

# THE SPIRIT OF BELLINGHAM

## April 2024 Newsletter

*From the Council on Aging*

40 Blackstone Street • Bellingham, MA 02019

Phone: 508-966-0398 • Fax: 508-966-5843

[www.bellinghamma.org](http://www.bellinghamma.org)



## **VOLUNTEERS!**

**“Thank you!”** Senior Center Director Josie Dutil expresses her gratitude for all the work done by the volunteers who, together, contribute more than 200 hours of work at the Center every month.

In recognition of their work, a **Volunteer Appreciation Dinner** is scheduled for Wednesday, April 24, at 5pm at the Coachmen’s Lodge in Bellingham.

*(continued on page six)*

## **OLDER ADULT LOBBY DAY**

**A delegation from Bellingham visited the State House in Boston last month to advocate for critical support for older adults and people with disabilities trying to live healthy lives in the community.**

Led by State Representative Mike Soter the group included Senior Center Director Josie Dutil, and Bellingham Council on Aging board members Wendy Wright, Brenda Griffin, and Dave Dunbar.

*Read the full story on page seven.*

## **HEALTH FAIR!**

**Questions about your health?**

**Get your questions answered at the Senior Center’s Third Annual Health Fair** coming up on Friday, May 3, from 10am until 1pm. (The Center’s regular programming will be cancelled that day.)

**For the first 150 people who sign up, there will be a free lunch.** All you have to do is call the Center – (508) 966-0398 – and reserve your spot at the Fair.

*(continued on page 12)*

**SENIOR  
CENTER**  
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Stuart, Miguel Moril-  
lo, Marcia Mendell,  
Wayne Goodale, and  
Joe Alger.

The Senior Center has some brand new, hand-held weights for use in exercise classes thanks to a gift from friends of Marie Justice who recently passed away.



Led by longtime friend Wendy Wright, money was raised to purchase the weights and a rack. The idea came from Marie's daughter, Tracy Dixon, in memory of her mom's participation in many fitness classes at the Center over the years.

Pictured, from left, are Jim Justice (husband of Marie), Patti Feeley, Kathy Holmes, Helen Whiting, Wendy Wright, Glenna Laverdiere, Josie Dutil (kneeling), and Marie's and Jim's daughter, Tracy Dixon.

**From the rack will hang a silver tag with the words:**

With loving memories of Marie Justice. Beloved friend, mentor, role model, avid supporter of fitness and health. In our minds and hearts forever.

**CHAIR YOGA**

**Chair yoga is a promising form of exercise for older adults.** It may help people with certain health conditions, such as arthritis, to exercise without putting pressure on joints. It may also reduce the fear of falling, and help people who are not used to exercise to begin improving their strength and balance.

**New on the schedule: Fridays at 9:15am** with instructors Josie Dutil, Terri Graham, and Judy Higgins. All certified in February. Please sign up for the class by calling (508) 966-0398.

**WEALTH BUILDING  
AND  
RETIREMENT  
SAVINGS**

Come hear financial expert John Orthman of The Moody Street Group share ideas to make the most of your investments.

Bring your questions and prepare to see a bright way forward into retirement (or get your money's worth out of what you already have).

**Tuesday, April 16, at 11:30am. Please call ahead.**

The COA provides support and leadership to our senior community through advocacy and by implementing educational, nutritional, recreational and wellness programs to meet their needs. **508-966-0398**

**Our next public Board Meeting will be at the Center on April 9 at 11am**

### **COA Officers and Board Members**

*Chair: Kay Page. Treasurer: Dave Dunbar. Secretary: Brenda Griffin. Board Members: MingMing He, Glenna Laverdiere, Tsune Roberts, Wendy Wright. Associate Members: Steve Racicot, Tina Arsenault.*

Welcome April and Hello all,

April is here and brings us warmer weather (we hope), of course the April showers that will bring the May flowers, the Boston Marathon and Passover. To all celebrating, however you celebrate, we wish you a happy and joyous Passover!

