

Office for the Aging News

Niagara County Office for the Aging

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September – October 07

Director's Column

The Price of Eggs

One of my favorite saying is “What’s that got to do with the price of eggs?” These days, it seems like the cost of everything – including eggs – is going up. Gas, food and electricity take larger bites out of everyone’s wallet every month. The same is true for the Office for the Aging. Buying groceries for our nutrition programs costs money. Running our vans costs money (does it ever!) OFA has to pay many expenses to provide services, and our costs are on the rise all the time, just like yours.

One way OFA pays for services is through client contributions. If you ride an OFA van, eat at a Nutrition Site, get Home Delivered Meals, attend Adult Daycare or use some of our other programs, we ask you to make a voluntary contribution toward the cost of these services. We suggest an amount, and we hope you will agree that this amount is always low compared to what you get from the program. We want you to know, though, that even though the amount is low, it is still very important. Every dollar helps us to do more and to serve more people.

We thank you all for your contributions in the past, and we humbly ask that you continue to put those dollars and quarters in the box in the future. By contributing, you help ensure that services are there

for people who need them. So whether you are eating at a Nutrition Site, riding a van or using another OFA service for seniors, please be a good egg and put in what you can. The contributions are voluntary – no one will ever be required to contribute or denied services for not contributing – but they mean a lot. By doing that little bit, you help us to stretch our budget that much further. By doing so, you are not only helping us to help you, but you are also giving a gift to others. Thank you for your contributions!

Thank you.

Chris Richbart, Director



Preparing to Live Alone

By Uteva Powers
From “Aging Arkansas”

Chances are you will be living alone at the end of your life. How often do you hear of couples dying together?

After 40, 50 or 60 years together, most couples have become a close-knit unit. Each has his or her duties to take care of, without even a reminder from the other. The arrangement makes the household run smoothly and is one of the ways couples show their love for one another.

I urge you to think about those duties and begin to reverse them. You need to be able to take over those tasks or at least know how to do them. They will become part of your job, and important in a newly

single world.

It may feel sad if this reminder crashes in on your seemingly secure, serene world. Death to a spouse comes and sometimes with cruel suddenness. There never is a “right time”.

Along with your newly widowed status comes the crushing grief that debilitates. Ask anyone who has gone through it. Planning ahead for that time doesn't have to be complicated or morbid. It's simple really. Just observe all the little things that each of you “takes care of,” and learn enough about the task to do it yourself.

Learn to check the car's oil, buy the groceries and learn enough cooking to survive. Learn how to do the laundry, where the vacuum cleaner is kept, and where to plug it in. Above all, learn to pay the bills if you're not the one who does it, what savings accounts or investments there are and become familiar with your taxes and insurance.

Take a look at your smooth-running life and observe how much your spouse contributes to things that you don't have to think about. Someday those tasks may be yours to do.

Even if neither of you is ever left alone, it will be a good thing to understand and appreciate more fully all the things that a wonderful spouse does for you that makes your life go smoothly.



Helpful Hints

From *Everyday Cheapskate*

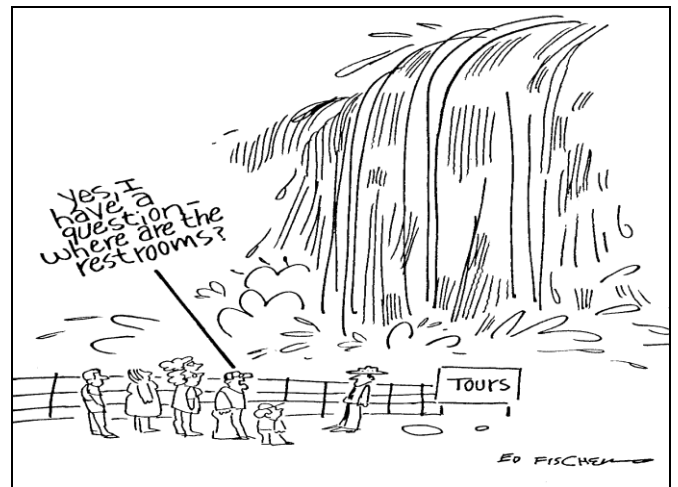
Paint Can Coaster- When I am doing a painting job, I always glue a paper plate to the bottom of the paint can before I open it. That way I can pick up the can

whenever I need to move it and I know that the paper plate will catch all the drips and spills.

