When Opportunity Knocks—Will You Answer?

By Christina Baldwin
Board Member, Island Senior Resources

“Knock, knock.”
“Who’s there?”
“Baby.”
“Baby who?”
“Baby New Year!”

Yup, it’s that time again. The holidays are over, and the images of Father Time trading places with Baby New Year are flitting across television screens and newspaper ads for end of the year/New Year sales. There are many things we are culturally programmed to consider as the calendar changes. Folks make resolutions and set intentions, go on a diet, or a vacation. The New Year can also be a time of regrets about what we did or did not do, or opportunities we missed in the twelve months passed. That’s why the Greek god Janus (for which this month is obviously named) had two faces: one looking back and one looking forward.

In 2018, the theme for these articles is OPPORTUNITY. Cambridge Dictionary defines opportunity as:

an occasion or situation which makes it possible to do something that you want to do or have to do, or the possibility of doing something.

What that means, I think, is opportunity notices the choices in front us, and stepping into what we want in the way of saying “yes.”

Even though some of us may relate more to the image of “Father/Mother Time,” than to “Baby New Year,” as long as we are creative and engaged, opportunities can continue to enrich our lives. In the spirit of Janus (looking back and looking forward) here are some suggestions for beginning the year.

Step 1: What was on your list last year that you want to roll over into this year? No regrets, just recommit.

Last year our neighbor wanted to submit a quilt he’d done to Island County Fair. Life intervened with health issues and family commitments and he didn’t get it done in time. This year, he’s continuing to sew. “Sew now, then when the summer comes, I’m done!” he says. “I’ve got some quiet time in the winter and I’m going to finish it early, hang it on the wall and enjoy it myself for a while.”

Welcome to 2018!
The Bizarre and Unique Holidays of January

By Barry Wenaas
Program Assistant, Oak Harbor Senior Center

Welcome to 2018—Let’s start the year with Bizarre and Unique Holidays for the month of January. When looking up the Holidays for January, I found at least one per day and some had 2-4 events per day—all 30 days.

January 1st you have National Hangover Day, whether you drink or not, just look at it as a hangover from 2016! January 1st is also better known as New Year’s Day, but on Jan 3rd, there is Festival of Sleep Day. It is the opportunity to sleep in, doze, nap and catch 40 winks. It is felt that it is a perfect day for the Festival—the Holidays are over, WOW! Weren’t they exhausting!

Then on January 4th we have National Spaghetti Day. Grab a bowl, fill with spaghetti, top with a generous helping of your favorite sauce, add meatballs and parmesan cheese and dig in. Did you know that Americans consume about 20 pounds of pasta per person per year? Now for all you Ladies—we have Male January continued on page 12

QUESTION OF THE MONTH: WHAT IS YOUR NEW YEAR’S RESOLUTION?

Linda Osier, 69
Oak Harbor
“My resolution is to not make New Year’s Resolutions.”

Leanne Hoover, 88
Langley
“To help everyone I can and spread joy.”

Mary Jo Morris, 74
Oak Harbor
“To get back into my physical fitness routine.”

Jack Mathisen, 57
Coupeville
“I’m going to exercise more. I do a lot of walking.”

Jean Mathisen, 70
Freeland
“To competently assist Oak Harbor residents with Medicare issues as a SHIBA volunteer.”

Island Senior Resources
14594 SR 525
Langley, WA 98260
From the Executive Director of ISR

By Cheryn Weiser, Executive Director, Island Senior Resources

Our capacity as humans to make lemons out of lemonade is one of the great adaptive skills that fuels survival for all species. Recently at Senior Thrift in Freeland, we received a huge lemon in the form of the fire that happened July 23, 2017. Volunteers and staff were particularly thrust into a set of unfamiliar circumstances that called upon each of us to find ways to see the crisis as an opportunity. The Chinese character for crisis is translated as dangerous opportunity. We embraced that definition.

What allowed all of us to move ahead and find opportunity in the crisis was the devotion of our community in the form of donations, volunteer support, and a great sense of “team.” Everyone that was called upon to work with us in the restoration of Senior Thrift held the vision of the store re-opening on November 24, Black Friday. And, the power of vision, community, dedication, and caring made it happen.