**I want to say a few words about volunteering!** I have been a volunteer for several years at the Senior Center, have met so many wonderful, interesting people and have such good friends at the Center!

If you have free time and are looking for something to do to fill a few hours a day or a few days a week, **try volunteering** -- call or come to the Senior Center and sign up! Not only are you helping others, but you are also helping yourself -- meeting new people, making friends and giving you a little additional purpose to your day! **There is so much to be done in the senior community and we can always use help!** I can't say enough about volunteering -- give it a try it really is so rewarding! (Please see article about volunteering on page one of this newsletter.)

**Join us for the second annual Ladies' Tea Party on Tuesday, May 7 at 1pm** (please reserve your spot at the table by May 1). \$5 per person... and expect some surprise entertainment!

The Grab-and-Go lunch program will begin Tuesday, April 2 with Mickey G's catering. The cost will be \$5.00 for Bellingham residents and \$10.00 for non-residents. Call the Center to sign up.



**Remember, the COA is the eyes, ears and advocates for the senior community.** If you have any suggestions, comments or concerns please call the Senior Center at (508)966-0398.

Thank you!  
Kay Page, Chair



# NEWS BRIEFS

**LADIES' TEA PARTY** — Mark your calendars for Tuesday, May 7, at 1pm! Enjoy tea sandwiches, hors d'oeuvres, petite delicacies, and some of the fanciest hats you've ever seen! (Oh, and there'll be surprise entertainment as well.) Bring a hat! New, old, store-bought, whatever. Bring your favorite tea cup or use one of ours. And bring a friend! Kindly reserve by May 1. \$5 per person.

**COFFEE & CONVERSATION** — Special guest coming this month... Stephanie Gray from Congressman Auchincloss' office will join the Conversation on Tuesday, April 23, at 9:30am. C&C happens every Tuesday... and you are invited!

**BESG COOKOUTS** — These popular events will resume this month on Thursday, April 11, at 4pm and include one-time entertainment from folk singers Creeque Alley at 5pm thanks to a Bellingham Cultural Council grant. Sausage, peppers, and onions are on the menu.

**BESG BIRTHDAY PARTY** — This month, we'll celebrate folks with birthdays in March and April. Enjoy American Chop Suey! And please call ahead to let us know you'll be coming Thursday, April 25, at noon.

**WELCOME BACK** — Grab-and-Go lunches return this month. Mickey G's will be supplying the lunches. The same price at \$5 for Bellingham seniors (\$10 for non-residents). Tuesdays and Thursdays at 11:30am. Lunches are limited to 35, so please call a week prior to pick up.

**OUR THANKS** to these generous donors: Debra Lynn Chiacu, Lynn Bruce & Ed Clifford, Jacqueline Copeland, Mr. & Mrs. Gerard Dutil, Patti & Charles Feeley, Kathryn Murdy, Ana Panizo & Betsy Gonzales, John & Alice Rousseau Jr., Roger & Janice Simmons, Marie Ustinowich, and Anonymous. **Special thanks to** Wall Street Development Corp. and Dean Bank for supporting our lunch program.

**GATRA van service** is for Bellingham senior citizens and Town residents with a medical disability.



The van service takes riders to abutting communities (up to 10 miles) Monday through Thursday from 8am to 4pm and Friday from 8am to 3pm. Other requests are considered on a case-by-case basis.

Please make your **local medical appointments** between 9:30am and 1:30pm for best availability and provide at least 24 hours' notice. **There is van service for shopping** to/from Market Basket and/or Walmart on Monday mornings and Thursday mornings - please provide 24 hours' notice. On Tuesdays, trips are offered to the food pantry.

There are currently four vans which can **accommodate wheelchairs or riders who use canes or walkers**. If you are requesting a ride for the first time you will be screened for eligibility. While no fare is charged, donations are gratefully accepted and used for transportation related needs above and beyond the Town's budget.

