



Niagara County Office for the Aging
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Office for the Aging News

DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

BE YOUR OWN BEST ADVOCATE— WITH OUR HELP!

Sometimes, people call our office seeking someone to represent them in a legal matter, or to find a way around some bureaucratic obstacle. We do what we can to help—that's what we're here for after all, to help seniors and their caregivers in whatever ways we can—but we need to emphasize that there are limits to what even we can do.

We have Information and Assistance staff that can answer most questions related to aging, but they cannot attend legal proceedings and testify on your behalf. We have an attorney to provide free legal advice, but he is not here to take on your legal case and represent you in court. We have a Resource Center and a website where you can get a lot of information to help you advocate for yourself, but you need to take these tools and use them to help yourself. No one knows your needs and all the details of your situation like you do!

We are here to help in any way we can, but please understand that you are your own best advocate.

Christopher Richbart



Health and Nutrition

Beyond Whole Wheat Heart Healthy Grains

Barley

This hardy grain dates back to the Stone Age and has been used throughout the eons in dishes ranging from cereals to breads to soups (such as Scotch Broth). Most of the barley grown in the Western world is used either as animal fodder, or when malted, to make beer and whiskey. Hulled (also called whole-grain) barley has only the outer husk removed and is the most nutritious form of the grain. Scotch barley is husked and coarsely ground. Barley grits are hulled barley grains that have been cracked into medium-coarse pieces. Pearl barley has also had the bran removed and has been steamed and polished. It comes in 3 sizes- coarse, medium and fine and is good in soups and stews. When combined with water and lemon, pearl barley is used to make barley water, an old-fashioned restorative for invalids. Barley flour or barley meal is ground from pearl barley and must be combined with a gluten-containing flour for use in yeast breads.

Nutrition Facts about barley:

Very high fiber – all forms of barley contain both soluble and insoluble fiber. A type of soluble fiber (beta-glucan) in barley helps lower cholesterol.

Barley Primavera Serves 6

4 cups low sodium chicken broth

2 cloves garlic, crushed

½ cup red onion, minced

½ cup diced carrots

1 cup pearl barley

½ cup diced zucchini

2 Tablespoons fresh parsley

1 teaspoon olive oil

1 Tablespoon lemon juice

Salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

1. Heat ¼ cup of the broth in a saucepan over medium high heat. Add garlic and onion and sauté for 5 minutes.

2. Add the remaining broth and bring to a boil. Add the barley, lower the heat, cover, and simmer until the liquid is almost absorbed, about 50 minutes.

3. Add zucchini, carrots, parsley, oil and lemon juice. Simmer for 5 more minutes. Season with salt and pepper.

Calories: 152 Fat: 1.3 gm Carbs: 29.8 Fiber: 6 gm Protein: 5.8 gm



Important Social Security Information You Should Save

Each year in November or December the Social Security Administration sends you a notice that tells you what your Social Security benefit will be for the coming year. It also tells you that Medicare B premium that will be taken

out and finally the net amount you will receive as a direct deposit or a check that is mailed to you. **This notice is very important and needs to be put in a safe place where you can access it throughout the year.** This helps prove your income if you are applying for any programs or benefits that require proof of income (e.g. HEAP benefits).

After the 1st of the year, you will receive another Social Security Statement. This statement shows the amount of Social Security income you received in the previous year and needs to be used for tax purposes.

Both these statements are very important and need to be kept in an accessible, safe place.

The many uses of Coffee Filters:

They can be used to wash windows and are better than paper towels.

When re-potting a plant put a coffee filter on the bottom of a pot before you dump in the dirt. It prevents dirt from spilling out through the holes but still lets water drain through it. For larger pots dampen the filter to flatten and put one over each big hole.

Church Bulletins

“Ladies, don’t forget the rummage sale. It’s a chance to get rid of those things that are not worth keeping around. Bring your husbands.”

“The peacemaking meeting scheduled for today has been canceled due to a conflict.”

