Pearl Rhoades: No place like home
By Louisa Weeden

Pearl Rhoades is nearly 98 years old, lives with her newly-adopted cat Betsey and receives a hot, nutritious home-delivered meal each weekday from Elder Services Meals on Wheels (MOW) program. Although her husband George has passed away, Rhoades’ daughter and son-in-law live nearby and are often able to stop in and help out around the house and share occasional evening and weekend meals together. But, because they both work, there are times when the Meals on Wheels driver is the only person Rhoades might see in a day.

Knowing that her mother is being looked in on and receiving a nutritious meal makes her daughter, Marsha Sarno, “feel good.” Sarno refers to the drivers who have delivered meals to her mother over the past six years as “rays of sunshine.” Rhoades declares herself “a happy Meals on Wheels customer,” and enjoys the menu, including a recent lunch of chicken with asparagus, a wild rice blend, peas and onions, oat bread, and pine-

Free fruits and vegetables with Farmers’ Market coupons
By Marilyn Wiley, R.D.

Farmers’ Markets recently opened in Berkshire County featuring early seasonal vegetables including greens, asparagus, radishes and rhubarb. Customers seeking fresh vegetables and fruit enjoyed purchasing the produce and interacting with the farmers who grew it.

Recent studies have indicated that fresh foods lose valuable nutrients during long distance travel, so locally purchased food provides more vitamins and minerals. Unfortunately, much of the produce we eat travels thousands of miles from California as well as from all over the world including Latin America, Australia and New Zealand. Therefore, it is a treat to purchase food from local farmers and know we are contributing less to the world’s energy problems, providing income for local farmers and enjoying fresh fruits and vegetables with better nutrition as a bonus.

Seniors with limited financial resources can obtain a $10 coupon, which can be used at farmers’ markets to obtain free fruit, vegetables and other farm products. The Massachusetts Department of Agriculture may issue additional coupons later this summer, which can be used only for fruits and vegetables. Coupons are available now, and eligible seniors can obtain them through their housing authority if they reside in senior housing, or di-

Respite options for caregivers
By Bea Cowlin, LSW

With summer here, many are making plans for time away to rest and relax. For many caregivers, there are additional challenges. They must consider the loved ones for whom they are providing daily care. Caregivers must arrange for the needed services, supervision, medication monitoring, cooking, etc., before they can even begin to plan for their own time away. And without assurances that all will go reasonably well when they are gone, it is sometimes difficult for caregivers to relax, often wondering if things are going okay with their loved one at home.

Elder Services has a number of options to assist caregivers in making sure their loved ones will receive the assistance they need, and allow the caregiver to have respite time that is truly restful and relaxing. The following re-

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Celebrate Independence for Seniors!
See page 6
From the Director

Elder Independence — There’s no place like home

By Robert P. Dean

As we celebrate Independence Day this July 4th, we should recognize the overwhelming preference of most seniors to continue to live as independently as possible in their own homes and communities for as long as possible... and that if, or when they need long-term care services, to receive those services at home. We must honor this preference as best we can, and keep in mind that it actually costs less to provide long-term care services at home than it does in an institution.

Advisory seniors are unable to remain at home with very little service or support. For others, there comes a time when activities of daily living, once taken for granted, now challenge their ability to live independently. Such activities may include cooking, cleaning, getting dressed and ready for the day, keeping track of various medications, grocery shopping, transportation, getting to and from the bathroom, and managing a checkbook. The fact that a senior needs assistance with one or more of these activities does not mean that he or she can no longer live at home... it means that he or she needs some help in order to do so.

Here in Berkshire County, Elder Services and the 32 Councils on Aging offer a number of in-home and community supports for seniors and their caregivers, including information and referral. While each Council on Aging is unique to its community, most offer transportation, outreach, health education and screening, and fitness, social, and recreational programs. Additionally, various Councils on Aging provide grocery shopping assistance, telephone reassurance, friendly visiting, SHINE counseling, peer support groups, and intergenerational programs. Thirteen Councils on Aging partner with Elder Services to provide friendly lunch sites to serve the noontime meals we prepare in our Lenox kitchen each Monday through Friday.