De-Salt the Sauce – If you find that your tomato sauce or soup is too salty, just add a little brown sugar. It will neutralize some of the salty taste.

Freeze Bread – Whenever I freeze bread or bagels, I always add a dry paper towel to the inside of the storage bag before slipping it in the freezer. The paper towel soaks up the extra moisture, and the bread stays fresher longer once defrosted.

Open Soda Bottles. Use a nutcracker (the cheap squeeze kind) to grab and twist the tops on twist top soda bottles.



You know you're getting old when:

You can't find your glasses without your glasses.

You don't go anywhere without your sweater.

New haunts for oldsters:

Our hangouts used to be the sports bar and the coffee shop.

Now they're the pharmacy and the bathroom.

I Love to Live

By Sue Velky, volunteer at Summit View Place

Today, dear LORD, I'm 80 and there's
 so much I haven't done,
 I hope dear LORD, you let me live
 until I'm 81.

But then, if I haven't finished all I want
 to do,

Would you please let me stay awhile,
 until I'm 82?

So many places I want to go, so very
 much to see, Do you think you could
 manage to make it 83?

The world is changing very fast, there
 is so much in store, I'd like it very
 much to live until I'm 84.

And if by then I'm still alive,
 I'd like to stay till 85!

More planes will be up in the air, so I'd
 really like to stick, and see what
 happens to the world when I turn 86.

I know dear LORD it's much to ask,
 (and it must be nice in heaven) But I'd
 really like to stay until I'm 87.

I know by then I won't be fast and
 sometimes will be late,

But it would be so pleasant to be
 around at 88.

I will have seen so many things and
 had a wonderful time, I'm sure that I'll
 be willing to leave at the age of
 89...Maybe,

Just one more thing I'd like to say,
 dear LORD, I thank you kindly.

But, if it's okay with you, I'd love to live
 past 90!

Health and Nutrition Update



Nutrition Information:

Wacky Doodle Ground Beef

By Mary Hunt

Years ago I made a terrible mistake. I froze 10 pounds of ground beef. That big block of frozen burger languished in my freezer for years. What was I thinking? I should have browned it first then froze it in usable portions. But browning beef can be so messy.

A few years ago I came upon another cheap ground beef opportunity. The expiration date was nearing and my supermarket needed to get rid of -you guessed it-ground beef. Ten pounds. I almost walked by. Then I decided to try something different, albeit a little weird. I put the entire 10 pounds (or what ever amount you have) of raw ground beef into my big stock pot. I added enough water to cover and set it over high heat to come to a boil, no cover, no salt. After about 5 minutes I gave it a stir to break up the big clumps, which were few. The hot water was doing all my work for me – no splatters, no mess. When all the pink color disappeared I knew I was done, even though it had not started to boil.

I placed my large colander into a large bowl in the sink and poured the now cooked beef in the colander. I did this in batches because my colander would not hold all of it at once. This drained off all the liquid into the bowl including the fat, leaving uniformly fine textured ground beef in the colander. I could



have done the same thing scooping the meat from the stock pot with a large sieve and into a large bowl. (When done draining I put the beef broth in the refrigerator. Later I skimmed off the fat and used it for soup broth.)

I measured 2 cups of cooked beef (the equivalent of about 1 pound raw ground beef) into each gallon sized zip-type freezer bag, pressed out the air and zipped. Then I laid each one on the counter to flatten it thin, stacked them like sheets of paper and popped the stack into the freezer.

Because my bags of beef are so flat I can use them frozen-no microwave required. I take one of these flat frozen packages of ground beef, whack it on the side of the sink to break it into pieces, unzip and pour the contents into a non-stick skillet. It's ready for all uses. Here is the best part: this method removes the fat leaving the ground meat virtually fat free.

