Athletes Train for 25th Maine Senior Games

By Jerry Harkavy

Hundreds of older athletes who have the drive to compete are getting set to participate in the 25th annual Maine Senior Games, which will run from August 6 to September 25. The games are open to men and women ages 50 and above who will display their skills in any of 15 sports ranging from triathlon to table tennis.

The events are open to both elite and recreational athletes who come to the Senior Games with varying motivations, says Jo Dill, now in her third year as program manager for the Southern Maine Agency on Aging. “There are some fierce competitors looking to go to the nations, and there are those who are also competitive but just want to be in it for the camaraderie and the socialization, or to help stay in shape,” Dill said.

Sports include bowling, softball, road racing, swimming, tennis, table tennis, track and field, archery, triathlon, horseshoes, golf, racquetball, cycling, 3-on-3 basketball and foul shooting/hot shot basketball.

Participation in Maine Senior Games has grown exponentially since they were first held in 1986. SMAA has partnered with the Disability Resource Center (ADRC), Southern Maine Agency on Aging (SMAA) and Maine Health. Both days were workshops at Maine Medical Center and featured recently in our staff were featured recently in Maine Health Workshops. See page 16 to learn how this workshop could impact Interventions focused on increasing patient safety and effect on healthcare expenses for disabled adults and low-income seniors and families, in effect reducing their income.

See editorials about the impact of the Governor’s proposed budget by Nancy O’Connell on page 11 and by SMAA social worker Vicki Durrell on page 19.

I urge you to contact your Legislators asking them to vote against the provision to change the income qualifications for the Medicare Buy-In Program. Up to 40,000 low-income Mainers will lose some or all of the support they currently receive to help pay for medications, Medicare premiums, co-pays and deductibles, if their ability to qualify is taken away.

Living Well

You may have noticed the “Portland Press Herald’s” extensive story about our Living Well for Better Health Workshops. See page 16 to learn how this workshop could improve how you feel.

Happy Spring!

Laurence W. Gross
Executive Director, SMAA

From the Director’s Desk

Healthcare Reform

As part of the Affordable Care Act, Congress appropriated $500 million nationally to fund additional Care Transition Interventions focused on increasing patient safety and reducing hospital readmissions.

In SMAA’s role as an Aging & Disability Resource Center (ADRC), our staff were featured recently in workshops at Maine Medical Center and Maine Health. Both days were focused on the role of community providers like SMAA in preventable hospital admissions and safe transitions between levels of care.

SMAA has partnered with the Maine Medical Physician Hospital Organization (PHO) dedicating a SMAA social worker to assist with the transition from hospital to home. We received a two-year grant in 2010 to fund this demonstration to show the positive impact that social services can have on reducing hospital readmissions.

Proposed State Budget

So far, all state funds received by SMAA for the current year are included at the same level in the Governor’s 2012 budget proposal.

However, as I noted in my last column, the Governor’s proposed biennial budget, if approved by the Legislature, will have a significant effect on healthcare expenses for disabled adults and low-income seniors and families, in effect reducing their income.

"I truly believe it’s because of Title IX, and one of my goals is to encourage more women to participate," she said. "Athletes in Maine Senior Games who qualified in last year’s competition are eligible to take part in this year’s National Senior Games, to be held June 16-30 in Houston. The next chance to qualify for the nationals will come in 2012, when the top three athletes in each event will have the opportunity to compete in the 2013 nationals in Cleveland. Mainers have done well in the National Senior Games, returning with 42 medals and 11 ribbons from the 2009 competition in California. Among the top performers were a Brunswick couple, Jerry and Arden LeVasseur, who collected a combined total of three medals—including Jerry’s gold in the 4 x 100 meter
Maine Senior Games

continued from page 1

teams. Maine’s Houston-bound
team numbers 55, and the summer
heat in Texas may have discouraged
some qualifiers from going.
The LeVasseurs, who moved to
Maine from Connecticut seven
years ago, are familiar figures at
the Senior Games, having participat-
ed since they first
became eligible
upon turning 55.
The minimum age
has since been low-
ered to 50. Jerry,
73, takes part in
road races and track events and Ar-
den, 71, is competitive in swimming
and the triple jump.
What may seem surprising to
some is that roughly 40 percent of
the athletes in the Maine Senior
Games are from out-of-state,
including a few Canadians. Some of
the nonresident athletes vacation in
Maine during the summer or have
children or grandchildren who live
here. Dill says Maine also draws
athletes who may not have qualified
for the nationals in their home state
and are looking for a second chance.
Because 2011 is not a qualifying
year for the nationals, some predict
that attendance at this year’s state
games may be about the same as
last year or slightly lower.
Maine Senior Games draws
athletes from throughout the state,
but most are from the southern and
central regions that are home to
the various venues. Among the
most popular events are track and
field, held August 6 at Scarborough
High School, and basketball, Sep-
tember 10 and 11 at Cape Eliza-
abeth High School.
Even with the current menu of
15 sports from which to choose,
Dill gets plenty of calls, e-mails
and letters from seniors lobbying
for the addition of their particular
favorites.
“I have someone who, three
times a year, talks to me about pow-
er lifting. I had someone call and
want bocce. Someone e-mailed me
and definitely wanted badminton.
The other day I got four e-mails
with pitches for croquet,” she said.
“People who are passionate about
their sport really want to see it in.”
There also are occasional rum-
blings about the addition of winter
games, which might appear to be a
natural fit for a cold, snowy state.
One element of a five-year plan
approved by the advisory board of
Maine Senior Games is to explore a
winter schedule, even if it includes
only one or two events. “That’s
probably coming in the near future,”
Dill said.
Ski area fees or the cost of ice
time at a rink would pose a hurdle.
At present, Maine Senior Games
draws about 70 percent of its rev-
ue from sponsorships—Martin’s
Point Health Care is the biggest
sponsor—and 30 percent from regis-
tration fees.
With or without the addition of
new sports, it’s a good bet that
the interest in the games will
increase with the aging of the fit-
ness-conscious baby-boom genera-
tion. Already, says Dill, the biggest
segment of athletes has dropped
from those in their 60s to the 55 to
59 age bracket.
As athletes get older, of course,
they can look forward to moving up
to the next age bracket in which the
competition might not be as stiff.
But LeVasseur, who has participat-
ed in eight National Senior Games
as well as in national and world
masters’ events, finds that the field
may thin out as he gets older but
the competition remains tough.
“Your best competitors, if they’re
still around, will be there,” he said.
You may register by visiting
www.mainsenigames.org or email
jdill@smahaa.org. Save $5 by regis-
tering before August 1st.
See page 17 for complete sched-
ule and more details.
Rides for Non-Drivers
Independent Transportation Network (ITN)

Dottie Macdonald, 81, got to the annual crafts fair in Portland, Maine last winter the same way she always does: with six big bins of dolls and quilts and artwork stacked in the back of a 2002 Dodge Caravan, the one her husband Bob always drove because Mrs. Macdonald never learned how. Actually, it wasn’t quite the same. This time Mr. Macdonald was in a passenger seat, too, and the driver was a stranger. The van didn’t belong to Dottie and Bob anymore. The Macdonalds may have found an answer to the practical questions that follow the decision to stop driving: How are Mom and Dad going to get around, and what do we do with the car?

The Macdonalds are members of ITNPortland, a non-profit organization that provides both scheduled and on-demand rides for non-drivers. ITNPortland’s work is important because it helps older people live independently in their own homes even when they limit or stop driving because of age-related changes.

ITNPortland provides a very personal and convenient transportation alternative for seniors over 65 years of age or for visually impaired adults who live in the greater Portland area or within 15 miles of Portland.

Paid and volunteer drivers drive private vehicles without the usual commercial look, like a taxi or a bus. Drivers appear like a neighbor or friend offering rides 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Rides are available for any purpose such as the beauty salon, grocery shopping, medical appointments or to a bridge game. Riders need to be ITN members and pay a fee below the actual cost of the ride.

ITN operations are funded by fees paid per ride, donations and grants, plus supported by the services of volunteer drivers. The cost is more affordable than a taxi. The average ride is almost five miles and costs about $11—a $4 pick-up fee, plus $1.50 per mile. ITN’s bottom line is happy seniors, not dollars.

ITN rides are a convenience to family members who would have been responsible to provide some or many of these rides for their parent, grandparent or other relative.

ITN seeks to serve more seniors whether or not you still drive. If you prefer not to drive to an unfamiliar place, in bad weather or at night, an ITN ride is a convenient option for you.