“For those of you who have children and don’t know it, we have a nursery

Barley Apple Pudding

1 cup chunky applesauce
2 cups cooked Arrowhead Mills
Barley or any cooked barley

2 eggs

¼ cup honey

¾ cup raisins

½ tsp. grated nutmeg

½ tsp. ground cinnamon

Juice of 1 lemon or 1 T. Lemon
Juice

Stir apples, barley, lemon juice, raisins and honey together in large bowl. Add spices. Separate eggs, beat yolks until creamy; stir into mixture. Beat whites until stiff; fold in. Turn pudding into greased 1 qt. baking dish. Bake at 350 degrees for 35-40 minutes.

Hint- To cook barley, use 3 cups water to 1 cup barley. Bring to a boil and reduce heat. Cover and simmer for 1 hour.

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. Home visits are made as part of the assessment. 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. Our local program requires that persons who receive any funding must have their homeowner's taxes paid, be 60 years old or older, and be HEAP eligible. Call for more information.

Even if you are not eligible for WRAP, Office for the Aging staff can provide you with information over the phone on home repairs, contractors, sources of financial information and assistance, and other related matters.



Cleaning Small Appliances

Germs breeding in your microwave?

Cheese meltdown, syrup spills, and butter tsunamis: Readers said this indispensable machine takes a beating - inside and out. To soften up grease and calcified oatmeal (or whatever that crud is), place a bowl of water mixed with lemon juice in the microwave and run on high for one minute, then use a food-safe sanitizer (such as Lysol's version) to banish germ lurking under the turntable. An all purpose cleaner or a mildly abrasive powder can usually dislodge reappearing streaks and fingerprints. Buff with a soft rag.



HEAP and WRAP

What is HEAP? The **Home Energy Assistance Program** is a federal program which provides a small amount of money to help low income people who pay their own utility bills. Regular HEAP will be closing shortly. HEAP for furnace repair or replacement is still open and you can call 278-8645 or 439-7744 for information.



Information and Assistance – Call 438-4020

The Office for the Aging Information and Assistance staff are available at many locations across the county on a regular basis. They visit all the senior centers and nutrition sites, 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 438-4023 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 John Duke Center. (Call 438-4020 for times).



12 Tips to Protect Yourself from Health Care Fraud

Health care fraud is not just about losing money, it can make you sick or hurt you. From unsafe drugs sold on the Internet as a “cure” for cancer, to wheelchair billing plots that try to milk consumers and Medicare out of millions of dollars for unneeded or improper equipment, health care fraud is everyone’s concern!

Health care fraud, errors and abuse cost the US between \$80 and \$160 billion a year. \$1 of every \$10 spent on public insurance programs like Medicare and Medicaid is lost to fraud. Healthcare fraud causes big

Financial problems for you as well as others. The most recent estimate is that consumers themselves lose more than \$10 billion each year to health care fraud.

Don’t be a Victim!

Consumers like you play a big role in the fight against health care fraud by reporting errors and possible fraud. Law enforcement is important, but the best protection comes from preventing people from being cheated in the first place.

There are 12 simple steps you can take to protect yourself and your family.

1. Only visit your personal doctor, hospital or clinic for medical help. Only they should make referrals for special equipment, services or medicine.
2. Never show anyone your medical or prescription records without first talking to your doctor or pharmacist.
3. If someone calls and tries to threaten or pressure you into something, simply hang up the phone.
4. If someone comes to your door and says they are from Medicare or some other health care company, shut the door...It’s shrewd to be rude!
5. Do your homework and talk to your health care provider before buying or investing in internet “cure-all” or “miracle” products or services.
6. Don’t keep mail in your mailbox for more than one day. People steal personal information right out of your mailbox.
7. Rip or shred your Medicare or other health care papers and other important documents before throwing them away. Crooks go through the trash!
8. Treat your Medicare & Social Security numbers like credit cards. If someone offers to buy your Medicare or social security number, don’t do it...it’s simply not worth it.