As we age, we are frequently tested in our ability to find opportunity in the often new and difficult circumstances that we face. We must reach deeply inside ourselves to find the right ingredients that allow us to turn difficult circumstances into opportunities. Connections with others, our own sense of resilience, and our ability to see the glass as half full instead of half empty make all the difference as we journey through our older years.

As we enter 2018, I wish each of you that sense of resilience that allows you to find the opportunity in small and large ways. May you turn lemons into lemonade!

What’s On Your Teacup List?

We’ve all heard of making a “bucket list” of things we want to do in our lifetime. But have you made a teacup list? A WHAT? A teacup list! No, it’s not a list of tiny animals that fit in a teacup, or an inventory of delicate porcelain teacups from Grandma. It’s a list of the tiny things that you can do, each day to make a difference in your life and the lives of those around you, by trying something new, going somewhere you’ve never been, or making that opportunity possible for someone you might not even know. So drink in the new, fill up your teacup list, and see how many of these tiny opportunities you can enjoy in the months ahead. Little things really do matter.

“Great opportunities to help others seldom come, but small ones surround us daily.” – Sally Koch
Step 2: Is there something you’ve been saying you want to do, but keep putting off because realistically it seems too big to tackle? Readjust and reclaim.

I’ve been meaning to clean out that layer of household goods that I’m no longer using—eying the clutter in my closets and the storeroom of our home office. Just as I was gathering momentum, the Senior Thrift store in Freeland had a fire and closed. Then, I was traveling mid-fall and missed the window of opportunity when the store was accepting goods to restock inventory. Well, it’s open now, accepting donations again, and I’m ready to reclaim this task. I’ve had several months to mentally assess my plan and the master bedroom closet better. It’s open now, ready to reclaim this task! I’ve had several months to mentally assess my plan and the master bedroom closet better.

Step 3: Is there something you’ve wanted to explore? Just say yes and try it!

My friend MK is an inspiration. When her career ended early due to disabling chronic health illnesses, she moved to Whidbey and took a Forest Stewardship certification to preserve the woods around their home. Then she took guitar lessons and song writing courses, and now she’s taken up boxing to build her core strength and balance. “Learning is a survival skill,” she says. “I feel better when I’m learning something new and I’ve been very lucky in finding gifted teachers. Whidbey’s a great place for that.”

Step 4: What is one opportunity in the next thirty days that you don’t want to miss? I’m ready, step up, and meet the moment.

Preparation is often essential to our readiness to try something new. Before my grandchildren come to visit again this summer, I want to be able to ride my bicycle to Freeland so that I can join our grandson in jaunts to town for his favorite chocolate donuts. The hills up Bush Point Road are steep in both directions.

First, I have to dust off the bike, get it out of the garden shed, fill the tires, and make sure I have working flasher lights, a helmet, and a safety vest. Then, I need to start building up my leg muscles and cardiovascular capacity. January will be pedaling around the neighborhood, then up to the State Park and back. February will be trying the monster roller-coaster hill heading toward the Mutiny Bay Road intersection. (Yes, I give myself permission to walk it the first few times.)

I know it will be work. I know I’ll never catch up to my grandson going uphill or downhill, but experiencing renewed freedom and strength is an opportunity I don’t want to miss, even in my seventies.

2018 is here. Let’s all embrace opportunity, welcome the new, and amaze ourselves!
American Red Cross
Serving Northwest Washington

Protect your Family with new FREE 10-year smoke alarms!

- Smoke alarms and fire escape plans save lives.
- If your smoke detectors are over 10 years old, they need to be replaced.

If you don’t have working alarms and an escape plan, we can help. The American Red Cross will provide and install smoke alarms in your home for FREE!

We can help you be prepared.
To take advantage of this offer:
Call (360) 733-3290 ext. 0 or visit getasmokealarm.org

COLLEEN’S
FESTIVE
FETA CHEESE BALLS
Terrific Easy Appetizers!
(yields about 16-24 balls)

Gently mix the following ingredients:
- ¼ cup dried cranberries
- 2 oz. feta cheese
- 2 TBSP Ranch dressing
- ½ TBSP dried ranch dressing
- 2 TBSP chopped green onion
- 8 oz. softened cream cheese

Roll mixture into 1-2 inch balls. Then, chop 1 cup nuts (your choice of walnuts, pecans, or almonds). Roll cheese balls in chopped nuts. Spike each with a straight pretzel stick for easy pickup. Enjoy!