Volunteer drivers are needed for as few or as many hours your schedule allows. You would drive your own vehicle, and ITN would reimburse you for the miles driven. You may enjoy meeting new people and you can even plan on driving the same members each time you are available to drive.

To learn more about ITNPortland, visit www.ITNPortland.org or call 207-854-0505.

“Excerpt from February 8, 2011 story in “New York Times.”

Restless Legs Syndrome (RLS) Renamed Ekbom Disease
Find out more on June 23

Dr. Régis Langelier will hold a free informational meeting on June 23 from 11:45 AM to 1:15 PM at the Southern Maine Agency on Aging to talk about the new understanding of RLS as a disease that usually involves more than the legs in many cases. Dr. Langelier says, “A neutral name, such as Ekbom Disease (EKD), will make it easier to discuss the full spectrum of the disorder from mild to severe.”

A recent program on RLS will be shown and handouts will be available to share with healthcare providers and family members.

Dr. Langelier is a volunteer leader and RLS Foundation Board Member and will discuss the reasons for the name change and provide an update on RLS from the June 2011 Sleep Conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota. This meeting will be a chance to get information that should help you be more hopeful about improving management of RLS and related sleep problems.

Please RSVP by June 17th at 207-351-5352 so that enough snacks will be available. The meeting will be held at the SMAA office, 136 US Route One, Scarborough, Maine.

Background Information:

RLS is a movement disorder that affects the muscles of the legs most commonly. People with RLS experience an irresistible urge to move their legs. The urge to move is usually relieved by movement of the affected limb. The condition can be extremely frustrating to those who suffer with it. RLS is often associated with daytime sleepiness, restless legs, and other sleep disturbance.

The Medically Underserved Patient Program (MUPP) at the Maine Medical Center is hosting a seminar for the name change and providing an update on RLS from the June 2011 Sleep Conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The meeting will be a chance to get information that should help you be more hopeful about improving management of RLS and related sleep problems.

Please RSVP by June 17th at 207-351-5352 so that enough snacks will be available. The meeting will be held at the SMAA office, 136 US Route One, Scarborough, Maine.

In the seminar, Dr. Régis Langelier will provide an update on RLS from the June 2011 Sleep Conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The meeting will be a chance to get information that should help you be more hopeful about improving management of RLS and related sleep problems. Please RSVP by June 17th at 207-351-5352 so that enough snacks will be available. The meeting will be held at the SMAA office, 136 US Route One, Scarborough, Maine.

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“Excerpt from February 8, 2011 story in “New York Times.”
Live Music from the 30s, 40s, and 50s

Along with the Maine Whoopie Pie Song

Frank Manduca will sing and play at Scarborough Terrace, 600 Commerce Drive in Scarborough on June 1. This musical program features the songs of Jerome Kern, George Gershwin, Cole Porter, Harold Arlen and other well-known composers. John Lin- scott will join Frank on the piano and perform his original “Maine Whoopie Pie Song!” Interested non-residents should call Scarborough Terrace at 883-5568 for available seating.

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• wellness and exercise center
• library and computer center

Mission Statement

Improve the physical, social, emotional and economic well being of older adults living in southern Maine (Cumberland and York counties).

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Aptments:
31 one-bedroom and 3 two-bedroom units

Amenities:
- Laundry room and assigned parking
- Fitness and computer rooms
- A cat is permitted
- Individual storage units
- Part-time resident services coordinator

Qualifications:
- 55 years of age or better
- Income limits
  1 person: $25,500–$30,600  2 people: $29,150–$34,980
- Rents include heat and hot water
  One bedroom: $678–$814  Two bedroom: $815–$978

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Qualifications:
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Participating in Springtime Activities

Ann O'Sullivan, OTR/L, LSW
Family Caregiver Specialist

Spring is short in Maine and many of us try to get the most out of it that we can. For some, that means getting out in the garden, getting outdoors for walks, or reconnecting with neighbors not seen over the winter.

For all of us, not matter what our age, abilities, or problems are, being able to participate in activities that are meaningful and involving is an important component of health and wellbeing. Research shows that “engagement with life” is one of the keys to health and life satisfaction.

As we age, some of our sources of meaning, such as work, social status, or activity may be impacted by retirement, medical or cognitive issues, or personal loss. We can, however, seek new or adapted ways to pursue things that bring us joy.

As caregivers, we may feel challenged to identify ways to help someone we care about continue or resume engagement in life activities. A couple of strategies may be helpful in this.

Consider what it is that you or your person truly enjoys. Let’s think about gardening. What is the source of satisfaction? Is it digging in the dirt, making things grow, creating beauty, being outdoors? If working in the garden has become difficult, or it is too hard to get down on the ground, what about window gardening, or raised beds, if it is too hard to get down on the ground? What about window gardening, if getting outside is a problem?

If planning beds is too difficult, would it still bring joy to help plant or weed? Would long-handled tools be helpful if bending is hard? If you think about the different components of an activity and what about it provides satisfaction, it’s often possible to discover ways to adapt and enjoy it.

Many of the family caregivers we work with at SMAA are struggling to find ways to engage people with cognitive loss. We know that being focused on an activity (“contented involvement” according to the Savvy Caregiver Program) is a way to keep confusion away. However, people with cognitive loss have increasing difficulty staying focused and tend to lose the ability to filter out distractions. As caregivers, we may be able to adapt the task and the environment to help support the person’s participation. Think about reducing background noise or other commotion (turn off the TV or radio). Simplify how tasks are presented—maybe one step at a time. Reduce the amount of information the person is being asked to take in and allow them time to process. If a previously enjoyed activity has become too complicated, is there a simplified alternative that might be satisfying?

One caregiver, whose mother had been an artist, tried a simple egg-decorating project with her. The results were really quite beautiful and both of them enjoyed the time they spent together.

Life satisfaction is key for everyone, and we can continue to find meaning and engagement throughout our lives if we are flexible. Enjoy your spring!

Are you helping an older adult manage bills, prepare meals, manage medical services? Do you help with bathing or dressing, household chores, transportation to appointments, or companionship? Are you a senior who is raising someone else’s child?

Then you are a caregiver.

Attention Teachers and Students!

Are you a teacher or student who is also assisting a family member or friend with dementia who lives in the community? We are offering the Savvy Caregiver series at SMAA during the day this summer. Of course, the class is open to non-teachers / students too, but this schedule may be particularly convenient for those with lighter workloads in the summer.

Because we know that people often take on the role of caregiver without any preparation or training, Maine’s Agencies on Aging and the Alzheimer’s Association are offering this training program statewide, through a grant from the Administration on Aging.

This program helps family caregivers develop knowledge, skills and attitudes to make taking care of a person with dementia easier. As part of the grant, we will be collecting data to add to the research on this program, by asking participants to complete pre- and post-questionnaires. So far, feedback from caregivers who have taken the class has been overwhelmingly positive.

Classes will be held at SMAA, on Wednesdays, starting July 6, from 9:30 to 11:30 AM. The course runs for six weeks. Pre-registration is required. You can find details in the Senior News caregiver class schedule, on the SMAA website www.smaaa.org or you can contact Ann O'Sullivan or Kate Cole Fallon at SMAA (1-800-427-7411).

Updated Connections Book Now Available

The book, Connections: A Guide for Family Caregivers in Maine has been updated and is available for download on the SMAA website www.smaaa.org. The guide was first printed in 2002, and this is the fourth time it’s been updated. It was developed by the Family Caregiver Support Program of Maine, which includes the programs at all five Area Agencies on Aging in the state. The book helps family caregivers learn about available services and resources in Maine, and how to find them. If you go to the website and click on Family Caregiver Support on the home page, the book, along with a number of other helpful resources, will appear in the list on the right. Please feel free to read, download and share!

Contact Kate Cole Fallon at 1-800-427-7411 x 558.

York: Caregiver support group for family and friends assisting an older adult with a chronic condition, 3rd Tuesday of the month, from 1-2 PM, at the Heart Health Institute. Contact Susan Kelly-Westman at 351-3700.

Other areas: Please call Kate or Ann at SMAA’s Family Caregiver Support Program if you are looking for a group in another area. 1-800-427-7411.

Kinship/Grandparent Support Group

Sanford: Wee Care, support and discussion for kinship parents helping to raise children, 2nd Wednesday of the month, 5:30-7:30. Supper and child care available. To register, call Thea Murphy at Trafal Senior Center at 457-0080.

On-Line Discussion and Support Group

Online support group: This private Yahoo! message board is available 24/7. If you are caring for an aging family member or friend, and you have Internet access, please join us! Contact Kate at SMAA, 1-800-427-7411 or online@smaaa.org.