There is also **very limited long-distance medical transportation** available (medical appointments only) to destinations such as the Boston area, Worcester, the Framingham area, and Providence, funded by the Town and rider donations (\$15 to \$25 are requested per round trip in an envelope; checks made payable to the Town of Bellingham). Provide at least three weeks' notice for long-distance medical appointments. Someone may accompany you if needed; no fee will be charged.

**Call the Senior Center at (508) 657-2709 to book your appointment or with any questions.** A staff member will call you back to confirm your information and ride arrangements.

# **BELLINGHAM ELDER SERVICE GROUP**

Bill Eltzroth, *President*; Jim Fitzpatrick, *Vice President*;  
Ray Conklin, *Treasurer*; Muriel Day, *Secretary*; Gail Milgram, *Sunshine Lady*  
*Board Members*: Paul Arsenault, Peg Brooks, Barbara Eltzroth, Linda Drohan,  
Eva Gamache, Pat Goodale, and Greg & Doreen MacLellan

**The BESG office is located at the Municipal Center. Please call either the Senior Center at 508-966-0398 or the Town Hall at 508-657-2715 for specific dates and times.**

Greetings!

I must say, **we've been blessed with another mild winter.** I think I have only had my snowblower out once. Hoorah!

The corned beef and cabbage dinner sponsored by the Bellingham Police Association was a great success. We want to thank them for all the hard work and hours they put in to make our town a safe place.

We gave up our birthday party in March so our State Rep Mike Soter could have a sit down ham dinner for Bellingham residents. We thank him for all that he does for our town and other towns in his district. Thanks, Mike!

Easter came early this year and we hope everyone enjoyed themselves with their families. And a reminder: **March and April birthdays** will be celebrated together on Thursday, April 25, with American Chop Suey for dinner and our first cookout will be on Thursday, April 11, at 4pm.

**Congratulations to Coffee & Conversation** for being one year old! It has picked up speed and everyone enjoys being there... new people show up every week... and we solve all the problems of the world! Hahaha!

**If you have a small project around the house** that you can't afford, give me your name, address, phone number, and what has to be done. I'll try to get help. Drop your information in the BESG mailbox at the Senior Center.

We still need hospital equipment so we can help people who need it. We were able to donate some walkers to a rehab in Westboro so some olds ones could be replaced. They were very appreciative.

There are a lot of new people coming to the Senior Center and also new readers of our monthly newsletter. Many wonder why we have two boards involved at the Center.

First, the **COA Board** provides support and leadership to our senior community through advocacy and by implementing educational, nutritional, recreational and wellness programs to meet their needs. It meets the second Tuesday of every month and it's open to all. Come to the 11am meeting and support the COA's efforts and express your opinions.

Second, the **BESG** is the fund-raising arm of the Senior Center. Our goal is to raise money to support the Center above and beyond the town's budget. We are very dedicated!

**BESG IS THE HEART AND SOUL OF**  
**THE SENIOR COMMUNITY**

Bill Eltzroth  
BESG President



# VOLUNTEERS

(continued from page one)

**“When you look at all the events,** programs, games, and activities that take place at the Center,” says Dutil, “you wonder how it all gets done. I’ll tell you how, on the backs of countless, selfless volunteers. **Bellingham has the best of the best!”**

**“We have more than 50 volunteers,”** explains Terri Graham, the assistant director of the Center who manages the volunteer program. “Those 50 do not include National Honor Society students who work in the garden, lead technology instruction, host a prom, write letters to homebound folks, or the grade schoolers that make holiday cards.”

**The Appreciation Dinner is for volunteers who have worked 100+ hours over the past year and does not include Tax Work Off participants.** If you are a qualifying volunteer who has not yet received an invitation to the Dinner, please contact: [tgraham@bellinghamma.org](mailto:tgraham@bellinghamma.org) or call the Center at (508) 966-0398.

