

Senior Echoes

Western Montana Area VI Agency on Aging, Inc.
Serving Seniors in Western Montana and N. Idaho
110 Main St. Suite 5, Polson, Mt 59860 883-7284 or 1-800-551-3191
Summer 2022



A Word To the Wise

The Farmers Almanac

Under the guiding hand of its first editor, Robert B. Thomas, the premiere issue of **The Old Farmer's Almanac** was published in 1792 during George Washington's first term as president. Although many other almanacs were being published at that time, Thomas's upstart almanac became an immediate success. There are various guides with their own predictions, but **The Old Farmer's Almanac** has been around for 230 years and claims an **80%** accuracy rate for its weather predictions. The forecasts are determined by combing solar science, weather patterns, and meteorology.

Starting with the first edition of the **Farmers' Almanac** in 1818, readers used to nail holes into the corners to hang it up in their homes, barns, and outhouses (to provide both reading material and toilet paper).

An almanac provides data on the rising and setting times of the Sun and Moon, the phases of the Moon, the positions of the planets, schedules of high and low tides, and a register of ecclesiastical festivals and saints' days. An almanac contains a wealth of information about the forthcoming year. Weather predictions, best dates for planting crops, dates of eclipses, and farmers' planting dates are all pieces of information found in an almanac.

Another almanac was, **Poor Richards Almanac**, published first in 1732-1758, the success of this was due in part to Ben Franklin's ability to adapt bits and pieces of past calendars with his own skills and wit. Franklin wrote under the pseudonym of Richard Saunders.

Do folks still use the Almanac? Well the answer seems to be "yes". And for those who like folklore, they also offer legendary weather-predicting tips — such as the one about the woolly bear caterpillar, the larval form of *Pyrrharctia Isabella*, the Isabella tiger moth. Legend has it that the width of the middle brown section of the caterpillar is a predictor of winter weather. Supposedly, the wider the brown segment, the harsher the coming winter will be. If the brown band is narrow, old timers say the winter will be mild. Folklore however, is not part of the todays staff's forecasting formula.

The Farmers Almanac seems to be a comforting link with the natural world and our past, the gardeners who tilled perhaps the same rich, fragrant soil as todays gardeners, or the old mariners who sailed the same seas under the same stars and moon as mariners in our times. Hmmm...maybe I need to look into buying an almanac.....





SENIOR MEDICARE PATROL

Social Media Scams Increasing

Recently we've received questions about Medicare Flex Cards and genetic test kits being advertised on Facebook. Before addressing that specifically we need to talk about protecting yourself on social media from scams in general. As social media grows, so do the scams. If you use Facebook, you've probably already recognized this. The ads are everywhere.



Medicare Flex Cards, genetic and cardiac test kits, and more. Whether it's misleading ads or outright fraud, here are some ways to help you and your family stay safe on social media:

- Limit who can see your posts and information on social media. All platforms collect information about you from your activities on social media but visit your privacy settings to set some restrictions.
- Check if you can opt out of targeted advertising. Some platforms let you do that.
- If you get a message from a friend about an opportunity or an urgent need for money, call them. Their account may have been hacked – especially if they ask you to pay by cryptocurrency, gift card, or wire transfer. That's how scammers ask you to pay.
- If someone appears on your social media and rushes you to start a friendship or romance, slow down. Read about romance scams. And never send money to someone you haven't met in person.

Before you buy, check out the company. Search online for its name plus "scam" or "complaint." Regarding the flex cards, genetic and cardiac test kits, Medicare is not distributing flex cards to Seniors, and the best advice is to always talk with your Physician about genetic and cardiac test kits.

Call us for help or to report Medicare fraud

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“Ask Mary Mc”



Dear Mary Mc,

I received a phone call, unsolicited, from Humana Advantage telling me how good their plan was and how I needed to be on it. It sounded like they knew what they were talking about, and they mentioned Medicare, so I let them put me on it. Later I went to the Dr. and had to have a procedure. My supplement didn't pay anything! What happened? Puzzled in Pablo

Dear Puzzled,

I am so sorry this has happened to you. It has happened to many people. What they failed to inform you of, is that if you have an Advantage plan, your supplement is not allowed to pay and you will likely lose your supplement. We continually caution people against doing anything over the phone unless you yourself has initiated the call .

If you come to us soon enough, we can often change you back and if you qualify for a special enrollment period, definitely we can change you back to your original Medicare with your supplement. If your supplement has dropped you, this may be more difficult and you may not be able to get back on it if you have any health concerns.

Dear Mary Mc,

I received my Medicare card in the mail. It said I could sign it and send it back to SSA if I didn't want part B. It is awful expensive, can I just not get part B? Wondering in Ronan

Dear Wondering,

It is only a good idea if you are still employed and have creditable insurance through your work. If you do not enroll in part B in your 7 month enrollment period and want to enroll later, you will have a penalty added to that 170.10 every month for as long as you have your Medicare. 10% for every full 12 months you did not enroll.