Caring For Aging Family Members

Support/Discussion Groups

Biddeford: For caregivers of people with dementia. NEW DAY: 2nd Monday of the month, 3-4:30 PM, at Community Partners, Inc. Contact Barbara Alberda at 229-4308.

Bridgton: 2nd Wednesday of the month, 1-2:30 PM, at the Bridgton Community Center. Contact Ann O’Sullivan at 1-800-427-7411 x 541. Respite care is available on site.

Scarborough: 4th Thursday of the month, from noon to 1 PM at SMAA.

Are you helping an older adult manage bills, prepare meals, manage medical services? Do you help with bathing or dressing, household chores, transportation to appointments, or companionship? Are you a senior who is raising someone else’s child? Then you are a caregiver.

Is caring for an older loved one leaving you feeling tired, isolated, sad, guilty, stressed? Caregiving may be the most difficult and rewarding thing you’ll ever do. The Family Caregiver Support Program can help.

Contact Kate Cole Fallon at 1-800-427-7411 x 558.
Meeting the Needs of Family Caregivers in Maine

Save These Dates!! June 23 & 30, 3-4 PM

Plan to attend this two-part webinar series from your office or home...all you need is Internet access!

This webinar will present information and resources in Maine to support the complex needs of family caregivers who assist seniors living at home.

Topics will include:

• assessing caregiver needs
• dealing with the demands of care giving
• environmental adaptations
• Maine community resources
• and more...

The target audience for this webinar is physician practices, rehabilitation professionals, nurses, home health clinicians, case managers, OTs, PTs, social workers and human service providers.

Mark your calendar today! Contact Ann or Kathy to register.

Ann O’Sullivan, OTR/L, LSW, Family Caregiver Specialist, Southern Maine Agency on Aging, 396-6541, 1-800-427-7411 x 541, aosullivan@smaaa.org
Kathy Adams, OTR/L, ATP, Maine CITE Training Coordinator, Maine CITE Coordinating Center, kadamsot@maine.rr.com, 1-207-621-3195

Help For People Helping Aging Family Members

Class Schedule 2011

May 19, 6:15-7:30PM: Maine Health Care Advance Directives. Wells-Ogunquit Adult Community Education. Call 646-4565 to register.
May 31, June 7, 14, 21, 28 and July 5, 1-3PM: Savvy Caregiver. The Gathering Place, Kittery. Contact Kate Cole Fallon at 1-800-427-7411 x 541 to pre-register (required).
August 11, 18, 25, September 1, 8 and 15, 9-11AM: Savvy Caregiver. Southern Maine Medical Center, Biddeford. Please contact Ann O’Sullivan at 1-800-427-7411 x 541, or check www.smaaa.org for updates.

Please use the numbers listed to register. Feel free to call Kate Cole Fallon or Ann O’Sullivan at SMAA (1-800-427-7411) with questions.
Comments from a five-month survey of Southern Maine Agency on Aging participants caring for a family member with dementia:

I would like to take the course again and would love to see a follow-up group or reprise to refresh skills, since the progress of the disease is ever-changing and difficult to keep up with.

This little box is not large enough for me to expound on the tremendous benefit I have received from the Savvy Caregiver training.

The last months would have been much more difficult without this course.

I’ve shared the information with my children and am getting great support!

I’m now involving others in the process of supporting my parents.

I’ve become calmer, more sure of myself.

I aim to be happy with his “contented involvement.” I try to have more patience.

I’ve changed my expectations. I consciously work on patience, tone of voice, and letting go of unimportant matters.

I’m more tolerant because I now understand what he isn’t capable of doing.

The class gave me more understanding of the faces of dementia and what to expect of my Dad. I’m more patient.

I have more self-confidence.

I now recognize the need for routine and simplicity.

I have become more accepting of the conditions of this disease and less angry.

I am less personally involved in a sense of failure. I pay more attention to choosing tasks appropriate to the level of ability to achieve. I have more patience and more understanding of the disease.

NOTE: The Southern Maine Agency on Aging offers Savvy Caregiver classes on a regular basis. See page 7 for the upcoming schedule.
Mild Cognitive Impairment — Betwixt and Between

by Ron Bailyn, MD
Director, Memory Disorders Program
Maine Medical Center

not remembering the name of the couple who just moved in. Forgetting significant news from dinner with friends. Misplacing those keys—yet again.

Normal aging? Dementia? Something else?

Neuroscientists often call that something else “Mild Cognitive Impairment” (MCI). Commonly, the person with MCI experiences a new and measurable problem in forming memories. Sometimes the intellectual change involves a different area of cognitive ability. While often hampered by the problem, the individual with MCI is able to manage customary tasks. Transition to dementia occurs when the person is no longer able to function independently.

Awareness of MCI that involves attention, language or other problems with fairly normal memory (non-amnestic MCI) has increased. For this, most research continues to center on individuals for whom memory loss is the prominent feature (amnestic MCI). Calendars and reminder notes are their frequent companions. Day-to-day judgment and reasoning skills are often fine.

None of us, even that legendary relative who could remember the weather in 1926, have a perfect memory. Where does normal forgetfulness leave off and MCI begin? A new pattern of forgetting activities anticipated may help for about a year. The medication Aricept may help for two to three times as much golf as other age groups.” Although the economic downturn tapped into the discretionary income of many, Peter believes boomers will return to the game in droves when the economy improves. “One benefit of the downturn is that it’s a great time to be a golf consumer. Boomers can capitalize on discounted green fees, equipment and even memberships.”

Peter’s website emphasizes travel, courses, real estate and general news. “With 16,000 golf courses in the U.S., boomers like the travel aspect of golf. They build entire vacations around golf courses. Both spouses can play and it’s a good time for families to reconnect.” He likes to regionalize his travel section throughout the U.S., promoting courses within a geographical area. “Maine has become a golf travel destination due to everything else we offer in Vacationland.” He points out that many of the newer courses introduced in southern Maine in the past 15 years like Point Sebago, the Links at Outlook, Nonesuch, and The Ledges have raised the bar in terms of golf expectations when it comes to course conditioning and customer service.

Regarding advice for golfing boomers, Peter believes in two essentials: “Take lessons and invest in the right equipment. Golf is hard—make it easy on yourself and work with a professional. Practice what you’ve learned, play and practice some more. If you can, play a round with your teaching professional.”

Give this website a look, get some practice and then tee up with Maine Senior Games!

May-June 2011
Senior News 9

Maine Senior Games Golf Tournament
Tuesday, August 16th 8:30am
Teddy Brook Golf Course
925 Sligo Road, North Yarmouth
Rain date: Tuesday August 17th
Event Coordinator: Marty Layne

925 Sligo Road, North Yarmouth
Toddy Brook Golf Course
Tuesday, August 16th 8:30am
Golf Tournament

• Medals are awarded the top three finishers in each age division (ribbons for fourth place)
• Event is a National Senior Games sanctioned sport
• Medals are awarded the top three finishers in each age division (ribbons for fourth place)
Senior Moments
by Hunter Howe
Rest in Peace

We seniors worry, some about our obituary. Come on now, just admit it.

I will. Darn right I worry about my final words. I figure that I’ve only got about three paragraphs of life material highlighted by “Hunter played badminton, bingo and banjo poorly.” I need to get going. Perhaps I have obituary phobia.

In my youth, I’d grab the newspaper and scrutinize the sports page. In middle, I still led with the sports, turned to the Editorial and Op-Ed sections and finally the obits. Today, it’s the obits first. It’s an age thing.

Here’s the problem. Some of the obits will chill me. I don’t measure up. I read one about Old Joe who performed as a circus clown with gypsies in Eastern Europe, toiled on a tramp steamer in the South Pacific, boxed in Morocco, summered in Malta and ran a successful company that made discount toys for the destitute. And, it said the details of our life material highlighted by, “Old Joe, as reported, wasn’t a circus clown.” Yeah right.

Don’t you be better? Remember the lyrics to the song, “Be happy, don’t worry!” Now you don’t have to worry about your obit, just passing away. I like passing on better than passing away because I feel like I’m actually going to go somewhere.

Rest in peace.

EDITORIAL

By the Year 2020, 20% of Maine’s Population will be 65+
Private Sector Health Insurance is Not What We Need

Maine keeps getting older. The 65+ age group are: Sagadahoc -72%; York-70%; Lincoln-58%; Cumberland-58%; Waldo-58%. In terms of the share of the total population, these numbers represent an increase from 15.2% in 2008 to 21.3% in 2020. In other words, in 2020 about one in five people in Maine will be 65 or older.