**April is National Volunteer Month** across the U.S., and it highlights the power of volunteer service every year. Throughout this month, you'll find numerous events, campaigns, and initiatives aimed at encouraging volunteerism and celebrating the impact volunteers have on society. April was officially named National Volunteer Month by President George H.W. Bush in 1990 as part of his 1000 Points of Light campaign.

**If you’d like to know about volunteer opportunities at the Senior Center, then please contact Terri Graham at (508) 657-2710.**

## GARDEN UPDATE

**The first step has been taken to awaken our Senior Center garden from its long, winter nap.**

Volunteers prepared and planted late last month in four of our eight raised beds. This was the first time we’ve done a “Spring Planting” to allow more time for the vegetables to grow. Spring plants and seeds included kale, pea, lettuce, onion, chard, radish, beet, and carrot.

As of this writing, the next step will be the “Summer Planting” on Monday, May 20, at 1pm. We’ll be preparing and planting in the remaining four raised beds. We could use some help! **To volunteer, please either stop by the Welcome Desk at the Center or call (508) 966-0398.**

### **APRIL 22 IS EARTH DAY 2024**

The first Earth Day in 1970 mobilized millions of Americans from all walks of life to birth the modern environmental movement. Since then, Earth Day has evolved into the largest civic event on Earth, activating billions across 192 countries to safeguard our planet and fight for a brighter future.

# OLDER ADULT LOBBY DAY

**Some 500 people from across Massachusetts – including a delegation from Bellingham – attended “Older Adult Lobby Day” last month at the State House in Boston.**

It was an opportunity to hear the latest news about legislation aimed at improving the lives of older adults. They filled the Great Hall and heard reports from sponsors of the event including AARP, The Older Adult Behavioral Health Network, Mass Home Care, Massachusetts Councils on Aging, Alzheimer’s Association, and MA Senior Action.

**Attendees, after the presentations, were released to hunt down their state legislators for some verbal arm-twisting (lobbying).**

“Speaking with Massachusetts legislators,” says Bellingham Senior Center Director Josie Dutil, “is something that I’m learning to be more comfortable with, and something that is necessary if our elected officials are to understand what older adults are facing in day-to-day living.”

**“This is the year we make real progress on the things we care about,”** explained Senator Patricia Jehlen, one of the featured speakers. “And we need your help.” She mentioned home care, assisted living, and housing as services that need particular attention.

Another speaker, Representative Thomas Stanley, added that, **“We need more funding for all programs that serve older adults** including adequate wages for home healthcare workers, elder nutrition, and affordable housing.”

The Massachusetts Councils on Aging is looking for an increase in the funding distributed to each Council on Aging in every city and town in the state based on the number of elders living in each municipality.

**“For me,” says Bellingham COA board member Brenda Griffin, “the most impactful presentation was by the Massachusetts Councils on Aging** to increase the COA Formula Grant by \$1/elder (from \$14 to \$15/elder). Their supporting document highlighted two individuals and the COA services and programs that they received in one year. One man had 272 interactions and a woman had 429 interactions which based on the \$14, resulted in a reimbursement of \$.05 and \$.03 per interaction.”

Griffin continues, “I have emailed our Senator Becca Rausch and Representative Mike Soter requesting their support of this bill [9110-9022 Elder Affairs FY25].”

**Mass Home Care provided attendees with a script to use to contact their legislators.** It urged increased support for the Senior Nutrition Program, SHINE’s Health Benefits Counseling Program, the Elder Mental Health Outreach Team (EMHOT), and the Elder Supportive Housing Program.

**According to Mass Home Care, 23% of the state’s population is aged 60 or older** and it expects that number to grow to 26% by the year 2030. It says that among these older adult households, approximately 25% have annual incomes below \$20,000.



“Great to be with the folks from Bellingham Senior Center,” says Representative Soter. “After their meetings, we took them on a tour of the State House including the Grand Staircase.” Pictured, from left, are Mike Soter, Josie Dutil, Wendy Wright, Brenda Griffin, and Dave Dunbar.

