

NEWSLINES



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OF THE DIVISION ON AGING, DISABILITIES AND VETERANS' INTERMENT

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www.visitmonmouth.com/aging

Keeping Warm This Winter

For some people, the cold weather is welcome. They like the crisp days, blankets of snow and cozy times by a crackling fire. But for many, the cold weather brings problems. For those on a low fixed income the cold weather brings higher energy bills, and for many people with certain diseases, like arthritis or other conditions that worsen when the temperature drops, winter brings discomfort and pain.

Each year, New Jerseyans face rising costs for all forms of energy. Natural gas, oil and heating bills continue to rise even more than last year. To counter these rising costs, the state is increasing benefits that help pay for electricity by 10 percent and for natural gas costs by 19 percent. The state is offering assistance in many forms, including additional funding for NJ SHARES, a statewide nonprofit group that provides grants to moderate-income families who cannot

afford their heating bills. And Congress recently doubled funding for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). The NJ Universal Service Fund (USF) and NJ SHARES offer assistance designed to avert tragedies and eliminate the "heat or eat" dilemma faced by many seniors. Eligibility for LIHEAP depends on income and family size. The application can double as an application for the USF program. To learn if you are eligible and to apply for assistance, call 1-800-510-3102. If your household is above the LIHEAP maximum, NJ SHARES may be able to help. It provides grants to families who exceed LIHEAP income limits but have a financial emergency and cannot pay their past due utility bills or afford heating oil. For information call 1-866-657-4273.

If you have health problems that get worse in the cold, like arthritis, osteoporosis

or asthma, talk to your doctor about what to do. Here are some tips for keeping warm, comfortable and safe:

- Bundle up in several layers from head to toe.
- Use a face mask that warms the air you breathe.
- Preheat the car before getting into it.
- Keep your home warm.
- Sleep with an electric blanket.
- Warm clothing in the dryer before dressing.
- Drink warm or hot drinks, such as coffee, hot tea or hot chocolate.
- Use lotions on your skin.
- Keep physically active, and AVOID FALLS.
- Use handrails, keep sidewalks free of snow and ice, and wear shoes with a good grip. ❖

If you have a problem with your heating bills and need help with applications for assistance, call the Monmouth County Division on Aging, Disabilities and Veterans' Interment at 732-431-7450 or our toll-free NJ EASE line at 1-877-222-3737.

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Board of Chosen Freeholders: (back row) Lillian G. Burry, Amy A. Mallet
(front row) Robert D. Clifton, Barbara J. McMorrow, Director, John D'Amico, Deputy Director.



How to Escape the Winter Blahs WITHOUT Spending a Lot of Money - By Sandra Wiater

It is winter and many of us get cabin-fever this time of year but cannot afford to fly away to a warmer climate. Here are some “cheapie suggestions” for mini-escapes that won’t deplete one’s pocket or pocketbook!



Concerts at the local library can be fun – many libraries provide free concerts on the weekend for those of us still working full-time, and also offer classes, movies, lectures and other activities during the week. Check out your local newspaper or go on-line to discover what is happening in your neck of the woods. If you have access to a computer, you can pull up Monmouth County’s own website: www.visitmonmouth.com. At that site you can access a Calendar of



Events through the county Tourism Office, and library activities by pulling up the Main Library’s web page.

If you are willing and able to spend a little money, you can also find information about classes and activities offered through the Monmouth County Park System and Brookdale Community College. For example, you can take “Conversational Spanish” on a Saturday through Brookdale or sign up for an overnight bus trip or day outing through the Park System. You can also just bundle up and go to a park and walk around.

Consider taking your grandchildren with you – many parks have a fireplace you can sit in front of – bring a thermos of hot chocolate and a pair of binoculars – you can watch the bird activity and maybe even see some deer – at Holmdel Park you can observe the sheep and other farm animals — with or without your grandchildren!



If you don’t like to shop or your budget is depleted from the holidays, you can still walk around a mall if it’s too cold to walk outdoors. Many movie theatres offer discounts for matinees or you can

stay home and borrow a DVD from the library or rent one from a video store. Consider a movie that “transports” you to a warmer climate or just watch the travel channel if you have it available to you.



Walking on the beach or going to a trendy shore restaurant is often more pleasant off-season without the summer crowds to deal with. Parking is easier, too! I recently added to my collection of beach glass by walking on an uncrowded bay area beach after a walk on the boardwalk.

If you enjoy cooking, trying out some new recipes and inviting family or friends over to share a meal can be a pleasant diversion. I received a crock pot for Christmas and am experimenting with different recipes. I have had successes and failures! The crock pot lasagna is definitely a “keeper” but the rice pudding recipe is not!