It doesn’t take much imagination to see that the state and federal programs that serve the elderly will soon be stressed to the breaking point. How can we muster the financial and bureaucratic resources necessary to sustain these programs, especially Medicare and MaineCare? New and pragmatic policies need to be established to deal with these problems and the time is now. Those political leaders who keep putting this off are in denial. It is folly and irresponsible to think that we can wait until the suffering starts before we start to think about the remedies.

That is why Paul Ryan’s (U.S. Rep. from Wisconsin) plan to dismember Medicare has gained support. But his plan to convert Medicare into a program that would provide seniors with subsidies (vouchers) to purchase private health insurance is not the kind of innovation we need. It simply transfers much of the cost of health care to seniors, and puts insurance companies in charge of their care.

Stan Cohen, Bridgton

ATTENTION CREATOR:)
www.themonarchcenter.com

We are a premier 42-apartment assisted living community for those with Alzheimer’s disease and related disorders of memory. We are located in the heart of Saco’s historical downtown district.

We are a gated and secured community for the safety and well being of our residents. We offer a wide array of services and have elegant, yet comfortable living areas. Our extensive activities are designed for the particular needs of our residents. We maintain a 24-hour Health and Personal Care staff and seven-day a week nursing staff. We offer warm, individualized and comprehensive services, which help the adaptation process and continue to afford the resident and family with a feeling of security and peace of mind.

We invite you to stop by or call for a personal tour so you can see and hear the details of our unique program.

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OPENINGS IN ASSISTED LIVING

For more information contact
Lori Maxwell: 775-7775 or maxwell@75state.org

SEVENTY-FIVE STATE STREET
Serving seniors since 1854

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SEVENTY-FIVE STATE STREET
Serving seniors since 1854
Governor’s Budget Bad News
Medicare Buy-In Could be Eliminated
By Nancy O’Connell

The time is near when Maine’s disabled adults and low-income seniors and families may have to start worrying about their medical care, MaineCare coverage, prescription drugs and co-pays.

Should Part AAA of Governor LePage’s proposed Biennial Budget pass, there will be little or no help for this segment of Mainers.

According to Maine Equal Justice, the Governor’s proposal will affect about 40,000 disabled adults and low-income seniors currently receiving assistance. Approximately 12,500 will lose all assistance, 6,500 most assistance and 21,000 will lose some assistance. These Mainers will have to bear the cost of Medicare premiums ($115 will be deducted from Social Security checks), co-pays and deductibles. Without the Drugs for the Elderly program (DEL), many would go without lifesaving drugs.

These “so-called” savings in the DEL program only transfers the money to “Provider Payments” and is intended to help cover MaineCare debt to hospitals and to offset future increases by hospitals. The source of the money is the Tobacco Settlement Money. About 80% of this money funds MaineCare and other programs for seniors and the disabled.

Also affected will be the Medicare Buy-In Programs, which help pay Medicare supplement premiums, funded by MaineCare. Without this help, the cost will be $150 to $200 per month. Eligibility for MaineCare and elder services will drop significantly, ie: monthly income levels for QMB will drop from $1,436 to $908 and QI from $1,754 to $1,225. The Governor wants to lower Maine’s qualifying income levels to those of the Federal Poverty Levels (FPL).

According to the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services the value of these benefits averages $4,000 per year, a huge chunk of money for low-income people.

Several elderly people form the Biddeford-Saco area I spoke with said if they had to choose between rent, heat, electric or drugs they would pay their housing costs. Without subsidized medical care, some low-income Mainers would lose their housing and would have to turn to expensive care like nursing homes, which would cost much more money for the state.

State Senator Nancy Sullivan, District 4, explained why Maine is in dire financial straits and why healthcare funds for the elderly and disabled are being raided: “The budget enacted by the 124th Legislature was passed unanimously by both parties. An agreement was

continued on page 19

Visit planned giving on our website http://www.smaaa.org/planned_giving.php to learn more, or contact Peg Brown at the Southern Maine Agency on Aging, (207) 396-6590 or mbrown@smaaa.org.
By Susan DeWitt Wilder

Eddie Woodin, the founder of the Best Friend Fund at the Southern Maine Agency on Aging, told me the other day that he’d received a thank you card from an older woman who had received care for her cats through the Fund. I was able to find Claire Dumont and ask if she’d tell her story for “Senior News.” She replied, “Certainly. When Eddie puts his foot forward, it’s nice for people to know help is available.”

“It was Andrew, my grandson, ten at the time, who named my two cats Zircon and Jadzia. It has something to do with Star Trek or Star Wars. That was nine years ago and these cats are my constant companions. I take them for a walk every evening down the hall to give them exercise. A friend used some wheels from a walker and built a ‘cat taxi’ for me in which I take the cats upstairs to visit a friend.”

Claire grew up in Biddeford, then lived on Munjoy Hill for many years. She worked for the Maine Department of Health and Human Services and also spent 20 years working in the radiation therapy and radiology departments at Southern Maine Medical Center, Mercy Hospital and Maine Medical Center.

She’s had some health challenges—two knees and a hip replaced in the last seven years—and last year she needed health care for her cats. She’d saved an article about the Best Friend Fund from “Senior News” with a photo of Eddie and his two dogs, so she called the Southern Maine Agency on Aging to ask if the Fund could help her. “Things were getting tough. I didn’t know how I was going to afford the vet bills. The Best Friend Fund was a big help. My cats make all the difference to me. Without them I would be lonely.”

Mr. Woodin has issued a challenge for the Best Friend Fund again this year. He asks pet lovers to match his gift by contributing to this fund that helps older people who need help paying for pet-related care.

To sustain the great work of the Best Friend Fund by making a donation, call me, Susan DeWitt Wilder, at 207-396-6513 or email me at swilder@smaaa.org. You can also mail a contribution marked Best Friend Fund to Southern Maine Agency on Aging, 136 US Route One, Scarborough, Maine 04074. If Zircon and Jadzia could talk, they would say: The force will be with you.

If you are over 60 and cannot afford the cost of veterinary care for your cat or dog, call 207-396-6565 to inquire about the Best Friend Fund.

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www.gentiva.com
The Right Time To Consider Assisted Living

By Elizabeth Simonds
Southern Maine Assisted Living Educational Group

Assisted living communities provide seniors an environment that supports and encourages independence while providing assistance with a range of services as needed. If you or a loved one are facing challenges living on your own, assisted living can offer the right amount of support, community, friendship and peace of mind.

The following are common services and amenities that are provided by many assisted living communities with examples of challenges you might be experiencing:

**Nutritious Meals and Snacks** - If you are losing interest in preparing food or perhaps you are eating the same frozen meal consistently or maybe you are losing weight because of poor meal planning, it’s time to think about assisted living.

**Medication Administration** - When medications are skipped or there is confusion about what you have taken or not taken, assisted living offers medication support.

**Socialization** - Especially in Maine, with “special” weather, it is easy to feel isolated when living alone. Socialization is a very important part of stimulating your mental and physical health. Living in a community with peers and a caring staff can be a healthy solution.

**Personal Care Assistance** - As a resident in an assisted living community, your individual care plan may include help (if needed) with bathing, dressing, grooming, incontinence, ambulating, reminders and medications.

**Well-Trained Care Staff 24/7** Enjoy peace of mind knowing that a registered nurse and other staff are in your assisted living home to care for you around the clock.

**Daily Activities** - Exercise programs, art classes, games, musical performances and social hours are only a sampling of activities offered that enhance your physical, spiritual, intellectual and emotional well-being.

**Transportation** - Trips to medical appointments, shopping, dining and entertainment are provided.

**Housekeeping, Laundry, Maintenance Services** - What a great relief! Most assisted living communities provide these services.

While there are many choices of assisted living communities, it is important to visit several and ask questions about services, availability and cost. Make sure you choose a community that matches your lifestyle and financial resources. Just as important is making a plan now while you have the choice. Moving to an assisted living community when you can take advantage of all it has to offer will help extend and even improve your quality of life.

Information provided by the Southern Maine Assisted Living Educational Group offering seminars on assisted living. For more information, contact Elizabeth Simonds 207-885-5568, Ext. 330.
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Driver Safety Course Schedule

The AARP Driver Safety Course is recognized as an approved motor vehicle accident prevention course for automobile insurance premium reduction by the Maine Bureau of Highway Safety. Drivers age 55 and older may be eligible for an appropriate reduction in automobile insurance premium charges after completing this course. Please check with your insurance company or agent prior to taking this course for any additional requirements for eligibility. The registration fee is $12 for AARP members, $14 for others.