The Home You Want
the Care You Deserve

At Maple Ridge, our philosophy is to offer exceptional care while providing choice, independence, fun and laughter.

We offer a full range of services designed to support your lifestyle.

Visit today and discover Retirement Perfected™

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By Bonaventure®
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Freeland, WA 98249
(360) 331-1303
BonaventureSenior.com

Assisted Living
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Seniors for Seniors Adoption Program
The details are simple!

- Adopter must be 62 or older
- Dog or cat must be 8 or older
- WAIF will waive adoption fees!

Visit us at our four adoption locations:
From Freeland to Oak Harbor! (Dogs are located in Coupeville only)
For more info, call (360) 678-8900 or (360) 321-8660 to schedule a visit.
Visit our website! www.waifanimals.org
Social Security’s Representative Payee Program

If you receive, and oversee, the Social Security or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits for an adult who cannot manage his or her own benefits, you must register with Social Security to be the beneficiary’s Representative Payee.

Having a power of attorney, or joint bank account, with the beneficiary, is not the same as being a representative payee. You need to be a Representative Payee to have the legal authority to negotiate and manage a beneficiary’s Social Security and/or SSI benefits.

A Representative Payee’s responsibility is to use that individual’s benefits for current needs and to securely care for unspent funds to pay for future needs. As their Representative Payee, you must keep careful records of all expenses and provide an annual report to Social Security of how the funds were used or saved.

How do you become a Representative Payee? You must apply and be accepted by Social Security. Go to www.socialsecurity.gov/payee for information and the application.

Thank you for reading Island Times. Please support our advertisers. Please recycle this publication when you are finished reading it.
New To Medicare?
We can help sort through options.
J. Johnson Insurance, LLC
Now in Freeland
360-341-1848
jjins@whidbey.com
Naomi DeMartini, Agent
Medicare including Medicare Supplement plans, Medicare Advantage plans, Medicare Prescription plans along with individual & small group plans.
1635 Main Street #A7, Freeland, WA 98249

Join us for LUNCH & LEARN

Presenters will offer information on key topics affecting the lives of seniors, their caregivers, families and friends.

AT THE COUPEVILLE HUB • WEDNESDAYS, 1 PM
Events begin at 1 p.m. at the Coupeville United Methodist Church, 608 N. Main Street. Lunch is served every Wednesday at noon (suggested donation $5). Contact Carol Walker: (360) 678-0636, bigrockdesigns@whidbey.net.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic and Presenter</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 3</td>
<td>Bingo</td>
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<td>Jan. 10</td>
<td>&quot;It's never too early until it's too late to have THE conversation.&quot; Carla Jolley, MN, ARNP, AOCN, CHPN, WhidbeyHealth Palliative Care, will discuss how to find the right words to talk about end of life decisions and advanced care planning with your loved ones, doctor and others.</td>
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<td>Jan. 17</td>
<td>What is Careage? Sean O'Neill, Executive Director for Careage of Whidbey will discuss what the only skilled nursing facility on Whidbey Island has to offer Island residents. Also onsite is a day care center for children ages 1 to 12 which provides a fun, energetic environment for Careage residents.</td>
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<td>Jan. 24</td>
<td>Small Miracles that have Big Impact Vern Olsen, board member for Small Miracles of Coupeville will discuss how a small band of volunteers who care about the health and well-being of their friends and neighbors, help them cover medical expenses they wouldn’t otherwise be able to afford.</td>
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<td>Jan. 31</td>
<td>Aging in Place</td>
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<td>Chasity Smith, Director of Aging &amp; Disability Resources presents how to plan ahead to ensure you can remain in your own home. Join us to receive guidance and resources available to help you safely “age in place.”</td>
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ISLAND SENIOR RESOURCES (BAYVIEW) • TUESDAYS, 12:30 PM
Lunch (optional) will be served 11:45 am – 12:30 pm (suggested donation $5) followed by a free presentation. See our menu section for what is being served for lunch. Come eat, socialize, and learn!

