

SENIORS IN ACTION

MAY DESIGNATED OLDER AMERICAN'S MONTH

The month of May is designated each year as Older American's Month, therefore I thought I'd take this opportunity to highlight some of the beneficial services available to "Older Americans" in Fallon County.



The Older Americans Act was established in 1965 to meet the diverse needs of the growing numbers of older persons in the United States. The OAA set out specific objectives for maintaining the dignity and welfare of older individuals and created the primary vehicle for organizing, coordinating and providing community-based services and opportunities for older Americans and their families.

Among the home and community-based services available in Fallon County are congregate and home delivered meals, skilled nursing, health screening activities, homemaker assistance, legal services, personal care or respite services, transportation services, and senior center activities. Also available in Fallon County are information and assistance services, Options Counseling, as well as assistance from the State Health Insurance Program and the Senior Medicare Patrol project.

For more information or to begin receiving any one of the home and community-based services listed above, contact Carla Brown at 778-3595.

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RECIPE ROUNDUP



Sausage Casserole

Ingredients:

1 pound bulk pork sausage, hamburger or chicken may also be used

1/3 cup chopped onion

5 cups coarsely chopped cabbage

1 cup sour cream or plain yogurt

3/4 cup shredded American cheese

1/8 teaspoon pepper

1 cup soft bread crumbs

1 tablespoon butter or margarine, melted

Instructions:

In a Dutch oven, cook sausage and onion over medium-high heat until sausage is brown.

Drain off fat.

Stir in cabbage. Cook covered for 10 minutes or until cabbage is crisp-tender, stirring occasionally. Drain off any excess liquid.

Stir in sour cream, cheese and pepper. Transfer mixture to a 3 quart baking dish.

In a small bowl, combine bread crumbs and melted butter. Sprinkle over sausage mixture.

Bake uncovered in a 375° oven for 20 minutes or until bread crumbs are golden.

You may leave in Dutch oven or skillet and bake.



Coming to us from the kitchen of Mary Ann Hecker and possibly(?) previously published (look at all those "p"s) this recipe struck me as just the one to share this month.

Do You Have A Recipe You'd Like To Share?

Submit It Today To Be Included

In Next Month's Issue Of "Seniors In Action"

DECLUTTER YOUR LIFE—NOW!

Downsizing a home can present emotional and physical challenges for senior citizens. Sorting a household of possessions – and wading through a lifetime of memories – can be daunting for both seniors and their caregivers. Seniors, especially, have four compelling reasons to pare back possessions.

1. You intend to grow old in your home. Most people want to stay in their homes for the rest of their lives. To do this, a home has to be prepared for aging in place.

Decluttering and organizing your belongings while you are young enough to tackle the job allows you to: access what you want easily, enjoy memories stored in mementos, photos, letters, videos and other treasures you've been saving, reorganize possessions for safe reach, maneuver more easily through the home in case you become disabled.

2. You may be headed for trouble. Decluttering can help head off problems that often force elders from their homes such as devastating falls. Serious falls can permanently reduce a senior's mobility and freedom. Reducing clutter opens up space and could reduce the possibility of tripping and hurting yourself.

3. You want to leave heirs a lighter load. Estate planning, making a will and a trust and keeping them updated, is a kindness to your heirs. Likewise, decluttering now protects your loved ones from inheriting the burden of a home full of stuff.

4. You're downsizing. You may find, especially after children are grown, that you're weary of the cost and maintenance of the family home, and you'd rather move in with adult children or downsize to a smaller place. The problem is, you can't cram everything you own into your new home.

Rules of Organizing

Do the most distasteful task first. Tackle your "hot spot," the place that drives you the most crazy, before you try to clear out anyplace else.

Stick to routines. Do things the same way every time: Put your purse in one place, your keys in one place. When you need them, there they'll be.

Store like with like. Having multiple storage locations for supplies such as lightbulbs breeds a chaotic environment.

Get it off the floor. The floor is not a storage option. Boxes that reside there permanently create visual clutter. Stow belongings behind cabinet doors to make a room more serene.

Make a decision and act on it. When decluttering, don't look at something, ponder it and put it in a stack for later. If you hate that lamp, why would you put it in your closet?

PROVIDING MOBILITY TO FALLON COUNTY RESIDENTS

Montana shares with the rest of the nation an overwhelming reliance on the private automobile for mobility. Montanans overwhelmingly choose the private automobile for their mobility needs. This preference is growing; reinforced by increasing rates of automobile ownership, land use patterns, and more drivers making multi-destination trips. Many Montanans think of transportation in terms of the highway and their cars. Montana has one of the highest rates of automobile ownership in the nation.

Locally, service is available anytime between the hours of 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Saturday.

The driver is on call throughout the entire 8 hour day and may be reached directly by dialing 978-9760.

The people of Montana value their independence and take pride in their western spirit of self-reliance, resourcefulness, and equanimity under difficult conditions. In common with most Americans, the people of Montana perceive that driving their own cars when and where they want is a right, not a privilege.

