Public Hearing at Westchester County Center
Addresses Vital Aging Issues

By Stephen E. Lipken

Mae Carpenter, Commissioner Westchester County Department of Senior Programs and Services (DSPS) presided over a Public Hearing at Westchester County Center on Tuesday, October 18 regarding their 2012-2016 Four Year Plan on use of the Federal Older Americans Act and New York State (NYS) Office for Aging (OFA) grants.

Bernice Spreckman, Board of Legislators Committee on Generational, Cultural and Economic Diversity mentioned that many seniors have to worry about supporting their grandchildren, sometimes having to care for them so their parents can work. “Transportation is another issue. This room would be packed if we could afford buses.”

Greg Olsen, Acting Director, NYSOFA said, “Some media think that senior citizens are a financial drain on the community. But did you know that income for seniors’ ages 45-64 is $28.5 billion dollars versus $14 billion for people 25-44?” Olsen added that the Census will have an impact; the 2000 census showed 3.2 million citizens ages 60 and older; the 2010 Census registered 3.7 million seniors, a 500,000 population increase.

Melinda Bellus, Esq., Staff Attorney, Legal Services of the Hudson Valley (LSHV) remarked that evictions can be a problem when some landlords want to evict low renters and will take them to court on any pretext. LSHV can help. Call 914-949-1305, extension 106; TDD extension 149.

Dozene Guishard, Westchester County Department of Senior Programs outlined “Living Well” where people 60 years and older can be trained to manage their own chronic conditions such as arthritis, heart conditions and diabetes. She can be contacted at 914-813-6408.

Carpenter summed it up by showing a diagram of a triangle with End of Life Services at its apex; the bottom representing the goal of independent, healthy seniors.

Golden Harvest Dance Featured Talented Seniors

By Stephen E. Lipken

Over 200 lively senior citizens sang, danced and performed magic at the Golden Harvest Dance, held at Westchester County Center, White Plains on Tuesday, October 4.

“The Golden Harvest Dance has taken place for the last 30 years. The Talent Show was added as a component ten years ago,” according to Mae Carpenter, Commissioner, Department of Senior Programs and Services. Observing the enthusiastic senior participation, New York State (NYS) Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins stated, “We’re celebrating our lives the way we always do—by singing and dancing...By all means keep singing, keep dancing, keep celebrating and keep loving.”

The Talent Show featured a wide variety of acts, including two operatic tenors, Ross Grasso who sang Caruso and Sal Natoli, an 87-year old Purple Heart recipient who rendered Nessun Dorma from Giacomo Puccini’s opera Turandot as well as three large vocal groups. “The Amazing Nick” (Angela and Nick Mastromarco), appearing to be truncated, did a magic act from a curtained box. “Fahdida” performed an exotic Middle Eastern dance, complete with silk scarves that she bestowed on audience members.

Even those not participating in the Talent Show danced to the music...
Assemblyman Robert J. Castelli was joined by state and local officials from across the Hudson Valley on October 4 to announce bipartisan legislation (A.8644) that will structurally reform the cost administration of New York State’s Medicaid system by incrementally transferring full responsibility for funding the $44 billion program to the State – gradually eliminating the local share traditionally paid by county governments.

“This is one of the most historic pieces of legislation to be introduced in decades,” said Stephen Acquario, president of the New York Association of Counties. “Counties have made a tremendous sacrifice over the last 50 years.”

“Westchester’s property owners face the highest real property tax rates in the country, with tax rates going higher every year,” Castelli said. “The burden of federally mandated services is already difficult enough for counties to bear. With the active assistance of the state in mandating almost every optional service that may become available under Medicaid, it is critical to note that New York is one of only a handful of states that requires local government pay any portion of Medicaid costs. If the state wishes to provide an optional service, it is time for the state to pay for that service.”

The legislation has garnered widespread support from local officials across the New York State. It mirrors similar legislation (A.1334) Castelli had introduced after taking office in 2010, that required the State to immediately assume responsibility for funding Medicaid.

The proposal initially freezes local Medicaid costs, providing $180 million in immediate local savings by eliminating the automatic three percent annual spending increase currently required by statute. Starting in the third quarter of 2012, the local share would then be reduced by five percent, providing counties with an additional $75 million – totaling $255 million in savings for county governments.