May 26 — 8:30AM to 12:30PM
Brunswick, Thornton Oaks
Call instructor: Joe Hahn, 751-9364

May 26 — 12 to 4:30PM
Fryeburg, Fryeburg Public Library
Call instructor: John Hammon, 655-4943

June 6 — 9AM to 1:30PM
Bridgton, Bridgton Comm. Center
Call instructor: John Hammon, 655-4943

June 7 — 9AM to 1 pm
Sanford, Trafton Senior Center
Call instructor: David Snyder, 793-2889, To register, call 457-0081

June 8 — 10AM to 3PM
Kittery, 2nd Cong. Church
Call instructor: George Davis, 474-0677, To register, call Virginia Barron, 439-1678

June 17 — 9AM to 1:30PM
Yarmouth, Yarmouth Town Hall
Call instructor: Phil Chin, 846-0858

June 28 — 9AM to 1:30PM
Portland, AARP State Office
Call instructor: Robert Libby, 650-0571

August 4 — 9AM to 1:30PM
Portland, AARP State Office
Call instructor: John Hammon, 655-4943

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www.smaaa.org

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Aging Gracefully with the Montreal Jazz Festival

June 25 - July 4, 2011

By Elizabeth Margolis-Pineo

Be there or be square.

For 32 years, our friendly neighbors to the north have presented the biggest jazz festival in the world with hundreds of free concerts on 10 outdoor stages and 12 indoor venues around the ever-expanding Place des Arts in beautiful downtown Montreal.

Ageless virtuosos in this summer’s lineup include Diana Krall, Dave Brubeck, Chick Corea, Dave Holland, Brad Mehldau, Josh Redman, Tony Bennett, Marianne Faithfull, Sade, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Madeleine Peyroux, Nikki Yanofsky, Paco de Lucia, Peter Frampton, k.d. Lang, Bob Walsh and many more.

Through the years, we’ve matured along with festival regulars B.B. King and Grace Jones. Here are six savvy senior strategies for a fun and safe jazz festival experience:

1. Stay at the Hyatt. From the elevator, and late nights at the bar you can schmooze with the greats. You can also “bump into” musicians in the elevator, and late nights at the bar.

2. Bring nifty GCI PackSeat portable stools (available at LL Bean). Outdoor seating is sparse, but savvy seniors enjoy free outdoor concerts with a portable seat. Be aware that folding seats are not allowed at big events when crowds are dense—the festival does a great job of keeping everyone safe.

3. Book evening concerts at small, ticketed indoor venues. Our favorite is the Gusa Centre de Créativité, a cozy venue with fabulous acoustics and cozy atmosphere. We’ve seen amazing performances there, intimate and indelible.

4. Treat yourself to larger, ticketed indoor venues like the Salle Wilfrid-Pelletier or Théâtre Masson- neuve. They’re comfortable, formal and a bit pricey—but when you’re listening to a Marsalis or Brubeck, it’s worth it!

5. Bring a sun hat. Last year temps soared well into the 90s. Staying hydrated is easy with onsite refreshments whose proceeds support festival infrastructure—Montreal gets “greener” every year!

6. Grab a program for schedules, maps and accessibility information. There is so much going on, especially in the evening and a little preparation goes a long way. For tech-savvy seniors, the Jazz Fest App is a great tool for instant information.

So practice your high school French and be prepared to laisser les bons temps rouler! For information and evolving all-star lineup, visit www.montreal-jazzfest.com.
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This six-session workshop series will help you learn new ways to deal with issues such as:

• eating well
• breathing problems
• solving problems
• being stressed
• planning for the future
• feeling sad
• feeling sore
• planning for the future
• being stressed
• solving problems
• breathing problems
• eating well

Any adult who has a long term health condition is welcome. A family member or friend can also participate.

When is the next workshop?

Springvale: May 24 - June 28, 9:30AM-12
Portland: June 21 - August 2, 2:30-5PM

To sign up contact Anne Murray at 396-6529 or amurray@smaaaa.org

How much does this workshop cost?

$10 donation for the entire 6-week series. A workbook and CD are available for loan or purchase.

“This program would be helpful for anyone.”

Cindy M.

Is this for me?

If you are dealing with concerns such as:

• aches and pains
• weight issues
• missing out on things you used to do
• arthritis
• depression
• high blood pressure
• diabetes
• cancer
• heart disease

Any adult who has a long term health condition is welcome. A family member or friend can also participate.

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Editorial

A SMAA Social Worker Speaks Out

I do not think I am alone in my feelings of deep concern and outright anger at the Republican party’s aim at cutting Medicare and Medicaid and services for the poor, elderly, and disabled while they continue to support tax cuts for the wealthy. In fact, they propose making all Bush-era tax cuts permanent! We all know who those tax cuts benefit!

As a social worker I see first-hand the hardships seniors face trying to live on their meager Social Security checks. One of my clients receives only $636 a month from Social Security. She is a divorced woman who stayed home and raised her children as did most women of her generation. When she did start working she earned minimum wage, hence the low Social Security benefits she now receives. I challenge any law maker to try to live on $636 a month with the cost of today’s food, gas and oil prices. There is no way this woman could afford to pay even her Medicare Part B premium, let alone supplemental or prescription drug plan premiums. She is able to live her final years of life in her own home with the help of programs like the Medicare Savings Program, which pays for her Part B and D premiums and gives her Mainecare as a secondary insurance. She also receives fuel assistance and food stamps. If these programs are cut, my client will be forced to move to an assisted living facility at the cost of $5,000 or more a month, paid for by the state.

These proposed cuts also affect my family directly. I am the mother of young man who is developmentally delayed. I thank God for having him in my life but worry about his future as someone largely dependent on the welfare system for his housing, insurance, and care. He, like most other persons with disabilities, is unable to advocate for his services even more outrageous. Please contact your state representatives and ask them to protect our most vulnerable citizens and support our President in his aim at eliminating tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans.

Vicki Durell, LSW
Information & Resources
Southern Maine Agency on Aging

Older Adults and Alcohol Use

You may not think twice about having a drink now and then. But alcohol can be a serious problem for older adults, especially if you take certain medications, have health problems or don’t control your drinking.

Aging lowers the body’s tolerance for alcohol, so older adults can develop problems even though their drinking habits haven’t changed. “Older adults can experience the effects of alcohol, such as slurred speech and lack of coordination, more quickly than when they were younger,” says Dr. Kenneth R. Warren, acting director of NIH’s National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism.

Drinking too much alcohol can also make many health conditions worse. These include diabetes, high blood pressure, congestive heart failure, liver problems, memory problems and mood disorders such as depression and anxiety.

Alcohol Use and Older Adults, a new topic on NIH Senior Health, provides helpful information about the effect alcohol can have on our bodies, health and lifestyles as we age. You can find it at http://nihseniorhealth.gov/alcoholuse/toc.html. The pages also discuss how much is safe to drink for most older men and women, what precautions to take if you’re on medication and how to get help if drinking is a problem.
Thank you, Medicare Volunteers!

SMAA relies on volunteers to help with Medicare Open Enrollment and “Welcome to Medicare” seminars. Volunteers pictured here are from left to right: Fred Ronco, Kathleen Kluger, Howard Hanning, Jim Baker, Mary Bruns, Carrie Grant, Mary Smith, Tim Michtee, John Innes, Pat Paine, Marion Rzewus, Paula Burke, and Nancy Gordon. To find out more about joining the Medicare Team, call Carol Rancourt at 396-6547 or 1-800-427-7411, ext. 547.

From a letter to a SMAA Resource Specialist

Dear Sheila,

“At the pharmacy last week I stood and blessed your name as I picked up a prescription with absolutely no payment at all. With a huge smile the lady at the counter announced, ‘No co-pay…’ This would have been almost $200 otherwise.”

—Arthur Anderson, Old Orchard Beach

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Major Pettigrew’s Last Stand
by Helen Simonson (2010)

We are introduced to the intelligent and refined Major Pettigrew, a 68 year old former British army Major, who has just lost his brother. Major Pettigrew has been widowed for six years and lives in a small town in Sussex England named Edgecombe St Mary. We also meet the Major’s self-centered, obnoxious son who has an entirely different set of values, concerned with money and promoting his banking career, thereby creating a father-son clash. Into this mix enters the learned and attractive widow ten years the Major’s junior, still considered Pakistani by this village, even though she has never been beyond the Isle of Wight. Finally, you add the rest of the town’s residents, along with a couple of stereotypical American businessmen, all with their idiosyncrasies and fondness for “the right sort of people.” Thus, you have the characters you will enjoy meeting in this well-written romantic comedy by Helen Simonson.

