

Office for the Aging News

Niagara County Office for the Aging

111 Main Street, Suite 101, Lockport, N.Y. 14094 438-4020

www.niagaracounty.com/ofa

November - December 2006

Director's Column

Older Americans Act Reauthorization Victory!

"The Congress hereby finds and declares that, in keeping with the traditional American concept of the inherent dignity of the individual in our democratic society, the older people of the Nation are entitled to . . . Freedom, independence, and the free exercise of individual initiative in planning and managing their own lives, full participation in the planning and operation of community-based services and programs provided for their benefit, and prevention against abuse, neglect, and exploitation."

So begins this most important piece of legislation in the history of older Americans – The Older Americans Act of 1965. When the Senate passed, under unanimous consent, the Older Americans Act Amendments of 2006 (H.R. 6197), it reauthorized the Act for another five years and signaled a victory for aging advocates nationwide. We in the aging network lobbied hard by calling them, faxing them, sending emails and letters, and visiting their offices, and kept our message in front of our Senators and Representatives to keep the titles and provisions of the Act adequately funded because as we all know, the best conceived program is useless if there is not money set aside in the budget to pay

for needed services. The House of Representatives passed the same bill on September 28. The bill now goes to the President for his signature, and no President has ever failed to sign the bill when it has been presented to him.

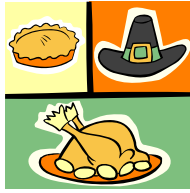
At this time of year, we think a little bit more than usual about things like traditions and family – the things that make life worth living. We celebrate different religions, races, colors and creeds, and we do so knowing that we live in the greatest country in the world and enjoy freedoms unheard of in other places. Our society is based on laws and those laws are not created lightly, nor are their re-authorization simply a matter of a rubber stamp. The process is rigorous because once a bill becomes a law it has real teeth and cannot be ignored. That Congress saw fit to guarantee certain rights to older Americans some forty years ago says a lot about how important we view the aging members of our society. We recognize their contributions and their right to dignity, and it is our job as the officially designated Area Agency on Aging to see that those rights are protected and that dignity is assured.

We're here to help; you just need to call 438-4020 to get started.

Happy Holidays from all of us at the Office for the Aging.

Sincerely,

Chris Richbart, Director



Giving Thanks

The point of Thanksgiving is to remember the things we have to be grateful for. It's our special time to give thanks...not just for the obvious, like food, but for the thousands of fortunate moments, the multitude of blessings that we receive each year.

That's not always as easy as it sounds. We tend to remember the bad things much more easily than the good. That's where this article comes in. Using the tips below, you can make thankfulness an everyday habit. It's a skill that will benefit you throughout the year.

Begin by keeping a gratitude journal. Don't write negative things; only positive ones. For example, "I'm grateful that I made it through that heavy rush hour traffic safely." "I'm grateful that I got to see a beautiful sunset."

Think of all the good things that happened because something bad happened first. For example, "If that slow driver hadn't pulled in front of me, I would have gotten a speeding ticket."

Don't focus on what you don't have. Focus on what you do have. For example: "I'm so fortunate to have a warm place to sleep in the winter." "I'm so fortunate to live in a safe neighborhood where I can take walks."

"I'm so fortunate to be able to see the beauty around me."

Think about people you've known that have made you thankful for their existence. They can be family, friends or simply people that you've read about or seen on TV. Imagine how many other people there are who might be equally as wonderful. You just haven't met them yet.

Think about the animals that have given you joy. Dogs that love you with every inch of their heart, cats that think your lap is the best place in the whole world to nap.

Think about the places that make you smile: a favorite hangout, a wooded trail, an exciting city, a great spot from which to view the sky, a hill you once rolled down. Give thanks for all these things.

Now pass it on. True gratitude involves action. Lend a hand as often as you can. Make a gift. Give your time. Listen. Give back as often as you can. Even a friendly greeting can make all the difference in the world.

