

Senior Scope

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

Vol. 8, Issue 5

Published by Coastline Elderly Services, Inc.

February 2026

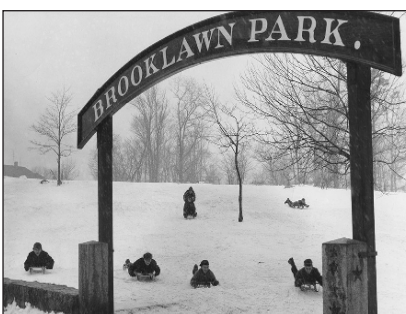
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Simple Winter Joys, page 7

DRIVEN BY LOVE



Barrington's father, William, works to restore a World War II Army vehicle at his North Carolina home in an undated photo.

Dartmouth man carries on father's military vehicle legacy

When Jim Barrington headed south from Dartmouth to North Carolina, he expected a long day, but not a grueling test of endurance.

The goal was simple enough: retrieve a surplus military command car from his parents' former property and bring it home.

The reality was very different.

Barrington, 73, left New Bedford after finishing work one May evening, driving straight through

the night, about 800 miles, with a trailer rated to handle the weight and a winch system he believed would do the job.

The plan was to arrive early, load the 2.5-ton vehicle, grab a quick bite, and head back north. He intended to return later for three other military vehicles stored on the property.

What pushed him to act quickly was what he'd recently learned about the site itself. After the death

of his sister several years earlier, the family home had been abandoned, something Barrington only discovered when a developer called to ask about purchasing the land.

"I was told, 'It's abandoned,'" Barrington said. "That's when I knew I had to go."

When he arrived early the next morning, he barely recognized the place. Overgrown grass and young

Continued on page 12

SNAP Benefits: Here's what you need to know in 2026

If you receive SNAP benefits, or may be eligible, important changes are underway that could affect both your benefits and how the program is run in Massachusetts.

On July 4, the One Big Beautiful Bill Act was signed into law, making some of the most significant changes to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program in decades.

The law tightens work requirements, limits benefit flexibility, and shifts more financial responsibility to states, changes that may be felt most acutely by older adults, caregivers, and people living on fixed incomes.

One of the most consequential changes for older adults is the

expansion of SNAP work rules. Previously, work requirements applied to adults up to age 54. Under the new law, they now extend to age 64.

Adults without dependents, referred to as "ABAWDs," must work, volunteer, or participate in an approved job training program for at least 80 hours per month to receive SNAP for more than three months within a three-year period. Each month of noncompliance counts as a strike, and after three strikes, benefits stop until eligibility is regained or the three-year clock resets.

In Massachusetts, that clock resets on Jan. 1, 2027. Until then, individuals who lose benefits due

Continued on page 9

Resources

Massachusetts SNAP (DTA)

For benefits questions, work rules, recertification, or reporting changes at mass.gov/snap, call 877-382-2363, or visit the New Bedford DTA at 16 Kilburn St.

SNAP Work Rules & Exemptions

Learn who must meet work requirements and what counts as approved activities online at mass.gov/snapworkrules.

Volunteer & Training Options

Find approved volunteer opportunities at snappathwork.org.

EBT Card Help

To lock a lost card, report fraud, or check balances, call 800-997-2555.



New Bedford's Zeiterion reopens renovated space

The Zeiterion reopened last month after an 18-month renovation project, bringing the familiar gathering place's beloved shows and more back to downtown New Bedford.

Alongside the restoration of the main theater space and historic elements, the renovation introduced a number of new public spaces aimed at broadening how the building can be used.

These include an expanded lobby and gathering areas, a new lounge and an intimate "speak-easy" event space, as well as a movement/rehearsal studio on the upper level.

The box office is also more easily accessible after being relocated to the street level under a new marquee. Accessibility improvements, including an elevator that now connects all floors, create clearer flow and more space for community activities beyond traditional performances.

The reopening was celebrated with sold-out opening parties on Jan. 17.

The event marked the return of live performances to a space that, for decades, has offered entertainment, social connection, and an entertaining reason to come downtown.

From the Editor

A month into the new year and there's no shortage of news affecting older adults. While much of it focuses on staying safe from fraud, new benefit requirements, or protecting what you've earned, there are also meaningful updates, helpful resources, and a few bright spots worth your attention.

In this issue, we look squarely at the essentials, necessities like food, transportation, and medical costs, that affect our everyday lives and our ability to be independent and stay well as we age.

For anyone who receives SNAP benefits, be sure to read our page one story outlining changes in effect now, or coming soon, under the One Big Beautiful Bill signed into law on July 4. Adults ages 54-64 will want to pay close attention to new work requirements and available exemptions. We've also included local and statewide resources to help you sort through what applies to you and where to get answers.

Medical bills can be confusing at any age. A page 3 feature from Kaiser Health News offers practical guidance drawn from their Bill of the Month series, including where to turn for help and how to submit a bill for review if something doesn't seem right.

The monthly updates on page 4

have several items of note, including free grocery delivery through PACE's Community Food Center. If winter weather or transportation has made shopping difficult, this program (available through March) may be worth a closer look.

Other stories this month include the state's decision to exempt live-in personal care attendants from state and federal taxes, a step toward supporting caregivers and strengthening a workforce so many families rely on (page 7).

Assisted living residences may soon see new safety measures building on work underway before the Gabriel House fire and informed by lessons learned from that tragedy (page 5).

Finally, our lead feature offers a change of pace: the story of a 73-year-old Dartmouth resident whose persistence and mechanical know-how helped him bring home restored military vehicles he once worked on with his father, a World War II veteran. It's a reminder that ingenuity, determination, and a good story don't fade with age, even when the project weighs several tons.



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	Patricia Midurski Samantha Ortiz
Dartmouth Council on Aging 628 Dartmouth St., Dartmouth	508-999-4717	Ginny Walega Matthew Dansereau Joan Menard
Fairhaven Council on Aging 229 Huttleston Ave, Fairhaven	508-979-4029	Dianne Perkins, Julie Lizotte Carolyn Dantoni, Jean Silver, Richard Marcotte
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 CharylN Feeny
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 David Ducharme
City of New Bedford-Community Services, 133 Williams St., NB	508-984-2670	Ivis Espinoza-Oviedo
Rochester Council on Aging 67 Dexter Lane, Rochester	508-763-8723	Jan Cote
Southcoast Health 200 Mill Road, Suite 109, Fairhaven	508-965-1047 (Internal referrals)	Denise Dupuis

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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.

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In Memory Of

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— Claudette L. Senna, New Bedford

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Senior Scope

Published by Coastline Elderly Services, Inc. with Title III funds from the Executive Office of Aging & Independence

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Medical bills can be vexing and perplexing. Here's this year's best advice

By **Emmarie Huetteman**

Originally published on Dec. 23, 2025. Republished with permission.

A Texas boy's second dose of the MMRV vaccine cost over \$1,400. A Pennsylvania woman's long-acting birth control cost more than \$14,000.

Treatment for a Florida Medicaid enrollee's heart attack cost nearly \$78,000 — about as much as surgery for an uninsured Montana woman's broken arm.

In 2025, these patients were among the hundreds who asked KFF Health News to investigate their medical bills as part of its "Bill of the Month" series.

Insured and uninsured. Job-based and government-funded. Comprehensive and short-term. Part of a sharing ministry. So many people with different health insurance situations asked the same questions: Why do I owe so much? And how am I going to afford it?

As millions of Americans grapple with the rising cost of health insurance next year, the "Bill of the Month" series is approaching its eighth anniversary. Our nationwide team of health reporters has analyzed almost \$7 million in medical charges, more than \$350,000 of that this year.

Of this year's 12 featured patients, five had their bills mostly or fully forgiven soon after we contacted the provider and insurer for comment.

Our mission, though, is to empower every patient with the information needed to understand, manage, and — if push comes to shove — fight their own medical bills. Here are our 10 takeaways from 2025.