Between 2012 and 2019, local Medicaid costs will continue to be gradually reduced as the state assumes an increasing share of the burden. The end result would completely eliminate Medicaid costs from county budgets, providing municipal governments with the flexibility to substantially reduce local property taxes.

In attendance with Castelli were State Senator Patrick M. Gallivan (R, C, I – Erie, Wyoming, Livingston, Ontario), Roy McDonald (R, C – Saratoga), and David Carlucci (D, I – Clarkstown), as well as Assemblymembers Amy Paulin (D, I, WF – Scarsdale), Dr. Steve Katz (R, I – Mohegan Lake), Ellen Jaffee (D – Suffern) and local officials.

“Without comprehensive changes to the cost structure of Medicaid, county governments are going to be faced with extremely regrettable choices. The tax cap will only work as intended to address the property tax burden in New York State if we provide the corresponding mandate relief on local budgets,” Paulin said. “This proposal will permit local governments to control taxes, while ensuring they are able to continue providing the essential services working families rely on.”

Under New York’s current Medicaid structure, the program is funded by state and local governments, with matching funds provided by the federal government. Medicaid costs mandated by the state represent the largest item in nearly every county’s budget: on average, Medicaid accounts for 45 percent of an individual county’s local property tax levy. In Westchester County, property owners pay the highest real estate taxes in the United States.

“This is a great step towards providing the unfunded mandate relief that our Counties so desperately need,” Katz said. “I fully support Assemblymembers Castelli and Paulin in this effort, and I am proud to stand here today with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to continue the fight to make New York more affordable.”

Local Medicaid costs are expected to increase $2.6 billion by 2025 if nothing is done to provide county governments with some form of Medicaid mandate relief. “Freezing local costs for next fiscal year by eliminating the automatic three percent increase in Medicaid will provide immediate relief to local governments struggling to make ends meet under the constraints of the new property tax cap,” Gallivan said. “This legislation implements responsible and realistic reforms that will ensure taxpayers won’t continue to bear the brunt of county governments’ ever increasing Medicaid burden.”

Senator McDonald added, “Medicaid is the largest unfunded mandate imposed on local governments by the State. This has resulted in New Yorkers paying the highest local taxes in the nation. It is essential that we address the unsustainable local costs of Medicaid and implement responsible and realistic reforms to relieve the local mandate and tax burden.”

The issue is too important, McDonald insisted, for dialogue among state representatives to be put off until the opening of the legislative session in January 2012. “The session begins now.”

The new legislation takes advantage of the Medicaid spending cap provision enacted in this year’s State Budget prohibiting the State from increasing spending on Medicaid by more than the ten year rolling average of the medical component of the consumer price index. Absent future legislation stripping the spending cap of its teeth, Medicaid will cost taxpayers $10 billion less than if the program continued to be funded jointly with local governments.

“The constraints of a hard spending cap will force additional reforms to Medicaid’s structure, and present a perfect opportunity to implement and expand upon the recommendations put forth by the Medicaid Redesign Team assembled by the Governor Cuomo in January,” Gallivan said.

The lawmakers were also insistent that this legislation in no way precludes the Legislature or Governor Cuomo from continuing to identify and eliminate burdensome unfunded or under-funded mandates aside from Medicaid.

By calling for an initial spending freeze coupled with a multi-year transition of the local share of Medicaid costs, the legislation intentionally allows the Governor, the Legislature and the State Department of Health a reasonable period of time to prepare and adjust the program to ensure that New York State’s Medicaid program is compliant with the new healthcare provisions and state mandates contained in the federal Affordable Care Act, enacted in 2010.
A new coordinator, Pat Esposito, is now leading Westchester County Seniors Out Speaking (SOS), a volunteer model that since 2001 has trained older adults in Westchester to help their friends and neighbors understand Medicare and related health coverage. To help Westchester residents during the Fall Open Enrollment Period, which began on October 15 and runs through December 7, Ms. Esposito is leading a special educational initiative that includes expanded counseling at Westchester’s local libraries, programs at senior centers, and presentations at local and county health fairs. During Fall Open Enrollment, people with Medicare can change their health and drug coverage options without restriction.

“We are thrilled to have Pat at the helm of our Seniors Out Speaking team in Westchester, particularly during this busy enrollment season,” said Joe Baker, president of the Medicare Rights Center. “Programs like SOS help us get the word out to people with Medicare that now is the time to review their coverage. And this year, the enrollment season ends earlier—on December 7—so people should review their coverage by Thanksgiving instead of later in the year.”