Create your own opportunities for gratitude. Do you know someone who never seems happy? Be ready with a smile and a kind word each time you see them.

Let others know when they've done something that you're thankful for. For example, "That email you sent really made my day." An attitude of gratitude spreads like ripples from a tossed pebble, benefiting all it touches.

Remember that hard times make good times sweeter. Also keep in mind that obstacles and challenges not only make you stronger, but they force you to explore outside of the comfortable routine that you've settled into. Without challenges, there can be no progress. Without obstacles, there can be no achievement. Be thankful for the opportunities that they provide.

In conclusion, giving thanks is a powerful tool that can dramatically improve your life and the lives of those around you. Start embracing gratitude's special day, and then make it a habit.

Health and Nutrition Update

November is National Diabetes Month

Diabetes Programs coming to sites:

Diabetes "HELP" Program conducted by Mary Oksman, Certified Diabetes Educator and Registered Dietitian. Free Updated Accu-Check Glucometers will be offered and their use for monitoring blood sugars explained.

Friday, November 3rd

Barker Fire Hall
 Quaker Road, Barker
 1:00 PM

Thursday, November 16th

Ransomville Fire Hall
 Route 93
 Ransomville
 10:30 AM with Niagara Nutrition lunch after
 Call 731-3407 to reserve lunch

Tuesday, November 28th

Tuscarora Health Clinic
 Mount Hope Road and Walmore Road
 6:30 PM
 Refreshments provided.

There will also be a program on Wheat-free Diets & Allergies or Celiac Disease conducted by Joan Pedlow, RD, RN at:

John Duke Center 1201 Hyde Park Blvd
 Niagara Falls
 Wednesday, November 8th 10:30 AM

Fat-free Brown Sugar Squares

1 egg
 1 cup brown sugar (or use ½ cup brown sugar Splenda)
 1 tsp. vanilla
 ½ cup flour
 ¼ tsp. baking soda
 ¼ tsp. salt
 1 cup chopped walnuts or pecans



Grease 8" square pan. Stir together egg, brown sugar, and vanilla. Quickly stir in flour, sugar and salt and baking soda. Add nuts and stir.

Bake at 350 degrees for about 17 minutes. Cookies will be soft in the center. Cool and cut into squares.

For Diabetics: Use brown sugar Splenda- but only use ½ cup. From Glenda - NCOFA

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 9th St, Thursday from 11 to 1.

Wenonia Myles: Niagara Towers, 3rd Tuesday from 11 to 12; LaSalle Nutrition, 2nd Tuesday from 10:30 to 12:00, Summitview Senior Housing, 7210 Williams Rd (call OFA for date).

Janice Williams: Sanborn Seniors at Sanborn Fire Hall, 1st Wednesday every 3 months from 10:30 to 12:00; Wheatfield Seniors, every other month the last

Wednesday; Lewiston Seniors the 3rd Tuesday from 10:30 to 12:00.

Tina Cur: Barker Fire Hall, quarterly; Lockport Senior Center, 1st & 3rd Tuesday from 10:00 to 12:00 and the 2nd 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 4th Thursday from 10:30 to 12:00; Olcott Fire Hall, quarterly 1st Thursday from 10:30 to 12:00; Wilson Seniors (Fire Hall) 1st Tuesday from 12:30 to 1:30.

Information and Assistance workers also visit others sites in the county. To find 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).

Medicare Premiums and Deductibles For 2007

Premiums and Deductibles for 2007

Part A Premium: \$410 (paid by about 1percent of beneficiaries)

Part A deductible: \$992

Part B standard premium : \$93.50

Part B deductible: \$131



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.

Staying Healthy

Medicare's Preventive Services

An easy and important way to stay healthy is to get disease prevention and early detection services. Disease prevention and early detection services can keep you from getting certain diseases or illnesses, or can find a health care problem early which is when treatment works best. Talk with your doctor or health care provider to find out what test you need and how often you need them to stay healthy.

