

# Office for the Aging News

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438-4020



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## Director's Column

*As I look out my window today, I see snow gently falling on the streets of downtown Lockport, people shuffling along wearing heavy winter coats, their hands stuffed in their pockets, trying to get where they are going as quickly as possible, trying to keep warm. Spring should be just around the corner, but we haven't turned the corner yet, apparently. Winter still has a couple more weeks on the calendar, and it seems that it wants to hang on right to the bitter end.*

*It's lead to some challenges here at the Office for the Aging. Slippery roads and poor visibility have made transporting Seniors to medical appointments and meals difficult. Home Delivered Meals have been delivered and Home Visits and In-Home Services have been made through deep snow. The need for assistance with energy bills and home weatherization have been high. In short, Old Man Winter has given us a run for our money, and we here at OFA have had to work hard to keep him at bay. We're a hardy bunch, though, and through it all we've met the challenge and gotten the job done.*

*I want to commend the fine staff here at the Office for the Aging for their hard work and dedication. There is not a finer, more committed group of people anywhere. And a special Thank You to our many volunteers, who do what they do for the love of their fellow man and a simple desire to serve. I am humbled to be associated with so many fine people in such a worthwhile and shared common cause.*

*If there is anything we can do here at the Office for the Aging to better help serve the Senior population of Niagara County, please feel free to contact us and let us know.*

Sincerely,

Chris Richbart  
Director, Niagara Co. Office for the Aging

## Health and Nutrition Update

### Italian Herbed Pasta Alfredo

(This dish is a great substitute for the traditional high-fat version)

- 1 Tablespoon soft tub margarine
- ¼ cup chopped green onions or yellow onion
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 Tablespoon all-purpose flour
- 1 (12-ounce) can evaporated skim milk
- ¼ cup grated fresh Parmesan cheese
- ¼ cup fresh Romano cheese
- ½ teaspoon whole thyme
- ½ teaspoon whole basil
- ¼ teaspoon dried whole dill weed
- 6 cups hot cooled medium shelled macaroni
- green onion strips (optional)

Melt margarine in a saucepan over medium heat; add green onions and garlic, and sauté 2 minutes. Add flour and stir well. Gradually add milk, and bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Reduce heat to medium-low, and cook 3 minutes or until thickened, stirring constantly. Remove from heat, stir in cheeses and herbs. Serve over macaroni or mix into macaroni. Garnish with onion strips, if desired. Or, add pieces of chicken or vegetables like broccoli or carrots (steamed).

Yield: 6 servings Calories: 244 for 1 cup pasta and ¼ cup sauce; 4.3 grams of fat  
Source: Cooking Light magazine and Niagara Wellness Council

Call Glenda for more information at 438-4030.

Inside me lives a skinny woman crying to get out. But I can usually shut her up with cookies.

## Information and Assistance - Call 438-4020

The Office for the Aging Information and Assistance staff are available in many locations in the county on a regular basis. They visit all of the senior centers and nutrition sites at least monthly, and are available at some large club meetings and special events. If a home visit is needed an appointment can be made and someone will come to the home. To find out how to contact the information and assistance worker serving your area or schedule a home visit call Susan Christian at 438-4020 at the Office for the Aging.

Questions regarding health insurance can be answered by Information and Assistance staff at the locations mentioned above, or by HIICAP volunteers by appointment, and at the Lockport Senior Centre, North Tonawanda Senior Center and H.A.N.C.I. (Call 438-4020 for times).



### HIICAP (Health Insurance Information, Counseling, and Assistance Program)

#### Questions

Medicare and the Social Security Administration can answer all your questions about Medicare coverage.

Call Medicare's helpline toll free 1-800-633-4227; TTY users call 1-877-486-2048; or on the Internet at [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov). The Medicare helpline and web site offer information about Medicare bills and services, fraud and abuse, buying Medigap or long term care insurance, appeals and complaints and programs to help pay medical bills.

