

TOWN of TOLLAND COUNCIL on AGING

WINTER NEWSLETTER

241 West Granville Rd.
Tolland, Massachusetts 01034

December 8, 2020

Hi Neighbors,

We hope this note finds you and your loved ones well. Life has been a roller coaster since our last note in August. But with the successes the medical community is having with the Covid-19 vaccines we can all hope to return to some sense of normalcy in the foreseeable future. On a very encouraging note things remain very much the same in Tolland. The trees have lost their leaves, the lakes and ponds are being drawn down for winter, we have had our first snow, it did not get above freezing for two consecutive days, winter is coming and there is peace in the hills.

Yoga -The Tolland COA has completed our on-line Yoga program for the year. We expect to restart in late spring. You can still attend Zoom Yoga classes - Otis is offering On Line Yoga every Saturday morning at 9:00 AM. Connie Wilson is the instructor. Interested participants should visit <https://www.facebook.com/noticeotis> and request to join the on-line class group first. If you have any problems call. Patricia Richard, Program Supervisor; Otis Recreation Commission 413 269-4514.

BROAD BAND –Tolland Broadband Update -POLE SURVEY WORK November 17, 2020 Pole survey work: Verizon has hired Pike Construction to survey the Utility poles in Tolland; there are 1130 poles being surveyed. Surveys began November 12, and the surveyors can complete about 150 poles per day. Survey work is weather dependent and can be completed within 3-4 weeks. Work on Schoolhouse Road continues: Witch Equipment workers say they are past the ledge they encountered in the last 3-4 weeks. Respectfully submitted, Kevin Donovan Chair Tolland Broadband Committee. A more complete report is inside the newsletter

The COA Rides program continues to provide rides to seniors who need to get to doctor appointments, grocery shopping, pharmacies, PT and other necessary appointments. Call 413 258-4794 X129 at least 48 hours in advance and leave a message with your phone number and someone will get back to you.

The COA's Outreach worker, Ann Skibski, continues to be in contact with seniors in town to assess their needs, update them on available services and activities as well as assist them in obtaining needed services. assistance in meeting

Our Community Food Pantry in Southwick serves Tolland, Southwick and Granville. The holidays are always a busy time for them. They provide food assistance to those in need. Tolland has always supported this program. If you would like more information call (413) 569-9876.

Upon the recommendation of the Council on Aging (COA) the Board of Selectmen, on October 19, voted, subject to approval at a town meeting, to establish a program to allow persons over the age of 60 to volunteer to provide services to the town. In exchange, the town shall reduce the real property tax obligation of the person on his/her tax bill. This shall be an abatement. The rate of the abatement a person shall receive or credited with, shall be at the current minimum wage and shall not exceed \$1,500 in a given tax year. This is authorized under Part I, Title IX, Chapter 59, Section K of the general Laws of Massachusetts. The COA believes the program will be beneficial to the town and may provide some help for its senior citizens.

The vote to approve this program will be at the next town meeting. Dave Spidal of the COA will make a brief presentation and answer any question. If you have questions prior to that meeting, you can email them to councilonaging@tolland-ma.com and a member of the COA will contact you to answer your question(s)

The COA received a shipment of 500 face masks and they are available at no cost for any resident in Town Hall. Call Margaret at (413) 569-9876 X 101 to get come. Or stop in town hall Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday between 10 AM and 2 PM and be sure to wear a mask.

During October the Southwick – Tolland- Granville Regional School District had the highest percentage of students participating in in-person learning in Western Massachusetts. The District and the teachers union had agreed that if Hampden County reached a 3% positivity rate the district would pivot to a remote learning model. The Hampden County Positivity Rate reached 3.74%, therefore, starting Monday, November 9, 2020, the district shifted. to a full remote teaching model. The district strongly believe that there is no replacement for in-person learning and the connections between students, teachers and peers. As of this writing the schools are still in full remote but looking forward to resuming in person learning.

The Tolland Library is open and doing business albeit with reduced hours. The current operating hours are Wednesday: 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm and Saturday: 10:00 am to 12:00 pm. All visitors must wear a mask.