Major Earnest Pettigrew is a man in a constant state of “repressed irritation” his daily tea is often not to his liking, people do not exhibit the proper manners and politeness he thinks is expected. His son barges in on him unexpectedly upsetting his weekly schedule, and he has to confront the shallowness of racial and religious intolerance amongst his village neighbors. Fortunately, he is able to find reprieve in his new companion, Mrs. Jasmine Ali, an independent woman who shares many values with the Major and is affected by her own cultural family and societal issues. She and the Major engage in bright and witty dialogues, sharing a love for reading, especially Kipling. Through it all, you cannot help but cheer for them to have a successful relationship despite the many problems they encounter throughout their courtship.

The book is filled with humor, much of it emanating from the Major’s relationship with his son, Roger, and also from the social interactions he experiences with the cast of colorful characters living in the town. Ms Simonson’s first novel is a very entertaining story directed primarily at the over fifty age group, with a message not to give up on love no matter what stage of life. It is also a good read for anyone wanting to enjoy an amusing look at English folkways and mores.

Quality Time with the Undertaker
By Jason Wilson

Pre-planning your final arrangements will help prevent emotional turmoil for those your leave behind.

The costs and fees associated with decisions are seldom brought up in family discussions during final arrangements. The discussion and angst is focused on what the person who died might have wanted or said they wanted for their final arrangements. Ironically, if you want to alleviate the financial burden for your family, you should pre-plan your arrangements. A typical scenario for those left with making the final arrangements may include selecting a more expensive urn or casket than you would want. Why? Simply, it is a guilt/anxiety purchase. The survivors would rather make an error towards a better urn or casket. There is nothing wrong with a “feel good” purchase; Dad loved oak wood so they choose the oak urn or casket. The difference is subtle, and families want to be certain of their purchases. Uncertainty causes anxiety and people will do whatever possible to eliminate it like purchasing something more expensive. Knowing Dad likes oak wood but left specific instructions to be buried in a simple, pine casket ends any confusion.

What to do? Start with a dated, simple set of instructions with copies for the decision makers in your family. The date is necessary because people change their preferences during their lives. Someone will remember that you mentioned something 30 years ago that is not relevant at the time of your passing. What is a “simple set of instructions”? Use the Who, What, Where, and How technique. Who do you want to perform your ceremony? Who do you want to attend? What type of ceremony do you want? Where do you want it to take place? How do you want to be remembered?

Write a draft of your obituary or fill out paperwork, typically provided by the funeral home, supplying the important places, dates and people to be mentioned in your obituary. The obituary is a big stressor at the time of arrangements—everyone is afraid they will leave out an important person or item.

In summary, pre-arrangement can save your family a lot of emotional turmoil caused by uncertainty, which leads to possible overspending. Decide the type of service you want and if buried or scattered where that should occur. Finally, make copies, date the material for a time reference, and date and initial any updates. Your family and friends will notice your imprint on the final arrangements and add their own special touches.
How About Giving “Senior News” a Boost?

Since 1997 Maine’s only newspaper devoted to the daily life of older adults and their families has been produced, mailed and distributed throughout southern Maine free of charge. The good news: “Senior News” will continue! A recent public opinion poll* of 300 people age 55 or older found that 74% recognize the value of such a newspaper and 35% specifically identified “Senior News.”

This is good news for our faithful advertisers who make the “Senior News” possible. Yet, costs have crept up over the years, especially postage over which we have no control, and we need a financial boost.

If you enjoy the “Senior News” and are able to donate to help keep the paper thriving, please send a suggested donation of $10 per year. By supporting “Senior News” you will help keep the information and resources communicated in our pages available to more than 20,000 households.

If you don’t receive “Senior News” in the mail, call Bonnie Craig at 207-396-6526 or 1-800-427-7411, x526 and leave your name and mailing address. We’re happy to send your way!

*Research conducted by Critical Insights, Portland, Maine.

Governor’s Budget

continued from page 11

reached between the Maine Hospital Association (MHA) and the Legislature on how to pay the hospitals. To the Republicans, Democrats and the MHA it made perfect sense,” she said. “The new administration decided to make a big media splash announcing how the state had not been paying its bills. We were paying as agreed. Now the hospitals want full payment,” she said.

About ten years ago the state sales tax was 5.5% then it reverted to 5%. That one-half percent brought $204 million into the state coffers over two years,” said Sullivan. As a result of losing sales tax money the state had to find a way to replace it and they did. “They replaced it with the tax most people reject—property taxes,” she said. “The amounts are huge.”

Sullivan said she is not anti-business and profits, however, she is against our elderly, disabled and the public sector paying the state’s business bills, “to their detriment.” Biddiford Mayor Joanne Twomney commented, “The Governor is going in the wrong direction. I do not think he realizes how these cuts will affect people’s lives. It will be devastating. We need the Legislature to stand up and oppose this.”

Sullivan recommends calling your Legislators at home and asking them to vote against the proviso. Tell them you want a call back on how they voted, and “you are a voter in their district and you expect to hear back from them,” she said.

It would perhaps serve the Governor well not to underestimate this segment of Maine people who comprise a formidable voting bloc. Several calls to the Governor’s office for comment failed to elicit a response. To propose a Budget that increases healthcare costs for the disabled and low-income seniors and families is unconscionable.

Nancy O’Connell can be reached at 282-0453.
Burt Rendall Named “Volunteer of the Year”

O
n April 11 Burt Ren-
dall, a SMAA-RSVP
volunteer for the past
21 years, was named
“Volunteer of the Year” by
Maine Medical Center. Burt sought RSVP’s help in
finding a placement when he moved to Maine from
Worcester, Mass. He is re-
tired from an oil company in
Texas where he was a safety
director and designer. Burt
also received the Sup-
port Service Award from the
United Way in 1995. He
is an outstanding and
unique volunteer serving
several nonprofits all in one
week (he and his wife have
volunteered five days a
week for years). In any one
week you could find Burt at
the Scarborough Library, the
Portland Symphony, Maine
Historical Society, SCORE, Maine Medical Center and the Maine Trol-
ley Museum.

At the Maine Historical Society
Burt helped catalogue over 4,000
drawings of the Portland Company
that was in business from 1846-
1978. Portland Symphony benefited
greatly when he restored and cata-
logueed sheet music that had been
acquired but not catalogued for 50
years. He built shelves for the music
and in the process learned names of
various instruments in a variety of
different languages. At Scarborough
Library he shelved and kept 150
magazine collections in order. They
saved special projects for him be-
cause he is such a detail expert. In
the winter at the Trolley Museum
he used his talents to help restore
the trolleys and in the summer he
often operated the trolleys. At
SCORE he had been secretary and
did intakes and counseling for small
business owners. At Maine Medical
Center he has been called upon for
special projects of all sorts. His wife
of 60 years is also a RSVP volunteer and has given 35,855 hours of serv-
vice to Maine Medical Center!!

Burt Rendall exemplifies volun-
teers who have retired from work
but not from life, contributing not
only time but priceless lifelong
skills and experiences for the bet-
terment of the community.

Burt and Sally Rendall each receive a spoon for the
glass bowl “Volunteer of the Year” award Burt received on April 11.

A quartet of the Royal River Chorus entertained at the Portland
Volunteer Recognition event. Pictured here from L-R are Robin
Marszanski, Rhonda Williams, Ann Guenette, and Sue Banor.

Burt Rendall, a SMAA-RSVP volunteer for the past 21 years, was named “Volunteer of the Year” by Maine Medical Center. He received the Support Service Award from the United Way in 1995. He is an outstanding and unique volunteer serving several nonprofits all in one week (he and his wife have volunteered five days a week for years). In any one week you could find Burt at the Scarborough Library, the Portland Symphony, Maine Historical Society, SCORE, Maine Medical Center and the Maine Trolley Museum.

Burt Rendall exemplifies volunteers who have retired from work but not from life, contributing not only time but priceless lifelong skills and experiences for the betterment of the community.

Happiness Improves with Volunteering

by Eileen Whynot, Editor, “Senior News”

I’ve discovered that among other things, volunteering can make you happy—at least that’s what a num-
ber of volunteers told me at the SMAA and RSVP Volunteer Recognition Luncheons.

Everyone has interests, tal-
ent and skills of some sort to
share. SMAA and RSVP help volunteers find their
“happy place” by matching interests with hundreds of volunteer opportunities in southern Maine.

I met Janet Michaud who not only reads to chil-
dren, last year she made 399
handmade greeting cards
for military men and women
serving in Afghanistan or
Iraq to send home to their
friends and family members.