1. Most insurance coverage doesn't start immediately. Many new plans come with waiting periods, so it's important to maintain continuous coverage until the new plan kicks in. One exception: If you lose your job-based coverage, you have 60 days to opt into a COBRA policy. Once you pay, the coverage applies retroactively, even for care received while you were temporarily uninsured.

2. Check out your coverage before you check in. Some plans come with unexpected restrictions, potentially affecting coverage for care ranging from contraception to immunizations and cancer screenings. Call your insurer — or, for job-based insurance, your human resources department or retiree benefits office — and ask whether there are exclusions for the care you need, including per-day or per-policy-period caps, and what you can expect to owe out-of-pocket.

3. "Covered" does not mean insurance will pay, let alone at in-network rates. Carefully read the fine print on network gap exceptions, prior authorizations, and other

insurance approvals. The terms may be limited to certain doctors, services, and dates.

4. Get a cost estimate in writing for nonemergency procedures. If you object to the price, negotiate before undergoing care. And if you're uninsured and receive a bill that's \$400 or more than the estimate, the federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services has a formal dispute process.

5. Location matters. Prices can vary depending on where a patient receives care and where tests are performed. If you need blood work, ask your doctor to send the requisition to an in-network lab. A doctor's office connected to a health system, for instance, may send samples to a hospital lab, which can mean higher charges.

6. When admitted, contact the billing office early. If possible, when you or a loved one has been hospitalized, it can help to speak to a billing representative. Ask whether the patient has been fully admitted or is being kept under observation status, as well as whether the care has been determined to be "medically necessary." And while there may be no choice about taking an ambulance, if a transfer to another facility is recommended, you can ask whether the ambulance service is in-network.

7. Ask for a discount. Medical charges are almost always higher than what insurers would pay, because providers expect them to negotiate lower rates. You can, too. If you're uninsured or underinsured, you may be eligible for a self-pay or charity care discount.

8. There's help available for Medicaid patients. If you get a bill you don't think you should owe, file a complaint with your state's Medicaid program and, if you have one, your managed-care plan. Ask whether there is a caseworker who can advocate on your behalf. A legal aid clinic or consumer protection firm specializing in medical debt can also help file complaints and communicate with providers.

9. Your elected representatives can help, too. While a call from a state or federal lawmaker's office may not get your bill forgiven, those officials often have an open line of communication with insurance companies, local hospitals, and other major providers — and advocating for you is their job.

10. When all else fails ... you can... you can write to "Bill of the Month"! Learn how to submit your bill and describe your experience at kffhealthnews.org/send-us-your-medical-bills/.

Read original article and more from KFF Health News at kffhealthnews.org.

Boomers ..
Call To Action
We Need
Volunteers

Preferably drama free, respectful and grateful.

"DROP-IN"
 (See for yourself)
 Coffee and a tour every day at 11
 (Except Sundays)

 508-717-8715

4 Slocum Street Acushnet

Gifts To Give .org

Help local children.

Updates

State redesigns disability placard to curb fraud

The Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles introduced a redesigned disability placard in January to improve security, curb fraud, and expedite delivery. Current placards will remain valid until their expiration date. The updated placard features several improvements including a modern design with the universal accessibility logo; durable material embedded with security features to deter fraud; and bilingual instructions in both English and Spanish. The RMV's Medical Affairs division issues approximately 140,000 placards annually to qualified residents on a temporary or permanent basis. The new placards eliminate the need for individual lamination, cutting processing time by 25%. For more information, please visit mass.gov/RMV.

Free laundry access for those who need it

Fresh clothes can make a world of difference, and Steppingstone's Project FAIHR is helping people access laundry services. The program offers free laundry service every month at XPress Laundry, 330 Hathaway Boulevard, New Bedford. The service is offered every third Wednesday of the month from 9 a.m. to noon; or every third Friday of the month from 1-4 p.m. During these times two loads of laundry, washing and drying, laundry supplies, and toiletries are available at no cost. The service is meant for individuals or families who are experiencing challenges or are currently unhoused, according to Steppingstone. Call XPress at 508-313-9901 or Project FAIHR at 774-992-0655 for more information.

Free grocery delivery is available for eligible adults

Older adults in the Greater New Bedford area may qualify for free grocery delivery from the PACE Community Food Center. The program runs through March 2026 bringing nutritious food right to your door. To qualify, individuals must be age 65 or older, meet income guidelines, and live in New Bedford, Dartmouth, Marion, Rochester, Mattapoisett, Fairhaven, or Acushnet. Preference is given to those living alone. To learn more or register, call (508) 939-3447 or email foodcenter@paceinfo.org.

Energy advocate holds office hours at New Bedford libraries

The city of New Bedford's energy advocate Kate Klein is holding regular office hours from 5:30-7:30 p.m. other Tuesday at alternating New Bedford library branches. Are your energy costs too high? If you're looking to lower your utility bills or access no-to-low-cost upgrades for your home, stop by during scheduled office hours to get assistance on your energy costs. Klein works on behalf of the Mass Save program in New Bedford's Energy Office. During office hours, people will be able to talk in-person about ways to save energy and reduce costs and are invited to bring their most recent utility bill with them. Call 508.991.6193 to schedule an appointment, or feel free to drop-in. Upcoming dates are: Feb. 10 at the Main Public Library; Feb. 24 at the Wilks Library; March 10 at Casa da Saudade; March 24 at Lawler Library; and April 7 at Howland Green Library. For more information on the Mass Save program, visit www.mass-save.com/community-first/newbedford.

Courageous WWII chaplains to be honored

The American Legion Post One of New Bedford will hold its annual Four Chaplains Service to honor the four chaplains who sacrificed their lives on the SS Dorchester at 2 p.m. on Feb. 8. The service will take place at St. Lawrence Martyr Catholic Church, 110 Summer St., New Bedford. All are welcome. The American Legion Post One is a non-profit veterans organization established in 1919 to support active-duty members, military veterans, and their families.

Become a dementia champion

Learn how to lead a Dementia Friend information session for your community! Take part in a free, 3-hour volunteer training on Zoom on Wednesday, March 11. Champion trainings are held in English. This training will begin with an information session that is open to the public, from 1-2:15 p.m. Those who wish to become volunteer champions are required to attend the whole training from 1-4 p.m. Upon account approval, you will receive access to all of the adapted and translated materials in nine languages.

Southcoast Food Policy Council holds virtual Lunch & Learn series

Help shape the future of food in Massachusetts in this four-session legislative briefing series from the Southcoast Food Policy Council, a program of the Marion Institute. Four sessions will focus on priority food system bills that address real challenges tackling food insecurity, nutrition education, and equity in farming. Whether you're a parent, educator, farmer, business owner, or advocate, these one-hour briefings offer the context and tools to take meaningful action. Learn about the critical issues, understand the proposed solutions, and discover how you can advocate for policies that build a healthier, more just food system for all. All sessions are from noon to 1 p.m. on the following dates: Feb. 19 on Food System Budget; Feb. 26 on HIP and State Funded SNAP; March 3 on Farm to School / Food Literacy; and, March 12 on Food Donation/Equity in Agriculture. Find more information and links to register for each session at www.marioninstitute.org/legislative-briefings/.

Library offers book delivery

The New Bedford Free Public Library offers homebound delivery service to New Bedford residents who have difficulty using their local library branch. Get your books delivered if you are unable to go to the library yourself. If you would like to sign up for homebound delivery from the New Bedford Free Public Library's mobile library, submit your request using an online form at <https://forms.gle/SGp2iewRmt2rGUAp9>. You may also call librarian Ned Denby at 508-979-1703 or email ndenby@sailsinc.org to make your request.