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 9</td>
<td>The Magic of Travel</td>
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<td>Sherry Auer will share her experiences and speak to the magic of travel in Scotland, Ireland, and beyond.</td>
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<td>Jan. 23</td>
<td>Estate Planning</td>
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<td>Join attorney, Ken O’Mhuan, in a session that explores the elements of estate planning. (This session will run from 12:30-2 pm)</td>
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<td>Jan. 30</td>
<td>Macedonia</td>
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<td>Experience a virtual tour of charming historic Macedonia with Michael Seraphinoff who is connected to this culture with many heart felt ties, and learn about language and culture opportunities at Northwest Language and Cultural Center.</td>
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OAK HARBOR SENIOR CENTER • 11:30 AM
All Lunch Bunch/Brown Bag Series are open and FREE to the public and begin at 11:30 am to 12:30 pm. Come Play Bingo! Aging & Disability Resources will also be available to help you safely “age in place.”

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<td>Jan. 23</td>
<td>Aquatic Therapy</td>
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<td>Janet Wardell will explain the benefits which include strengthening, balance, circulation, muscle relaxation, and muscle memory improvements, by using the waters properties of buoyancy, resistance and hydrostatic pressure. Janet is a Physical Therapy Assistant certified ATR Aquatic Therapist.</td>
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Disclaimer: Island Senior Resources (Bayview and the HUB) offers a variety of information, classes, and presentations, but does not endorse any speaker or vendor. Presentations are meant as an educational opportunity and no solicitation is allowed. We suggest attendees explore a variety of options before making any decisions regarding services. Island Senior Resources will not share your information with any vendor or speaker. If you choose to share your contact information, this is at your own discretion.
## Oak Harbor Senior Center Activities 360-279-4580

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### Island Senior Resources (Bayview) Activities 360-321-1600 or 360-678-3373

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### Dates and Times of All Scheduled Events Are Subject to Change. It’s Always Advisable to Call to Confirm.
There will be a stop at the duty free shop.

Home and to do some shopping on goods, baked by the students, to bring of the culinary school in Vancouver, BC. There will be time to buy delicious baked gourmet lunch, served by the students.

Let us treat ourselves to a 3-course ture or art to grace your garden.

You can buy new plants or unique handcrafted wares, savor delicious specialty foods, or find that special piece of furni-

OAK HARBOR SENIOR CENTER

For more information, call the Travel Desk, 360-279-4587

CAPE FLATTERY

Thursday, February 1 – Friday, February 2

8 AM (2/1) - 6 PM (2/2)

Members: Single $225 • Double $160

Member: Single $245 • Double $180

Price includes hotel, sack lunch on the first day, and breakfast.

Tired of being inside all winter? Come with us to the Northwestern-most Point in the Contiguous United States! The views are incredible, some of the most iconic beach scenes of the wilderness at its best.

Taking the Coupeville – Port Townsend Ferry we will travel the peninsula along the Cape Flattery Scenic Byway to Cape Flattery. After adventuring we will return for the evening to the centrally located Red Lion in Port Angeles. The next day we will return to Oak Harbor after a stop in Port Townsend for a no host lunch. What a great trip! Cape Flat-

Port Angeles and Port Townsend in one.

COSTCO RUN

Thursday, March 8

9 AM - 2 PM

Member: $20 • Non-Member: $35

Let us do the driving! We will head over to the Burlington Costco to check out all the great product. Stock up on your own.

SNOWISH ANTIQUE SHOPPING

Thursday, March 15

8:30 AM - 5 PM

Member: $35 • Non-Member: $50

Let’s go antiquing in the Antique Capital of the Northwest — Snohomish! Over 175 antique dealers in 11 shops. So many stores, so much to see! Enjoy lunch on your own.