9. Remember that “Medicare” doesn’t sell anything.
10. Follow your instincts—if it seems too good to be true, it usually is!
11. If you suspect an error, fraud, or abuse related to health care, gather the facts and report it.
12. ALWAYS read your Medicare Summary Notice (MSN) or health care billing statement. Your Medicare Summary Notice is the piece of mail stamped “This is Not a Bill” that comes after you get medical care.

Look for three things on your billing statement:

- ◆ Charges for something you didn’t get
- ◆ Billing for the same thing twice
- ◆ Services that are not ordered by the Doctor

Take action—post the 12 Tips to Protect Yourself on your refrigerator and use them as a daily checklist to make sure you are keeping your personal information and health safe.

Everyone pays the price for health care fraud, errors and abuse, through higher insurance payments, increased costs for medical services and equipment, and greater expenses for Medicare and Medicaid. But more importantly, lives are at stake.

To learn more about how to protect yourself or join in the fight against fraud, contact your local Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) project.



Legal Corner

The following article is from the Niagara County Legal Aid Society. Phone is 284-8831 or 1-800-529-0556.

The following is a list of items to review before renting an apartment. Any problems you find, even if not listed below, should be brought to the landlord’s attention and documented in writing before you move in. Documentation may prevent problems and protect you.

General

1. Doors close and have good locks.
2. Keys fit.
3. Floors ok—all tiles present, wax left, no holes.
4. Windows open and close, screens ok, glass ok, sashes ok.
5. Adequate heat in winter—ask tenant.
6. How fast does the hot water come on after turning on the faucet.
7. Closets adequate - size, doors open and close.
8. Adequate water.
9. Noise from neighbors and streets.
10. Overhead lights work.
11. Curtains/blinds - ok.
12. Quickness of landlord’s repair.
13. Ceilings not buckled, stained or with holes.
14. Length of “brown outs” when power surges.
15. Outlets and switches work, no exposed wires.

Kitchen

1. Stove knobs turn, burners and oven work.
2. Refrigerator has all shelves, seal around door.
3. Enough outlets.

4. Disposal and dishwasher work.
5. Any cockroach trails or mouse droppings in cabinets, or around edges of floor.
6. Stoppers in all drains (kitchen & bath).
7. Cabinet doors close.
8. Faucet does not leak or drip.
9. Sink pipes do not leak (check floor underneath for ripples, warping or discoloration).

Bath

1. No leaks in sink or shower.
2. Shower rod present.
3. Tub and sink still glazed.
4. Medicine cabinet securely attached to walls, doors open and close.
5. Toilet ok-no leaks.
6. Shower - caulked where necessary.

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 at 111 Main Street in Lockport on Wednesday afternoons. Call the Office for the Aging for his schedule.

“Old” Folks Quiz

1. When the Beatles first came to the U.S. in early 1964, we all watched them on who's show?
2. Get your kicks _____.
3. The storey you are about to see is true. The names have been changed to _____.
4. In the jungle, the mighty jungle, _____.
5. After the twist, the mashed potatoes, and the watusi, we “danced” under a stick that was lowered as low as we could go in a dance called the _____.
6. Satchmo was America's “ambassador of goodwill.” Our parents shared this great jazz trumpet player with us. His name was _____.
7. What takes a licking and keeps on ticking? _____.
8. Red Skeltons hobo character was named _____, and Skelton always ended his television show by saying, “Good night, and _____.”
9. The cute little car with the engine in the back and trunk in the front, was called the VW. What other names did it go by? _____ and _____.
10. We can remember the first satellite placed in orbit. The Russians did it, it's name?
11. One of the big fads of the late 50's and 60's was a large plastic ring that we twirled around our waist; it was called the _____.

Answers on page 8.