*(continued on page 11)*

# WHAT'S COMING IN

## MONDAY

1

9am Knitters & Quilters  
9:30am Guitar/Ukulele Practice  
10am Chair Volleyball  
10:30am Joyful Noise  
1pm Poker  
1pm Chair Exercise

8

9am Knitters & Quilters  
9:30am Guitar/Ukulele Practice  
10am Chair Volleyball  
10:30am Joyful Noise  
1pm Poker  
1pm Chair Exercise

15

**The Senior Center will be closed in honor of Patriot's Day.**

22

9am Knitters & Quilters  
9:30am Guitar/Ukulele Practice  
10am Chair Volleyball  
10:30am Joyful Noise  
1pm Poker  
1pm Chair Exercise

29

9am Knitters & Quilters  
9:30am Guitar/Ukulele Practice  
10am Chair Volleyball  
10:30am Joyful Noise  
1pm Poker  
1pm Chair Exercise

## TUESDAY

2

9:30am Coffee & Convo  
10am Gentle Yoga (\$5)  
10am Blood Pressure  
11:30am Line Dancing  
**1pm Tech Connect—iPhones**

9

9:30am Coffee & Convo  
10am Gentle Yoga (\$5)  
10am Blood Pressure  
**11am COA Board Meeting**  
11:30am Line Dancing

16

9:30am Coffee & Convo  
10am Gentle Yoga (\$5)  
10am Blood Pressure  
11:30am Line Dancing  
**11:30am Wealth Building & Retirement Savings**  
**1pm Tech Connect—Androids**

23

9:30am Coffee & Convo  
10am Gentle Yoga (\$5)  
10am Blood Pressure  
11:30am Line Dancing

30

9:30am Coffee & Convo  
10am Gentle Yoga (\$5)  
10am Blood Pressure  
11:30am Line Dancing  
**11:30am Caregiver Assistance for Respite Expenses**

## WEDNESDAY

3

9:15am Adaptive Yoga (\$5)  
10am Walking Group  
10:45am Motion to Music  
1pm Art Anyone can Paint  
1pm Bingo

10

9:15am Adaptive Yoga (\$5)  
10am Walking Group  
10:45am Motion to Music  
1pm Art Anyone can Paint  
1pm Bingo

17

9:15am Adaptive Yoga (\$5)  
10am Walking Group  
10:45am Motion to Music  
**11am Financial Advice**  
1pm Bingo  
**2pm Legal Advice**  
**3pm Pop Up Pantry**

24

9:15am Adaptive Yoga (\$5)  
10am Walking Group  
10:45am Motion to Music  
1pm Bingo  
**5pm Volunteer Appreciation Dinner**

# APRIL

## THURSDAY

**4**

9:30am Stretch & Strength  
Yoga (\$5)  
10:30am Bereavement  
Group  
1pm Mahjong

**11**

9:30am Stretch & Strength  
Yoga (\$5)  
**Movie Matinee**  
1pm Mahjong  
**2:30pm Rainbow Café**  
**4pm BESG Cookouts re-  
turn (see page four)**

**18**

9:30am Stretch & Strength  
Yoga (\$5)  
10:30am Bereavement  
Group  
1pm Mahjong

**25**

9:30am Stretch & Strength  
Yoga (\$5)  
**NOON BESG Birthday  
Party**  
1pm Mahjong

## FRIDAY

**5**

9am Walking Club  
9am Cribbage  
9:15am Chair Yoga  
**1pm The Rob Show  
(singer)**

**12**

9am Walking Club  
9am Cribbage  
9:15am Chair Yoga  
**1pm Red Sox**

**19**

9am Walking Club  
9am Cribbage  
9:15am Chair Yoga  
**1pm Jordan Marsh**

**26**

9am Walking Club  
9am Cribbage  
9:15am Chair Yoga  
**1pm Dolley Madison**

## NOTES

**ONCE-A-MONTH** offerings are listed in **bold**. Program dates and times change so please call the Center to confirm all activities.