On the first Wednesday of every month, except January and February, a Foot Nurse comes to the Otis Town Hall, to take care of our feet. She is a private nurse and the charge for her services is \$40.00.the Tolland Council on Aging supplements \$15.00 of this charge for Tolland Residents. You must make an appointment through the center at 413 269 0100 x107. She will also take walk-ins when possible. As of this writing, Otis has closed their Town Hall so this program is suspended.

Folks often have a temporary need for durable medical equipment like crutches, walkers, wheel chairs, etc. The Otis COA, the Westfield Senior Center and the Southwick Senior Center have an inventory of durable medical equipment that they will loan you. In Otis contact Ralph Gleason at seniors.otis@gmail.com or 413 269 0100 x107. The Westfield Senior center can be reached at (413) 729-0222. The Southwick Senior Center's phone is 413-569-5498

On August 22 the COA, with funding from the Cultural Arts Commission and set up y the Tolland DPW, hosted a Concert On the Green featuring Davis Bates with his stories and songs for all ages. Twenty-eight folks attended (less than the thirty allowed by the Governor), wore their masks and spread out over the green. It was an enjoyable evening with a surprise visit by a flock of six domestic turkeys – they appeared to enjoy the music too. We are planning on having more of these concerts next summer.

Assessors' Maps and Property Record Card Information available Online. The Tolland Board of Assessors would like to announce the launch of the online availability of all assessor maps and property data via AxisGIS. The maps can be accessed by the link on the Board's page at <https://www.axisgis.com/tollandma/> There are many features to the maps. If you click the help link on the lower left of the web page, you can take a tour of the features offered through the system. Any potential errors can be reported through the map website or directly to the the Tolland Board of Assessors.

We have given operation hours for a number of facilities in this newsletter. They were accurate at the time we wrote this however they are always subject to change so contact them before you go.

Keep well, keep smiling (behind your mask) and carry on!

The Tolland Council on Aging

Tolland Broadband Update

November 17, 2020

Since my July update, Comcast has begun the underground construction on Schoolhouse Road and has approximately one mile left to complete. Ledge and rock have slowed the process, and they continue to work to complete the three-mile project. Witch Equipment workers say they are past the ledge they encountered in the last 3-4 weeks

Eversource and Verizon have started work on estimates for the make-ready work on the utility poles. We do not have the granular data to measure and report their progress at this time; this information will be available quarterly when the estimates are completed and the work on the poles begins.

To reiterate from my last update, we remain in the make-ready phase of construction, the component of the network build with the longest timetable. Comcast has completed the mapping of all utility poles in Tolland, completed, and submitted the applications for the pole licenses to the respective utilities, Eversource and Verizon. Eversource and Verizon has processed the applications and begun surveys to determine the position on the pole where Comcast will attach and a cost estimate for each pole. Pole survey work: Verizon has hired Pike Construction to survey the Utility poles in Tolland; there are 1130 poles being surveyed. Surveys began November 12, and the surveyors can complete about 150 poles per day. Survey work is weather dependent and can be completed within 3-4 weeks. The pole work will be completed based on the estimates and scope of work for each.

Comcast is ordering equipment and entering addresses into their system, being ready to mobilize when the make-ready work is complete. The estimated completion of the network is fifteen to twenty-one months away. Peter Larkin and his staff at MBI meet bi-weekly with Comcast and the utilities discussing all towns under construction in Western Mass.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Donovan,

Chair - Tolland Broadband Committee

CORNFLAKES

A little silver-haired lady calls her neighbour and says, "Please come over here and help me. I have a killer jigsaw puzzle, and I can't figure out how to get started."

Her neighbour asks, "What is it supposed to be when it's finished?"

The little silver haired lady says, "According to the picture on the box, it's a rooster."

Her neighbour decides to go over and help with the puzzle.

She lets him in and shows him where she has the puzzle spread all over the table.

He studies the pieces for a moment, then looks at the box, then turns to her and says,

"First of all, no matter what we do, we're not going to be able to assemble these pieces into anything resembling a rooster."

He takes her hand and says, "Secondly, I want you to relax. Let's have a nice cup of tea, and then," he said with a deep sigh

"Let's put all the Corn Flakes back in the box."

\$\$\$ for Senior Homeowners & Renters!