If you have any Medicare questions for Mary Mc, or if you are in need of advice , please email your query to shipline3@a6wm.onmicrosoft.com OR call 406-883-7284

Veterans Directed Care Program News



In our pursuit of giving the best possible service to our veterans, we come across exceptional resources. One organization that I located while researching sources for free, or discounted weighted blankets for veterans is the organization Blankets4Vets.

Blankets4Vets is a non-profit 501(c) (3) founded in memory of a Veteran of a foreign war who often requested additional blankets for warmth during hospital stays as he battled cancer. His family became regular patrons of local stores purchasing blankets for him, and after he passed the idea of Blankets4Vets was borne out of their grief.

I was fortunate enough to speak with Kimberly, the organization's founder, and her graciousness in sharing her dedication to our veterans was remarkable. I had initially contacted Blankets4Vets to learn more about their program of offering free weighted blankets to veterans and during my conversation with Kimberly, I had asked her if she could send our Veteran Direct Care Program here in Idaho brochures that we could hand out during the Veteran Stand Down on May 7, 2022.

Imagine my surprise when what I thought would show up in the mail would be a manila envelope stuffed with brochures, turned out to be a box filled w/ mental health stress kit goody bags to hand out during the Stand Down. My respect for Blankets4Vets is beyond measure and passing out those goody bags to our veterans was heart-warming and fun!

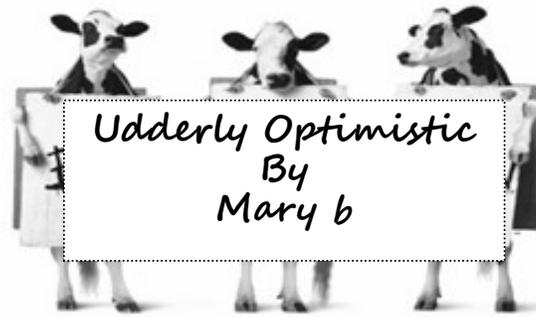
Blankets4Vets primary focus has been in providing Veterans suffering from PTSD, as well as other mental health issues, a free, high-quality weighted blanket. Their ultimate goal is to provide such a blanket to every veteran in honor of their service. Their blanket distribution area includes VA hospitals, community shelters, resource centers based in the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia. They also provide homeless veterans with blankets and will gladly ship blankets for free nationwide to any veteran that requests one.

According to Blankets4Vets website: "Irrespective of whether they are receiving care in a VA hospital or medical center or not, the Department of Veterans Affairs ("DVA") estimates that for every one hundred Veterans, 11-20 experience post-traumatic stress disorder ("PTSD"). This means that, at a minimum, of the 18.5 million Veterans in the United States, between 2.07 million and 3.76 million currently suffer from PTSD."

For those unfamiliar with weighted blankets, they were developed decades ago for people with autism to reduce anxiety. At the time it was also learned that weighted blankets enabled most users to reach a better level of REM sleep. This type of blanket (typically weighs between 5-30 pounds) stimulates the production of serotonin and other hormones that induce relaxation and sleep, as the weight of the blanket relaxes the nervous system. Weighted blankets can also be effective in providing relief for distressing flashbacks and neuropathy.

It is important that anyone interested in a weighted blanket speak with their primary care physician to ensure they are an appropriate candidate for such a blanket. Anyone with compromised breathing, whether due to COPD, asthma, bronchitis, and the like would not be an appropriate candidate due to the weight of the blanket.

All veterans can receive a free weighted blanket, and if you are not an appropriate candidate for a blanket, Blankets4Vets also offers a quilt. To receive a blanket, you need to email the organization at: www.Blankets4Vets.org. They need your full name, address, and branch of service, with "weighted blanket" in the subject line. Lana Galbraith VDC Idaho



Cousins & Summer Adventures

Deep in my childish memory are hot dry summers when I was allowed to go spend a week or two with my 3 cousins in a small Montana town. The two older girls were much older than we were and they didn't have much to do with us, although I was fascinated by them and their girly things, flowery smells, and pretty clothes. I had 7 older brothers and their boy things with jeans and sweatshirts and pungent sports equipment smells all around me. I loved being in a house full of girls. Here, my uncle was outnumbered.

I came from a larger city where a little more caution was exercised and we had to report to my mother who was a busy homemaker. The things we were allowed to do during the day in her sleepy little town while her parents were at work were so much more fun to me. It was one of those towns that had inviting porches and lazy rope swings hanging from tall green tree canopy's in back verdant, mossy yards. People out gardening spoke to us as we passed by. The roads all looked like some ancient black dragon had burrowed it's way under the pavement, cracking and heaving the surface as he snaked along.

