

# Office for the Aging News

Niagara County Office for the Aging

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[www.niagaracounty.com/ofa](http://www.niagaracounty.com/ofa)

January – February 2007

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## Director's Column

WE NEED VOLUNTEERS!!! I don't know how else to say it, so there it is. If you've been reading the papers or watching the news these days, you know how desperate all home delivered meals programs all over the country are for volunteers. The situation is no different in Niagara County. We have hundreds of people who need meals delivered, and less than a hundred volunteers to deliver them.

Volunteering is easy. You just call our office and ask for our Home Delivered Meals Coordinator, Thomas Chapman, at 438-4031 or one of his great staff. He'll get you signed up.

All you need is a few hours free around lunchtime, a reliable vehicle (we'll reimburse you for the mileage you log) and a desire to help. As a volunteer, you not only provide people with nutritious meals, but also give them contact with someone who cares about them. That can mean more than the food in many cases.

Please call our office to find out more.

Of course, we're here to answer all your questions about Aging Services in Niagara County, too. So call – maybe we can help you, and maybe you can help us and others as well. It's all about helping, and we need you! Call 438-4020.

Thank you.

Chris Richbart  
Director



## Nutrition Program Emergency Closing Announcements

If we are unable to deliver meals due to road conditions, the emergency closing will be listed on these radio stations: WJYE (96.1) FM, WLVL (1340) AM, and WBEN (930) AM.

Remember to keep several emergency meals on hand in case the weather prohibits the delivery of the meals from the Office for the Aging.

**Winter Safety Tips for Seniors** – This has appeared in previous newsletters but I think it still has good information for us all to use during the winter months.

Here are some tips for staying safe and healthy in the winter:

- ❖ Dress warmly with several layers of clothes.
- ❖ Set your thermostat no lower than 68 during the day and 64 at night.
- ❖ Find out if any of your prescriptions may make you more sensitive to the cold.
- ❖ Maintain a good diet including hot nourishing meals and warm drinks.
- ❖ You are at greater risk of hypothermia if you have been ill, you have limited physical activity, or you live alone in a cold house.

- ❖ Keep throw rugs and mats to a minimum.
- ❖ Wear rubber gripper slipper sox around the house.
- ❖ Keep hallways well lit.
- ❖ Keep stairs clear of debris.
- ❖ Arrange for someone else to keep walks and driveways clear of snow and ice.

### **Hypothermia Poses Danger for the Elderly** from NY State Office for the Aging

As we approach the coldest months of the year, it's time to again urge everyone, especially the elderly, not to take chances with hypothermia.

Winter's spells of near zero and below weather are times of greatest peril for hypothermia, but the threat to older people can be as great during the moderately cool winter weather. It is important that the elderly population and those who care for them remain keenly aware of signs of hypothermia and take precautions to prevent it.

Hypothermia is an often fatal environment emergency caused by exposure to cold coupled with a person's decreased ability to cope with the effects of changes in temperature.

While hypothermia is a risk for anyone in severely cold weather, the elderly are especially vulnerable because the ability to perceive cold diminishes with age. Many older persons take medications which may also blunt their reaction to cold.

Health conditions such as stroke, severe arthritis and Parkinson's disease may reduce the awareness of cold for many seniors. Others do not take adequate precautions or seek help they need because of limited income.

### **Health and Nutrition Update**



#### **Slow-Cooker Lasagna**

- 1 pound ground beef (lean)
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 can tomato paste (6 ounce)
- 1 can (29 ounce) Tomato Sauce
- 1/2 of a 16 ounce package of Lasagna Noodles (use 9 noodles) (Do not cook)
- 3-4 cups shredded mozzarella cheese (can use fat-free or low-fat)
- 12 ounces (1 to 1 and a half cups) ricotta or cottage cheese, use low-fat or fat-free
- 1/4 cup Parmesan Cheese
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 3/4 cup water
- 2 teaspoons oregano

In a skillet, cook ground beef, onions, and garlic over medium heat until meat is no longer pink; drain any fat. Add tomato sauce, water, paste and oregano. Mix well. Spread a fourth of the meat sauce mixture in the bottom of an ungreased 4-5 quart crock-pot. Arrange a third of the noodles over the sauce, breaking them if necessary to make a layer over the sauce. Top with one-third cheeses which have been combined. Repeat layers twice. Top with remaining meat sauce.

Cover and cook on low for 4 hours or until pasta is tender.

Makes: 6-8 servings.