Free vegetables for SNAP recipients

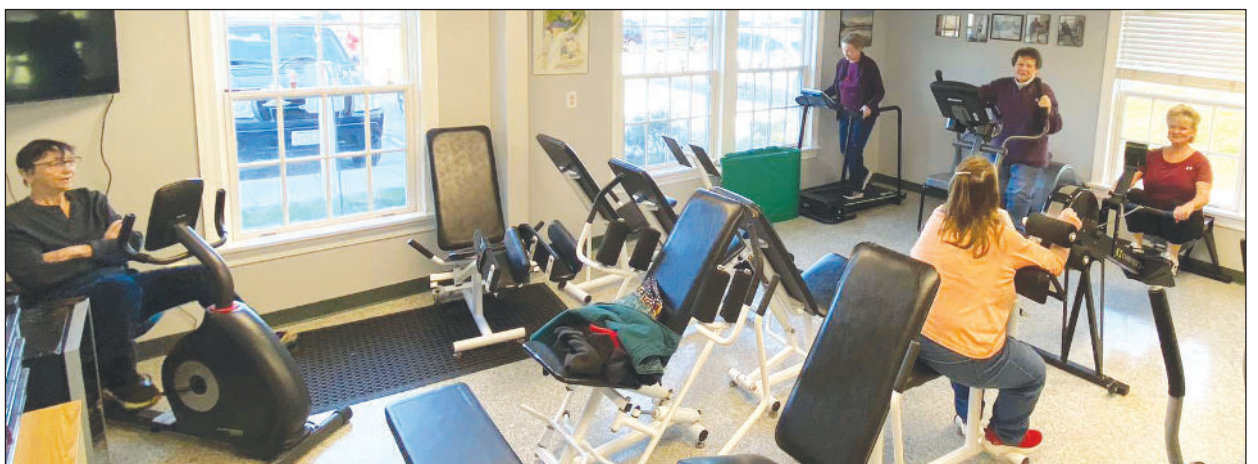
SNAP recipients can access up to \$40 in free fruits and vegetables using their SNAP EBT cards through the state's Healthy Incentives Program. Cards must have a balance of \$0.01 to use HIP benefits. HIP options through Coastal Foodshed are available for pickup on Feb. 6 from 2 to 3 p.m. at the Underground Railroad Cafe, 213 Acushnet Ave., New Bedford; For more information, call Coastal Foodshed at 508-501-5187.

Ready, Set, Move! Rochester COA kicks off new year with fitness upgrades



(Photos courtesy of the Rochester COA)

The Rochester Council on Aging started the New Year off with an upgraded Fitness Center to help the town's older adults stay healthy in 2026 and beyond. Residents who are 60 or older and become COA members can sign a waiver to use the machines.



Community

What really gets in the way of heart health and one change that matters most

Cardiologist Dr. Mike Rocha reflects on heart health, aging, and everyday choices for American Heart Month

Heart health is often framed around what happens in an exam room—or an operating room. But according to Dr. Mike Rocha, a local cardiologist and longtime advocate for wellness-based care, some of the most powerful influences on the heart show up in everyday life: how we eat, move, manage stress, and stay connected to others.

In this American Heart Month Q&A, Dr. Rocha reflects on what people tend to overlook as they age, why “knowing what to do” isn’t always enough, and how social connection, movement, and realistic support can make a measurable difference in heart health. He also shares the one small change he believes can have the biggest impact—especially for older adults navigating loss, isolation, or major life transitions.

Senior Scope: After years of caring for patients and helping people connect to wellness programs, what’s one heart-health lesson you think people overlook as they age?

Dr. Mike Rocha: They often overlook that each of us has more of a role in their own health than we think. Yes, family history is important but at some point as people age, it is less about our genes and more of how they are able to take care of ourselves. Diet, activity, managing stress, and social connections can’t be underestimated.

We have made it seem that heart health only occurs in the operating room, through a stent or in a pill. All of our technology is great and has helped people live longer, but if people aren’t able to change their lifestyles, they may end up needing more procedures.

Senior Scope: Many people know what they “should” do for their heart but struggle to follow through. What gets in the way most often and how can people work with that reality instead of fighting it?

Dr. Mike Rocha: One frequent obstacle is eating heart healthy. For

example, if someone loses a significant other, they may not want to cook for one. They often resort to less healthy options such as fast foods, eating out, delivery or take out. Many of these options have a significant hidden salt load. Many heart conditions are best managed with lower salt intake, less processed foods, less red meat, cheese, and dairy. Certainly, if people are eating out, it is important to navigate the menu to make the best choices under the circumstances and some restaurants go out of their way to show heart healthier options which I applaud.

Eating healthier can be expensive, time consuming and overwhelming for folks to navigate. More fish, fruits and vegetables sounds like an easy goal, but it may not be easy to achieve. A less than ideal diet can make managing blood pressure, fluid retention, and high cholesterol a big challenge. Agencies that can assist with providing healthy options is super important. Family members and friends that can jump in and help with shopping can make a big difference.

Senior Scope: You’ve helped bring yoga, walking groups, and even happiness workshops into heart health. Why do these “non-medical” approaches matter so much for the heart?

Dr. Mike Rocha: Social connections matter. Getting your steps in matter. Flexibility matters. Lower stress matters. These different activities help balance many hormonal levels in our bodies such as the stress hormones that regulate pathways that impact our blood pressure, heart rate, and subsequently our overall heart health.

Senior Scope: How does social connection, or isolation, show up in heart health, especially for older adults?

Dr. Mike Rocha: Loneliness or isolation is a huge problem. The associated depression results in people avoid-



ing the activities they need to be healthy like walking, buying and eating healthy foods, taking their medicines, and can accelerate heart disease. The local councils on aging can help curb some

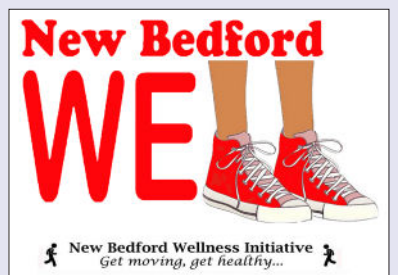


Dr. Michael Rocha

of the isolation that people maybe experiencing with some fantastic programs. It can’t be underestimated, the importance of checking on older family members and getting them out.

Senior Scope: If someone could make just one small, realistic change this year for their heart, what would you suggest and why that one?

Dr. Mike Rocha: All of the important heart healthy behaviors have to begin with strong social connections. Focusing and improving those connections not only makes life worth living, it motivates us to eat well, move more, take our medications, and follow up with health professions. For an aging population, many of whom have significant losses of loved ones and loss of independence, it’s not easy but can make a world of difference for their overall well-being and their heart health.



Classes are free and take place at the Boys & Girls Club.

Sunday, Feb. 1

8:30 a.m. Science of Well-Being
9:30 a.m. Meditation
10 a.m. Yoga
11 a.m. Zumba

Sunday, Feb. 8

8:30 a.m. Science of Well-Being
9:30 a.m. Meditation
10 a.m. Yoga
11 a.m. Zumba

Sunday, Feb. 15

8:30 a.m. Science of Well-Being
9:30 a.m. Meditation
10 a.m. Yoga
10 a.m. Hypnosis to Stop Smoking
11 a.m. Zumba

Sunday, Feb. 22

8:30 a.m. Science of Well-Being
9:30 a.m. Meditation
10 a.m. Yoga
11 a.m. Zumba

Boys & Girls Club is at 166 Jenney St., New Bedford. For updates or more information, visit www.nbewell.com.

Massachusetts assisted living sites to get new safety measures following Gabriel House fire

The Healey-Driscoll administration said it will take immediate action to begin implementation of safety recommendations for assisted living residences in the state, based on recommendations in a Jan. 12 Massachusetts Assisted Living Residences Commission report.

The ALR commission’s report to the Legislature outlines both regulatory and legislative solutions to improve the safety and well-being of residents. The report was underway when the tragic fire happened at the Gabriel House in Fall River in July. Afterwards, the state approved an extension to give the commission additional time beyond its August report deadline to incorporate lessons learned from the fire.

The commission approved its final report on Jan. 12.

The commission’s recommendations aim to ensure ALRs continue to

meet the evolving needs of older adults while significantly strengthening transparency and oversight, emergency preparedness, staffing, and consumer protections. In its work, commission members met 16 times, held two public hearings, and incorporated direct feedback from residents, families, industry experts, and first responders.

