

Pomfret Senior Center Newsletter

Volume 1, Issue 7

March 2016

Pomfret Senior Center

Special points of interest:

- Make sure you reserve your spot for the St. Patrick's Day lunch by March 2nd!
- RSVP for the Matulaitis Nursing home lunch by March 31st!
- Congratulations to Dot Downer on being the winner of the first-ever P.S.C. Fudge Bake Off!!

Inside this issue:

A Little Irish Lore	2
You're Invited	2
Meditation	3
Fudge Contest	4

Month at a glance

Did you know that March was designated National Irish American Heritage Month by Congress in 1995? We are all thinking it's time for corned beef and cabbage and maybe even a little green beer. We will be celebrating the month at the Pomfret Senior Center with a **presentation on Ireland** and a **St Patrick's Day Lunch**.

Tai Chi – Because our Yoga instructor will be away the month of March we are happy to announce that we will be able to provide Tai Chi on Tuesdays and Thursdays during this month. Yoga will resume on Thursdays in April.

March Movies – Our first movie on March 3rd is *Message in a Bottle* starring Kevin Costner, Robin Wright and Paul Newman. A young woman discovers a tragic love letter in a bottle on a beach and is determined to track down it's author.

On St. Patrick's Day, March 17th, the featured film will be *Something's Gotta Give*. This movie is about a swinger on the cusp of being a senior citizen with a taste for



young women who falls in love with an accomplished woman closer to his age starring Jack Nicholson, Diane Keaton and Keanu Reeves.

Anne Miller will return to the center on March 15th to give a Learn at Lunch presentation on her trips to the Republic on Ireland and Northern Ireland.

Fraud Scams & Protecting Your Identity –

Jo-Ann Chenail will give a Learn at Lunch presentation on March 23rd to increase awareness of the different scams and ways to protect yourself.

Chocolate Demo – Jim Weiss, a local artisanal chocolatier, will talk about the art of fine chocolate making at our Learn at Lunch on March 29th.

Spring Luncheon at Matulaitis Nursing Home – Please be sure to sign up for this April 7th event by March 31st. (Details on Page 2.)

Bingo, WII, Trivia and Family Heirlooms will round out the month.

All programs are listed on the monthly calendar, in the Putnam Town Crier and in the Woodstock Villager as well as in morning announcements on WINY.

A little Irish Lore

As we approach St Patrick's Day and our celebratory meal on the 16th, it seems like a little Irish history might be in order.

Every year on March 17, the Irish and the Irish-at-heart across the globe observe St. Patrick's Day.

What began as a religious feast day celebrating the traditional death date of the patron saint of Ireland

has become an international festival celebrating Irish culture. Saint Patrick's Day is a public holiday in the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland, the Canadian province of Newfoundland and Labrador and the British Overseas Territory of Montserrat. It is also widely celebrated by the Irish diaspora around the world.

A **leprechaun** is a type of fairy in Irish folklore. It is usually depicted as a little bearded man, wearing a coat and hat, who partakes in mischief. They are solitary creatures who spend their time making and mending shoes and have a hidden pot of gold at the end of a rainbow. If captured by a human, the leprechaun has the magical

power to grant three wishes in exchange for their freedom. Leprechaun-like creatures rarely appear in Irish mythology and only became prominent in later folklore. Modern depictions of leprechauns are largely based on derogatory 19th century caricatures and stereotypes of the Irish.

A **shamrock** is a young sprig of clover, used as a symbol of Christianity in Ireland. Saint Patrick is said to have used it as a metaphor for the Christian Holy Trinity. The name *shamrock* comes from Irish *seamróg*, which is the diminutive of the Irish word for clover (*seamair*) and means simply "little clover" or "young clover".

Hurling is a sport native to Ireland. It is the fastest field sport in the world. The game is similar to hockey. However the ball (or *sliotar*) is rarely played along the ground. Hurling is also played on a large pitch and is considerably faster than hockey.

It's a joke when driving around Ireland, Someone leans back, closes their eyes and says, "Wake me if you see any sheep." There are estimated to be 4.7 million sheep in Ireland, compared to 4.6 million people.

If these small tidbits make you hungry for some traditional Irish fare, be sure to sign up by March 2nd for our St. Patrick's Day Celebration Meal which will be served on Wednesday, March 16th.

Saint Patrick's Day is a public holiday in the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland, the Canadian province of Newfoundland and Labrador and the British Overseas Territory of Montserrat. It is also widely celebrated by the Irish diaspora around the world.



You're Invited!

On April 7th, the Putnam and Thompson Recreation Commissions, along with Matulaitis Nursing Home will host a Spring Luncheon at Matulaitis Nursing Home.