YOU MAY QUALIFY FOR CASH or CREDIT FROM THE STATE IF YOU PAY RENT OR PROPERTY TAXES

The Massachusetts “**CIRCUIT BREAKER**” **TAX PROGRAM** is for qualifying persons age 65 or over whose property tax (or 25% of rent) exceeds 10% of their annual gross income. You may be eligible even if you receive a property tax exemption through your city/town.

Whether or not you owe taxes, you may be eligible for **cash or a tax credit of up to \$1,150 this tax year** - *even if you did not file Massachusetts state income tax forms*. This benefit equals the amount that your property tax (plus 50% of your Water and Sewer Bill*) or 25% of your rent exceeds 10% of your income up to a maximum benefit amount that varies by year.

To obtain the benefit, you must file for the 2020 tax year beginning in January 2021.

You may also file retroactively for any benefits you could have qualified for in the past three years. ***The maximum credit you may receive for tax year 2020 is \$1,150; 2019 is \$1,130; 2018 is \$1,100; and 2017 is \$1,080.*** The deadline for retroactive filing for tax year 2017 is April 15, 2021.

See if you qualify:

1. You must be **Age 65** or over by the end of tax year for which you are filing.
2. Your **Income** must not exceed the following (Including Social Security, and other income not ordinarily taxed in Massachusetts.)

Income for tax year	2017	2018	2019	2020
Single	57,000	58,000	60,000	61,000
Head of household	72,000	73,000	75,000	76,000
Married, filing jointly	86,000	88,000	90,000	92,000

3. Your **primary residence**, owned or rented, must be in Massachusetts.
Public Housing and subsidized renters are not eligible.
4. The **assessed value** of your home must not be greater than:
2017 - \$747,000; 2018 - \$778,000; 2019 - \$808,000; 2020 - \$848,000
5. **Homeowners:** Your property tax plus 50% of your water and sewer bill* must exceed 10% of your income. Multi-acre property owners: only one acre plus your home count toward your qualifying assessment. Consult your local assessor to compute assessment for application.
Renters: 25% of your annual rent must exceed 10% of your gross income.

Even if you don't normally file with the state, you are most likely due a check or tax credit from the Dept. of Revenue if you meet the above criteria. *If you have an accountant, ask for help with this year and /or previous years.*

For more information or assistance filing, call your local Council on Aging at _____ or call the Mass. Department of Revenue Customer Service at 1-617-887-6367 for information and forms. Or visit <https://www.mass.gov/guides/personal-income-tax-for-residents>

* Your water and sewer bill must be separate from your property tax bill.

ANOSOGNOSIA

In the following analysis, the French Professor Bruno Dubois, Director of the Institute of Memory and Alzheimer's Disease (IMMA) at La Pitie-Salpetriere-Paris Hospitals, addresses the subject in a rather reassuring way:

"If anyone is aware of his memory problems, he does not have Alzheimer's"

I forget the names of families.

I do not remember where I put some things.

It often happens in people 60 years and older that they complain that they lack memory.

"The information is always in the brain, it is the 'processor' that is lacking." This is "Anasognosia" or temporary forgetfulness.

Half of the people 60 and older have some symptoms that are due to age rather than disease.

The most common cases are: forgetting the name of a person, going to a room in the house and not remembering why we were going there, a blank memory for a movie title or actor, an actress, a waste of time searching where we left our glasses or keys.

After 60 years, most people have such difficulty, which indicates that it is not a disease but rather a characteristic due to the passage of years.

Many people are concerned about these oversights hence the importance of the following statement:

"Those who are conscious of being forgetful have no serious problem of memory."

"Those who suffer from a memory illness or Alzheimer's, are not aware of what is happening."

Professor Bruno Dubois reassures the majority of people concerned about their oversights: "The more we complain about memory loss, the less likely we are to suffer from memory sickness."



BARBARA BERNARD

This, that and something for everyone

FROM TIME TO TIME, readers ask me to share a column of the tidbits I tend to collect. Here's my latest edition, some funny, some thoughtful and all new to this column. I am in the frame of mind to say, "Ask, and ye shall receive."