**PITCH** — Come, play every Tuesday at 1pm.

**MEN'S GROUP** meets every Wednesday at 11am at Liz's Tavern.

**POOL ROOM** — Opens at noon on Mondays. 8am-4pm Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays. 8am-3pm on Fridays.

**CANASTA** — Every Tuesday at noon... come play with us!

**VIRTUALLY YOURS** — Every Monday at 9am, the Spiritual Book Club meets via Zoom. Contact Josie Dutil at (508) 966-0398 to sign up.

**ENHANCE FITNESS** — 8am on Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday; 11:30am on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday.

## QUAKER GIRL IN WASHINGTON: THE INFLUENCE OF DOLLEY MADISON



**Enjoy a stroll through the social/political swirl of post-Revolution America!**

Your hostess will be Dolley Madison, the Quaker child who transformed into one of America's most fashionable, gracious, and powerful First Ladies. Discover how this patriot used her charm, wit, and resourcefulness to unite our country and influence it socially and politically.

The centerpiece of Washington's high society, Dolley stepped softly outside of its

social norms to establish new standards of decorum, introduce women into the politics of the day, and earn the respect of the military and civilian populations. Come learn the extraordinary story behind the life of one of America's lesser known yet influential First Ladies. The elegant Mrs. Madison was, by the way, a snuff aficionado!

**Join us for this Historical Portrayal by Janet Parnes on Friday, April 26, at 1pm.**

Please call the Senior Center to reserve your seat at the table. This presentation is made possible by a grant from the Bellingham Cultural Council.

## ULTIMATE PRESENTATION FOR RED SOX NATION

**Take a fun and enlightening journey through Boston Red Sox history** with the author of the Ultimate Boston Red Sox Time Machine Book. This presentation features exciting and nostalgic videos of the greatest and most fascinating players, teams, events, and moments in franchise history. The program also includes trivia questions for patrons to ponder and covers Sox history from the Royal Rooters, who launched Red Sox Nation, to Babe Ruth to Ted Williams to The Impossible Dream Season of 1967 to Lynn, Rice and '75 to the heartbreak of 1986 all the way to the four World Series championships and beyond. It will conclude with a question-and-answer period.

**Author Marty Gitlin** will have autographed and personalized copies of his book for sale after the presentation. **Join us on Friday, April 12, at 1pm.**

## CAREGIVERS NEED A REST, TOO!

**Tri-Valley has a new grant specifically for non-paid caregivers who are looking for a break** from caregiving to recharge their batteries and enjoy some time to themselves. It's called The Caregiver Assistance for Respite Expenses (C.A.R.E.) program and it will provide support to caregivers who live in our service area.

The C.A.R.E program will be working with grandparents raising grandchildren under 18 and caregivers caring for adults over age 65 or a loved one with a disability or a dementia-related diagnosis. Requests are reviewed on an individual basis.

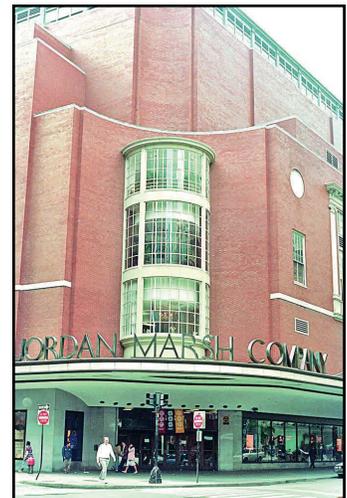
**To learn more, please join us for a presentation** on Tuesday, April 30, at 11:30am or contact Dawn Salkiewicz at [dsalkiewicz@tves.org](mailto:dsalkiewicz@tves.org)

## JORDAN MARSH: BOSTON'S FIRST DEPARTMENT STORE

**Jordan Marsh opened its first store in 1851 on Milk Street in Boston** selling assorted dry goods. Following the Civil War, the store moved to Winthrop Square and later to Washington Street between Summer and Avon Streets.