Additionally, Elder Services provides a variety of in-home services including case management, personal care (assistance with getting dressed and ready for the day, and in the bathroom), housecleaning, laundry, grocery shopping, transportation to and from medical appointments, companionship, money management, Meals on Wheels, attendance at Social and Adult Day Health programs, caregiver supports, and SHINE (health and prescription medication insurance) counseling. The typical senior served by our in-home programs is between 75 and 90 years old, female, widowed, living alone, and on a fixed income. In many cases, the Meals on Wheels driver, Case Manager, or Personal Care worker may be the only face-to-face contact the senior has that day. Unfortunately, many of these vital programs are under-funded.

The point at which outside help is needed and accepted varies from senior to senior... and from caregiver to caregiver. We at Elder Services understand this, and are ready to help, when help is ready to be received. Our goal is to serve any senior who has a need, and to provide them the opportunity to remain at home and in the community for as long as possible. If you or someone you know could use some help, give us a call. We’re here to help. And speaking of help, a special thank you to our friends in the community, who support Elder Services financially, and in so many other ways, during these difficult times, so that we can continue to help Berkshire seniors to live independently.

As this great nation celebrates its independence this Fourth of July, we at Elder Services wish each of you a Happy Independence Day... today and everyday.

Robert P. Dean is Executive Director of Elder Services.

Visit Elder Services on the Internet at: http://www.esbci.org

Berkshire Senior

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Elder Services and its programs are funded, in part, by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs.

State and federal funds provided to Elder Services are limited. Elder Services welcomes charitable donations to help meet the growing needs of Berkshire seniors, and gratefully acknowledges all donations.

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• Employment Opportunities for Seniors
• Got Questions? (Information & Referral Services at Elder Services)
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For questions, comments, or requests, or if you would like to have any of these programs re-broadcast, contact Roger Suters at 499-0524 or 1-800-544-5242.

Elder Services Update
As the Baby Boomer Generation ages, more and more resources need to be made available to those 55 and older and the organizations that provide services to them. The Massachusetts Legislature takes the needs and well being of the seniors of the Commonwealth very seriously. That is why as a body we have increased the funding to several important services and programs that help to keep people as independent as possible.

Our community and social services are more important than ever. With every downturn of the economy, more individuals rely on the services these organizations provide, but the organizations' operating costs tend to increase and donations go down. Over the past year the price of food staples has increased dramatically, with the price of milk rising by 26% and eggs by 40%. It concerns me that those on fixed incomes, especially the elderly, will reduce their consumption of nutritious foods, such as fruits, vegetables dairy and whole grain products in order to pay other bills. That is why my colleagues and I were happy to support increases in vital programs.

One of the greatest assets to our communities are the Councils on Aging. They provide over 440,000 elders in the Commonwealth with services annually. Councils on Aging provide a wide array of programs that help keep the aging population independent and healthy. Many councils, especially here in the Berkshires, rely on the good work and generosity of volunteers to staff Senior Centers, run events and provide transportation and other services. The funding that the legislature has approved will assist with maintaining the council programming that is already in place and hopefully allow many to pursue new opportunities. It is important in our rural communities to give seniors a safe and convenient place to go to socialize, dine, learn and participate in various activities. Keeping an active social life is vital to staying healthy as we age. By providing transportation to events, those who can no longer drive or choose not to drive are not confined to their homes and have the opportunity to participate.

I, like so many, believe that ensuring that people are able to stay independent, living in the community, as long as it is safe and healthy for them to do so, must be a top priority in our society. While nursing homes and elder care facilities do good work caring for those who are unable to care for themselves, they often come at a huge expense, both financially and emotionally for the individual and loved ones. We in the legislature see the need to fund these institutions adequately, but we have also continued to provide resources to alternative programs.

In the Fiscal Year 09 budget the legislature funded many programs that provide Home Care and support individuals and families who care for the elderly in a domestic setting; so that elders can afford and access the supportive services they need in order to stay in their homes and communities.

One’s “golden years” should not be spent worrying about how they are going to pay for heat or groceries; they need to be about living life to the fullest after years of working and raising a family. The more the commonwealth can make this a reality for as many people as possible, the better off we all are.

Denis Guyer is State Representative for the 2nd District. He can be reached at 413-684-0033 or in Boston at 617-722-2460. His e-mail address is rep.denisguyer@hou.state.ma.us.