DEALER’S CHOICE CASINOS & SHOPPING

Monday, March 19

9 AM - 4:30 PM

Member: $27 • Non-Member: $42

Pick your favorite Tulalip Casino, Quil Ceda Casino or discount shopping at the outlet mall. We will drop off at each Casino and once you have had your fill of skits, take the shuttle from Tulalip Casino to the outlet malls. Would you rather get straight to the shopping? Our driver will drop you off right at the mall.

CABARET

Sunday, April 8

11:30 AM – 6:30 PM

Member: $95 • Non-Member: $120

Come hear some of the most memorable songs in theatre history, including Caba-

ret, Willkommen, and Maybe this Time. Welcome to the Kit Kat Klub, where Sally Bowles and ensemble take the state to tantalize the crowd in pre-WWII Ger-

many.

At the Mt. Baker Theatre in Bellingham. We will stop for a no host brunch or lunch prior to the show.

OLATE DOGS

Saturday, June 9

10:30 AM – 5:30 PM

Member: $45 • Non-Member: $60

These fuzzy faced winners of American’s Got Talent and their owner – handler, Richard Olate have been thrilling audi-

ences and promoting animal welfare for some time. The dogs are rescue dogs trained to deliver high energy, fast paced canine acts filled with dog tricks, human aero-

batics and humor.

At the Mt. Baker Theatre in Bellingham. We will have a no host meal stop before the show.

ANDREA BOCELLI AT KEY ARENA

Sunday, June 24

3:30 PM – 11:30 PM

Member: $168 • Non-Member: $190

This June, legendary tenor Andrea Bocelli will be returning to the US for a special concert series and will be at the Key Arena in Seattle. The unique perfor-

mances will feature a new popular reperto-

tore from Bocelli’s latest album, Cinema along with Bocelli’s beloved repertoire of Arias, love songs, and crossover hits. Ticket includes transportation. We will arrive in Seattle in time to enjoy a no host dinner before the show.

MYSTERY LUNCHES

Tuesday, January 16

Wednesday, February 21

Thursday, March 22

Members: $20 • Non-members: $35

Price includes transportation only.

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Thursday, March 22

Members: $20 • Non-members: $35

Price includes transportation only.

CASINOS

SKAGIT CASINO

Monday, January 22

9 AM - 4 PM

Member: $23 • Non-Member: $40

Rumor has it there are new machines and a new menu at the Skagit Casino, so let’s give it a try! We normally receive some free slot play and a discount on lunch.

ANGEL OF THE WINDS

Tuesday, February 27

9 AM - 4:30 PM

Member: $25 • Non-Member: $40

Let’s see if our favorite casino is still the friendliest. The perks include the usual discount on the buffet and $5 slot play.

HERITAGE OF AMERICA

April 20-29, 2018

Double: $3,549 • Single: $2,469

Includes round trip air from Seattle, lodging, hotel transfers and 14 meals.

Trip Presentation January 23, 10:30 am at the Oak Harbor Senior Center.

Double: $2,350 • Single: $1,075

Includes round trip air from Seattle, lodging, hotel transfers and 9 meals.

Trip Presentation January 23, 10:30 am at the Oak Harbor Senior Center.

Double: $2,350 • Single: $1,075

Includes round trip air from Seattle, lodging, hotel transfers and 9 meals.

This incredible tour program features a 7 day/6 night itinerary flying roundtrip from Sea-

tle to Bellingham including transfers from Oak Harbor, unpacking once and staying for 6 nights in beautiful Cape Cod. Our hotel located conveniently in Mid Cape, provides the perfect location for a week’s stay on Massachusetts’ famed Cape Cod.

Oak Harbor Senior Center, 360-279-4580 | Island Senior Resources, (360) 321-1600, (360) 678-3373
ISLAND SENIOR RESOURCES

For more information, call 360-321-1600 or 360-678-3373

CASINO TRIPS IN 2018

All casino trips depart/return from Bayview Community Hall Parking lot. Depart 9 AM • Return 4:30 PM.
Member: $35 • Non-member: $45

SWINOMISH January 9
QUIL CEDA CREEK February 13
TULAPIT RESORT March 13
ANGEL OF THE WINDS April 10
SKAGIT VALLEY May 8
SWINOMISH June 12
TULAPIT RESORT July 10
ANGEL OF THE WINDS August 14
QUIL CEDA CREEK September 11
SKAGIT VALLEY October 9
SWINOMISH November 13
TULAPIT RESORT December 11

Volunteers Needed

Time Together Adult Day Program – Bayview or Oak Harbor

By Mel Watson
Time Together Program Director, Island Senior Resources

If you are looking for a meaningful opportunity to give back to our community, this is one that will change your life and add sparkle to your week.