Call the Social Security Administration (SSA) toll free 1-800-772-1213; TTY users 1-800-325-0778; or on the Internet at [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov). The SSA can answer questions about:

- ✓ Medicare Part A and B eligibility and enrollment
- ✓ Get a replacement Medicare card
- ✓ Change an address

- ✓ Sign up for Medicare Part A and Part B
- ✓ Find your local SSA office
- ✓ Report the death of a Social Security recipient

## H.E.A.P. and W.R.A.P.

### HEAP

What is HEAP? The **Home Energy Assistance Program** is a federal program which provides a small amount of money (\$40 to \$400) to help low income people who pay their own utility bills. Homeowners and some renters can qualify. The Office for the Aging HEAP staff process applications from people 60 and older and persons under 60 receiving SSI or Social Security Disability. Persons with monthly incomes below \$1,702 (1 person) or \$2,226 (2 people) will be eligible this year.

It is important to continue to pay your bill every month. If you have a shutoff notice you should contact your utility to see if you can set up a payment plan, or, after the HEAP program opens, you can call the Department of Social Services at 439-7744 to apply for emergency shutoff funds.

### WRAP

Related to HEAP is WRAP, which stands for **Weatherization Referral, Assistance and Packaging** program. If a person is eligible for HEAP and is 60 or older, they are eligible for WRAP. WRAP staff help people who are homeowners assess needs for home repairs or modifications that will improve the safety and habitability of their homes. Information and advice is offered on what types of repairs or modifications should be made, and referrals are made to a variety of places including the NIACAP Weatherization program.

There is only a very limited amount of money available to help fund needed work for those most in need. Call for more information.

Two peanuts walk into a bar, and one was a salted.

### '60s Hits to accommodate us Aging Baby Boomers

Herman's Hermits "Mrs. Brown, you've got a lovely walker"



## The Legal Corner

The Office for the Aging has a legal assistance program for anyone 60 and over living in Niagara County. There are no fees, but contributions are accepted. There are many legal topics that our legal program addresses on a regular basis including wills, estate planning, tenant/landlord problems, and consumer fraud. Our lawyer, Gary Billingsley, is available at various locations in the County on a regular basis, including the Office for the Aging office on 111 Main Street in Lockport on Wednesday afternoons. Call the Office for the Aging for his schedule.

A corporate attorney sent the following out to employees in his company:

The next time you order checks, omit your first name and have only your initials and last name put on them. If someone takes your check book they will not know if you sign your checks with just your initials or your full name but your bank will know how you sign your checks.

When writing your checks to pay credit card accounts, DO NOT put the complete account number on the "For" line. Instead, just put the last four numbers. The credit card company knows the rest of the number and anyone who might be handling your check as it passes through all the check processing channels won't have access to it.

**Deja Moo:** The feeling that you've heard this bull before.

Put your work phone number on your checks instead of your home phone. If you have a PO Box

use that instead of your home address. Never put your Social Security number on your checks, you can add it if it is necessary. But if you have it printed, anyone can get it.

Place the contents of your wallet on a photocopy machine, do both sides of each license, credit card, etc. You will know what you had in your wallet and all of the account numbers and phone numbers to call and cancel.

Keep a photocopy in a safe place. You may want to carry a photocopy of your passport when you travel here or abroad.

### Deciding on Long Distance Deals

Looking for a great long distance deal? Think you've found the cheapest rate, but still confused by all the ads? Here's how to sort out what's clearly in ads and what's not.

Look for all the information related to the price.

**Monthly fees:** When an ad promises 10 cents a minute, look for any monthly fees or surcharges you'll have to pay to get that rate.

**Minimum Charges:** Look for minimum charges for each call. If every call has a 50-cent minimum, even a two-minute call can cost you 50 cents. On "up to 20 minutes for a dollar" plans, a one-minute call or a message you leave on an answering machine is a dollar.

**Climbing Rates:** An ad may say that all calls up to 20 minutes are a dollar. Look for information on what happens to the rate structure after 20 minutes. Rates may increase dramatically.

Look for all the information related to **RESTRICTIONS** on the advertised rates.

**Time Restrictions:** Is the advertised rate available when you want it? Some rates may apply only at certain times of the day or only on certain days of the week. What are the rates at other times?

**Geographic Restrictions:** Is the advertised rate available on all long distance calls – those that you make to someone in another state as well as those

that you make to someone in another city in your own state? Some plans do not include long distance calls in the same state.

**Promotional Restrictions:** Are the advertised rates constant or an introductory offer that's good for a limited time. If so, what are the rates once the promotion is over?