Key recommendations include:

Stronger Fire Safety & Emergency Preparedness Standards: Enhance inspections and coordination with local fire departments to prevent tragedies.

Transparent Public Data: Create a new statewide online database to provide families with clear access to compliance records, ownership information, and corrective action plans.

Standardize Disclosures: Standardize information on services, costs, staffing, and resident rights for easier comparison across ALRs.

Staffing & Nursing Requirements:

Ensure every ALR has access to licensed nursing support and leadership training that matches resident needs.

Clear Assessment Practices: Ensure consistent evaluations of resident needs with notice of any cost or care changes.

Affordability Task Force: Create a task force to evaluate new models that expand access for low- and middle-income older adults.

“The heartbreaking tragedy at Gabriel House showed us that we cannot wait to strengthen protections for assisted living residents,” said Governor Maura Healey. “We are taking immediate action on these recommendations so we can better protect residents, support families and ensure our assisted living system continues to serve people well.”

The Commission recommends legislative action including establishing a dedicated funding mechanism

to expand state oversight and public reporting, amending state law to allow certified medication aides in ALRs, and creating a statewide registry for ALR executive directors. The report also urges the review of ALR building classifications and updating building codes. Finally, the commission recommends forming an ALR Affordability Task Force to look into sustainable models that expand access for low- and middle-income older adults.

“While there are quality residences across Massachusetts, inadequate regulations have allowed bad actors to persist for far too long,” said Senator Mark Montigny, lead legislative sponsor of the ALR Commission. “As the devastating Gabriel House fire showed, vulnerable lives are at stake and we need to continue to demand more action from legislators, regulators, and residence owners.”

Simple steps to help protect your personal information

Identity Theft Awareness Week, observed annually each January, offers a timely reminder that protecting personal information is part of everyday self-care, much like staying alert to common scams.

Identity theft doesn't always begin with dramatic warning signs. Often, it starts quietly, through a misplaced document, a reused password, or an overlooked account statement.

The good news is that simple, steady habits can make a real difference. By taking a few practical steps to safeguard financial and personal information, we can reduce risk and respond quickly if something doesn't look right.

The tips below, from the Federal Trade Commission, offer easy ways to stay informed, organized, and protected.

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 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.

Find more information about keeping your information safe at consumer.ftc.gov/identity-theft-online-security.

Passos simples para ajudar a proteger as suas informações pessoais

A Semana de Conscientização sobre Roubo de Identidade, comemorada anualmente em janeiro, oferece um lembrete oportuno de que proteger as informações pessoais faz parte dos cuidados diários, assim como ficar atento a golpes comuns.

O roubo de identidade nem sempre começa com sinais de alerta dramáticos. Muitas vezes, ele começa silenciosamente, por meio de um documento extraviado, uma senha reutilizada ou um extrato bancário

ignorado.

A boa notícia é que hábitos simples e constantes podem fazer uma diferença real. Ao tomar algumas medidas práticas para proteger as informações financeiras e pessoais, podemos reduzir o risco e responder rapidamente se algo não parecer certo.

As dicas abaixo, da Comissão Federal de Comércio, oferecem maneiras fáceis de se manter informado, organizado e protegido.

Como proteger as suas informações

- Leia os seus relatórios de crédito. Aceda aos seus três relatórios de crédito gratuitos por ano, solicitando-os todos de uma vez ou um a cada quatro meses. Aceda a annualcreditreport.com ou ligue para 1-877-322-8228.

- Leia regularmente os seus extratos bancários, de cartão de crédito e de conta. Se encontrar algum erro, ligue para a empresa responsável pela conta.

- Destrua todos os documentos que contenham informações pessoais,

financeiras e médicas, como o seu número de segurança social e data de nascimento, antes de os deitar fora.

- Não responda a e-mails, telefonemas ou mensagens de texto que solicitem informações pessoais.

- Use palavras-passe complexas. Não use a mesma palavra-passe para mais de uma conta.

Encontre mais informações sobre como manter as suas informações seguras em consumer.ftc.gov/identity-theft-online-security.

Pasos sencillos para ayudar a proteger su información personal

La Semana de Concientización sobre el Robo de Identidad, evento anual que se celebra cada enero, nos recuerda oportunamente que proteger la información personal es parte del cuidado personal diario, al igual que estar alerta a los fraudes.

El robo de identidad no siempre comienza con una señal de alerta dramática. A menudo comienza sigilosamente, a través de un documento extraviado, una contraseña reusada, o un extracto de cuenta omitido.

La buena noticia es que los hábitos sencillos y constantes pueden hacer una gran diferencia. Tomando algunos pasos prácticos para proteger la información personal y financiera, podemos reducir el riesgo y responder rápidamente si algo no parece estar bien.

Los siguientes consejos, de la Comisión General de Comercio (Federal Trade Commission), ofrecen formas sencillas para estar informado, organizado, y protegido.

Como proteger su información

- Lea su informe de crédito. Aceda

a sus tres informes de crédito gratuitos cada año solicitándolos todos de una vez o uno cada cuatro meses. Visite annualcreditreport.com o llame al 1-877-322-8228.

- Lea regularmente sus extractos bancarios, de tarjetas de crédito y de cuentas. Si detecta algún error, llame a la empresa titular de la cuenta.

- Antes de tirarlos a la basura, destruya todos los documentos que contengan información personal, financiera y médica como su número de Seguridad Social y su fecha de

nacimiento.

- No responda a correos electrónicos, llamadas telefónicas, o mensajes de texto preguntando por información personal.

- Use contraseñas complejas. No use la misma contraseña para más de una cuenta.

Encuentre más información sobre cómo mantener segura su información en consumer.ftc.gov/identity-theft-online-security.

Translations provided by:

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Affordability makes it difficult for older adults to buy healthy food, survey shows

In a new survey of older adults, the National Council on Aging, found that 71% of respondents reported affordability is a main obstacle to their ability to choose and purchase healthy foods, NCOA said in a Dec. 9 release on its website, www.ncoa.org.

Respondents to the survey said they are confident about what types of foods are healthy for older adults to eat, but funding purchases for these foods is often challenging.

“Eating healthy food is essential to aging well, but these results confirm what we already know—far too many older adults are struggling just to afford the basics,” said Gretchen Dueñas-Tanbonliong, NCOA Associate Director of Health and Wellness. “With high food costs across the country, it’s more important than ever that we connect older adults who are eligible to programs that can help them afford food, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP), and the Senior Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP). NCOA continues to advocate at the federal level to protect and strengthen these essential nutrition assistance programs.”

The survey was designed to understand older adults’ needs related to nutrition and joint health, their confidence in their knowledge of nutrition and physical activity,

“Eating healthy food is essential to aging well, but these results confirm what we already know—far too many older adults are struggling just to afford the basics.”

— Gretchen Dueñas-Tanbonliong, Assoc. Dir. of Health and Wellness

and their own experiences related to these issues, NCOA said.

Other key findings include:

- Nearly half (48%) of respondents

said it was somewhat hard, hard, or very hard for their household to regularly get and eat healthy foods in the past 12 months.

- After affordability, respondents cited mobility challenges or physical limitations (22%) and food assistance qualification issues (20%) as the main obstacles to not eating healthy foods.

Three-quarters of respondents reported feeling joint discomfort in the previous two weeks, 59% took a pain reliever, and 58% stretched or did yoga to feel better.

Older adults and their families can check to see if they are eligible

for SNAP, CSFP, SFMNP, and other state and local food assistance programs by visiting NCOA’s free and confidential BenefitsCheckUp® website. By answering a few anonymous questions, visitors can receive a personalized report of public and private programs they may qualify for, as well as steps on how to apply.

NCOA works with thousands of national and local partners, to provide resources, tools, best practices, and advocacy to ensure every person can age with health and financial security. Learn more at www.ncoa.org and @NCOAging.