Berkshire County State Legislators

It’s important to keep your legislators informed about what is important to you. If you have questions or comments that you want to share with your Berkshire representatives, you can contact them using the information below:

danielbosley@hou.state.ma.us
• Rep. Denis Guyer (2nd District) 617-722-2400 & 413-684-0033
denisguyer@hou.state.ma.us
• Rep. Smitty Pignatelli (4th District) 617-722-2582 & 413-637-0631
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July 2008

Government Update

All benefit when the Commonwealth helps seniors

By State Rep. Denis Guyer
CAREGIVER DISCUSSION GROUPS

Elder Services’ Caregiver Coordinators Bea Cowlin and Pat Morrissey lead three discussion groups at Elder Services, which are open to all caregivers.

The groups meet monthly:
• 2nd Tuesday, 10 to 11:30 a.m., men’s group
• 4th Tuesday, 10 to 11:30 a.m., for all caregivers
• 2nd Wednesday, 6:30 to 8 p.m., for all caregivers

New members are always welcome. There is no charge.

Come for conversation, support, & helpful information. For information call 499-0524 or 1-800-544-5242.

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Respite Page 1

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We Believe Life Should Be a Party. Especially If You’re 90

Helen Kusko with her daughter, Vickie Lea

Helen Kusko recently celebrated her 90th birthday at her new home, EPOCH Assisted Living at Melbourne. Helen says she’s adjusted easily, has made many new friends and finds something fun to do every day! Her daughter, Vickie, says she’s thrilled with her mom’s quality of life . . . even at 90. “Mom’s life is so much better at EPOCH. It is a dream come true.”

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July 2008 Elder Services’ Berkshire Senior Page 5
Dear Friend:

There’s no place like home…especially as we grow older. Home is full of wonderful memories. It’s safe and secure. Most of us would prefer to continue to live in our own homes for as long as possible. For nearly 34 years, Elder Services has been helping Berkshire seniors to continue to live in their own homes with dignity and independence by providing the in-home services and supports that they need.

Aging isn’t always easy. The passage of time often brings unwanted changes in health and well-being. Eyesight fades, hearing diminishes, and mobility can become impaired. Activities as simple as bathing and dressing require motor skills and stamina that many of the seniors we serve no longer possess.

When Berkshire seniors can no longer:

- prepare hot meals, we provide Meals on Wheels.
- bathe and dress independently, we provide assistance with personal care.
- clean their own homes, we provide homemaking and laundry assistance.
- drive, we arrange transportation to medical appointments.
- do their own grocery shopping, we offer volunteer shoppers.
- write checks and pay bills, we provide Money Management assistance.
- live alone, we offer supportive housing services.

We serve more than 10,000 seniors, caregivers, and individuals with disabilities a year. Perhaps you know someone who receives Meals on Wheels or some of the many other in-home services and supports we provide. State and federal funding only goes so far in making these essential services available to Berkshire seniors. We need your help.

Won’t you take a few minutes and make out a check to Elder Services for whatever amount you can afford to give?

Thank you. Your tax-deductible donation to Elder Services’ Elder Independence Appeal is much appreciated!

Sincerely,

Barbara I. Kie,
President
Do you want to be popular?

By Margie Ware

Have you ever wanted to be the most sought after person in the room? Do you crave being that individual about whom it is said “When she speaks, people listen?” If being the center of the conversation is your goal in life, we can assist you in accomplishing your objective.

Elder Services SHINE (Serving Health Information Needs of Elders) Program is holding its annual training program for new SHINE volunteers beginning September 17. The classes will meet twice a week for five weeks and a graduation event is scheduled for November 6. The classes are five hours per day and are full of information on Medicare, supplemental “Medigap” insurance, prescription drug coverage and public benefit programs.

Once you finish the course and become a certified SHINE Counselor, we can almost guarantee your popularity. With someone turning 60 in this country every seven seconds, the need for individuals who are qualified to explain the ins and outs of Medicare is expanding exponentially. You’ll be a valuable resource to your friends, family, neighbors and colleagues. You will be an important part of the Berkshire community as you assist seniors in understanding the rights and responsibilities of Medicare beneficiaries.