Transportation will be provided to and from the Pomfret Senior Center by the Putnam Recreation Commission as parking at Matulaitis

is limited.

This will be an opportunity to enjoy a delicious meal with area seniors. There will be entertainment and a discussion of local events and programs. We ask that you sign up at the center by Thursday, March 31st so we can

provide a count for lunch as well as assure there is space on the bus for everyone. The Pomfret Senior Center will be open on the 7th as well. Be sure to let staff know if you will be eating at the center that day so we can plan for meals.

Meditation helps with Senior Health

More and more doctors believe meditation to be an effective tool in assisting seniors to achieve mental, physical, and emotional health. Many people think that the practice of meditation is to reach a high level of spiritual awareness or to help lead a peaceful, thoughtful life. However, modern science has discovered a whole slew of ways meditation can help so many other things.

1. Meditation helps memory: The dominant long term memory and short term memory storage hubs, the Hippocampus and frontal brain lobe, both become well-stimulated during meditation. What does this mean for the aging senior? Better long & short term memory recall, including retrieving long lost memories.

2. Meditation makes the digestive system work better: The deep breathing exercises central to any meditation program improve circulation and blood oxygen enrichment, sending extra help to all of the organs, including the stomach and intestines.

3. Meditation activates the happy part of the brain: By stimulating the “feel-good” prefrontal cortex brain region, seniors who suffer from depression can benefit greatly from meditation (so can people of all ages!). With increased feelings of happiness in the mind, the aging senior can renew his or her zest for life!

4. Meditation sharpens and

focuses the mind: With an increased mental alertness and heightened ability to function as a well-capable member of society, meditation can make the senior years just as rewarding as other life phases. Better focus, more creativity, quicker wit, are but just a few of the available benefits.

5. Meditation melts away stress, yielding many great benefits: For senior citizens, long term stress can come from many sources, such as chronic illness or disability. Many significant aging and quality of life factors can be greatly reduced after beginning a meditation program.

6. Improved Longevity: A study published in the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology suggests that there is evidence that elderly practitioners of mindfulness meditation, experience improved longevity. The study followed a large number of seniors and found a significant decrease in mortality rates among those who meditate. Another way that meditation may improve longevity is through preventing cellular aging, a mechanism suggested in a National Institutes of Health study.

7. Decreases Loneliness: Mindfulness and meditation have also been found to decrease loneliness, or rather, “promote connectedness.” A UCLA study found that seniors who engaged in a simple eight week meditation program

significantly decreased rates of self-reported loneliness. Since isolation is a crucial problem among seniors, this is a promising avenue of research.

8. Reduced Healthcare Costs: A study in Journal of Social Behavior and Personality reportedly found that seniors who practiced meditation had significantly fewer hospitalizations. According to the study, the meditation group’s “five-year cumulative reduction in payments to physicians was 70% less than the control group’s [non-meditating group].

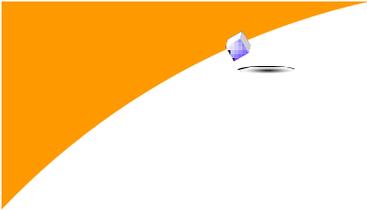
9. Improved Mood: A study conducted in Thailand supplemented walking therapy for seniors with a meditation component. They found that seniors who engaged in the meditation component had significantly better outcomes than seniors who merely were in the walking group: “Walking meditation was effective in reducing depression, improving functional fitness and vascular reactivity, and appears to confer greater overall improvements than walking without meditation.

It’s never too late to learn to practice meditation/mindfulness. A study in Geriatric Nursing indicated that teaching mindfulness meditation and related techniques in senior communities can help improve resident health and feelings of connectedness. To this end, the Pomfret Senior Center hopes to offer meditation later this winter or spring.

There is considerable information on the internet regarding meditation and mindfulness for seniors. Several of the sites that were useful for the purpose of this article were eocinstitute.org, aplaceformom.com, elderthink.com, senioradvisor.com, psychcentral.com and liveyourretirement.com.

Life is
available-only
in the present
moment!!





Pomfret Senior Center

207 Mashamoquet Rd

Phone: 860-928-7458

TEEG: 860-923-3458

Email: seniorservices@teegonline.org

First Annual Fudge Bake Off



On February 11, 2016, the Pomfret Senior Center held it's first bake-off! Four participants provided eight different kinds of fudge for the judges to try.

The competition was stiff and the job the judges had, (though delicious!) was a tough one. All entries were judged on taste and appearance and rated on a five point scale.

Dorothy Downer was the

winner, being ranked first by three of the four judges. Coming in at a close second was John Carter, who submitted four different kinds of peanut butter fudge.

All entries were delectable and the judges can't wait for next year's contest.

If you have a favorite fudge recipe, please bring it into the center to share!