The new five-story building, designed by Winslow & Wetherell, unveiled the novel concept of department shopping under one roof. It attracted shoppers by offering personal service with the adage that the customer is always right, easy credit, art exhibitions and musical performances. By the 1970s, it had become a regional New England icon and the largest department store chain in the nation.

**Join presenter Anthony Sammarco on Friday, April 19, at 1pm to hear the full story!**



# VETERANS NEWS

## **Pension Payments for Eligible Survivors**

VA's Survivors Pension program offers monthly payments to qualified surviving spouses and unmarried dependent children of wartime Veterans who meet certain income and net worth limits set by Congress. If you're a surviving spouse or child of a deceased wartime Veteran, you may want to investigate by visiting [va.gov](http://va.gov)

## **Increased Disability for Time in a Hospital**

Have you spent time in a VA medical center or a VA-approved hospital for a disability related to your military service? If so, you may be eligible to get added disability compensation or benefits with a temporary 100% disability rating for the time spent in the hospital. Go to [va.gov](http://va.gov) to learn more.

## **Request a Higher-Level Review for Your Appeal**

Disagree with VA's decision on your claim? Veterans can request a higher-level review (HLR). This allows a Veteran or their representative to speak directly with a higher-level reviewer assigned to complete the decision review. **Bellingham's veterans' service office is available to help. Call (508) 657-2812 or email [vso@bellinghamma.org](mailto:vso@bellinghamma.org)**

## **CLEARCAPTIONS IS FREE FOR CUSTOMERS**

**ClearCaptions Phone is available to qualified, hard-of-hearing U.S. residents at no cost** as part of the Title IV of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). These laws were created to make sure people with disabilities like hearing loss have equal opportunities and access to phone calls – it's your right!

As part of the ADA, The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) requires telephone and internet companies to contribute to the Telecommunications Relay Services (TRS) fund. The TRS fund is managed by the FCC and helps pay service providers like ClearCaptions, that make captioned calls available at no cost to you. You'll need internet service; phone is voice over IP.

**For more information, please contact Lisa Loo at (508) 657-2714 or email [lloo@bellinghamma.org](mailto:lloo@bellinghamma.org)**

## **OLDER ADULTS** (from page 7)

**"Attending Older Adult Lobby Day had a tremendous impact on me** and left me with a better understanding of all the legislative action that is taking place behind the scenes in Massachusetts," notes Senior Center Director Dutil. **"I left there feeling comforted** that there are many agencies and organizations that are identifying the needs and communicating with lawmakers, and I was thrilled to be there representing one of those agencies that is doing this work."

**The Bellingham delegation included** Dutil, three members of the COA board, and State Representative Mike Soter who gave the group a tour of the State House.

COA board member Wendy Wright: "It was obvious Mike loves the State House, so knowledgeable in all his stories. He made us all smile with the fact President Taft was such an enormous man they had to widen the front doors of the building so he could visit, and they are still the same wide doors today although seldom opened except for State Functions."

**She continues: "Our history is deep in the bones of this amazing building,** you can feel it as you walk the mosaic tiled halls, marble stairways, brooding portraits of long past presidents and governors. I learned that artists charged by the number of limbs that are shown in their finished works (who knew?)."

**"I highly recommend a trip to our State House,"** concludes Wright, "to soak up the 'magic,' stare at the stain glass windows, glorious ceilings, and the Great Hall with all the Massachusetts' cities and town flags. It's magical!"