You’ll also make a lot of new friends. We presently have over 30 qualified SHINE counselors who are interesting, lots of fun and great company at our monthly meetings. You’ll get to see new places such as your local senior center or perhaps you’ll be visiting homebound seniors who cannot get to a counseling center. SHINE Counselors are always welcome here at 66 Wendell Avenue to help to answer the phones, especially during peak periods of open enrollment.

If you are curious, a good listener, interested in how the “system” works and willing to put some effort into understanding a subject that is always changing and throwing us new curves, we hope you will consider attending our orientation session for new SHINE volunteers on Wednesday, August 20 at 11 a.m. We’ll go into further details about what the program involves, and you can ask any questions.

For additional information, please call Margie Ware at 499-0524 or 1-800-544-5242. We look forward to hearing from you soon!

Margie Ware is Elder Services’ Regional SHINE Program Coordinator.

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Elder Services is running a raffle to raise money for its Nutrition/Meals on Wheels program, which provides frail homebound Berkshire seniors with hot, nutritious, home-delivered meals each weekday.

Buying raffle tickets is a good way to help keep Meals on Wheels rolling.

Over 30 great prizes have been assembled. (See list below.)

The program has been dangerously under-funded for years, even as the cost of food and gasoline has skyrocketed. The Meals on Wheels program, which has a very lean budget, has been hit particularly hard.

Last year, Elder Services’ kitchen prepared a quarter of a million meals, producing more than 1,000 hot, nourishing meals a day each Monday through Friday. Over 200,000 meals were delivered directly to the homes of frail elders, and the rest served to seniors attending the 14 lunch sites throughout the county. Our Meals on Wheels drivers traveled more than 226,000 miles last year, covering all of Berkshire County.

Raffle tickets are $1 each or six for $5, and are available at the 14 lunch sites (see page 16) and at Elder Services office at 66 Wendell Avenue in Pittsfield.

Come and get ’em!

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2008 Meals on Wheels Raffle Prizes

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prize</th>
<th>Giver</th>
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<tr>
<td>Round of Golf for 4 with 2 carts...............Cranwell Resort</td>
<td>$250 gift certificate .................Zabian’s Jewelers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two Red Sox Tickets.............................Fenway Park</td>
<td>$250 gift certificate .................Dino Zabian Fine Jewelry</td>
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<tr>
<td>$125 gift certificate ............................American Auto Detailing</td>
<td>$100 gift certificate .....................George’s Liqueurs</td>
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<tr>
<td>$100 off Benjamin Moore Paint....................Lee Hardware</td>
<td>$100 off off Benjamin Moore Paint......George’s Liqueurs</td>
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<tr>
<td>$75 gift certificate .............................Mill on the Floss Restaurant</td>
<td>$100 gift certificate .....................George’s Liqueurs</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 gift certificates .............................Friends of the Gallagher</td>
<td>$100 gift certificate .....................George’s Liqueurs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alzheimer’s Resource Center</td>
<td>$100 gift certificate .....................George’s Liqueurs</td>
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<tr>
<td>One week of half-day camp .....................Gymfest Day Camp</td>
<td>$100 gift certificate .....................George’s Liqueurs</td>
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<tr>
<td>One year Family Membership .....................Hancock Shaker Village</td>
<td>$100 gift certificate .....................George’s Liqueurs</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 $50 gift certificates .........................Salmon Run Fish House</td>
<td>$100 gift certificate .....................George’s Liqueurs</td>
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<tr>
<td>$50 gift certificate .............................Village Inn, Lenox</td>
<td>$100 gift certificate .....................Nejaimes’ Wine Cellars</td>
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<tr>
<td>$50 gift certificate .............................Glad Rags, Lenox</td>
<td>Brunch for 2 ..............................Dakota Restaurant</td>
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<tr>
<td>$50 gift certificate .............................Glad Rags, Lenox</td>
<td>2 Lunches for 2 ..........................Samel’s Deli</td>
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<tr>
<td>$35 gift certificate .............................Hair Studio</td>
<td>$35 gift certificate .....................Hair Studio</td>
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<td>$25 gift certificate .............................Highland Restaurant</td>
<td>$25 gift certificate .....................Highland Restaurant</td>
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<td>$25 gift certificate .............................CVS</td>
<td>2 half gallons maple syrup ............Dave Gage Family Farm</td>
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<td>2 half gallons maple syrup ............Dave Gage Family Farm</td>
<td>$25 gift certificate .....................Shear Design, Lenox</td>
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<td>$25 gift certificate .............................Sullivan Station Restaurant</td>
<td>$25 gift certificate .....................Sullivan Station Restaurant</td>
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<tr>
<td>$25 gift certificate .............................Home Goods</td>
<td>$20 gift certificate .....................Panayiotis Grill and Pizzeria</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gift Basket ......................................Gould Farm, Monterey</td>
<td>Gift Basket ......................................Gould Farm, Monterey</td>
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</tbody>
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Performance of “My Sister’s an Only Child” at the Colonial Theatre to benefit Meals on Wheels