The Way Things Were

SNOW DAY MEMORIES: Sledgers dot a hillside at Brooklawn Park taking advantage of recent snowfall clinging persistently to the landscape in this February 1958 photo. (Courtesy of Spinner Publications.)

Live-in PCAs no longer subject to state and federal taxes

Thousands of live-in personal care attendants will no longer be subject to state or federal income taxes, according to an announcement from the state in the final days of 2025.

The exemption is projected to save these PCAs \$5,000 or more per year, the state said in its release.

PCAs are health care professionals who help older people and those with disabilities keep their independence by aiding with activities of daily living, such as bathing and dressing. The exemptions apply to PCAs who live in the same home as the person they care for.

“We are working every day to identify ways to make life more affordable for the people of Massachusetts,” Gov. Maura Healey said in a released statement. “Personal Care Attendants do incredibly challenging work to care for the most vulnerable among us, and they shouldn’t have to also worry about being able to afford to meet their own basic needs. We want highly qualified, dedicated individuals to pursue and stay in careers as PCAs, but they need to be able to afford to do so.”

The Executive Office of Health and Human Services, through the PCA Workforce Council, requested a ruling from the Internal Revenue Service to confirm that income earned by PCAs for providing MassHealth-covered PCA services to MassHealth members who live with them qualifies as “Difficulty

of Care” payments.

With that ruling, such income is now exempt from both federal and state income tax, which will save many PCAs \$5,000 or more per year.

Approximately 60,000 people are employed as PCAs through the MassHealth PCA program, an estimated 18,000 of whom will qualify for this tax exemption. The program is a cornerstone of the state’s long-term services and supports system, and the care provided by PCAs supports more than 50,000 MassHealth members with disabilities to live independently at home and in the community.

“This exemption brings substantial tax relief for trained live-in friends and family members who are providing crucial health care services for MassHealth members with disabilities. We are proud of this step to support PCAs and the people they care for in continuing to live, work, and thrive in Massachusetts,” said Secretary of Health and Human Services Kiame Mahanah, MD, MBA, former chair of the PCA Workforce Council.

Since 2023, the state has taken several steps to improve PCA roles, including increasing the PCA hourly wage, creating a seniority ladder, working to create a pathway to a PCA retirement plan, and increasing the number of holidays on which PCAs are paid at a premium rate of time-and-one-half the regular rate of pay.

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Housing resources that can help renters and those experiencing homelessness

By Raquel Antonio

South Coastal Counties Legal Services

As the housing crisis continues, it has become very difficult for tenants to pay their monthly rent. If you need assistance, the following resources may be able to help you.

Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT) and Emergency Rental and Mortgage Assistance (ERMA) function as homelessness prevention programs.

For all kinds of households at risk of homelessness, RAFT provides up to \$7,000 during a 12-month period. This assistance is not limited to families with children.

RAFT can help with past and future rent, utility bills, security deposits, moving costs, and other housing necessities.

ERMA is similar to RAFT but has different financial eligibility guidelines. ERMA also provides up to \$7,000 in financial assistance to families and individuals having trouble making housing payments. ERMA only helps with rent or mortgage arrears and stipends.

Unlike RAFT, ERMA does not assist with moving costs or utility arrears. Bristol County applicants can apply for RAFT and ERMA through the NeighborWorks Housing Solutions website, <https://nhsma.org/apply-for-raft/> or by phone at 781-422-4204.

In addition to RAFT/ERMA, there may be other rental assistance options available to you.

Catholic Charities is a local non-profit that can provide financial assistance to eligible people in need. To access Catholic Social Services' rental assistance options, applicants must be faced with eviction and have been served with a 14 day or 30-day Notice to Quit for nonpayment of rent. Applicants must have been served with a Notice to Quit. To find out if you are eligible, applicants can call the New Bedford Coordinator at 508-997-7337 or the Fall River Coordinator at 774-520-2555. More information can be found at their website, <https://www.cssdioc.org/>.

Another local agency which

provides help to people with housing issues is **People Acting in Community Endeavors, or "PACE."** The Housing Opportunity Center at PACE provides limited rental assistance for those individuals and families that are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The program also provides referrals to resources and provides housing search lists for people seeking permanent housing. To apply, call PACE's Housing Opportunity Center at 508-993-0033.

If you are experiencing home-

"For all kinds of households at risk of homelessness, RAFT provides up to \$7,000 during a 12-month period."

lessness, **New Bedford's Coordinated Entry System** provides rapid shelter entry and rehousing options. To learn more, you can call 508-501-0900 or go to their website, ce@comcounseling.org. Additionally, at this time, some homeless shelters in the area have decided to allow constituents to directly call them for services instead of going through New Bedford Coordinated Entry System. Two local homeless shelters that can be contacted directly are Sister Rose's House at 508-997-3202 and Grace House at 774-628-9743.

Finally, South Coastal Counties Legal Services Offices (SCCLS) is a non-profit law firm that provides free civil legal help to low-income and disadvantaged residents of Southeastern Massachusetts, Cape Cod and the Islands in a variety of civil legal matters.

If you are facing eviction, been denied disability or unemployment benefits, experiencing domestic violence or are faced with another civil (non-criminal) legal issue, please call 1-800-244-9023 to apply for legal help. The intake line is open from Monday to Thursday between 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

To learn more about the services SCCLS provides, you can visit our website <http://www.sccls.org>.

Trivia

FOR YOUR ENTERTAINMENT – KIM CAMARA

- In which country would you find the city of "Timbuktu"?
A.) Senegal B.) Morocco C.) Mali D.) Ethiopia
- The Willis Tower, formerly the Sears Tower, is located in what U.S. city?
A.) Houston B.) Chicago
C.) New York D.) Los Angeles
- What city is the "Air capital of the world"?
A.) Wichita B.) Cincinnati C.) Cleveland D.) Columbus
- What is tattooed on Popeye's arm?
A.) Olive Oyl B.) Anchor
C.) Pirate ship D.) Cross
- Flamenco dancing comes from what country?
A.) United States B.) Cuba C.) Mexico D.) Spain
- Which of these singers released the song "Time After time" in 1983?
A.) ABBA B.) Sting C.) Cyndi Lauper D.) Madonna
- What famous fairy tale characters were originally goats?
A.) The Seven Ravens B.) Goldilocks and the 3 Bears
C.) Three Little Pigs D.) Snow White and the 7 Dwarfs
- What does "Mardi Gras" stand for?
A.) Looney Monday B.) Fat Tuesday
C.) Chill Wednesday D.) Fat Friday
- What sports event does "Run for the Roses" refer to?
A.) Boston Marathon B.) Masters Golf Tournament
C.) Super Bowl D.) Kentucky Derby
- What 1950's car was considered to have the biggest tail fins?
A.) '57 Chevy Belair B.) Cadillac Eldorado
C.) Packard Caribbean D.) Ford Edsel

[Answers listed on page 11]

Starting
in 2026!

Inside

Senior Scope



Senior Scope, December 2025

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questions?

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Senior Scope is published by
Coastline, 863 Belleville Ave.,
New Bedford, MA 02745
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SENIOR SCOPE MOVES TO 11 ISSUES A YEAR

Beginning in 2026, Senior Scope will publish 11 issues per year and will skip the month of August. This small change helps us continue to provide the high-quality coverage you count on.

What This Means for Subscriber

All current subscribers (as of Dec. 31, 2025) will receive 12 issues. If one of your 12 issues would have been the August issue, we will extend your subscription by one month. All renewals and new subscriptions will be for 11 issues at the same \$18/year price.

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SNAP Changes continued...

to noncompliance generally must wait for the reset unless they meet an exemption or successfully requalify. These rules took effect in July and apply both to new SNAP applications and to existing recipients at recertification.

For many older adults, complying with these requirements may be difficult. Health limitations, caregiving responsibilities, transportation barriers, and age-related discrimination in hiring can make steady participation challenging.