“It is rewarding to work with a team of professionally trained volunteers who can present information on complicated issues such as Medicare in a way that Medicare beneficiaries can understand,” said Esposito. “It is a wonderful experience to see seniors, knowledgeable of their rights and benefits under Medicare, begin to make more educated choices in managing their health care.”

Seniors Out Speaking events include Medicare Minutes—short, engaging presentations on timely Medicare topics presented at local sites on a monthly basis—and Medicare and Health Advocacy Programs, which train members of the community to become health advocates for themselves and their peers. Medicare beneficiaries can also get one-on-one counseling on Medicare and related benefits at Senior Benefits Information Centers, which are managed in cooperation with the Westchester Library System.

The following events and services are free and open to the public:

**Medicare/Health Advocacy Programs**
- Somers Library
  Topic: Understanding Your Medicare Prescription Drug Options
  - Thursday, November 3 at 6 p.m.
  - 914-232-5717
- Anthony Veteran Park Multi-Purpose Center (Greenburgh)
  Topic: Understanding Your Medicare Prescription Drug Options
  - Tuesday, November 15 at 11 a.m.
  - 914-963-8985

**Senior Benefits Information Centers**
- Grinton I. Will Library (Yonkers)
  - Tuesdays, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.; Thursdays, 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.
  - 914-269-7138
- John C. Hart Memorial Library (Shrub Oak)
  - Tuesdays, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
  - 914-269-7137
- Mount Kisco Public Library
  - Wednesdays, 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.
  - 914-269-7764
- Warner Library (Tarrytown)
  - Wednesdays, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
  - 914-269-7765
- Peekskill Field Library
  - Thursdays, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
  - 914-265-5286
- New Rochelle Library
  - Fridays, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
  - 914-265-5287

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Ongoing

Somers Library, 80 Primrose Street, Somers will hold the following programs: November 14 at 6pm – The History of American Music Through the Eyes of a Jukebox; November 19 at 2pm – The Two of Us Plus One, On the Road (Concert); and November 21 at 6pm – Consultants and the Death of Architecture. For complete details call 232-5717 or visit www.somerslibrary.org.

The Field Library, 4 Nelson Avenue, Peekskill presents the works of Elana Gore in an exhibition entitled, “Apathy’s Children,” through November 19. For further information call 737-7110.


For more information call 667-4116 or visit www.nps.gov.

Medicare Part D for 2012 will take place on November 16, 2011. Seniors are reminded that enrollment for Medicare Part D will take place on November 16 and days from 1 to 2:30pm at the Mamaroneck Town Center, 740 Boston Post Road. Call 834-7174 for details.

WJCS offers the Breast Cancer Navigator Program, where women who have been newly diagnosed with breast cancer have mentors for help and support through breast cancer diagnosis and treatment. For additional details, call 761-0600, ext. 144.

Instructors workshops on Medicare “basics” will take place on Nov. 16 and Dec. 1 at the County Office Building, 9 S. First Avenue, Mt. Vernon presented by the Westchester County Department of Senior Programs and Services from 10am to noon in the 8th floor conference room. Registration is required by calling 813-6100.

The Hudson Stage presents the play God of Carnage through 19 (weekends only) at Woodward Hall Theatre at Pace University, 325 Elm Road, Briarcliff Manor. For tickets call 271-2811 or visit www.hudsonstage.com.

Technical

For more information call 522-5150.

Tickets or more information visit bedfordchamberconcerts.org or call 522-5150.

November

8 From 1:30 to 3pm, “Making the Connections for a Healthier Lifestyle” will take place the Hugh Doyle Senior Center, 94 Davis Avenue, New Rochelle presented by Elderserve and more. To register call 368-5506.

12 At 10am, The Westchester County Genealogical Society presents a lecture by Toni McKeen entitled, “20th Century Military Records,” at the Aldersgate Methodist Church, 600 Broadway, Dobbs Ferry. For more information call 953-9173.

16 Beginning with refreshments at 7pm, the Hudson River Audubon Society of Westchester presents, “Long Live the Queen – The European Honey Bee and Beekeeping,” at Lenore Nature Preserve, 19 Dudley Street, Yonkers. This meeting is free and open to the public. For additional information call 237-9331.