Did you know that Medicare covers...

One-time "Welcome to Medicare" Physical Exam	Beginning January 1, 2005, Medicare covers a one-time review of your health, as well as education and counseling about the preventive services you need, including certain screenings and shots. Referrals for other care if you need it will also be covered. You must have the exam within the first six months you have Medicare Part B.
Cardiovascular Screenings	Ask your doctor to test your cholesterol, lipid and triglyceride levels so he or she can help you prevent a heart attack or stroke. Beginning January 1, 2005, Medicare covers tests for cholesterol, lipid, triglyceride levels every five years.
Flu Shots	These shots help prevent influenza, or flu virus. Medicare covers these shots once a flu season in the fall or winter for all people with Medicare.
Pneumococcal Shot	This shot helps prevent Pneumococcal infections. Medicare covers this shot for all people with Medicare. Most people only need this shot once in their lifetime. Talk with your doctor.

For some of these services, you might have to pay a deductible, coinsurance and/or Co-payment. These amounts vary depending on the type of services you need and the kind of Medicare health plan you have.

For more details about Medicare's

coverage of these preventive services, including your costs in the Original Medicare Plan, get a free copy of the *Guide to Medicare's Preventive Services* (CMS Pub. No. 10110) at www.medicare.gov on the web. "Select Publications." Or, call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) and ask for a copy. TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048.



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.

Here is another email tip that I received and wanted to pass on to you.

"I received a telephone call last evening from an individual identifying himself as an AT&T technician (could be Verizon) who was conducting a test on the telephone lines. He stated that to complete the test I should touch nine (9),

zero (0), pound (#), and then hang up. Luckily, I was suspicious and refused. "

"Upon contacting the telephone company, I was informed that by pushing 90#, you give the requesting individual full access to your telephone line, which enables them to place long distance calls billed to your home phone number. I was further informed that this scam has been originating from many local jails/prisons."

DO NOT PRESS 90# FOR ANYONE!!!!

One of the greatest gifts we can teach our children is to be responsible for their actions.

Those who are thankful for the little things in life are the ones who enjoy life to the fullest.



Are you growing younger?

We all wish that were true. But, seriously consider these steps to help feel your best, regardless of your age.

9 Steps to Live Younger Now

1. Eat breakfast every day. Studies show that breakfast eaters live longer than breakfast skippers. A fatty breakfast is almost as bad as no breakfast. Think lean and high fiber.

2. Take your vitamins. Taking a multivitamin is one of the quickest and easiest ways to feel younger. A generic brand formulated for senior citizens is best. Check with your pharmacist.
3. Fill up on fiber. Fiber aids digestion, stabilizes blood sugar and helps to lower your risk of heart attack. Read food labels to learn fiber contents.
4. Be active. Regular exercise not only helps you look and feel great; it also makes you feel years younger. The goal is 30 minutes most days of the week.
5. Know your blood pressure. Ideally your blood pressure should be 115/75 or lower. Your doctor will tell you your BP goals. Eat less salt and salty foods. Lose weight if you're overweight.
6. Floss your teeth. Flossing and brushing your teeth daily has a direct and positive effect on oral health and an indirect benefit to heart health. Floss once a day if possible.
7. Wear your seatbelt. Buckle up before you shift into drive or reverse. Many accidents happen in parking lots or driveway entries.
8. Laugh a lot. Laughter makes you happier and younger! Folks with a sunny disposition tend to have better health. Rent a funny movie and invite a friend over to watch it with you! If you feel down or despondent, talk to your doctor.

9. Reduce stress. Stress can hamper immune system function, opening the door to endless aging. Spend more time with supportive friends and family to help lessen the effects of stress. Walking is a great stress reliever, too.

Out of the mouths of babes.....