We are looking for volunteers who love spending time with older adults. Our program helps families stay together by giving respite to family caregivers and meaningful engagement to participants. Program attendees have a broad range of physical and/or cognitive challenges. Volunteers assist in a social and fun environment, helping participants succeed in activities and social engagement.

Experience preferred. Mindfulness is vital. All volunteers receive training at no cost.

If you are interested, please contact:
Mel Watson, Director
Time Together Adult Day Services
(360) 321-1623
mel@islandseniorservices.org
www.senior-resources.org

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Call 360-321-1600 or 360-678-3373 to schedule your personal tour

SHIBA Medicare Advising

Will you be going on Medicare in the next 6 months and/or want to know more about Medicare? Come attend a free seminar, “Getting Ready for Medicare,” presented by SHIBA (Statewide Health Insurance Benefit Advisers) volunteers. Seminars will begin in February; call Oak Harbor Senior Center or Island Senior Resources for dates.

The Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors (SHIBA) offers unbiased and confidential advising for Medicare benefits and insurance options to people of all ages and backgrounds. The program is sponsored locally by Island Senior Resources and is available at three sites throughout Whidbey Island: Island Senior Resources at Bayview, Oak Harbor Senior Center, and WhidbeyHealth Medical Center.

To schedule a free, individual counseling session, please call:
For Tuesday appointments: Oak Harbor Senior Center, 360-240-4580
For Wednesday appointments: WhidbeyHealth, 360-678-5151
For Friday appointments: ISR Bayview, 360-321-1600 or 360-678-3373 x 0

SHIBA regularly hosts informational presentations, “Getting Ready for Medicare.” Call for upcoming dates and locations.

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ENVIRONMENTAL AND EMOTIONAL WELLNESS

Continuing our journey through the 8 Dimensions of Wellness

By Liz Lange, Administrator, City of Oak Harbor Senior Services

In the last three editions of Island Times we discussed the idea of holistic wellness through attending to the 8 dimensions of wellness in our individual lives. We have focused on the need of intellectual wellness, recognizing your talents and seeking ways to use your knowledge and skill as well as social and spiritual wellness which includes connecting with your community and own cultural background as well as expanding your sense of purpose and meaning in life. We also covered environmental and emotional wellness, the ability to cope effectively with life and have good health by occupying pleasant environments. So, how are you doing on those five so far? What changes have you made in your daily routines to incorporate strengthening your intellectual, social, spiritual, environmental and emotional wellness?

As you continually focus on those aspects, let’s round it all off with the remaining three. Financial, occupational and physical wellness are essential to our holistic view of wellness.

FINANCIAL — Satisfaction with current and future financial situations. Financial wellness is a feeling of satisfaction about your financial situation. Finances are a common stressor on what you find. This is especially meaningful for many who are on fixed incomes.

OCCUPATIONAL — Personal satisfaction and enrichment from one’s work. Occupational wellness is a sense of satisfaction with your choice of work or volunteer opportunities. Occupational wellness involves balancing work and leisure time, building relationships with coworkers, and managing workplace stress. Finding work, whether paid or volunteer, that fits with your values, interests, and skills can help maintain occupational wellness.

PHYSICAL — Recognizing the need for physical activity, healthy foods, and sleep. Physical wellness is affected by physical activity, healthy nutrition, and adequate sleep. There are many examples of physical activity that range in levels of intensity from light to vigorous. Maintaining your physical health can include yoga, bike riding, jumping rope, engaging in sports, running, walking, jogging, skating, dancing, tennis, and gardening. This is an easy one! Come into the Oak Harbor Senior Center to start your physical activity plan with one of our many and varied classes.