At the same time, the law sharply reduces states' ability to waive work requirements in areas with limited job opportunities. Waivers are now allowed only when unemployment exceeds 10 percent, a level rarely reached. In addition, exemptions previously available to people experiencing homelessness, veterans, and former foster youth have been eliminated. Increased enforcement means more SNAP recipients will need to document work or approved activities to keep their benefits.

The law also limits how SNAP benefits can be adjusted. Going forward, benefit changes will occur only once a year, through the annual cost-of-living adjustment each October. This removes the federal government's ability to make mid-year changes in response to rising food prices, supply disruptions, or other

economic shifts, a concern for households already struggling to stretch food budgets.

Another change affects the replacement of stolen or lost SNAP benefits. Federal funding to replace benefits lost through EBT card theft or scams ended in December 2024, and states can no longer request reimbursement. Massachusetts officials are urging SNAP recipients to protect their cards by locking them when not in use. This can be done by calling the EBT customer service number, similar to locking a credit card, and unlocking it again when needed.

Eligibility rules for some non-citizens are also changing. Beginning in November, several humanitarian categories will no longer qualify for SNAP, including refugees, asylees, certain parolees, and individuals protected under VAWA provisions. Eligibility continues for lawful permanent residents, Cuban-Haitian entrants, and individuals lawfully present under the Compact of Free Association, which includes residents of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, and Palau. These rules apply to both new applications and recertifications.

There have also been changes to how utility costs are calculated for SNAP purposes. Updates to the standard utility allowance may increase or decrease benefits depending on a household's actual expenses, meaning some

recipients could see adjustments that are not immediately obvious.

Beyond individual benefits, the law significantly affects how SNAP is funded and administered in Massachusetts, changes that may indirectly impact recipients. Federal funding for SNAP nutrition education programs has been eliminated. In Massachusetts, these programs are expected to continue only until existing funds are exhausted, anticipated by Sept. 30. These programs help people learn how to eat well on a limited budget and navigate rising food costs.

“If you are between ages 55 and 64, or your work situation has changed, ask DTA whether the new work rules apply to you and whether you qualify for an exemption or approved activity such as volunteering.”

Administrative funding has also been cut. Previously, the federal government covered about half the cost of running SNAP. Under the new law, it will cover only 25 percent, leaving Massachusetts responsible for the remaining 75 percent. In addition, states must now contribute toward SNAP benefit costs if their payment error rates exceed certain thresholds,

with required contributions ranging from zero up to 15 percent. This represents a new and potentially significant expense for the state.

Taken together, these changes make SNAP more rigid and less forgiving, while placing new financial pressures on states. For older adults, especially those nearing retirement or managing health challenges, the stakes are higher. While the full impact will unfold over time, staying informed, reporting changes promptly, and seeking guidance about exemptions or approved activities will be more important than ever.

If you receive SNAP, continue using your benefits as usual, but pay close attention to mail, notices, and recertification deadlines from the Department of Transitional Assistance.

If you are between ages 55 and 64, or your work situation has changed, ask DTA whether the new work rules apply to you and whether you qualify for an exemption or approved activity such as volunteering.

Protect your EBT card by locking it when it's lost or not in use, and report changes in health, income, or household status promptly. If you are unsure how these changes affect you, reach out to a trusted benefits counselor, council on aging, or community organization for help navigating your options.

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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.

Veteran's Coffee Social: Tuesday, Feb. 3 at 8:30 a.m.

Beginner Watercolor classes: With The Wandering Brush, Feb. 4 & 25 at 10:30 a.m.

Valentine's Day Bingo: Thursday, Feb. 12 Doors open at noon. Raffle closes at 12:45 p.m. Games begin at 1 p.m.

Seed Oil Presentation: With Ashley Whewell MS, RD Coastline Elderly, Wednesday Feb. 18 at 1 p.m. This presentation explores seed oils—what they are, how they're made, and why they've become so controversial. We'll review common myths and claims surrounding seed oils, examine what the current evidence says about their health effects, and discuss whether and how they can fit into a balanced diet.

Stoneforge Lunch Trip: Thursday Feb. 19. Transportation is complementary. Attendees are responsible for their own meal.

Nutrition Demonstration: With Dietician Barbara Canuel from Community Nurse. Wednesday Feb. 25 at 12:30 p.m.

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

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.

Social Security Updates: Feb. 6 at 1 p.m. Discussion will focus on latest Social Security Administration updates for 2026. This is a great opportunity to stay informed, ask questions, and prepare for the year ahead. Pre-registration required.

Harmony Sound Bath: With music educator Renee Moriarty, Tuesday, Feb. 10 & 24 at 3 p.m. Pre-registration required. Free!

Annual Valentine Dance: With DHS National Honor Society students Friday, Feb. 13 from 1-3 p.m. Pre-registration required.

Art for Your Mind: "The Fascinating Georgia O'Keeffe" presented by art historian Jill Sanford. Wednesday, Feb. 18 at 2:30 p.m. Pre-registration required. Cost is \$5.

Summit ElderCare PACE Program: Information opportunity on Friday, Feb. 20 from 9:30-11:30 a.m. Walk in and learn about a unique healthcare model, newly available in Southeast Massachusetts. This program is designed to support older adults and their caregivers who manage complex health challenges at home.

"Man on the Inside": Netflix Series Season Two. Monday, Feb. 23, and March 2 and 9, 1-2:30 p.m. Pre-registration required.

"Funny Business": A deep dive into the art of laughter with Anthony Lewis — writer, stand-up comic, and English professor. Wednesday, Feb. 25 at 1 p.m. Pre-registration required. Free.

Beginner Watercolors: With The Wandering Brush, Thursday, Feb. 26 at 10 a.m. Cost is \$10. Includes supplies. Pre-registration required.

Coffee Hour: Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:13-10:30 a.m. Walk-ins welcome.

Tech Literacy with Carly: By appointment Tuesdays 10:30 a.m. -12:30 p.m. Bring questions, a computer, phone or tablet. Call center at 508-999-4717 for appointment.

Cribbage for Beginners: Tuesdays 8:30-10:30 a.m. Walk ins welcome.

Open Art Studio: With Christine, Tuesdays, 9:30 a.m. - Noon. Cost is \$10. Bring your own supplies/project.

Pedicures: Third Tuesday by appointment. Basic Waterless \$30 non-polished, \$35 polished. Nail clipping non-diabetics \$30 by appt.

Acoustic Jam Session: Tuesdays 1-2:45 p.m. Do you love music, like to sing or play an instrument? Informal group meets to share songs and sounds. Walk-ins

Alzheimer's Support Group: 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month 2:30-3:45 p.m. Contact Donna Leary at 508-264-3892 or email her at mimi.donna29@gmail.com

French Conversation and Culture: Wednesdays at 10 a.m. Join Suzanne Pelletier, retired French Professor, for an hour of fun in the world of French. Walk-ins welcome.

Manicures: Second and last Friday. By appointment. 9 a.m. to Noon. Cost is \$15.

Qigong with Cristina: Wednesdays 2:15-3:15 p.m. Class combines gentle movements, breathing, and meditation to enhance overall health. Free. Walk-ins welcome.

Board and Card Games: Wednesdays 1:00-3:00 Walk-ins welcome.

Caregiver Support: First Thursday of the month, 1-2:30 p.m. Please call Stephine Gibson at 774-510-5209 for information.

Widows Person Support: 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month. Please call Jane Rocha, WPP director, at 508-999-3255 for more information.

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, MA 02719. Open 7:30am-3:30pm and until 8pm on Wednesdays. *Everything subject to change. Please call the COA if you have any questions.

Mall Trips: Feb.4- First Light Casino, Feb. 11th- Westgate Mall, Feb.18th- Prov. Place Mall, Feb. 25th- South Shore Plaza

Monday Movie Matinee: 12:15 p.m. If you would like lunch before the movie at 11:30 a.m., please call the Thursday BEFORE the movie on the Monday. Feb. 2nd - Groundhog Day. Feb. 9th- On Golden Pond, Feb.23rd- The Lost Valentine

Page Roses: Feb. 19th 9am-11am FREE CRAFT

Alzheimer's Association Caregiver Support: Feb 12th 1p.m.