Elder Services has reserved 200 premium orchestra tickets for the performance of Steve Solomon’s “My Sister’s an Only Child” on August 16 at 2 p.m. at The Colonial Theatre in Pittsfield. Elder Services is proud to offer this block of tickets for Solomon’s humorous, autobiographical performance that promises to be one of the funniest productions of the summer.

Solomon, a native of Sheepshead Bay in Brooklyn, is the author of the record-breaking, critically acclaimed show, “My Mother’s Italian, My Father’s Jewish and I’m in Therapy;” has played to sold out crowds and had return engagements in over 50 cities around the United States, Canada and Bermuda. The Broadway hit sold out two shows at the Colonial in 2006. In “My Mother’s Italian…” Solomon shared stories from his wacky family and the crazy characters he met on the road. In “My Sister’s an Only Child,” Solomon is back with an hysterical prequel in which he introduces new and old characters from his past. Uncle Willie, Stuttering Cousin Bob and Demented Cousin Kenny come to life under Solomon’s unique genius of story telling and character development.

Solomon creates voices, dialects and sound effects, which make the stories and jokes come alive.

Tickets are $45 each and 15% of each ticket sold through Elder Services will benefit Elder Services’ Meals on Wheels program, which provides over 1000 hot, nutritious noon time meals each weekday to homebound seniors and to those who attend the 14 lunch sites located throughout Berkshire County. If you, your family or friends would like to purchase tickets, please call Louisa Weeden at 499-0524 or 1-800-544-5242 and choose your seats.

“Variety” describes Solomon as — “Alan King, Billy Crystal, a smidgen of Don Rickles and George Carlin all thrown in.” Get your tickets, and have a fun afternoon and contribute to Elder Services Meals on Wheels, one of the most important programs for Berkshire County seniors.

---

Pittsfield Celebrates Third Thursdays

Elder Services joins the community event

Join in each Third Thursday from July to October in downtown Pittsfield as the streets come alive with musicians, artists, activities, sidewalk dining, after hours shopping and much more. The hours are 5 to 8 p.m., with some events continuing beyond 8 p.m.

Also, visit Elder Services table in front of the Ralph Froio Senior Center, where, courtesy of the Pittsfield Council on Aging we are available to answer any questions you may have about our services or to provide refreshments:

- Fresh baked cookies
- Fresh fruit cup
- Water

All proceeds Support Meals on Wheels!

---

Here are Pittsfield’s Third Thursday themes for 2008:

- **Thursday, July 17:** Tropicalismos; Main Stage - Crowne Plaza
- **Thursday, August 21:** 50s Back-to-school; Main Stage - Crowne Plaza
- **Thursday, September 18:** Harvest Hoedown; Main Stage, Persip Park
- **Thursday, October 16:** Jazz birds; Main Stage North Street at Maplewood.
Elder Services hosted Health Benefits University

Health Benefits University (HBU) is a free annual day-long seminar presented to members of the professional community by Elder Services’ SHINE Program. HBU serves as a “Medicare 101” experience for social workers and other medical and legal professionals who need a working knowledge of the Medicare system in order to understand the process for making referrals and “spotting issues.”

A lively group of more than 30 people participated in this year’s seminar, which was held at Elder Services. Participants enjoyed lunch compliments of the agency.
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Editor’s Note: Unless requested otherwise, each month Berkshire Senior publishes the names of donors to Elder Services and those honored by the donations. These funds help Elder Services provide area older adults with programs and services to help them remain independent. Contributions are tax-deductible to the extent of the law.
Happy July 4th

Surprising facts about the Fourth of July

Everyone loves Independence Day, the quintessential American holiday, full of parades, picnics, and... surprising facts? You bet! Be the life of the party—share a few of these tasty nuggets of knowledge with your fellow picnickers this year.