Quick as a Flash Burrito Filling: Two bags of boiled beef whacked and dumped into skillet (equivalent of 2 pounds raw ground beef), two packets of Burrito Seasoning mix, 2 ½ cups water. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and allow to simmer uncovered for 10 minutes. Done! Wrap in warm flour tortillas with grated cheese. Serves 8.

Sloppy Joes: Two bags boiled beef (Equivalent of 2 pounds raw ground beef) whacked and dumped, ½ cup chopped onion, 1 cup chopped celery, 1 (10.75 ounce) can condensed

tomato soup, ¼ cup ketchup, 1 tablespoon white vinegar, ¼ cup brown sugar, 1 ½ teaspoons Worcestershire sauce, ½ teaspoon salt, ¼ teaspoon garlic powder and 8 hamburger buns.

Place ground beef in a large non-stick skillet over medium heat. Add onion and celery, cover the pan and cook until beef is thawed and onions and celery are tender, about 5 minutes. Stir in the tomato soup, ketchup, vinegar, brown sugar and Worcestershire sauce into the beef mixture. Season with salt and garlic powder. Simmer over low heat until thoroughly heated, stirring frequently. Spoon the hot beef mixture onto buns. Serves 8.



New Shingles Vaccine

In May 2006, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) licensed Zostavax, a new vaccine to reduce the risk of shingles (herpes Zoster) for use in people 60 years of age and older.

Shingles is a disease caused by the varicella-zoster virus, the same virus that causes chickenpox. After an attack of the chickenpox, the virus lies dormant in certain nerve tissue. As people age, it is possible for the virus to reappear in the form of shingles, which is estimated to affect 2 in every 10 people in their lifetime. Shingles is characterized by clusters of blisters, which develop on one side of the body and can cause severe pain that may last for weeks, months or years after the virus reappears.

Zostavax, a live virus vaccine, was shown

to boost immunity against varicella-zoster virus. This is thought to be the mechanism by which the vaccine protects against zoster and its complications. The vaccine is given as a single injection under the skin, preferably in the upper arm.

Then in October 2006, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), a federal panel of immunization experts, recommended that people age 60 and older, including those who have had a previous episode of shingles, to receive one dose of Zostavax.

According to Merck, the manufacturer of the vaccine, Zostavax is eligible as a pharmacy benefit and may be reimbursed under 1 of 2 types of Medicare Part D plans:

1. Medicare Advantage Prescription Drug Plans (MA-PDs): medical and prescription drug benefits.
2. Prescription Drug Plans (PDPs): stand alone prescription drug plans for patients who have Medicare fee-for service medical coverage.

Medicare Part D plans that have added Zostavax to their formulary may require the patient to pay the full cost of the vaccine. The patient then submits a paper claim requesting reimbursement from their Medicare Part D plan. Medicare does not currently reimburse doctors for the administration of a Medicare Part D covered vaccine.

Some people should not get shingles vaccine or should wait. A person should not get shingles vaccine if they have had a life-threatening allergic reaction to gelatin, the antibiotic neomycin, or any

other component of shingles vaccine. Any person who has a weakened immune system from a serious disease (HIV/AIDS), cancer treatment with radiation or chemotherapy, has a history of cancer affecting the bone marrow or lymphatic system (leukemia or lymphoma), or active, untreated tuberculosis, should not get the vaccine or consult their doctor as to when they can.

Anyone interested in getting the vaccine or more information on the new shingles vaccine, should first discuss this with their doctor, to determine if they are a candidate for the vaccine. They should then discuss the insurance and payment requirements with both their doctor and their insurance company.

*Written by Mary Eckstein, RN, MS
 Public Health Nurse in Wyoming Co.*

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 of 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.

Most Information & Assistance employees work part time. Call the Office of the Aging at 438-4020 for their schedules.

Reminder

Call for appointments – OFA 716-438-4020. We know many folks like to drop by the office when they have a question or a concern. However, we would appreciate it if you would call to set up an appointment if possible. In this way it allows us to better prepare for your visit in getting the necessary paperwork or records pulled together. Further, it allows us to estimate the time necessary for the particular reason for your visit. That way we can give you the fullest attention to the matter and not be rushed by the clock. Therefore, it's always best to call and make an appointment so that we can give you the time and attention to serve you better.