Anyway, before we know it, Spring will be here, and those of us who like to garden can get outside and plant their spring crops. Whatever you enjoy doing, by using your imagination, you cannot only find fun things to do, but also save some money in the process! ❖

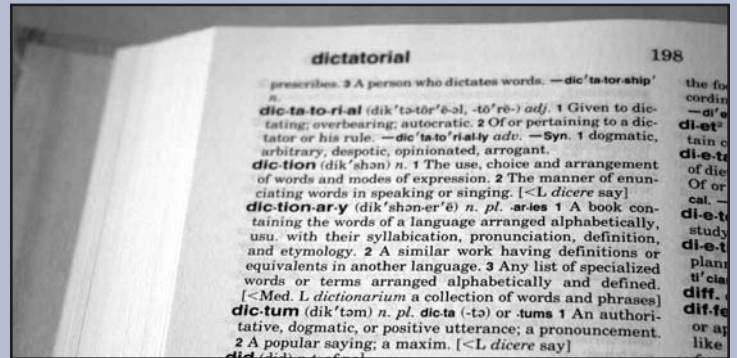
Happenings

Senior Spelling Bee

As part of the Older Americans Expo on May 21, 2009, the SCAN Learning Center will be holding the final round of the Word-for-Word Senior Spelling Bee in the Food Court area in Monmouth Mall, Eatontown, NJ. Seniors may participate at SCAN's Monmouth Mall campus or through their senior communities, organizations, senior centers, and assisted living communities.

All adults age 50+ are invited to take part. First round sessions will be held during February and March. First, second and third place winners will then attend

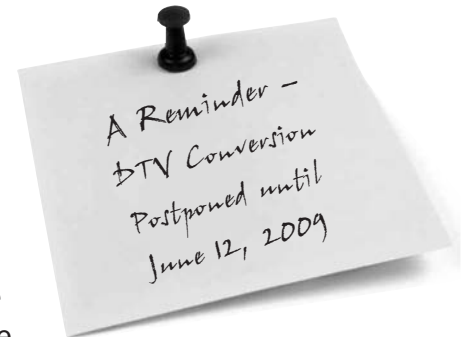
SCAN's final round in April. The final round will take place on May 21st. Prizes will be awarded for the final first, second and third place winners. ❖



For Spelling Bee information, call 732-542-1326

ALERTS!

ALERTS!



Just A Reminder... DTV Conversion Postponed

Even though the Congress voted to postpone the DTV conversion date until June 12, 2009, those people who do not have cable or satellite TV and use an antenna for TV reception need to get ready for the conversion. If you do have an old TV hooked up to an antenna, you will need a converter box to receive digital TV broadcasts. Your reception will be limited even with the converter box, but you will receive some channels depending on where you live. If you have cable or a satellite dish you do not need to use a converter box and will continue to receive the channels you already have.



The federal government will be issuing more of the coupons for the converter boxes, so if you don't already have a converter box for your antenna TV, it is not too late to apply for the coupons to purchase the boxes at a discount. If you are a homebound senior and need assistance with any of the steps of the process of converting to digital TV, (i.e. obtaining an application, buying the converter box, and installing the box), please call the Office on Aging at 732-431-7450 and a field representative will help you. ❖

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Jointly funded by the Monmouth Board of Chosen Freeholders and the New Jersey Division of Aging and Community Services, Department of Health & Senior Services

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Wellness

Hypothermia: A Cold Weather Risk

Older adults are especially vulnerable to hypothermia, which can be deadly if not treated quickly. The National Institute on Aging (NIA) has some advice to help people avoid hypothermia.

Hypothermia occurs when a person's body temperature drops below normal and stays low for a prolonged period of time. With advancing age, the body's ability to endure long periods of exposure to cold is lowered. The body's response to cold can be diminished by certain illnesses such as diabetes and some medicines, including over the counter cold remedies. Also, a less active older person generates less body heat. Body temperature that is too low affects the brain, making the victim unable to think clearly or move well. This makes hypothermia particularly dangerous because a person may not know it is happening and won't be able to do anything about it.

Check on older friends, relatives and neighbors when the temperature drops. The best way to identify someone with hypothermia is to look

for confusion or sleepiness, slowed or slurred speech, shivering or stiffness in the arms and leg, weak pulse or low blood pressure, poor control over body movements or slow reactions. If you suspect that someone is suffering from the cold and you have a thermometer available, take his or her temperature. If it is 96 degrees or lower, call 911 for emergency help. A person with severe hypothermia may be unconscious and may not seem to have a pulse or to be breathing. Handle the victim gently and get emergency assistance immediately. ❖



Bundle up and enjoy winter! From the Staff at the Monmouth County Division on Aging, Disabilities and Veterans' Interment

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