1. Independence Day commemorates the formal adoption of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776. Massachusetts signers of the Declaration were John Hancock, Samuel Adams (for whom North Adams and Adams were named) John Adams, John Treat Paine, and Elbridge Gerry. Independence Day was not declared a legal holiday until 1941.

2. Fireworks were made in China as early as the 11th century. The Chinese used their pyrotechnic mixtures for war rockets and explosives.

3. Uncle Sam was first popularized during the War of 1812, when the term appeared on supply containers. Believe it or not, the U. S. Congress didn't adopt him as a national symbol until 1961.

4. There are many precise rules for taking care of the American flag. And speaking of flag traditions, we're sorry to report that contrary to legend, historical research has failed to confirm that Betsy Ross sewed the first flag.

5. Not all members of the Continental Congress supported a formal Declaration of Independence, but those who did were passionate about it. One representative, Caesar Rodney, rode 80 miles by horseback to reach Philadelphia and break a tie in support of independence.

6. The first two versions of the Liberty Bell were defective and had to be melted down and recast. The third version rang every Fourth of July from 1778 to 1835, when, according to tradition, it cracked as it was being tolled for the death of Chief Justice John Marshall.

7. The American national anthem, the “Star-Spangled Banner,” is set to the tune of an English drinking song (“To Anacreon in Heaven”).

8. The iron framework of the Statue of Liberty was devised by French engineer Alexandre-Gustave Eiffel, who also built the Eiffel Tower in Paris.

9. The patriotic poem “America the Beautiful” was published on July 4, 1895 by Wellesley College professor Katharine Lee Bates.

10. Father of the country and architect of independence George Washington held his first public office at the tender age of 17. He continued in public service until his death in 1799.

11. Thomas Jefferson and John Adams both died on July 4, 1826, on the 50th anniversary of the signing. Another former President, John Monroe, also died on July 4, five years later.

Excerpted from Encarta MSN, published by Microsoft Corporation.
Presently, Shefield's Council on Aging (COA) rents rooms at Dewey Memorial Hall - one an office space that also serves as a lounge, and a large room used for all other activities including movies, exercise, yoga, dance, monthly lunches, clinics, and more. The COA has plans for its own senior center. The Town of Shefield has acquired land, has designed plans that have been submitted with a block grant application to the state for a possible $800,000, and has pledged another $450,000 if that grant is received. News from the state should come soon.

In the meanwhile, efforts continue to increase programming and support for Shefield seniors through the COA; its director, John A. Miller; and the Friends of the Senior Center — recently formed under the direction of Pauline Schumann and now seeking approval as a 501(c)3 organization in order to accept money for the new facility.

Two recent activities of note have helped to boost the community’s awareness and support for both the “Friends” and the COA. One was “A Celebration of Traditional Music and Dance,” a free weekend and a multi-organizational effort culminating with a concert, dance, and workshops, which brought together all generations. It was a celebration of many things including the generosity of Shefield citizens for approving the matching funds.

The other important activity was the recent Volunteer Recognition Lunch at the Egremont Country Club, which recognized many for their service. These volunteers help meet the needs of the growing senior population in Shefield. In his remarks, Miller referred to Elder Affairs Secretary Mike Festa’s statement “Volunteerism is the Fabric of Community.” Miller thanked those attending – about 40 in number – for the many different ways in which they were giving to their community as advocates for the senior population. Thanks went to Meals on Wheels drivers; our SHINE counselor Winnie Vertette; and individuals who make our Third Thursday lunches happen; are involved with our newsletter; fix so many things; provide seniors with transportation to town meetings, elections, doctor appointment; and COA gatherings; help in the office; as well as Schumann and the folks hard at work in the formation of the “Friends” group and so many more.

Guests from Elder Services, including Executive Director Robert P. Dean, Cynthia Costello, Sandy Alfonso, and Gail Rothwell, provided information about different services available through Elder Services.

Perhaps the most moving minutes of the afternoon came when Elder Services Nutrition Services Supervisor Sandy Alfonso shared anonymous comments from Shefield Meals on Wheels clients about the program and the drivers. They were truly expressions of gratitude, appreciation, and love, which the attendees of this Volunteer Recognition Lunch took home in their minds and hearts as reminders of the importance and value of their jobs well done.