19 From 10am to 2pm, The Warthung Adult Care Community, Meadowview Assisted Living, Latkin Media Center, 2 Warthung Place will hold a Memory Care Fair in recognition of Alzheimer’s Awareness Month. To pre-register for this free event, call 513-5317 or email info@thewarthung.org.

20 If you are 90 years of age or older and lived or worked in Yonkers, or are military veterans, East Yonkers Kiwanis is searching for you. This local service club invites those persons to its annual luncheon at the Dunwoodie Golf Club in Yonkers. Call 90 Plus Event Chairperson Mary Rattendi at 423-7928 for complete details.

December

2 The 29th Annual Westchester Senior Hall of Fame Ceremony will take place at The Westchester Marriott Hotel, Tarrytown starting at 11:30am. For details call 813-6400.

10 At 10am, The Westchester County Genealogical Society presents a lecture with Patrick Raftery entitled, “The Cemeteries of Westchester County,” at the Westchester County Archives, 2199 Saw Mill River Road, Elmsford. For additional information call 953-9173.

Care System with the addition of evening appointment hours. To make appointments at the FDR Montrose Campus call 737-4400 and press “3”. To make appointments at the Castle Point Campus call 845-831-2000, and press “2”.

The Westchester County Genealogical Society presents a lecture with Toni McKeen entitled, “20th Century Military Records,” at the Aldersgate Methodist Church, 600 Broadway, Dobbs Ferry. For more information call 953-9173.

10 At 10am, The Westchester County Genealogical Society presents a lecture with Patrick Raftery entitled, “The Cemeteries of Westchester County,” at the Westchester County Archives, 2199 Saw Mill River Road, Elmsford. For additional information call 953-9173.
Governor Andrew M. Cuomo announced the launch of a statewide alert system that will help find vulnerable adults who become lost. The “Missing Adult Alerts” system, similar to the nationwide Amber Alert program, will assist local law enforcement officials in notifying communities when a cognitively impaired New Yorker goes missing.

“The Missing Adults Alerts system will help law enforcement find elderly and impaired New Yorkers who become lost and get them home safely,” Governor Cuomo said. “This system has saved lives regarding missing children, and now it will provide the same assistance when it comes to finding vulnerable adults.”

Adults with cognitive disorders, mental disabilities, or brain injuries can experience disorientation and confusion, which often leads to wandering. Lost adults are rarely aware of the danger they may be exposed to and are often unable to ask for help. According to the Alzheimer’s Association, more than 60 percent of Alzheimer sufferers will wander and 50 percent are at risk of serious harm, or even death, if not located within 24 hours.

Governor Cuomo signed a new law in July that created the notification system to provide rapid public dissemination of information regarding adults with dementia, Alzheimer’s, or other cognitive impairments who go missing. The same tools the state’s Missing Persons Clearinghouse and State Police use to issue an AMBER Alert to find missing children will now be activated for missing vulnerable adults. Those tools include distribution of posters, a toll-free twenty-four hour hotline, and partnerships with local broadcasters for quick dissemination of information. Anyone interested in receiving these alerts may also sign up to receive them through the NY-ALERT system at www.nyalert.gov.

Deputy Secretary for Public Safety Elizabeth Glazer said, “Each year, hundreds of adult New Yorkers wander away from home and spend hours lost, often unbeknownst to the people passing them by. This new law signed by Governor Cuomo will help our law enforcement get the word out about missing adults and empower New Yorkers to be on the lookout for people in their neighborhoods who may need police assistance.”

Catherine James, Coalition Co-Chair and Chief Executive Officer of the Alzheimer’s Association Central New York Chapter, said, “The Coalition of New York State Alzheimer’s Association Chapters is thrilled that the Missing Vulnerable Adult Alert system has been established within the Division of Criminal Justice Services, and would like to thank Governor Cuomo and the Division for their leadership in implementing the new alert. As the leading advocacy and support organization for Alzheimer’s disease, the Coalition has actively pursued creating this alert for many years. This system will provide greater peace of mind to the more than 330,000 New York families touched by this disease.”

Ninety-five percent of people who go missing because they suffer from a cognitive impairment are found within a quarter mile from their home or the place where they were last seen. New Yorkers who encounter a missing person, or believe they have identified a vehicle mentioned in a Missing Person Alert, should immediately call 911.
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Talented Seniors Sing and Dance at Westchester County Center

continued from page 1

sic of the Milt Gerver Orchestra, a fixture at Rye Playland for over 33 years. After the Talent Show, Host Judy Ayres, choreographer and professional ballroom dancer with partner Mark Mindek taught the Fox Trot to an enthusiastic crowd.