Older Americans Month 2008

Working Together for Strong, Healthy,
and Supportive Communities

The United States is nearing the start of a tremendous demographic shift. Beginning in 2011, the first of 78 million baby boomers (people born between 1946 and 1964) will start transitioning into retirement, kicking off an expansion in the number of elderly people that will continue for decades. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, one out of every nine baby boomers will live to be at least age 90.

Our Nation will benefit in many ways from a larger population of older adults, a group that constitutes one of our greatest resources. Older adults support our society by providing millions of hours of volunteer, community, and civic service through formal organizations and a variety of informal arrangements. They enhance our communities and personal lives by sharing and transferring knowledge of cultures, values, and life experiences among generations. Thankfully, the contributions of older adults will continue to flourish in the coming years, since older citizens of today and tomorrow promise to be among the most active and engaged older adult populations in our Nation's history.

An expanding older adult population also spotlights our responsibility to ensure the well-being of our older citizens. As a Nation, we are working diligently to address older adults' unique health and long-term care challenges. The thousands of professionals,

caregivers, and volunteers that make up the National Aging Services Network have been collaborating in innumerable ways for decades to fulfill the mission of the Older Americans Act. Led by the U.S. Administration on Aging, the Network is now engaged in modernizing systems of care to provide consumers with more control over their lives.

May is Older Americans Month, a great time to bring attention to the issues that affect older adults. This year's theme is "Working Together for Strong, Healthy, and Supportive Communities," which speaks to the opportunities we have to create better care and reinforce healthier societies for all ages. Working together, our communities can improve older adults' overall quality of life by helping them:

- Make behavioral changes in their lifestyles that can reduce risk of disease, disability, and injury.
- Obtain the tools they need to make informed decisions about, and gain better access to, existing health and long-term care options in their communities.
- Have more options to avoid placement in nursing homes and remain at home as long as possible

Americans of all ages and backgrounds can celebrate Older Americans Month. Contact your local Agency on Aging and volunteer for activities in your area, promote community, state and national efforts to serve older adults, and find ways to enrich the lives of the older adults who touch your life. By working together we can improve the health and well being of our Nation's older adults and pave the way for future generations.



Confused about long term care choices?

Don't know where to turn?

Not sure what resources are available in your community?

Free information and assistance about long term care services for...

- ◆ Elderly
- ◆ Adults with disabilities
- ◆ Children with disabilities
- ◆ Caregivers
- ◆ Professionals

Providing a link to Niagara County agencies, facilities and providers, such as...

- ◆ Home Health Services
- ◆ Community Based Supports and Services
- ◆ Nutrition
- ◆ Transportation
- ◆ Residential Care

NY Connects Niagara County is connecting you with choices for long term care. Call 438-3030.

Answers to questions on page 6.

1. The Ed Sullivan Show
2. Route 66
3. To protect the innocent
4. The Lion sleeps tonight
5. The limbo
6. Louis Armstrong
7. The Timex watch
8. Freddy the Freeloader , and Good night, and may God Bless
9. Beetle or Bug
10. Sputnik
11. hoola-hoop



Who to call at the Office for the Aging

Do 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. Also you can go to our web site at www.niagaracounty.com/aging.

Director, Christopher Richbart 438-4021

Information and Assistance Program, Susan Christian 438-4023

Health Insurance Counseling (HIICAP), Susan Christian 438-4023

Expanded In-home Service to the Elderly Program (EISEP),

Tim Sexton 438-4039 or 278-8612

Legal Services, Gary Billingsley

Home Delivered Meals,

Thomas Chapman 438-4031

Congregate Meal Program, Nutrition Education and Counseling,

Glenda Reardon 438-4030

Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)

Lee Puzan 438-4036

Weatherization, Referral and Packaging (WRAP),

Lee Puzan 438-4036

Caregiver Program,

Nancy Smegelsky 438-4033

Newsletter Editor,

Nancy Smegelsky

Medical Van,

Jennifer Schumacher 438-4038

NY Connects,

Suzette Rutherford, 438-3030