Cribbage: Mondays 10 a.m. to noon.

Tai Chi: Mondays 11am. Joe Rebello Instructor. See instructor for cost.

Osteo Class: Simple and safe bone boosting exercises. Monday, Wednesday and Friday 8:30-9:30 a.m. \$1.

***NEW* Seated Yoga:** With Audra: 9-10 a.m. \$3 Tuesdays until February 3. Moving to Thursdays in February from 9-10 a.m.

Chair Yoga with Bet: 10:15-11:15 a.m. \$3 Wednesdays.

Tech Cafe: Wednesday's 4:30-5:30 (TIME & DAY CHANGE!)

MS Support Group: 10:30am-noon. Third Tuesday of the month. Please contact A.Nogueira@aol.com for more information and to join the meeting.

Watercolor Classes: First 3 Wednesdays in December. - 2:00-3:30 p.m. \$15/Class. See the COA Newsletter to see what you'll be painting! Please call to sign up.

Single Senior Supper Club: February 17th \$5pp. 3-5 p.m. Must call to sign up.

LGBTQ Supper Club: February 25th . Must call to sign up.

Senior U Technology Classes: Mondays 1:30-3:30 p.m. Please call the center to sign up and see class offerings or see the COA Newsletter.

Music Bingo: February 27th 12:30-1:30pm \$2 Per Person

Live Game Show!: February 17th 12:30pm. Must call to sign up.

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. Marion Board of Health: 508-748-3530.

Flower Arranging: Tuesday, Feb. 3 Members of the Marion Garden Group will lead us in arranging a beautiful Valentine's arrangement. Call 508-748-3570 to reserve your spot. There is a \$6 materials charge for this workshop due at sign up. Space is limited.

Manicures at Old Colony: Thursday, Feb. 12, 9:30 a.m. The Cosmetology students at Old Colony Regional Vocational Technical High School will be providing complimentary manicures (Tips are welcome). After your manicure, we will be stopping at a local restaurant for lunch. We will leave the COA at 9:30 a.m., returning at approximately 1 p.m. Call 508-748-3570 to make your reservation.

Continued on Page 11

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Concert with Sigy Moller: Feb. 9 1 p.m. Siegfried “Sigy” began his career in music studying opera in Pforzheim, Germany. At 14, he toured throughout Europe, and at seventeen was signed to a record company. At 20, without speaking any English, he decided to fulfill his dream and come to the states to pursue his career in music. He made his U.S. debut performing with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra. Since then, Sigy has performed across the United States. He has been compared to Engelbert, Elvis and Tom Jones with a bit of Dean Martin thrown in. His talent is equaled only by his joy of performing.

Concert with Gigi Abraham: Feb. 13, 1 p.m. Gigi is a voice actor and singer with over 100 voice roles to her credit. She has been singing professionally for over 30 years. Gigi has recorded in New York City, Nashville, Los Angeles and Boston. She had a hit single for Columbia Records that spent over six weeks on the National Billboard Hot 100 Chart.

Cooking Demonstration: Feb. 17 At Noon. Lunchtime cooking demonstration with Barbara Canuel, Registered Dietitian from Community Nurse Home Care. Learn new tips while preparing quick, nutritious meals. Call 508-748-3570 to reserve your spot.

Cooking Demonstration with Pampered Chef: Feb. 19 at Noon. Learn techniques from Linda Medeiros as she shares ways to save money as you prepare delicious meals. Call 508-748-3570 to make your reservation. \$5 donation requested to cover cost of food.

Protect Yourself From Medicare Fraud: Feb. 20 1 p.m. Healthcare errors, fraud and abuse cost American taxpayers and Medicare billions of dollars annually, but can also have devastating health-related outcomes. Join a representative from the Massachusetts Senior Medicare Patrol Program who will provide information and tools to become an engaged consumer. Call 508-748-3570 to reserve your spot.

Mattapoisett COA

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

Crafting Conversations: Mondays at 10 a.m. Bring your personal knitting, crocheting, or anything you’d like to work on and enjoy in the company of others while doing so.

Scrabble: Mondays at 1 p.m. Play is non-competitive and there are never any partners to disappoint. Stop by to check it out if you’re interested in learning more.

Bingo: Tuesdays from 1-2 p.m.

Cribbage: Tuesdays at 3 p.m.

Mah Jongg: Wednesdays from 1-3 p.m.

Bridge: Thursdays from 1-3 p.m.

Pliates: Mondays at 8:15 a.m. Cost: \$6 per class (*Please note change to cost) Instructor: Shawn Sweet A whole body workout, infused with yoga, focusing on strengthening the core. Low impact exercises are both on and off the mat. The benefits are improved balance, toned muscles, and increased flexibility.

Tai Chi: Mondays at 8:45 a.m. Cost: Free Instructor: Mary Beth Soares Location: Inside the COA. Tai Chi techniques aim to address the body and mind as an interconnected system and are traditionally believed to have mental and physical benefits. This is a standing exercise.

Tai-Yo-Ba: Mondays at 9:30 a.m. & Wednesdays at 10:45 a.m. Cost: Free (Registration Recommended) Instructor: Cam Bergeron Location: Congregational Hall (Mechanic St. entrance) Cam’s Conditioning is an exercise class using a chair, that is designed to help with strength, flexibility, mobility, and coordination.

Yoga: Tuesdays at 8:15 a.m. Cost: Free (Registration Required) Instructor: Shawn Sweet Stretching and poses to promote mind and body, with benefits of toning and flexibility. This is a floor exercise.

Country Line Dancing: Fridays at 10:30 a.m. Cost: \$3 per class (Registration Recommended) Instructor: Marge Blinstrub Line dancing is a choreographed routine done with a group of people that has a repeated sequence of steps.

Zumba Gold: Tuesdays at 10:30 a.m. Cost: Free (Registration Recommended) Instructor: Marge Blinstrub. The design of the class introduces easy to follow Zumba choreography that focuses on balance, range of motion, and coordination.

Walking Group: Wednesdays at 9 a.m. Cost: Free Meet in front of the COA a few minutes before start time. Walking approximately 3 miles in an hour. Routes vary.

New Bedford COA

For assistance, contact the New Bedford Council on Aging at 508-991-6250. Buttonwood Senior Center Programs and Activities with daily Coastline lunches (Monday-Friday) from 11:30 - 12:00. Brooklawn Social Day is at 1997 Acushnet Ave. and Rosemary S. Tierney Social Day 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, 8:30-9:15 a.m. with Cameron Bergeron.

Zumba Gold: Mondays 10-11; Zumba Toning is Thursdays 12:30-1:30 with Pati Cautillo.

Strength & Condition: Monday 12:30-1:30 and Fridays (2-3) with Larry Bigos.

Line Dancing: Monday, 1:30-2:30 p.m. with Kristina Hernandez.

Yoga Chair: Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 10:00-11:00 with Susan Ashley.

Chair Massage with Diane Charnley: Every other Tuesday (12:30-2:10). Call for schedule. Advance-sign-up required - 15 mins slots - Cost \$5.

Billiards and Gamer’s Gala: Tuesday, 12:00-3:00.

Senior Supper’s Club: Every 4th Tuesday of the month, (3:00-5:00) Cost \$7. Advance sign-up required.

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://facebook.com/Rochester,Mass)

Veterans Social: Thursday, Feb. 5, 5 p.m.

Grief Group: Feb. 12, from 1:30–3 p.m. in the COA conference room. All are welcome. Grief can be experienced from the loss of a loved one, separation or divorce, a serious medical diagnosis, and more. Facilitated by Certified Grief Educator Carol Valcourt.

February Special Lunch: On Monday, Feb. 2 at 11:30 a.m. Johnny Cash Tribute Show featuring Robert Black And His Band. \$20. Menu: roasted chicken thigh, non-spicy chili with cornbread, cauliflower veggie medley, dessert.