We would walk around town visiting her friends, playing Barbies or having tennis matches in the city park, near her house, getting sunburned and dusty. An interesting memory I have; Once while playing tennis, we heard strange music coming from the camp part of the park. We pretended to be characters from the Avengers British detective show we watched at night in her cool, dark basement. We crept stealthily toward the unfamiliar music and spied, as we hid behind stickery bushes there in the camp ground. Gypsies! I'd seen pictures of Gypsies dancing around a campfire, there were the gypsies that carried your children away in the storybooks and many strange things said about the exotic ancient wanderers. We knew they were Gypsies by the wagons they pulled with the brightly painted wooden sides, once by horses, now old rickety cars or trucks. Their dark eyes shone out from beautiful dusky faces burnished by sun, framed by shining black curls. In our youth and ignorance, we were strangely enchanted and a bit scared at the same time, remembering stories we'd read. We couldn't take our eyes off these enchanting people! We knew it was wrong to spy on anyone so we made our way back to Aunt & Uncles house. We told of our great adventure and were promptly scolded for intruding on anyone. But we were not a bit sorry. We'd had an adventure and something to remember in that hot summer, in that sleepy little town with the dragon heaved roads and rope swings that hung from tall tree branches in mossy green yards. It enchants me still.....

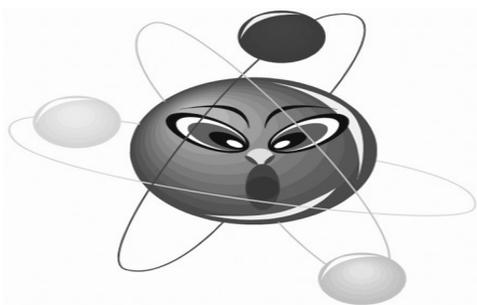
Bits & Pieces

Plants for a Butterfly Garden

There are two types of plants you need to have for your butterfly garden. The obvious ones are nectar plants, which feed adult butterflies.

Some top nectar plants include:

- Aster
- Blanketflower (Gaillardia)
- Butterfly bush (Buddleia)
- Coneflower (Echinacea)
- Cosmos
- Firebush (Hamelia)
- Heliotrope (Heliotropium)
- Lantana
- Pentas
- Salvia
- Verbena
- Yarrow (Achillea)
- Zinnia



Q: Why can't you trust atoms?
A: They make up everything!!

Then you need some of these host plants:

- Dill (*Anthem*) attracts Swallowtail butterflies
- Hops (*Humulus*) attracts Mourning Cloak butterflies
- Marigold (Tagetes) attracts Sulphur butterflies
- Milkweed (Asclepias) attracts Monarch butterflies
- Orange (*Citrus*) attracts Skipper butterflies (not sure we can manage this one)

Parsley (Petroselinum) attracts Swallowtail butterflies

Passionflower (Passiflora) attracts Zebra Longwing, Julia, and Gulf Fritillary butterflies (wrong zone)

Sunflower (Helianthus) attracts Checkerspot butterflies

Texas sage (Leucophyllum) attracts Checkerspot butterflies

Tomatoes (Lycopersicon) attracts Hummingbird moths

Yarrow (Achillea) attracts Painted Lady

*We are so pleased to welcome **Dawn Sonju**, our newest SHIP/I&A counselor to share **Lincoln County**.*

Dawn is married with 5 grown children and 3 grandchildren and has lived in Libby over 26 years. She retired from the Federal government in 2020 and joined our team in 2022 serving Lincoln County. She loves the outdoors, crafting and helping others.



Ask your Ombudsman about...

Person Center Care

Person Centered care is to focus on the resident as the focus of control and support the resident in making **their** own choices and having control over **their** daily lives.

A Resident has the Right to Self-Determination.

Choice of activities, schedules, healthcare and providers.

Participating in developing and implementing a person-centered plan of care that incorporates personal and cultural preferences.

Request, refuse, and or discontinue of treatment.

If we were supposed to talk more than we hear, we would have two mouths and an ear. [Franklin Jones]

Let's empower residents in MT to have a voice on **THEIR** wants and concerns for good quality care.

For further information or resources reach out to your local Ombudsman or call 883-7284 to connect with the ombudsman in your area.



Western Montana Area VI Agency on Aging
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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

June:

6. D-Day WWII
14. Flag Day
19. Father's Day

July:

4. Independence Day
19. Hot Dog Day (yum!)

August:

20. Hawaiian Statehood Day
25. National Park Service
Founders Day



Western Montana Area VI Agency on Aging
Aging Service Help line: 1-800-551-3191 or 406-883-7284 or 1-800-266-4188

Aging & Disability Resource Center (ADRC)

Advance Directives, Caregiver Options, Housing, Home Maintenance, In-home Services,
Long Term Care Planning, Nutritional Meals, SNAP, Commodity Foods Program,
Retirement Issues, Reverse Mortgages, Medicaid, Powers of Attorney, Elderly Home owner/renter Credit,
Transportation

SHIP, (State Health Insurance Program)

Medicare Rx plans/Supplement Insurance, Medicare Savings Program, Extra Help

Long Term Care Ombudsman Service

Ombudsmen help residents of nursing homes, transitional care units and
personal care facilities understand and exercise their rights to good care.

Veteran's Care Program

Helping Veterans remain in their homes.

Send your tax deductible donation to:
Western Montana Area VI Agency on Aging, Inc.
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