This is an impressive proj-
ect, and I was in awe of Mrs. Michaud’s creativity and how much it must mean to the people in a war
zone to be able to send birthday and other greeting cards back home. What a gift Mrs. Michaud gives to people she’s never even met.

I came across the Meals on Wheels table of volunteers who deliver in Kit-
tery, Eliot and the Berwicks. I
met Tammy Cole who drives meals from the SMAA distribution site in Kittery back to South Berwick four days a week, so that volun-
teers for the Berwicks can
pick up food without driving to Kittery. Back
in 2004 Tammy came to Maine from Missouri for her husband’s new job in Portsmouth. A friend
in St. Louis had deliv-
ered Meals on Wheels, so she decided to see how she could help. And help she does!

Some of the Kittery site volunteers know each other through the Footprints Food
Pantry, including Eileen McKeel and the SMAA site coordinator, Elaine Plaisted. Elaine’s parents drove for Meals on Wheels for 14 years and through them she learned about the part time job with SMAA.

John and Judy Elwell have been delivering every Monday for three years. Their
daughter told them about volunteering for Meals on Wheels. It turns out volun-
teers are desperately needed on Fridays in South Berwick and Tuesdays in North Berwick and Eliot. Elaine says 10 volun-
teers are needed right now to help get the meals delivered and shorten some of the
longer routes. Call Elaine at 475-7339 between 7:30 and 11:30 except week-
ends and Wednes-
days.

For Meals on Wheels drivers are reim-
ursed .44 per mile.

I met Alma Libby last year when she was 100 years old. She
was honored again this year for be-
coming the oldest active volunteer. She
knits hats and mittens for children and “prayer” blankets. If you’re hap-
pier, you may live longer.

Philippe Roux, a retired electric utility lineman, goes to the gym at
UNE every day, and has been deliver-
ing Meals on Wheels in Biddeford for 17 years. I guess fitness and vol-
unteering can go together so you

John and Judy Elwell, Kittery area Meals on Wheels.

“I get so much out of it. They’re doing more of a service for me than I am for them.”

“This is an impressive project, and I was in awe of Mrs. Michaud’s creativity.”

“Volunteer of the Year” award received on April 11.
People Age 55 and Older Have Additional Opportunities to Help People of All Ages Through RSVP

Southern Maine Agency on Aging (SMAA) is the sponsor of the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) in Cumberland and York counties. RSVP is a national program for people age 55 and over who want to serve their communities by volunteering.

In RSVP, you may help seniors by volunteering with SMAA, but you also have many additional volunteer opportunities with other nonprofit and healthcare organizations.

For opportunities in Cumberland County contact Priscilla Greene at 396-6521 or 1-800-427-7411 Ext. 521. Or email her at pgreene@smaaa.org. For opportunities in southern York County contact Deborah Levine at 603-205-4073 or email her at dlevine12@yahoo.com. For opportunities in the rest of York County contact Ken Murray at 396-6520 or 1-800-427-7411 Ext. 520. Or email him at kmurray@smaaa.org.

Some of the many opportunities available include:

- Activity Aide in Senior Housing
- Adult Tutor in Literacy Programs
- Board or Committee Volunteer
- Buddy for Health Program
- Bulk Mailing Helper
- Child Care Volunteer
- Classroom Aide
- Clerical Support
- Docent at a Museum
- Driver in a Volunteer Rides Program
- Entertainer at Senior Facilities
- Health Educator or Mentor
- Hospice Volunteer
- Hospital Volunteer
- Hotline Volunteer
- Independent Living Helper for Frail Elders or Returning Veterans
- Information Provider
- Knitter
- Library Aide
- Management Consultant to Nonprofit
- Mentor
- Ombudsman
- Program Aide in Various Settings
- Reader to Young Children
- Recruiter of Other Volunteers for Nonprofits
- Senior Center Volunteer
- Tutor of Children
- Visitor in Senior Housing

Join Spring Training
Time to sign up for training in an interesting volunteer opportunity!

There are hundreds of volunteer opportunities available for people age 55 and over through RSVP. The ones listed below are just “the tip of the iceberg.”

Cumberland County

- Attention gardeners! There are a variety of gardens in non-profit agencies that could use your help in planting or maintaining. Also available are situations where you could assist residents of long term care facilities in planting a vegetable garden.
- If you enjoy being in an office situation, there are needs for data entry, phone calling and assistance with fundraising.
- Do you enjoy engaging seniors in activities? Helping with crafts, cooking or discussing current events are three possibilities where you could run an activity.
- Join a river-watching team. Help collect water samples from our rivers and learn how to analyze the samples. This is a great opportunity to learn new skills while enjoying time outdoors.
- Another way to enjoy spring weather—assist in a trails program. Activities could include trail maintenance or helping at special events.

If any of the above opportunities interest you, or you would like to learn more about other ways you can help others, call Priscilla Greene for more in-depth information. If you’d like to work with people age 55 and over through RSVP, you may reach her at 396-6520 or 1-800-427-7411 Ext. 521. Or you may email her at pgreene@smaaa.org.

York County

- Volunteers are needed to work with the United Way to recruit other volunteers for area nonprofit organizations. This is a great opportunity to use your knowledge of your community.
- A therapeutic riding program is looking for volunteers to help with various activities. If you like horses, this would be a great opportunity for you.
- A cooking and nutrition program is looking for volunteers to assist instructors. The program teaches families living with low incomes how to prepare tasty, healthy meals on a limited budget.
- York County’s domestic violence prevention and response program is looking for volunteer hotline advocates, child care providers and court monitors.
- Nursing homes and assisted living centers have lots of volunteer opportunities to help with activities or visit with residents.

To learn more about these and many other volunteer opportunities, if you live in southern York County, contact Deborah Levine at (603) 205-4073 or dlevine12@yahoo.com. If you live in the rest of York County, contact Ken Murray, at 1-800-427-7411, Extension 520 or by emailing kmurray@smaaa.org.

Volunteers of All Ages Needed To Support Senior Independence

Southern Maine Agency on Aging has a long history helping people age 60 and over live full and independent lives. We have done that by providing clear, objective information and a variety of services. Volunteers have always been key to our success. Here are some of the many ways you could help as a volunteer:

- Help Seniors with Everyday Finances as a bill-paying assistant
- Deliver Meals on Wheels
- Shop for Groceries for a Senior
- Lead a Group to Help Seniors Improve their Balance
- Lead a Group to Help People Cope with Chronic Illness
- Help Organize Maine Senior Games
- Support Residents of Larrabee Village in Westbrook
- Leading Activities, Visiting or Grocery Shopping
- Help with Activities and Events at Truslow Adult Day Center in Saco
- Become a Medicare and Health Insurance Advocate
- Help Provide Information & Resources to Seniors
- Put Your Office Skills to Good Use at SMAA

To learn more, call the Volunteer Hotline at (207) 396-6525.

Maine’s Volunteer Roll of Honor

Each spring the Maine Commission for Community Service collects the names of volunteers who have contributed 500 or more hours during the previous year. They are then entered into the Roll of Honor, which is part of the Governor’s Service Awards program. This year, the following volunteers were nominated from RSVP:

- Kathleen M. Fink
- Doris Flaherty
- Irene M. Harford
- Ruth A. Johnson
- Joanne F. Moulton
- Lorraine M. Moulton
- Madeline Sargent
- Janice F. Phinney
- Sally M. Rendall
- Burt Rendall
- Lorraine M. Moulton
- Muriel Rumney
- Elizabeth D. Smith
- Kathleen M. Fink
- Ruth A. Johnson
- Burt Rendall
- Kathleen M. Fink
- Ruth A. Johnson
- Burt Rendall

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Finding Balance Between Trust and Mistrust

By Jessica Wood

How do we know for sure if we are being scammed or if we are going to fall prey to a potential scam? Our natural desire to give others the benefit of the doubt and to be considerate towards the unknown may sometimes alter our ability to judge a particular situation or person. After all, what kind of society would exist if we were constantly mistrusting of others? Ultimately, we must determine how to balance our ability to trust and mistrust to make sound decisions. The following stories exemplify this important message.

In the first instance, an elderly woman living in Maine was recently contacted by a gentleman claiming to be from a Canadian prison. The man asserted the woman's grandson was in jeopardy and required at least $2,000 to meet bail. Evidently this man had enough knowledge about the grandson to motivate his grandmother to contact her local bank to inquire about wiring funds to be from a Canadian prison. The bank advised their customer to report the event to the police, and to communicate to the suspect that she was going to coordinate payment through local law enforcement. Feeling satisfied that if the request for financial help was sincere, she would have legitimate means of helping her grandson, she relayed the suggested message to the person requesting the $2,000. In the end, when the suspect was told how payment would be made, he immediately hung up the phone and never called back.