While working for an organization that delivers lunches to elderly shut-ins, I used to take my 4 year old daughter on my afternoon rounds. The various appliances of old age, particularly the canes, walkers and wheelchairs, unfailingly intrigued her. One day I found her staring at a pair of false teeth soaking in a glass. As I braced myself for the inevitable barrage of questions, she merely smiled and whispered, "The tooth fairy will never believe this."



Program Closings

OFA Offices, Medical Van, Congregate and Home Delivered meals will be closed:

Tuesday, November 7 - Election Day
 Friday, November 10 - Veteran's Day
 Thursday, November 23 & Friday,
 November 24 - Thanksgiving
 Monday, December 25 - Christmas
 Monday, January 1 - New Years

Murphy's Other Laws

Ⓢ Light travels faster than sound.

This is why some people appear bright until you hear them speak.

- ☉ He who laughs last, thinks slowest.
- ☉ A day without sunshine is like, well, night.
- ☉ Change is inevitable, except from a vending machine.
- ☉ The 50-50-90 rule:
Anytime you have a 50-50 chance of getting something right, there's a 90% probability you'll get it wrong.
- ☉ It is said that if you line up all the cars in the world end to end, someone would be stupid enough to try to pass them.



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.

*We could learn a lot from crayons
 Some are sharp, some are pretty
 Some are dull, some have weird
 names
 And all are different colors,
 But they all exist very
 nicely in the same box.*

Source: Wit & Wisdom; summer 2006



Christmas Tips!

There is no other holiday like Christmas! It's a time for family gatherings, traveling and shopping. A time for delicacies and decorations. But with this holiday spirit comes the pressure of preparations and anxiety of making this Christmas most memorable for your loved ones.

So let us help with some wonderful quick-to-look-at tips for you this Christmas and make you holidays a time to enjoy and have fun!

- ❏ Be prepared. That's the key to a smooth-running Christmas. So don't wait for December, start planning right now!
- ❏ Make a things-to-buy list before you go shopping. It makes shopping easier, less stressful and less time consuming. Best time to shop is off-peak hours.
- ❏ One of the most time consuming tasks is to find perfect gifts for the perfect people in your life. Ask them to give you a wish list so you know what they want and you can start your search online! It's easy, saves time and can be a big surprise for them.
- ❏ Most importantly, set a budget! You don't want huge credit card bills at the beginning of the New Year, which you may not be able to pay on time. So make small purchases at a time and pay them early.
- ❏ Avoid overspending on gifts and decorations. Purchase a family gift instead of individual gifts. Be creative and make some homemade gifts, cookies and ornaments for neighbors and service personnel.
- ❏ Christmas is the time of family celebrations. So don't stress too much and get your family involved in decorations and preparing meals. This will give you some merry memories with your family.
- ❏ Use old Christmas cards to brighten up your home with old memories. Make new cards, ornaments, gift tags and collages with the pictures on them. Get your grandkids involved to keep them occupied.
- ❏ Prepare and freeze lots of comfort food like stews and soups that can be defrosted and heated up so they are ready to eat. These become handy after a late night shopping trip when you don't want to come home and cook.
- ❏ Get to know the significance of your traditions and history of the customs better this Christmas. Make it interesting for children and grandchildren. Tell them Christmas stories and have a Christmas trivia quiz and award prizes. A scavenger hunt is a great way to get the grandkids out and about and spread some Christmas cheer!
- ❏ Create good memories and enjoy this year's season!!!



A little gift for you to enjoy. This is an e-mail that I received that I wanted to share with you

A 98 year old woman wrote this to her bank. The bank manager thought it amusing enough to have it published in the New York Times.

Dear Sir:

I am writing to thank you for bouncing my check with which I endeavored to pay my plumber last month.

By my calculations, three 'nanoseconds' must have elapsed between his presenting the check and the arrival in my account of the funds needed to honor it. I refer, of course, to the automatic monthly deposit of my Social Security check, an arrangement which, I admit, has been in place for only eight years.