#### Decode Comparative Claims

**Basic Rates:** An ad promising "50 percent off the basic rate" isn't a good deal because the "basic" rate is another term for the highest rate available.

**Comparable Services:** When ads compare calling rates, are the services comparable? Is the information on both sides of the comparison as current as possible?

Any time that the company doesn't live up to their promise you can notify the Federal Trade Commission at 1-888-CALL-FCC (1-888-225-5322): TTY users 1-888-835-5322.



We've all heard horror stories about fraud that's committed on us in stealing a name, address, Social Security number, credit cards, etc.

Here's some critical information to limit the damage in case this happens to you or someone you know:

We have been told we should cancel credit cards immediately. But the key is having the toll free numbers and your card numbers handy so you know whom to call. Keep those where you can find them easily. File a police report immediately in the jurisdiction where it was stolen, this proves to credit providers you were diligent, and is the first step toward an investigation (if there ever is one).

Call the three national credit-reporting organizations immediately to place a fraud alert on your name and Social Security number. This alert means that any company that checks your credit

knows your information was stolen and they have to contact you by phone to authorize new credit.

The numbers are:

Equifax: 1-800-525-6285

Experian: (formerly TRW) 1-888-397-3742

Trans Union: 1-800-680-7289

Social Security Administration (fraud line):  
1-800-269-0271

Two antennas met on a roof, fell in love and got married. The ceremony wasn't much, but the reception was excellent.

Two Termites walk into a bar. One asks, "Is the bartender here?"

## HELP

Most individuals prefer to live independently, in their own homes, for as long as possible. However, living alone can be dangerous if a person is frail or prone to falls, even more so if they live in a multi-story or isolated house. In these cases, a personal emergency response system, (PERS), can be a godsend.

A PERS is made up of three components. The first is a small radio transmitter, worn as a watch or necklace. The second is the console, a machine hooked onto the phone. The last is the emergency response center. If a person needs emergency help, (fire, crime, medical, etc.) he or she pushes a button on the radio transmitter. A signal is sent through the console to the emergency response center, which is in operation 24 hours a day. When the emergency response center receives a signal, they immediately send help, either neighbors, local relatives or friends, or fire/police/ambulance units.

PERS can vary greatly in price. Some people prefer to buy units outright; others prefer to rent them. Whether a unit is bought or rented, there is a monthly fee that has to be paid to cover the services of the emergency response center. In addition, some PERS have extra features, such as built-in smoke alarms, and on some units radio transmitter

can actually be used to answer and talk on the phone.

Locally, several organizations rent PERS units, usually for about \$25 -\$50 per month. If you chose to purchase a unit from a national company, be sure to closely read any lease and price information before you sign. For more information, contact the Office for the Aging at 438-4020.



## 100 Club

This past month we have had recipients of OFA services celebrate their 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday. We asked them to tell us how they achieved 100 years and they told us their stories.

**Sophie Christopher** was born March 10, 1905 in Germany. She came from a family of 12 children, 6 boys and 6 girls. Sophie came to the United States when she was 18 years old on a large ship that took 10 days to cross the ocean. Her father gave her \$20 for her trip that he had borrowed. A family who paid \$500, which she had to pay back, sponsored her. She did not speak English and worked as a housekeeper in New York City. That's where she met her husband, Paul, who had lived only 3 miles away from her in Germany. She learned to speak and write English when her children went to school. Sophie was widowed at age 36 but continued to work and raise her children, Paul and Charlotte. She remarried 9 years later and with her new husband, Lloyd moved to Ransomville to be near her daughter and her family. Sophie and Lloyd ran a farm and raised vegetables and gave extras away to family and friends. Sophie also delivered fresh eggs locally.

Sophie visited Germany several times over the years but could not get over the fact that the first time she went to Germany it took 10 days and the last time she flew overnight. She finds all this amazing.

The family had a special 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday and had friends and relatives from Germany and throughout the United States who came to help her celebrate.

Sophie attributes her long life to her faith in God giving her the many blessings of love and family. She says, "Love never ends. Life may end, situations may end, but love is all enduring."