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.

Don't Fall for a Line

Tips and resources to help protect you and your loved ones from consumer scams.

It can be hard to detect a scam. Con artists by definition are well practiced in the art of persuasion. They have an arsenal of skills to lead you into making the wrong decision. However, there are clear warning signs. Paying attention to these cues can help you identify a potential scam before it's too late.

Some Top Warning Signs:

- * You're told that you've won a prize – but must pay to receive it. The scammer may say that there are administrative fees or taxes. It is illegal for sweepstakes to ask for payment.
- * If you don't pay right away, you'll lose the deal. Often scam artists will try to make a payment "convenient" by offering courier services or wire transfers.
- * There's not written information available. Scammers want to keep you from making an informed decision, so will often claim that there's no time to send written material.
- * Requests for donations fail to tell you where the money will go. Legitimate charities disclose how much of your donation goes to administrative costs and overhead.
- * The offer is secret. Legitimate organizations and charities want as much business as they can drum up, while scam artists want to keep you from questioning their scheme with your family and friends.

Bottom line: the old adage is true. If something seems too good to be true, it most likely is. *Source: www.aarp.org*



Caregiver Corner

Advice from an Alzheimer's Patient
 (This was submitted by an early
 Alzheimer's patient)

- ☺ Don't hurry me. Hurrying me tends to make me forget and then I tend to become confused.
- ☺ If I forget something, remind me gently. If I seem to forget that company is coming or that we are due to be somewhere, help me realize that it is okay if we are a little late or that everything needed is not ready.
- ☺ Do not keep asking questions. This frustrates me and makes me feel as if I am being tested.
- ☺ When I forget, either laugh with me or hug me, but please do not try to make excuses for me. When you do that, it makes me angry and I feel that you do not understand what I am feeling inside.
- ☺ When I say, "I don't know how to turn the oven on," just come help me. No words are needed and chances are, tomorrow I will be able to do it on my own.
- ☺ When I tell you something "dumb" that I did, please listen and try to understand that what I am really trying to tell you is that I am scared and hurting. I need to be loved and given time to talk about what is happening to me.
- ☺ When I am silent and unable to sleep, chances are that I am struggling with my own fears about

how this is going to hurt you as time goes on. I am asking myself what is going to happen to me and how are we as a family going to cope and survive.

- ☺ Try to understand that some days I almost convince myself that there is nothing wrong with me...and then there are days when I have no doubt that my head is not working normally. These later days are the ones when you're most apt to find me down in spirit. Try to understand that I am finding it difficult to believe that this is really happening to me. The big question "why" and "how long?" keeps going in my head.



Brain Health: Vary Your Workout

Research suggests that to keep your brain healthy, you need to take part of a variety of activities that contribute to your overall intellectual, physical, and emotional well-being.

Remain mentally active. Common activities such as doing crossword puzzles, attending lectures, visiting museums, reading, writing, or playing board games are all good ways to exercise your brain.

Remain socially active. Human connection through work, volunteering, recreational clubs, or travel staves off isolation and depression, which are associated with poor cognitive function.

Exercise regularly. Experts recommend at least 30 minutes of

brisk walking daily and two strength-training workouts each week.

Adopt a brain-healthy diet. Obesity and a high intake of saturated fats may double your chances of developing dementia. You can reduce this risk by watching your weight, roasting instead of frying, cooking with unsaturated fats (such as olive oil), and consuming protective foods including deep colored, antioxidant-rich fruits and vegetables and cold water fish, such as salmon, and tuna which are full of omega-3 acids.

To Test Your Brain!?!?!?

Here is an unbelievable math trick that will stump you and make your mind work. Who thinks of this stuff you might wonder? They should be running the country.

1. Grab a calculator. (You won't be able to do this in your head)
2. Key in the first three digits of your phone number (Not Area Code)
3. Multiply by 80
4. Add 1
5. Multiply by 250
6. Add the last 4 digits of your phone number
7. Add the last 4 digits of your phone number again.
8. Subtract 250
9. Divide the number by 2.

Recognize the answer?



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/ofa.

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
Senior Van, Jennifer Schumacher 438-4038