### **Advantages of Crock-pot Cooking**

Slow cookers were introduced in the 1970s and are finding renewed popularity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Considering the hectic pace of today's lifestyle, it's no wonder so many people have rediscovered the value of the crock-pot. Spend a few minutes preparing the ingredients, turn the slow cooker on low, and relax! Long cooking times without any fuss, take the stress out of meal preparation. Leave for work or a day of leisure and return 4, 8, or even 10 hours later for a hot, delicious meal.

- Tenderizes less tender cuts of meat so they are easy to chew
- Advance preparation the night before
- Can leave the house and forget it
- Ideal for soups and stews
- Use for many servings or few; any size family
- No danger of getting burned
- Nutritious- you do not throw the water away after the vegetables cook in it
- No need for constant attention or frequent stirring
- No worry of the food burning or overcooking
- Keeps your kitchen cool by keeping your oven turned off
- Great for parties and buffets to keep food hot for a longer period of time on low

- Saves energy - cook on low setting, uses less energy than a light bulb
- No sink full of pots and pans to scrub at the end of the day
- Add a small amount of water to roasts and you have a delicious broth and base to use for soup the next day
- Economical - since you can use less tender cuts of meat

Anyone can do it - even a novice!

Chicken for dinner no fuss! Put a chicken in the crock-pot. Add 1 cup of water. Turn it on! Season with salt, pepper, parsley, or fresh herbs. Check it in 4 hours on high, 6 hours on low.

Other easy meats to cook: London broil, beef stew meat, pork roast, turkey breast, beef brisket, any other beef roast.

### **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 workers work part time. Their schedules and

locations are as follows:

Marie Conde: John Duke Center – Monday through Friday.

Donna Miller: North Tonawanda Senior Center, Wednesday and Thursday from 10 to 12; Bishop Gibbons, Friday from 10 to 12.

Keesha Fields: St. John's AME, Tuesday from 11 to 1; Family Resource Center, 3001 9<sup>th</sup> St, Thursday from 11 to 1.

Wenonia Myles: Niagara Towers, 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday from 11 to 12; LaSalle Nutrition, 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday from 10:30 to 12:00, Summitview Senior Housing, 7210 Williams Rd. 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of each month from 1:00 to 3:00 PM.

Janice Williams: Sanborn Seniors at Sanborn Fire Hall, 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday every 3 months from 10:30 to 12:00; Wheatfield Seniors, every other month the last Wednesday; Lewiston Seniors the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday from 10:30 to 12:00; Wilson Seniors (Fire Hall) 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday from 12:30 to 1:30.

Tina Cur: Barker Fire Hall, quarterly; Lockport Senior Center, 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday from 10:00 to 12:00 and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday from 10:00 to 12:00; Gasport Seniors last Wednesday every other month from 10:30 to 12:00; Newfane Seniors (Miller Hose) the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday from 10:30 to 12:00; Olcott Fire Hall, quarterly 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday from 10:30 to 12:00.

Information and Assistance workers also visit others sites in the county. For further information please call the Office

at 438-4020.

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).

### **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. 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.

**It was fun being a baby boomer...**until now. Some of the artists of the 60's are revising their hits with new lyrics to accommodate aging baby boomers.

Bobby Darin: Splish, Splash, I was havin' a Flash

Roberta Flack: The First Time Ever I Forgot Your Face

Johnny Nash: I Can't See Clearly Now

Paul Simon: Fifty Ways to Lose Your Liver

The Commodores: Once, Twice. Three Times to the Bathroom

Tony Orlando: Knock 3 Times On The Ceiling If You Hear Me Fall

Helen Reddy: I Am Woman, Hear Me Snore

The Stones: Jumping Hot Flash I've Got Gas Gas Gas



Every year, hundreds of people experience what they think are symptoms of the flu: headaches, fatigue, nausea, dizziness.

Some recover: some die. WHY?

Carbon Monoxide – The colorless, odorless, tasteless gas that can kill.

Where does it come from?

Carbon monoxide (CO) is produced from burning any fuel. Any fuel-burning appliance in your home is a possible source of CO. Your car is a source of CO, too.

When appliances and their vents are in good working order, there is little danger that CO concentrations can be produced. Running a car in a garage or using charcoal indoors can also cause CO poisoning.

What does it do?

Carbon monoxide displaces the body's essential oxygen. Besides flu-like symptoms, it can cause vomiting, loss of consciousness, brain damage and eventually, death. Unborn babies,

infants, senior citizens and people with heart problems or breathing difficulties are especially at risk.

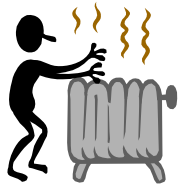
If you feel better....