Patricia Sales, performing “So in Love” from Kiss Me Kate and “Wherever We Go” from Gypsy with husband Sonny summed it up by saying, “Not all senior citizens have dementia. Dementia is a disease. Not all seniors are forgetful—young people forget, too. “Each person should be judged separately.”

Choreographer Judy Ayres and partner Mark Mindek

Sal Natoli singing “Nessun Dorma” from Puccini’s opera “Turandot”

Milt Gerver Vocalists Jerry Cardone (left) and Bobbie Ruth

Photo above: Alexandria Davyava returned to dance an Argentine Tango with Ronnie Griecco

Photo left: Left to right: James Felder; NYS Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins; Utah Ferguson; Jane Curtain

Photo above: Ludmil Nesterov returned to dance an Argentine Tango with Darlene Volpe
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A Life-Changing Lift

Today's seniors and those with mobility-related challenges sometimes face overwhelming choices as their life changes. And when stairs becomes a painful or difficult issue, the choices can be all too frightening.

It may mean major renovations, leaving your beloved home or living life largely restricted to one floor. That's where Westchester Stairlift comes in.

Stairlifts can allow Westchester seniors or those with disabilities to regain their independence and the full use of their home.

Now they no longer need to dread the stairs or rebuild an entire floor of their home. "It can be life-transforming and cost so much less than other options," says Martin Friedrichs -- a lifelong Westchester resident -- and co-owner of the only Westchester Company devoted solely to stairlifts.

Seniors need no longer fear the stairs, Friedrichs says. With a stairlift, they can ascend the stairs pain-free. And families no longer need to worry about their loved ones.

Westchester Stairlift is fully certified to deliver, install and service Bruno Stairlifts, the only U.S. based stairlift manufacturer and the market leader for stairlifts in the United States.

These products now offer benefits that simply didn't exist before.

The stairlifts are battery-operated to allow use during a power failure. They have rack and pinion systems to offer a smooth, reliable and secure ride. They include numerous safety features and remote controls to allow use by more than one household member.

Plus, a wide range of attractive options and models are available, including stairlifts that will curve around the most complex staircases.

Bruno products meet all industry standards and are elegantly made.

And Westchester Stairlift is now only a phone call away to ensure the product's reliable installation as well as assisting with any future maintenance issues.

"It's most important to have a local company to support you in the selection and installation," Friedrichs says. "And one that will be there for service as well." Westchester Stairlift deals only in stairlifts, Friedrichs says. "This is not a sideline product of a broader company or a sales office for a foreign manufacturer."

Westchester Stairlift will first embark on a detailed review of both your mobility issues and the type of stairway you have in your home. In that way, they can better streamline the product selection to your needs and your budget. Installation of straight lifts -- if the need is there -- can often be done in 48 hours from your first call.

Consultation is free and without any obligation.

"This can be a life-changing event," Friedrichs says. "You can give yourself or someone you love their independence and home back. No one ever regrets installing a stairlift. They often just regret waiting too long."

For more information, call Martin Friedrichs at (914) 709 5438 (LIFT) – 7 days a week -- or visit www.westchesterstairlift.com

Social Security Announces 3.6 Percent Benefit Increase for 2012

Monthly Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits for more than 60 million Americans will increase 3.6 percent in 2012, the Social Security Administration announced recently.

The 3.6 percent cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) will begin with benefits that nearly 55 million Social Security beneficiaries receive in January 2012. Increased payments to more than 8 million SSI beneficiaries will begin on December 30, 2011.

Some other changes that take effect in January of each year are based on the increase in average wages. Based on that increase, the maximum amount of earnings subject to the Social Security tax (taxable maximum) will increase to $110,100, from $106,800. Of the estimated 161 million workers who will pay Social Security taxes in 2012, about 10 million will pay higher taxes as a result of the increase in the taxable maximum.

Information about Medicare changes for 2012, when announced, will be available at www.Medicare.gov.

The Wartburg to Receive Enterprise NY Grant

The Wartburg Adult Care Community has announced that they will receive a $25,000 grant from Enterprise New York. This capacity building grant will be applied to the development of a market study of affordable housing development opportunities in southern Westchester and training seminars for staff to expand knowledge of the affordable housing industry.