- Something many of us wish for is if we could hire someone to worry for us;
- It would be great to lose your temper and never find it again;
- Sorrow looks back, worry looks around and faith looks up;
- Intellectuals solve problems. Geniuses prevent them;
- First sign of spring is not the red robin bobbin'. It's when your knees hurt from weeding;
- Is it true cannibals don't eat clowns because they taste funny;
- How many roads must a man take before he admits he's lost;
- I'm not as young as I used to be but I'm not as old as I hope to get;
- Cleaning the house while your children are still little is like shoveling the walk before it snows;
- I want my children to have all the things I couldn't afford and then I want to move in with them;
- The hardest decision to make is which bridge to cross and which one to burn;
- The reason the golf pro tells you to keep your head down is so you won't see him laughing;
- You know you are old

when they have discontinued your blood type;

- I place more confidence in a blushing face than a lie detecting machine;
- Children are apt to do what they see their parents do rather than what their parents tell them to do;
- Most people have photographic memories. They just don't have film;
- She is always late. Her ancestors arrived on the Juneflower;
- Seen it all. Done it all. Can't remember much of it;
- Revenge has no more quenching effect on the emotions than salt water does on thirst;
- The cook was so poor everyone prayed after the meal;
- A bartender is just a pharmacist with a limited inventory;
- Sign in the IRS window: We've Got What It Takes to Take What You've Got;
- The kind of coffee served on the Titanic was Sanka;
- And, the lettuce served on the Titanic was iceberg;
- Bagpipers walk while they play because they are trying to get away from the noise;
- The sole purpose for a child's middle name is so he can tell when he is really in trouble;
- We should ask the lord to keep his arms around our shoulder and his hand over our mouth;
- Have you noticed when you put the two words "the" and "IRS" together it spells "Theirs;"
- Eventually we stop lying about our age and start bragging about it;
- The best kind of a vacation is to get rid of your watch;
- A family either is the very best thing which can happen to someone or it can be the absolute worst;
- The problem with doing nothing is that you never know when you are finished;
- This poem popped up in my collection and it has a good rationale:

When good friends walk beside us on the trails which we must keep

Our burdens seem less heavy and the hills are not so steep.

The weary miles pass swiftly taken in a very joyous stride

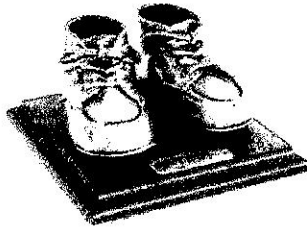
And all the world seems brighter when friends walk by our side;

- It's wise to ignore people who have seen everything and have learned nothing;
- Some people seem to have devoted their energies to avoiding work all their lives;
- Stress comes when your gut says "no" but your mouth says, "Of course I'll be glad to do it for you;"
- The golfer told his wife when he got home from a day at the club the only good drive he got all day was coming home in his car;
- What you don't see, don't say;
- Something which Rosalind Russell said I shall never ever forget: "Taking sheer joy in living is a woman's best cosmetic;"
- Your mind is a garden, your thoughts are the seeds and you can always grow flowers rather than weeds;
- My boss said, "Dress for the job you want, not the job you have," and now I'm sitting in a meeting dressed as Batman;
- I hate it when I gain 10 pounds for a role and then realize I'm not an actress;
- My head says gym but my heart says ice cream cone;
- Some things are better left unsaid, which, generally, I realize right after I've said them;
- Some of us are like fuses. When too many appliances are plugged into a fuse, it blows up;
- And this is something I often think: Wouldn't life be wonderful if sweat pants were sexy, Mondays were fun, junk food didn't make us fat, girls didn't cause so much drama, guys weren't so confusing and goodbyes only meant just until tomorrow.

Barbara C. Bernard, of Holyoke, is a columnist for The Republican.

PICTURES FOR "SENIOR" PEOPLE

WARNING: If you are not a senior don't bother to look at these pictures because you will not understand!



Be happy, not because everything is good, but because you can see the good side of everything.

Tolland Council on Aging
241 West Granville Rd.
Tolland, MA 01034

Important Dates Coming Up

Dec. 11 – First Day of Hanukah
Dec. 21 – Winter Begins
Dec. 25 – Christmas Day
Dec. 26 – Kwanzaa Begins
Jan. 1, 2012 – New Year's Day
Jan. 18 - Martin Luther King's Day
Feb. 15 – Presidents Day
Feb. 14 – Valentine's Day
Feb. 16 – Mardi Gras Day
March 17 – St. Patrick's Day
April 4 – Easter Sunday
May 10- Mother's Day