If symptoms disappear and you feel better when you go outside your home, but symptoms reappear when you go back inside, you may have CO poisoning.

#### **DO'S and DON'TS:**

- ♥ Install CO detectors in your home; at least one near sleeping areas, another outside furnace room.
- ♥ Have your heating system inspected and serviced annually.
- ♥ Inspect chimneys and vents regularly for proper connections, rust or stains.
- ♥ Be aware of any indications that an appliance is not operating properly.
- ♥ If your CO detector activates, open windows, get everyone out and call for help.
- ♥ Never burn charcoal indoors or in a garage.
- ♥ Never use a gas oven for heating.
- ♥ Never leave a car running in a garage.
- ♥ Never operate unvented fuel-burning appliances in a closed room.

Don't let aging get you down. It's too hard to get back up!



## 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 (\$50 to \$400 this year) to help low income people who pay their own utility bills. **The Home Energy Assistance Program is now open.** When you receive your application please fill it out and return to our office as soon as possible. Persons with monthly incomes below \$1,764 (1 person) or \$2,307(2 people) will be eligible this year.

### 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, have no other source of funding, and be unable to pay back loans. 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.



## Volunteer Corner

This is an article written by Charles Goodrich, a retired English teacher who has been a volunteer for Ken -Ton Meals on Wheels since 1990. It shows the rewards of volunteering. Won't you consider being a volunteer for the Home Delivered Meal Program? For more information call Thomas Chapman at 438-4031.

### Volunteer work has its surprises, rewards

When delivering Meals on Wheels to infirm clients, I am often the only person they see and talk to the entire day. We do have to expect the unexpected.

One Thanksgiving morning, I delivered a meal to a woman dressed in her best clothes. She invited me in, showed me her dining room. The table had all its leaves in, and special service was set for

20 people.

She said, "You may think me crazy, but this table is set for all my departed friends, and as I sit here today I will visit with each of them as if they were still with me."

On another Thanksgiving, a lady told me she had grown up in a Nazi – occupied territory, and they were trying to kill her. Then the Russians came, and they treated her horribly. Finally, she escaped to America, married and lived a good life until her husband died. As she sat eating her dinner, she said she would thank all of the people for the blessings she had received in America. Then she gave me a big hug.

The most serious problem I face would be to discover a deceased client. When the residents ask me about that, I tell them I must find a live person and that "I refuse to deliver a meal to a dead person." This always gets a laugh.

One hot summer day, I was met by a dog. When I could not get a response from the male resident, the dog and I walked through every room of the flat and I kept calling "Meals on Wheels."

In the farthest room I saw a body wrapped in a sheet. As I called for the last time, a naked man jumped up from a sound sleep and screamed at me. I was so relieved, I smiled, apologized for frightening him, then asked where I should put his meal. At that point, he relaxed.

I once walked into a home that had a sign

on the door, "Beware of Dog." When I asked the woman where the dog was, she broke into tears, then told me her dog had run out into the path of a car that couldn't avoid it. The driver brought the dead dog to her and was so upset that she had to calm him down. I was the first person she had talked to about her loss.

Another woman client was listening to swing music when I arrived, and she grabbed me and had me dance with her for a couple minutes.

A blind client opened his locked door to receive his meal and asked me what was being served that day. When I couldn't identify the food, he yelled at me angrily. "For cry sakes, I am blind and you can see! What is your problem?" The next time I served him, he was especially nice to me.

I once delivered a birthday card to a woman who had turned 100 that day. I asked her how it felt to be 100. Her answer, "It felt one hell of a lot better to be 90."

There are many more stories I could tell, but I will finish with this one about a somewhat confused woman whose last name was the same as that of a 15-year old girl in the first class I ever taught at Kenmore High School. I asked her if she had a daughter named Mary. As she puzzled over my question, I heard a loud voice from within the house yell, "Who wants Mary?" It was the same girl almost 50 years later. She remembered me as a teacher she had liked, who made her feel good about school. I told her she had

helped me decide to make teaching my career. And we hugged.

Yes, Meals on Wheels volunteering has its rewards.

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

### **Ramblings of a retired Mind – Some Thoughts**

I was thinking about how a status symbol of today is those cell phones everyone has clipped onto their belt or purse. I can't afford one. So, I'm wearing my garage door opener.

I was thinking about old age and decided that old age is 'when you still have something on the ball, but you are just too tired to bounce it.

Employment application blanks always ask 'who is to be notified in case of emergency.' I think you should write, 'A Good Doctor!'



### **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](http://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