"This grant will enable The Wartburg to identify communities in southern Westchester County that are most in need of affordable housing," said David Gentner, President & CEO of The Wartburg.

Ryan Herchenroether, Director of Planning for The Wartburg said, "Southern Westchester has a higher proportion of seniors than the rest of the state, and given the economy, affordability is a near universal concern. This grant will expand our understanding of the area’s housing needs."

"We are pleased to provide this grant to support The Wartburg’s efforts to ensure a sustainable housing organization in years to come,” said Elizabeth Zeldin, Program Director at Enterprise Community Partners Inc. of New York, NY.

Enterprise is a leading provider of the development capital and expertise it takes to create decent, affordable homes and rebuild communities. For nearly 30 years, Enterprise has introduced neighborhood solutions through public-private partnerships with financial institutions, governments, community organizations and others that share our vision. Enterprise has raised and invested more than $11 billion in equity, grants and loans to help build or preserve more than 280,000 affordable rental and for-sale homes to create vital communities.

For more information about The Wartburg Adult Care Community, call 699-0800, email info@thewartburg.org or visit www.thewartburg.org.

Reiss Named One of the Most Beautiful Minds in America

The 2011 America’s Brain Health Index, recently released, reveals which areas of the country have progressed, held their own or lost ground in taking measures to improve their brain health over the last two years. The state-by-state ranking of brain health is part of a national health education campaign called Beautiful Minds: Finding Your Lifelong Potential, a partnership between life’sDHA™ and the National Center for Creative Aging (NCCA), designed to inspire Americans to develop and maintain healthy, beautiful minds by incorporating key lifestyle factors known as the four dimensions of brain health — diet and nutrition, physical health, mental health and social well-being.

The campaign also introduced this year’s “Beautiful Minds,” 11 individuals from across the country who are fulfilling the four dimensions of brain health and achieving amazing things in the second half of their lives. A photo essay exhibit featuring their personal stories will travel the country through 2012 to inspire Americans to improve their brain health.

Alvin H. Reiss, of New York City and Somers, is one of the Beautiful Minds showcased in the exhibit.

Reiss believes words keep him young. As an accomplished journalist, song writer, editor and author, he listens carefully to spoken words and plays with words in numerous ways — writing words, punning words, inventing word games, writing song lyrics and much more. As a word person he loves libraries and recently joined the board of the Westchester County Library System. Professionally he uses words as editor of Arts Management, which he co-founded nearly 50 years ago, as a magazine and theater writer. He entered a new phase of his creative life when he completed a full-length musical about life in an over-55 community. He takes exercise classes and also belongs to a Hikers and Walkers club. He eats a wholesome diet and keeps his weight steady. “Over the years I’ve written books, humor, magazine articles and columns, had several musicals produced, taught college courses and lectured around the world. I’ve never lost my missionary zeal for turning others on to creative involvement. I love life. Take my WORD for it,” Reiss says.

Americans who want to join this growing brain-healthy community are invited to visit www.beautiful-minds.com.
Odyssey Diner in Eastchester Features Early Bird Dinners!

We have rediscovered the diner and it remains a wonderful treat, kitsch included! The Doukas family, George Sr. and his son Dean, proprietors of the popular Eastchester Diner on Rt. 22, are marking their 36th Anniversary at this location with an enhancement of the premises, a new catering/party room for up to 80 guests, and updated menus that stress value dining and diversity.

Of course, diner menus are always quite diverse, trying to offer something for everyone. It’s the nature of this type of eatery, but here at Odyssey the Doukas clan also prepares much of the menu from scratch, homemade special touches that run the gamut from ‘Breakfast Anytime’, Soups and Mousse, and Spinach Pie. The gamut from ‘Breakfast Anytime’, Soups and Mousse, and Spinach Pie.

There is the Breakfast Menu which begins at 6 a.m. daily. The Cinnamon Raisin Challah French Toast for $4.50; the Cheese or Blueberry Blintzes with sour cream from $5.75; Two Eggs any style served with home fries, toast, butter and jelly from $4.75; Omelets like the Farmer’s Omelet, smoked bacon, country sausage, Virginia ham, potatoes and onion for $6.50; all the way up to the Toasted Colossal Bagel Deluxe: with the works Nova lox, cream cheese, lettuce, tomato, Bermuda onion and all the trimmings for $9.50. The special breakfast menu is served from 6 a.m. to 11 a.m. but you can actually order breakfast specialties all day and evening.