If you have ideas about how older adults in Massachusetts can be supported, then please contact State Rep Mike Soter at (617) 722-2305 or [Michael.soter@mahouse.gov](mailto:Michael.soter@mahouse.gov)

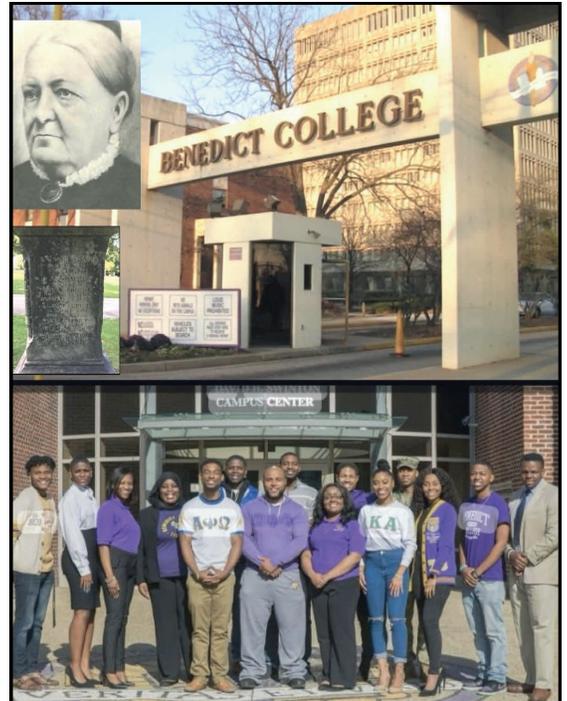
# HISTORICAL BELLINGHAM

**Bathsheba A. Barber (Benedict) was born in Bellingham, MA, in 1809. In 1830 she married Stephen Benedict a banker, mill owner, Baptist Church deacon, and early abolitionist from Pawtucket, RI.**

Her husband died in a fire in 1868. Using proceeds from her husband's insurance policy and estate and with a donation from her brother-in-law, Bathsheba Benedict coordinated a donation of several thousand dollars to the American Baptist Home Mission Society to start a Baptist School for freed slaves in the south.

By 1870, Benedict represented the Home Mission Society and provided \$13,000 (\$266,783 in 2022 money) to purchase a former plantation property in Columbia, South Carolina, to use as a school campus, which was named in her honor. Today, Benedict College continues to thrive by one woman's efforts to educate the freed slaves.

Bellingham is proud to say that Bathsheba A. Barber (Benedict) was born right here. Benedict died in 1897 at the age of 88. She is buried in Swan Point Cemetery in Providence, RI.



**Content above was provided by Rick Marcoux, a long-time Bellingham resident and Chairman of the Town's Historical Commission.** You can reach the Commission by calling (508) 966-5838 or email: [history@bellinghamma.org](mailto:history@bellinghamma.org) The Historical Museum is located at 3 Common Street in Bellingham; check the Historical Commission page on the town website for Museum hours.

## **HEALTH FAIR on May 3**

(continued from page one)

**Blood pressure screenings will be available.** The YMCA will offer information about its Live Strong and Diabetes Prevention programs. Bellingham Fire's Captain Brad Kwatcher will share an installment of his popular Senior Safe Program.

**Other vendors at the Health Fair will include** Aging Well Associates, Mobility by Dennis, Bellingham Supportive Day, Tri-Valley Inc., SHINE, Mass College of Pharmacy, Salmon Health, Fallon Health, Spot On Therapy, Thoughtful Engagement, Geriatric Care Specialist, ALZ Association, Charm Medical Supply, Medminder, and Norfolk County Sheriff.

**Now, about those free lunches.** Atria Draper Place in Hopedale, Cornerstone at Milford, and The Enclave of Franklin have teamed up to provide them. Your choices are lobster rolls, healthy wraps, and turkey sandwiches. Sign up early!

**If you would like to volunteer to help set up and take down the Health Fair** please sign up with Terri Graham at [tgraham@bellinghamma.org](mailto:tgraham@bellinghamma.org) or call (508) 657-2710.



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**Address correction requested**

# **INSIDE THIS EDITION...**

**We offer activities and information for seniors.**

Page 1— Volunteers! Health Fair!  
Page 2 — Remembering Marie Justice  
Page 3 — COA's Monthly Report  
Page 4 — GATRA Van Service  
Page 7 — Older Adult Lobby Day  
Pages 8 & 9 — April Calendar  
Page 10 — New April programs  
Page 11 — Veterans' News



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