John-Arthur Miller is chair of the Sheffield Council on Aging.
Berkshire Senior

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Beat the heat before it beats you!

By Simone Gaunt and Laura Feakes

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, more people die from heat waves each year than from hurricanes, lightning, tornadoes, floods and earthquakes combined.

Seniors are particularly vulnerable to the effects of heat stress. Because heat-related health issues are preventable, people and communities need to be aware of who is at greatest risk and what actions can be taken to prevent a heat-related illness or death.

People aged 65 years and older are more prone to heat stress than younger people for several reasons:

• Seniors do not adjust as well as young people to sudden changes in temperature.
• They are more likely to have a chronic medical condition that upsets normal body responses to heat.
• They are more likely to take prescription medicines that impair the body’s ability to regulate its temperature or inhibit perspiration.

Follow these prevention tips to protect yourself from heat-related stress:

• Drink cool, non alcoholic, non-cafeinated beverages. (If your doctor generally limits the amount of fluid you drink or has you on water pills, be sure to ask how much you should drink when the weather is hot. Also, avoid extremely cold liquids because they can cause cramps.)
• Rest.
• Take a cool shower, bath, or sponge bath.
• If possible, seek an air-conditioned environment.
• If you don’t have air conditioning, consider visiting an air-conditioned shopping mall or public library to cool off.
• Keep warm areas ventilated if not cooled. Proper ventilation will promote adequate sweat evaporation to cool the skin.
• Wear lightweight clothing.
• If possible, remain indoors in the heat of the day.
• Do not engage in strenuous activities.
• Sunblocks and sunscreens with a protection factor of 15 (SPF 15) can be very helpful when one is exposed to extreme direct sunlight.

Protect senior relatives and neighbors

• Visit seniors at least twice a day and watch them for signs of heat exhaustion or heat stroke.
• Invite them to air-conditioned locations if they have transportation problems.
• Whenever possible, make sure seniors have access to an electric fan.

Steps to take for someone with heat stress

If you see any signs of severe heat stress, you may be dealing with a life-threatening emergency. Have someone call for immediate medical attention.

Heat exhaustion

Heat exhaustion is a milder form of heat-related illness that can develop after several days of exposure to high temperatures and inadequate or unbalanced or unbalanced replacement of fluids.

Warning signs vary but may include the following:

• Heavy sweating, paleness, muscle cramps, tiredness, weakness, dizziness headache, nausea or vomiting & fainting.
• Skin: may be cool and moist.
• Pulse rate: fast and weak.
• Breathing: fast and shallow.

Simone Gaunt and Laura Feakes are Elder Services Information and Referral Specialists.

Heat stroke

Heat stroke is the most serious heat related illness. It occurs when the body becomes unable to control its temperature: the body’s temperature rises rapidly, the body loses its ability to sweat, and is unable to cool down. Body temperatures rise to 106 degrees F or higher within 10 to 15 minutes. Heat stroke can cause death or permanent disability if emergency treatment is not provided.

Warning signs vary but may include the following:

An extremely high body temperature, red, hot, and dry skin (no sweating) rapid strong pulse, throbbing headache, dizziness and nausea.
Gum disease, catch it before it’s too late
By John George, D.D.S.

It has been estimated that 80% of adults have some form of gum disease. Gum disease is also one of the leading causes of tooth loss in adults. Thanks to all of the wonderful advancements in dentistry in the last 30 years, a growing number of people keep more of their natural teeth later in life, resulting in a higher chance of developing gum disease.

Gum disease, also known as periodontal disease, is a chronic bacterial infection of the supporting structures of teeth. In its mild form there is some redness of the gums where they meet the teeth. If not treated, it will progress to a more advanced stage called periodontitis, which results in gums starting to separate from the teeth, and the bone surrounding the teeth beginning to deteriorate. If left untreated, the bone deteriorates further until the teeth become loose and ultimately fall out.

As I mentioned earlier, gum disease is a bacterial infection. The bacteria that cause gum disease reside in an area between the tooth and the gum called the pocket. In a healthy mouth, the pocket measures no more than two to three millimeters (mm). As the disease progresses, the gum loses some of its attachment and as a result the pocket becomes deeper. In severe cases these pockets measure 10 millimeters or more.