Join or Renew Your Membership

Annual membership with the Oak Harbor Senior Center is available for anyone 50+ years of age and is $40 a year. The dues benefit members and provide financial help to the Center. Membership includes discount prices on travel, classes and facility rentals. For more information, or to sign up for membership, come by the center at 51 SE Jerome Street in Oak Harbor.

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Laura Sparr will speak about finding Ship Passenger Lists for your genealogical research.

All are welcome to attend. For more information contact Margie Kott, 360-675-3146

W.I.G.S. (Whidbey Island Genealogical Searchers)

Tuesday, January 9, 1pm, 2720 Heller Road, Fire Station #25

Barry Wenaas

Program Assistant

Island Senior Resources, (360) 321-1600, (360) 678-3373 • www.senior-resources.org

By Liz Lange, Administrator, City of Oak Harbor Senior Services
What is the Older Americans Act?

As older Americans, it might be good for us to understand this act. The Older Americans Act (OA) funds critical services that keep older adults healthy and independent—services like meals, job training, senior centers, caregiver support, transportation, health promotion, benefits enrollment, and more.

From them to now

In 1965, Congress enacted the Older Americans Act, which established the U.S. Administration on Aging (AoA) and state agencies on aging to address the social services needs of older people. The Act is considered the major vehicle for promoting the delivery of social services to the aging population. Its mission is broad: to help older people maintain maximum independence in their homes and communities and to promote a continuum of care for the vulnerable elderly. In successive amendments, Congress authorized targeted programs to respond to specific needs of the older population.

Nearly five years after it expired, legislation to reauthorize the Act was passed by Congress with unanimous, bipartisan support. The bill was signed into law by the President on April 19, 2016.

Who Benefits from the Older Americans Act?

The intent of the OA is to promote the dignity of older adults by providing services and supports that enable them to remain independent and engaged citizens within their communities. The original OA Act established the Administration on Aging (AoA) and the aging services network that provides essential home and community-based supportive services. AoA is also the federal coordinating agency for Community Living (ACL) within the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). OAA funding is distributed to 56 state agencies, over 200 tribal organizations, two native Hawaiian organizations, more than 600 area agencies on aging, and 20,000 local service providers. While the program is open to older individuals, generally defined as 60 and older, it focuses on offering assistance to persons with the greatest social or economic need, such as low-income or older adults living in rural areas. Most services do not require means testing or copayments, but donations may be requested and some nonprofit programs may have cost sharing on a sliding scale. Unfortunately, years of limited funding have restricted access to OA services, resulting in waiting lists for many of these essential programs. The benefits of OAA programs are not just for older adults. They also support families by offering services to caregivers, and they provide jobs in the health and long-term care sectors in local communities around the country.

What are the Benefits?

The OAA authorizes a range of services and supports that help older Americans remain as independent and productive as possible in their own homes and communities. The OA acts consists of seven titles. Titles I and II declare the Act’s objectives and establish the AoA, the federal coordinating agency for OAA services. Title III—Grants for States and Community Programs on Aging—covers supportive services such as case management, senior center services, in-home services, transportation, and information and referral. Also included under Title III are nutrition programs, such as meals-on-wheels and senior center group meals; family caregiver support; and health promotion and disease prevention services. Funds for Title III programs are distributed based on a state’s proportionate share of either the age 60 or older population or, in the case of caregiver support programs, the age 70 or older population. Each state then has its own formula for allocating OAA funding to area agencies on aging which enable the delivery of services to local areas. Title IV of the OAA provides support for training, research and demonstration projects while Title V authorizes the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP). This program, which is managed by the Department of Labor, provides support for part-time employment for individuals 55 and over who are low-income, unemployed and have poor employment potential. Title VI covers Grants for Services for Native Americans and provides funding to tribal organizations, Native Alaskan organizations and nonprofits representing Native Hawaiians.

Finally, Title VII provides support for programs to ensure protection of the rights of older adults, including the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program and elder abuse prevention services. The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program is required to investigate and resolve complaints made by or on behalf of nursing facility residents or other institutionalized populations. Title VII funds are allocated based on the state’s proportion of residents age 60 and older.