A 4-course Fixed Price Early Bird Dinner is available Monday thru Friday from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. at $16.95. The meal comes with a house bread basket, soup or crisp house salad, a choice of over 25 main courses, house dessert, coffee or tea. Entree options include: Broiled Half Chicken, Hot Open Turkey, Center Cut Pork Chop, Broiled or Poached Filet of Salmon, Linguine with Clam Sauce and such Greek dishes as Baked Mousaka, and Spinach Pie.

The new primary menu runs the gamut from ‘Breakfast Anytime’, Soups Appetizers and Finger Foods, Odyssey’s Giant Half Pound Burgers, Overstuffed Sandwiches and Wraps Galore, fresh Salads and Salad Platters, Pastas, Meat and Seafood Dinners and specialties. Special relish tray, practically a meal in itself, is served with many of the entrees on the regular menu. Options include: Mr. George’s Gyro, a hefty Reuben Sandwich, Southern Fried Chicken Salad, Broiled Fisherman’s Platter, Chicken or Veal Cutlet Parmigiana; French Cut Lamb Chops, Penne Vodka, Roast Brisket of Beef, and Filet of Sole Florentine.

Don’t forget those wonderful Milk Shakes, hefty fresh Cakes and Pastries beckoning from the display case as you enter, a variety of Espresso and Cappuccino, even a good old fashioned Egg Cream or Ice Cream Soda.

The new private banquet room can accommodate up to 80 guests for any type of meeting or function.

Are You Prepared for Emergencies?

Tornadoes, thunderstorms, snowstorms and power outages—thankfully, these are rare occurrences. Whatever the emergency, communication is a key ingredient for coping with emergency situations.

Good communication is crucial for keeping informed and staying in touch with family, friends and emergency personnel. People with hearing loss face a greater challenge during emergency conditions. Here are some things to think about as part of your emergency preparedness:

Can I reach my friends and family? Every household should have at least one landline or mobile phone, so your phone will work during a power outage. The phone should have a built-in or attachable amplifier if needed.

Will my cell phone work? In an emergency, making cell phone calls may be difficult because of overloaded circuits. Text messages are more likely to get through busy circuits. Even if the message is not sent immediately, it’s “in-line” to be sent when the line is available.

Will I be able to send and receive e-mails and get news on-line? Install a back-up battery and power surge protector for your computer in case of a power outage.

Will I be able to get news bulletins? Television stations are required to broadcast emergency warnings visually, as well as with sound (such as the “crawlers” at the bottom on the screen).

A good transistor radio means you won’t be dependent on regular television broadcasts. Special radio receivers are available that provide text information from the National Weather Service broadcasts (www. WeatherRadios.com).

Should I have a buddy system? It’s a good idea to have a nearby family member or friend to stay in touch with in case of an emergency. However, it’s unreliable to count on someone else to alert you—they may be away or unreachable themselves.

Do I have enough emergency lighting? You should have several battery-operated flashlights or lanterns. Some models can be left plugged into your household current and come on automatically in case of a power failure.

Emergencies happen rarely, but still makes sense to follow the Scout approach—be prepared.

Dr. Hampton is an audiologist in White Plains. He is a fellow of the American Speech, Language and Hearing Association and editor of Hearing HealthCare News, a newsletter for people with hearing loss. For a free subscription to the newsletter, call (914) 761-4455.
What’s in a Name? NAELA, NELF, CELA, ACTEC, SNA -- What Does It All Mean?

All you want to do is to find a lawyer to draft a simple will and powers of attorney. You ask your friends, but no one has a referral they feel unequivocally good about. A little online searching reveals that there are any number of organizations, credentials and qualifications—how on earth do you figure out which lawyer actually knows something about estate planning, Medicaid planning, special needs trusts or guardianship (or whatever your elder law concern actually might be)? Below is a brief summary of what all these credentials mean so you can properly evaluate an attorney.

NAELA (the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys; www.naela.org) is a good place to start your search. There are about 4000 members, and the organization has been around for over twenty years. Any lawyer in the country who does any significant amount of elder law (and that term is generally understood to include all the categories in the previous paragraph) probably belongs. However, there is a big difference between someone who belongs to NAELA and someone who has held a leadership position in NAELA.