You are to be commended for seizing that brief window of opportunity, and also for debiting my account \$30 by way of penalty for the inconvenience caused to your bank. My thankfulness springs from the manner in which this incident has caused me to rethink my errant financial ways.

I noticed that whereas I personally attend to your telephone calls and letters, when I try to contact you, I am confronted by the impersonal, overcharging, pre-recorded, faceless entity which your bank has become.

From now on, I, like you, choose only to deal with a flesh-and-blood person.

My mortgage and loan payments will therefore and hereafter no longer be automatic, but will arrive at your bank by check, addressed personally and confidentially to an employee at your bank whom you must nominate.

Be aware that it is an offense under the Postal Act for any other person to open such an envelope. Please find attached an Application Contact Status which I require your chosen employee to complete. I am sorry it runs to eight pages, but in order that I know as much about him or her as your bank knows about me, there is no alternative.

Please note that all copies of his or her medical history must be countersigned by a Notary Public, and the mandatory details of his/her financial situation (income, debts, assets and liabilities) must be accompanied by documented proof.

In due course, I will issue your employee with a PIN number which he/she must quote in dealings with me.

I regret that it cannot be shorter than 28 digits but, again, I have modeled it on the number of button presses required of me to access my account balance on your phone bank service. As they say, imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.

Let me level the playing field even further. When you call me, press buttons as follows:

1-- To make an appointment to see me.

- 2-- To query a missing payment.
- 3-- To transfer the call to my living room in case I am there.
- 4-- To transfer the call to my bedroom in case I am sleeping.
- 5-- To transfer the call to my toilet in case I am attending to nature.
- 6-- To transfer the call to my mobile phone if I am not at home.
- 7-- To leave a message on my computer (a password to access my computer is required. A password will be communicated to you at a later date to the authorized contact.)
- 8-- To return to the main menu and to listen to options 1 through 7.
- 9-- To make a general complaint or inquiry, the contact will then be put on hold, pending the attention of my automated answering service. While this may, on occasion, involve a lengthy wait, uplifting music will play for the duration of the call.

Regrettably, but again following your example, I must also levy an establishment fee to cover the setting up of this new arrangement.

May I wish you a happy, if ever so slightly less prosperous, New Year?

Your Humble Client

(Remember: This was written by a 98 year old woman)

JUST GOTTA LOVE SENIORS!

Another Recipe...



Caesar Oyster Crackers

11 Ounces oyster crackers
 Nonfat cooking spray
 1 (1.2 ounce) envelope Caesar/
 Buttermilk ranch salad dry dressing mix.

Put one third of the oyster crackers in either a sealable bag or container with an airtight seal.

Spray the crackers with nonfat cooking spray.

Sprinkle with one third of the salad dressing mix.

Shake gently to coat the crackers well. Repeat this process two more times.

Yield: 9 (1/2 cup) servings

Calories: 70; Fat 2g; Cholesterol 0.

Blizzard Bags

Blizzard bags – two shelf-stable meals will be delivered before Thanksgiving to our Home Delivered Meal recipients. So in the event of a weather emergency these home-bound people are sure to have a couple of nutritious meals on hand.



New Wheelchair Accessible Medical Van

The Niagara County Office for the Aging is very excited about its new Wheelchair Accessible Medical Van for seniors 60 and older.

Transportation for medical appointments is provided between 9:30 AM and 1:00 PM Monday through Friday, except for holidays. We travel to Buffalo, Williamsville, and Amherst as well as locally to Lockport, Newfane and Niagara Falls. Please plan ahead as the medical van is booked quickly. We encourage booking **TWO (2)** weeks or more in advance.

Suggested contribution of \$4.00 locally (within the same area), \$6.00 (between Lockport to the Falls or North Tonawanda) and \$14.00 to Buffalo, Williamsville and Amherst. These contributions are for a round trip fare.

We also provide rides to OFA lunch programs for a 50 cent contribution to ride the van round trip. For more Information call Jennifer at 438-4028.



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. 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