OAA Funding

The Older Americans Act has a broad and critical mission. However, it is plagued with modest resources to support the service continuum. Over the past 20 years, the OAA has lost ground due to our rapidly-increasing frail, older population, and federal funding that has not kept pace with either inflation or growth in the older population. Eligible seniors face waiting periods for many OAA services in most states.

The Budget Control Act of 2011 imposed cuts in non-defense discretionary (NDD) spending Title V authorizes OAA programs, and resulted in dramatic reductions in senior nutrition and other programs in Fiscal Year (FY) 2013. Under provisions of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013, FY 2014 and 2015 funding was restored to pre-sequestration levels for nutrition programs, but other programs received less money than they did in FY 2012, President Obama’s FY 2017 budget proposes an increase of $28.4 million for the OAA, including $50 million for Older Americans Act Title III Supportive Services and $14.6 million for Title III Nutrition programs. Other programs are flat funded, with requested amounts remaining the same as the programs received for FY 2016 due to the 2015 Bipartisan Budget Agreement.

The cumulative impact of decades of inadequate funding, a rapidly growing older population and unbalanced attempts at deficit reduction could threaten the very sustainability of OAA programs, as well as the health, dignity, and independence of older Americans. The Leadership Council of Aging Organizations (a coalition of 72 non-profit organizations serving seniors, including the National Committee) determined that in order for OAA funding to simply catch up with the growth in the senior population, its appropriation would have to be increased by at least 12 percent each year for several years.

Your voice counts, let it be heard! Let your congress members know that you use and rely on programs funded by OAA, and encourage them to support legislation to increase the appropriation.

Send our congress members a note and let them know you support these important issues:

SENATOR PATTY MURRAY
154 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

SENATOR MARIA CANTWELL
511 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

REPRESENTATIVE RICK LARSEN
2131 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

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On January 23rd you can take the day to measure your feet—why? It’s best not to speculate. Thank goodness Congress did not spend the time to declare this a “National” day.

Do you remember how much fun you had popping the bubble wrap? Well, you can always do this the last day of January—it’s Bubble Wrap Appreciation Day. As you know, it not only protects things for shipping, but it releases stress. Just squeeze the bubble and feel the stress disappear.

One of our best days is always on January 27th. That is Chocolate Cake Day. Only chocolate cake will do, not yellow or white or a combination—it must be ALL chocolate. There are three objectives of chocolate cake day 1) to bake a chocolate cake; 2) decorate a chocolate cake 3) eat chocolate cake. If you are too busy to do the first two, at least eat a chocolate cake.

We have a couple more days to celebrate and this Fun at Work Day on January 28th and one always needs to have a National Puzzle Day on January 29th.

Now when you visit the Oak Harbor Senior Center, the next celebration can happen every day; but National Puzzle Day is always celebrated on the 29th. There always is a puzzle ready to be worked at the Center. Puzzles are a favorite pastime of millions of people young and old. Come by and see us at the Center and enjoy a puzzle or a laugh.

Hope you have enjoyed some of the zany and bizarre National Days in January. Always know that something is happening every day.

Compare Our CD Rates

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At the Oak Harbor Senior Center

GUITAR LESSONS
Resume Fri, January 5

AARP DRIVING COURSE
Wed, January 24 8:30-4:30 PM
Register by calling AARP or online at AARPCOM

DIGITAL DOWNLOADS:
RBdigital, Freegal, and Hoopla
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Learn how to access free movies, music, and magazines on your computer or mobile device. Find out how to stream movies, download music legally, and more. This class provides an overview of these exciting services and the information needed to start enjoying them on your own. Bring your library card and device for hands-on help after the overview.

TECH HELP!
Sun, February 26 2-4:30 PM
Bring your smart phone, tablet or laptop, the tech savvy Future Business Leaders of America group from Oak Harbor High School will be here to help you get programs set up and answer your questions about using your devices. If you have a smart phone or tablet and just don’t know what to do with it, this is for you! Want to set it up, or learn how to better use your Facebook account? Want to check your email on your device? Want to just know how to send a text or picture message? Come with your questions. After a short presentation there will be one on one help.

FREE TAX PREPARATION
February 2 – April 6 By Appointment
Call the Oak Harbor Senior Center at (360) 270-4580 to make an appointment. Appointments available starting in January.

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