To belong to NAELA all you have to provide is proof that you are a lawyer and a $375 check each year. Even though the dues are not high, they serve as a low-level filter—those who sign up tend to actually work in the trenches of elder law. The organization has very good continuing legal education programs and NAELA members generally share good ideas with one another. The leaders of NAELA are elected by their peers and are typically lawyers with outstanding reputations in elder law.

Then there are the NAELA Fellows. Each year a small handful of NAELA members are selected to be Fellows, based on their reputations in the national and local communities, their hard work in the field, and their writing and speaking. The Fellows are the best-known, hardest-working elder law attorneys in the country—and there are fewer than 100 of them.

NELF (The National Elder Law Foundation; www.nelf.org) is the only organization accredited by the American Bar Association to certify lawyers as elder law attorneys in the United States. It is a non-profit organization dedicated to the development and improvement of the professional competence of lawyers in the area of elder law. The certification process attempts to identify those lawyers who have the enhanced knowledge, skills, experience and proficiency to be properly identified to the public as certified elder law attorneys (CELA). There are substantial practice and experience requirements which must be met in order to become certified, including an exam which must be passed. Moreover, CELAs must be re-certified every five years. While certification does not necessarily mean that a particular attorney will be more qualified than someone who is not, it is certainly something for you to consider in making your decision. There are currently about 450 Certified Elder Law Attorneys in the United States.

ACTEC (the American College of Trust and Estate Counsel; www.actec.org) is a national organization of approximately 2600 lawyers elected to membership by demonstrating the highest level of integrity, commitment to the profession, competence, and experience as trust and estate counselors. ACTEC Fellows (the name for all members) have to have been nominated by an existing Fellow; there is no application process and no way to sign up other than to get invited after a vetting process which can sometimes last as long as a year.

With regard to special needs attorneys, the Special Needs Alliance (SNA; www.specialneedsalliance.org) is a national not-for-profit, invitation-only, organization of attorneys dedicated to assisting people with special needs and their families and the professionals who represent them. It is the only organization of its kind in the United States. SNA members have an average 18 years experience practicing special needs law and are leaders in the field. Similar to ACTEC, these lawyers are required to go through a vetting process in order to become members.

So, being armed with all of the above information, should you demand that your lawyer have one or more of the credentials described here? No, not necessarily—there are many excellent lawyers who are not involved in these professional organizations; however, as a consumer of legal services you are entitled to have as much information as possible at your fingertips so you can make an informed decision. After all, you want to make sure that you are getting the absolute best legal representation for you and your family.

National Poll Finds Retirement Security Concerns on the Rise

A new bipartisan, national survey reveals that anxiety about retirement continues to grow, with near universal concern about having enough to make ends meet throughout retirement.

The survey, conducted by Lake Research Partners and Public Opinion Strategies, shows widespread voter anxiety over having the means to maintain a comfortable standard of living throughout retirement. The poll was commissioned by Americans for Secure Retirement (ASR), a broad-based coalition of more than 70 organizations committed to raising awareness of policy issues related to retirement security.

“What we’re seeing is significant, and increasing, concern from Americans of all political stripes about falling short financially during retirement,” said Bill McInturff, founder and partner of Public Opinion Strategies. “Not only are Americans concerned about their own financial health, but they also express widespread concern over how the continued contentious debate in Washington could further undermine what they are planning for in retirement. Even those who feel we must make dramatic cuts to deal with the debt think Congress needs to identify concrete ways to help Americans deal with further retirement instability.”

The survey reveals pervasive anxiety over how efforts to reduce our national debt may impact retirement security. Regardless of party affiliation, the majority of voters are concerned that cuts to Medicare or Social Security would have too significant an impact on retirement or that, if cuts are made, Congress must look for other ways to help Americans better plan for retirement. A majority of respondents also expressed support for proposals such as tax incentives to help save for retirement.

“Continued economic uncertainty, high unemployment and instability in the stock market have placed a growing concern on retirement security, and it’s an issue that transcends party affiliation,” said Celinda Lake, President of Lake Research Partners. “As all eyes turn toward the 2012 election cycle, it’s clear that fears regarding retirement security will play out big not only for Democratic voters, but even the most conservative of Republicans as well.”

The poll was conducted by Public Opinion Strategies, in consultation with Lake Research Partners, as part of a national omnibus survey of 800 registered voters. The survey took place from September 10-13, 2011.
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