TRIAD Meeting: Feb. 4 at 11 a.m. The Car Shows will be back May through September with a new time, 4-7 p.m.. Stay tuned for what the theme of each Car Show will be. The July 9th theme will be “Happy Birthday USA” and the September Show will be the First Responders Theme with the Fire Department at the grille, Police Department serving root beer floats and a Plymouth County K-9 demonstration.

Book Club: Feb. 17 at 1 p.m. We will discuss ‘The Dictionary Of Lost Words’ by Pip Williams.

Brain Builders: Feb. 5 and Feb. 19 at 12:30 p.m.

Hearing Clinic: Friday, Feb. 27 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. You must register by calling 508-763-8723 or visiting the front desk. This team of Board Certified Hearing Instrument Specialists will perform a FREE hearing test and/or clean hearing aids and ears if needed. If you need hearing aids, At Home Hearing Healthcare works with many major insurance companies including Mass Health.

Dementia Directory

www.alzconnected.org

In-Person Groups

Alzheimer’s Support Group: 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month, 2:45 to 4 p.m. Held at the Dartmouth COA. Group is for caregivers and their care partners. Please contact Donna Leary, 508-264-3892 or mimi.donna29@gmail.com.

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.

February 2026 Trivia Quiz Answers

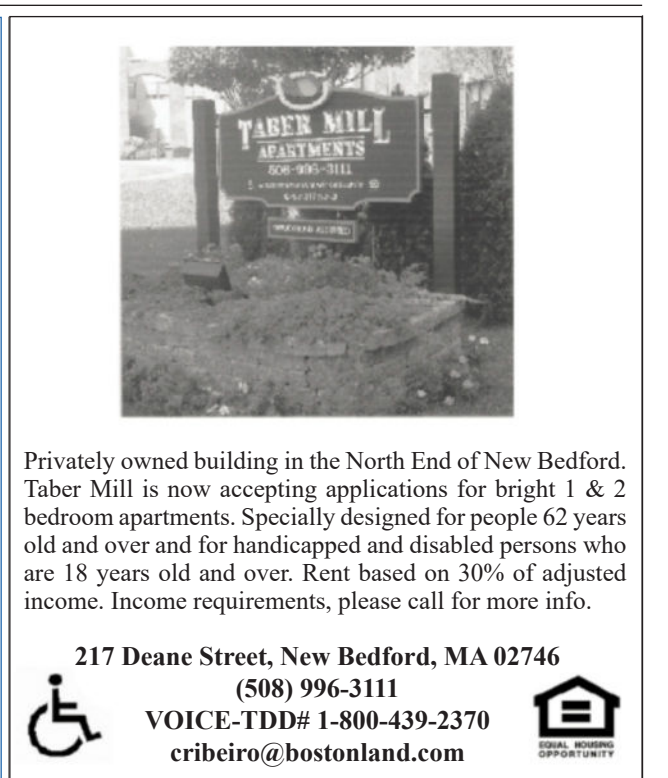
1. C | 2. B | 3. A | 4. B | 5. D
6. C | 7. C | 8. B | 9. D | 10. B



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Community



Clockwise from top left, Military vehicles restored by the Barringtons lined up during an airfield event; William and Jim Barrington together; Bill Barrington with one of the restored vehicles that was sold; and, Jim Barrington with one of the jeeps he loves to drive.



Restoring Military Surplus continued...

pine trees blocked the driveway, and the house and garage were nearly hidden. Barrington spent hours just clearing a path wide enough to get his truck and trailer close to the garage.

The command car, the first vehicle he wanted to bring home, sat inside. It was the one Barrington cared about most. Getting it onto the trailer, he thought, would take an hour.

Instead, it took most of the day.

Barrington backed the trailer into position and hooked his hand winches to the front of the vehicle. Nothing moved. The reason became clear quickly: the wheels were frozen with rust.

"I can't move that vehicle, not even an inch," he said. "And I'm sitting there thinking, 'Oh my God.'"

Working alone in the humidity and heat, Barrington jacked up the front end and removed the tires.

"I had a big crowbar and I put it in the studs and so I stand on it and I stand on it and I get it to move a little bit and I go on the other side and stand on it."

Barrington went back and forth on each side, forcing each wheel to turn, a few inches at a time, until they finally broke free. He repeated the process on all four wheels. By the time he finished, four hours had passed.

It was now mid-afternoon, the temperature was high, and Barrington had little food or water. He was soaked in sweat and exhausted, and he still hadn't gotten the vehicle up the ramps.

He reattached the winches and started pulling the command car

forward. It moved, slowly, but stalled halfway up the ramp. No matter how hard he pulled, it wouldn't go.

That's when experience kicked in.

Instead of pulling straight ahead, Barrington rerouted the winch straps over the tires and hooked them underneath. That way, the force rotated the wheels rather than dragging the vehicle.

"An inch on this one, an inch on that one, then an inch on this one. I can roll that truck up that ramp one wheel at a time," he said.

Hours later, the command car was finally on the trailer.

Hungry, drained, and relieved, Barrington climbed into his truck to leave and promptly got stuck.

While backing up earlier to get a better angle, the truck's tires had sunk into a rut. Now they just spun.

For two more hours, Barrington tried everything he had: jacking up the truck, stuffing two-by-fours under the tires, crawling through dirt beneath the frame. Nothing worked.

"I was done," he said about his emotional state in that moment. "I had nothing left."

Barrington walked to the road and flagged down passing vehicles. The second person to stop happened to know the family. She called her husband, who worked at a neighboring farm, and he arrived with a four-wheel-drive pickup and towed Barrington free.

Once out, Barrington drove to the farm to check that the trailer was properly balanced, critical to prevent fishtailing on the highway. There, he was handed a Gatorade, a muffin, and a hose to rinse off in the greenhouse.

"It saved my life," he said.

Already dark, he chose to spend the night sleeping in the truck. At dawn, he hit the road for home.

The command car was the first of four military vehicles Barrington would bring home over the next several months. The others, all 1942 weapons carriers, were heavier but, thankfully, not quite as difficult to retrieve.

"They have to be running because to let them sit there is a waste of (my father's) effort. It's like a memorial to him."

—Jim Barrington,
Coastline Money Management Program

On his second trip, Barrington brought his son with him, who helped continue a family tradition that stretches back decades.

Barrington's father, William David Barrington, was a longtime restorer of military surplus vehicles, often buying multiple damaged ones to rebuild a single working model. As a boy, Barrington learned by taking them apart.

"He'd hand us wrenches and tell us to take off every nut and bolt," Barrington said. "My brother and I would spend hours doing it."

Barrington senior was a veteran who served in the Marine Corps in World War II. He had been working on airplanes as a civilian but when his younger brother was killed at Guadalcanal, he enlisted.

"After boot camp, they said to him, 'Well, what can you do?' And

he said, 'I work on airplanes.' So they put them on an aircraft carrier," Barrington said.

Troubleshooting and restoring military equipment to working order was in his bones, and a love he never lost. Right up to his death in 2017 at age 94, he was passionate about and protective of his vehicles and tools.

For Barrington, work with his father continued after his dad retired to North Carolina from Massachusetts.

Together, they added to the collection and brought the vehicles to parades as well as air shows at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point in North Carolina, sometimes traveling with a convoy of nearly a dozen restored vehicles.

Keeping the vehicles running and in the family matters.

"They have to be running because to let them sit there is a waste of his effort," Barrington said about his dad. "It's like a memorial to him."

Each of the four vehicles Barrington transported to Massachusetts and a fifth, a jeep that he already had at home, were restored by his father.

One of the vehicles will eventually go to his son, Barrington said, continuing a line that now includes four generations of William David Barringtons.

Barrington hopes to keep sharing the vehicles with the community as well, bringing them to local parades and even using them for everyday errands.

When he does, people often leave him notes on the windshield.

"My father was in World War II," they write. "He drove one of these."

Barrington reads and enjoys everyone one of them.