As one additional note to this example: readers should be cautious because this is a well-known ‘grandparent/grandchild’ scheme. If you are presented with a similar situation, it is best to call police or your local sheriff department and allow them to assist you before sending money in what sounds like an emergency.

Also, when buying or selling an item never send or expect more than the amount of a purchase or sale—another scam that is popular. As one additional note to this example: readers should be cautious because this is a well-known ‘grandparent/grandchild’ scheme. If you are presented with a similar situation, it is best to call police or your local sheriff department and allow them to assist you before sending money in what sounds like an emergency.

The following example presented a challenge for an aging, disabled man. Due to his physical limitations, this man is often unable to keep up with the maintenance on his property. When several gentlemen approached him at his home offering to complete some unfinished work, he was relieved but in his opinion did not really accept the offer of their help. The “workers” completed a portion of the work they’d offered to do and pressured the man into writing a check as though the job was completed.

While this man was pressured into writing the check, it was eventually what caused him to feel uncomfortable about the exchange. When the “workers” never showed up to complete the work, the homeowner reported the events to the police and the bank. Although the bank customer wasn’t able to recall the identity of any of the suspects, the bank was able to aid in providing evidence. As of this date, the suspect who cashed the check will be brought up on charges stemming from this incident.

In due course, we must all develop strategies to help us lead with sound decision making. While it isn’t advised to radiate skepticism and uncertainty about everyone, we cannot place our unrelenting trust in the whole world either. Bottom line: reach out to professionals in the community, protect your assets, and pay attention to potential red flags to find your balance.

About the author: Jessica Wood is an investigator at Key Bank in Maine. She may be reached at Jeseca_Wood@KeyBank.com.
Message from Leadership

Thanks to the care and loyalty of our 1,345 generosity donors, we were able to offer critical services and successful solutions to more than 15,000 individuals in 2010. Like most non-profits across the state, SMAA faced a challenging fundraising year. While many nonprofits around the country reported significant declines in giving, we set a record for the number of new donors, 50%, and saw a 35% increase in the number of donors of $5,000 or more. Private donations provided 11% of our 2010 operating budget—vital support enabled as federal and state support continued to decline. We are deeply grateful to our SMAA volunteers, community members, municipalities, clients, foundations, businesses and community organizations—your continued generosity and your care for those we serve.

Last year we continued to develop new partnerships with a diverse group of organizations and have worked toward broadening and committing resources to reach seniors in the SSA home area.

As usual, our biggest challenge going forward is preparing for the number of “baby boomers,” those born between 1946 and 1964, many of whom will help care for older family members and friends. With this in mind, we are anticipating 40,000 seniors aging in-homes across the state, on the next decade in southern Maine alone. It will be only through the help of volunteers and donors that our organization can stay up to this challenge. Please consider how you can help by giving to our time or financial support.

Thank you for your interest in SMAA’s work.

Lawrence W. Gris, Executive Director

New Community Partnerships

- Working with the Veterans Administration, our adult day center in Saco created a core group of participating veterans. SMAA staff also developed two new long-term care programs for veterans.
- Recognizing that patients return home from a hospi-
tal stay with new or non-medical issues, Maine Medical Center’s Physician Health Organiza-
tion partnered with SMAA to develop special programs for their patients.
- Donor Eddie Woods launched the Best Friend Fund with a $5,500 challenge grant to help low-income pet owners with unexpected veter-

inary expenses.
- Our nutrition program joined community centers in Kittery, Saco and Westbrook creating local hubs for SMAA resources.
- Through our “Do Your Part” program, the Brunswick recreation, Me & D’s Diner, Southern Maine Community College, St. Joseph’s College, Maine Medical Center and York Hospital served 11,000 discounted meals. Customers choose from a variety of menu items, when and where they want to eat out.
- SMAA worked with the Good Shepherd Food Bank, Wayside Food Programs, Project Food, York County Sheriff, and the University’s Cooperative Extension with a number of local partners to reach 1,028 low-income seniors with 124,200 pounds of U.S. Commodity Supplemental Food in the first five months of this program.
- We worked with the Elder Abuse Institute of Maine and the City of Portland to develop Maine’s first transitional housing program for older abused women.

In January 2009 we set up electronic referral forms through the SMAA website. In 2010, the first full fiscal year with this feature, 873 website gen-
erated inquiries were transmitted to our staff.

Milestones

Fred Howard was presented the first Greenleaf Award by the estate of Ed Greenleaf to recognize a Maine Meals on Wheels volunteer who best demonstrates compassion and dedication to participants served by the South Portland site. Howard also received a “4 Who Care” Award from WCSH6 television.

Aron O’Shea was named to the Board of Fellows by the American Occupational Therapy Association for her “Timelines Leadership in Homecare and Fam-
ily Caregiving.” She has been a Family Caregiver Specialist at SMAA for 10 years.

Westbrook Housing Authority and SMAA celebrated 10 years of working together at Larrabee Village.

Enriched Services in the Community

- “Welcome to Medicare” Seminars were added in Windham, Scarborough and Springvale, training the number of people who can read this vital information.

- More than 50% of the 6,700 people SMAA helped with health insurance counseling re-
quired additional one-on-one assistance for 7,756 total contacts, a 17.6% increase from 2009.

- For those living alone, SMAA has collect-
ed, recorded and distributed 300 emergency 911 only call-phones.

- Volunteers helped 87 people continue to live independently by completing their monthly bookkeeping through our “Money Minders” program.

- More than 511 athletes age 50 and older participated in Maine Senior Games, a 40% increase from 2009.

- The Sam L. Cohen Foundation funded the technology for electronic reporting be-
 tween 17 outlying SMAA locations and the main office.

SMAA when vs. private donors. To donate toward our work, call 775-6711 or visit www.maine.org. Services of SMAA can also be supported by state and fed-
eral funds through the Maine DHHS Office of Elder Services, the Corporation for National and Community Service, and Housing and Urban Development, etc.

“Excellent presentation on Medicare!”

Volunteers made it possible for

- 189,919 Meals on Wheels to be delivered to 1,851 households

- 3,110 households to get 8,570 bags of groceries

- 4,764 people to be guided through complex health insurance decisions

This year, 1,500 volunteers of all ages were involved in service either for SMAA programs, in healthcare or other non-profits. Volunteer hours totaled 65,501 or the equivalent of 31.4 full-time employees.

- 2,050 family caregivers talked with one of our social workers or attended classes, which helped countless family members gain information and develop coping skills.

- Working closely with rec-

"Money Minders" program. To learn more, email: info@smaaa.org.

- Portland Rotary Club and SMAA volunteers delivered 185 holiday dinners to seniors who were alone at Christmas.

- Fred Howard was presented the first Greenleaf Award by the estate of Ed Greenleaf to recognize a Maine Meals on Wheels volunteer who best demonstrates compassion and dedication to participants served by the South Portland site. Howard also received a “4 Who Care” Award from WCSH6 television.

- SMAA relies on private donations. To donate toward our work, call 396-6591 or visit www.smaaa.org. Services of SMAA are also supported by state and fed-

eral funds through the Maine DHHS Office of Elder Services, the Corporation for National and Community Service, and Housing and Urban Development, etc.

- Truslow Adult Day Health Center in Saco

58 families benefited from 29,493 enrolling hours of therapeutic activities for their mother, father, husband, wife, brother or sister. Music therapy programs complete with themes, song along, games, people, messages, and dance movements were held each month and a annual field day was planned by staff and held on the grounds with the help of United Way volunteers.

“Just being there help. The people and staff are friendly to work with. It was a peaceful environment.”

“Mom needed a little more quiet time to herself and a safe place for Dad.”

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When facing the changing needs of an aging parent or other loved one, sometimes it all comes down to simple relief.

When Marianne Fenton’s father, John Garner, needed the specialized support of memory care, she and her mother, Pauline, visited Scarborough Terrace. “Halfway through the tour, Mom said, ‘I wonder if living here wouldn’t be best for both of us.’ ”

“Things couldn’t have worked out better,” says Marianne. The Garners started out sharing a beautiful assisted living apartment together, and later, when necessary, John received extra physical and emotional support in the Rose Garden, Scarborough’s memory care center.

If you or a family member is looking for your own special kind of “relief,” call Elizabeth Simonds at (207) 885-5568 to learn more.

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