Sophie is a jewel to be cherished. Anyone who has had the opportunity to meet her certainly comes away with a true feeling of fulfillment and envy of the complete circle of life she has had and continues to touch people's heart even now, as she reaches this very special birthday.

**Antoinette "Mary" Marchitelli's** 100<sup>th</sup> birthday was March 29<sup>th</sup>. She was born in 1905 in West Virginia. Her father was a coal miner. The family moved to PA to find work when she was very young. Mary had 3 sisters and 4 brothers. She remembers that there were no paved roads and none of the conveniences we have today. She moved to Niagara Falls in her teenage years and completed her high school education there.

She met her husband, Edward, while working at a plant. She always liked to dance. She was only allowed to dance with a chaperone; things are a lot different today. Mary especially remembers going on a boat over to Crystal Beach to dance in the afternoon and having to be home by dark. She married Edward on a rainy March 6, 1925.

Mary still lives in the home that her husband built in 1929. She has a daughter, Shirley who lives in Niagara Falls and a son, Jerome who lives in Indiana and 5 grandchildren and 6 great grandchildren.

Her family had a party at the Como to celebrate this day.

She is active in her church and attributes her long life to never having drunk or smoked and always working hard. Mary continues to be a caring and generous person. She is very witty and quick minded. Thank you Mary, for your insight and many experiences you have shared with us. Happy Birthday and welcome to the 100 Club.

**Dorothy Gothard** celebrated her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday on March 23, 2005. She was born in Broken Bone, Nebraska on a pig farm. She comes from a family with longevity in the genes, her father lived to be 97 years old and her mother lived to be 100.

She has two children, Gerald and Janet and 5 grandchildren and 11 great grandchildren. Dorothy kept busy taking care of home and children and enjoyed sewing for her family.

She credits her long life to taking care of herself, taking vitamin supplements and eating good food. Until two years ago she still wore her high heels. Way to go Dorothy! Happy Birthday and welcome to the club.

**Mearl Whysong** was born April 6, 1904 in PA. He was one of 13 children but only he and 3 sisters are still alive. He grew up being a hard worker, says he remembers at the age of 8 years old having to carry the water all the way up the hill. They never had indoor plumbing. He got up early every morning to get wood for a fire.

He worked in the coal mines from the age of 16 to 22 and then he moved to Niagara Falls in 1927. He bought a Ford when he was 19 and built his own home in 1937. He dug the basement out by hand with some help from his father in law. He still is living in that house. He remembers earning 47 cents an hour and only going to grade 6 as he had to help his father work to support the family.

He married his wife Rose and was married for 71 years until Rose passed away at the age of 89. He and Rose had 4 children, 3 sons and 1 daughter.

Mearl states his long life is due to taking care of himself and exercising and it helped that his wife was a good cook and he worked hard all his life. Mearl remembers when he was 4 years old and went fishing with his dad. They walked 6 miles to get to the pond. His father moved to a different spot and Mearl thought his father had left him and managed to find his way home. Says his father went crazy trying to find him. To this day he still likes fishing and hunting but is unable to go.

Thank you for the memories of your life as you reach this special day.

Real Menu for April 1<sup>st</sup> is: Beef Barley Soup, Breaded Chicken Patty, lettuce/tomato/mayo, Hamburg roll, Lemon whip with topping



### Who to call at the Office for the Aging

Did you ever wonder who to ask for when you call the Niagara County Office for the Aging? You can always call our main number, **438-4020**, and ask who can best answer your question, or you can call the same number and ask for one of the people below.

**Director**, Christopher Richbart 438-4021

**Information and Assistance Program**, Susan Christian  
**Health Insurance Counseling (HIICAP)**, Susan Christian 438-4023

**Expanded In-home Service to the Elderly Program (EISEP)**, Tim Sexton 438-4039

**Legal Services**, Gary Billingsley

**Home Delivered Meals**, Thomas Chapman 438-4031

**Congregate Meal Program, Nutrition Education and Counseling**, Glenda Reardon 438-4030

**Weatherization, Referral and Packaging (WRAP)**, Lee Puzan 438-4036

**Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)** Lee Puzan  
**Caregiver Program**, Nancy Smegelsky 438-4033

**Newsletter Editor**, Nancy Smegelsky

**Senior Van**, Jennifer Schumacher 438-4038