To aid in the diagnosis, the dentist regularly measures these pockets and recommends treatment appropriate to how deep the pocket measures. A pocket that measures four to five mm usually can be treated with a “deep cleaning” or root planing. This is more involved than a regular cleaning and usually requires anesthesia.

Any pocket greater than six mm usually requires gum surgery to properly treat the infection. The surgery is designed to eliminate the pocket and thereby create a situation where the patient can properly maintain and clean the areas. Surgery may be performed in the conventional way with a scalpel and sutures, or more recently, with a laser, which I find is much more comfortable for the patient.

There are several contributing factors that can quicken the progression of periodontal disease. Smoking and diabetes are two of the most common. Smoking will generally increase the progression of the disease by at least 50%. I also find that any treatment done on smokers will only show half as good results compared to those that don’t smoke. For diabetics, their immune system is generally compromised to begin with and this makes any treatment more difficult.

Gum disease usually progresses without any obvious symptoms. It is not until the advanced stages that a patient becomes aware there is a problem, which makes treatment that much more difficult. It is for this reason that a regular dental checkup is so very important. If diagnosed and treated in its early stages, the treatment is much more predictable and less involved. The most effective way of preventing gum disease is to practice good oral hygiene and have regularly scheduled cleanings and checkups at a professional dental office.

Dr. John C. George is a 1987 graduate of Georgetown University dental school. He has a private family dental practice in Pittsfield.

For Your Health

Tips for drinking fluids

- Every morning fill up a container that will hold a total of two quarts of water. Drink water throughout the day so that the containers is empty by evening.
- Keep a tally sheet on your refrigerator or bulletin board. Each time you drink a glass of water, mark it down on the daily tally sheet.
- Drink water at the same time each day.
- To avoid dehydration and to prevent heat illness:
  - Drink plenty of water. “Pre-hydrate” – drink 6 ounces to 8 ounces of water every 20 to 30 minutes, starting several hours to one day prior to working in the heat.
  - Avoid excesses of salt, sugar and caffeine.
  - Be aware alcohol can have a dehydrating effect for several days after the alcohol itself leaves the system. Drink two glasses of water for every serving of alcohol.
  - Be aware some medications can affect the body’s ability to handle heat. These include antihistamines, allergy medications, and some anti-hypertension medications.
  - When working in the heat, take frequent breaks in a cool area.
  - Stay inside on very hot days, but if you don’t have air conditioning, visit the library, a movie, or your senior center.

This article was drawn from Elder Care of Wisconsin and the website, seniors-site.
**Meals on Wheels**

- **Adams**: 743-8333
- **Becket**: 623-8934
- **Cheshire**: 743-9719
- **Dalton**: 684-2000
- **Gt. Barrington**: 528-4118
- **Hinsdale**: 655-2310
- **Jewish Federation**: 442-2200
- **Lee**: 243-5545
- **Lenox**: 637-5535
- **North Adams**: 662-3125
- **Pittsfield**: 499-9346
- **Stockbridge**: 298-3118
- **Williamstown**: 458-8350

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<td>Hot Dog Roll</td>
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**Meal Site Information**

To make reservations to eat at a Meal Site, call at least a day in advance, by 11:30 a.m.:

- **Lanesboro**: 442-4786
- **Lee**: 243-5545
- **Lenox**: 637-5535
- **North Adams**: 662-3125
- **Pittsfield**: 499-9346
- **Stockbridge**: 298-3118
- **Williamstown**: 458-8350

**July**

**Help Deliver Meals on Wheels**

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Elder Services needs your help delivering Meals on Wheels throughout Berkshire County. Meals are delivered each weekday.

Flexible schedules and mileage reimbursement are available. Volunteer Meals on Wheels drivers must be dependable and want to help seniors remain independent. A valid driver’s license and reliable transportation are required.

Hours are 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 pm.

For more information, contact Sandy Alfonso at 499-0524 x727 or 1-800-544-5242.

**MEMO: To Meals on Wheels Clients**

If you will not be home when your meal is delivered, PLEASE tell your driver or call 1-800-981-5201. If you have a food allergy and want to know a food item's content, call 499-0524 or 1-800-544-5242.

Menu subject to change without notice

* MOW substitution
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