The importance of public transportation to Montana's residents is probably best understood by the people and their families and friends who lack other modes of mobility. In a country dominated by the car, to live without a car is unthinkable, except in the most densely populated urban areas, which in Montana are few. In the past, a car was not so necessary to the maintenance of life because of family networks, functioning central business districts, fewer numbers of senior citizens, less consolidation of medical facilities and closer community ties. Today people and services are remote and access is not easy. Public transportation can fill the gap between people and life-sustaining activities.

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Public transportation is not well understood and its benefits are not easy for the public to identify. No exact dollar amount can be placed on the value of people being able to sustain their lives and move about independently.

Although small in size, Fallon County Council on Aging's Transportation System is available to all residents of Fallon County . . . whether they are young, old, or disabled. We provide services locally as well as regionally.

Locally, service is available anytime between the hours of 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Saturday. The driver is on call throughout the entire 8 hour day and may be reached directly by dialing phone number 978-9760.

Regionally, various group trips are scheduled. A trip to Miles City is held on the first Wednesday of each month. Passengers are urged to schedule any medical appointments between the hours of 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. if possible. A second monthly trip is planned for each month on the third Wednesday. During April we journeyed to Bowman for the first time and were able to accommodate several medical appointments.

We also provide non-emergency medical transportation trips in an approximate 225 mile radius of Baker. We ask that if you have an appointment in Billings that it be scheduled after 11 a.m. so that we don't have to be on the road before daylight. We are currently stipulating that the entire round trip be made in one day. The longer notice that you can provide regarding an upcoming medical trip the better as staffing concerns can be an issue.

For fare information and reservations, or to schedule a non-emergency medical transportation trip, please call Carla at 778-3595.

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Paring back a lifetime's worth of possessions can feel overwhelming. Some alternative ways of thinking about the problem can help. There is, after all, no one way to declutter.

- Stay nimble and flexible. If one approach no longer works, move on to another. Unless there's a deadline (you've sold your home, for instance), think of decluttering as a new habit rather than a mountainous job.
- Make it a regular practice. Keep paring down; a drawer this month, a section of the garage next month, slipping projects into your routine.
- Set aside one day a week. Reserve the time and plan nothing else that day.
- Take it an hour at a time. Tackle just one a task, promising yourself that you can quit or keep going when the hour is up.
- Take it 10 minutes at a time. See if smaller chunks of time work better for you.
- Take it drawer by drawer. You'll get a nice sense of accomplishment from removing just one drawer to a quiet place where you can work on it.

It takes 20 to 30 hours to organize a house. The essence of the job involves putting things into one of three piles, to keep, to toss, to sell or give away.

Another suggestion: Decide what you absolutely must keep. Don't roam around looking at your things. Just sit down with a pencil and paper and list the stuff you'd take to a desert island. Of course you'll keep more, but set those crucial possessions aside so you can look really critically at everything else.

Commodities will be distributed on Tuesday, May 15 at the Baker Senior Center.

Distribution will begin promptly at 1:30 p.m. and will continue until 3, at which time home deliveries will be made for those unable to come to the distribution site.

If you think you might qualify or desire additional information, contact Carla at 778-3595.

Mark Your Calendars For The



Clean For Spring Garage Sale

Friday, June 1 • 10 a.m.—5 p.m.

Saturday, June 2 • 8 a.m.—1 p.m.

Baker Senior Center

All Proceeds To Benefit Baker Senior Center

The Baker Senior Center is sponsoring a “Clean For Spring Garage Sale” June 1 and 2.

Committees are being formed to receive, sort, set up tables, arrange items, and help at the actual sale. Following the sale, help will be needed to pack up and take down tables. If you would like to serve on one of the committees, please call the Baker Senior Center at 778-2600.

Donations of clean, gently-used (recently decluttered) items will be accepted beginning Monday, May 21. No clothing or shoes will be accepted.

SENIOR MEDICARE PATROL WORKS TO STOP MEDICARE FRAUD

Are you reading your medical bills and statements? If not, you should be. Millions of dollars are lost each year simply because people are not reading their statements. A \$9 duplicate charge may not seem like much to you, but when it's duplicated on everyone's bill, it can turn into over a million dollars.

Medicare processes 4.5 million claims a day. They process claims as long as they are filled out correctly, but just because all the i's are dotted and t's are crossed does not mean the claim IS correct. Only you know if you've seen your doctor or received some tests.

If you have questions or concerns about a medical bill you have received that you believe might be in error, contact Carla at 778-3595. In addition to her duties as Coordinator for Fallon County Council on Aging, Carla is the Senior Medicare Patrol volunteer in Fallon County.

MAY BIRTHDAY CELEBRANTS

Marguerite Fisher—May 1

Barbara Supanik—May 1

Craig Napton—May 2

Elaine Rugg—May 5

Sharee Newell—May 6

Erna Greenlee—May 7

Sandra Kinsey—May 7

Douglas Rowe—May 7

Dianne Waterland—May 7

Barton Burdick—May 8

Penney Kono—May 9

Tim Bechtold—May 10

Arthur Meccage—May 10

Karen Griffith—May 12

Dale Leivestad—May 13

George Olind—May 13

John Moser—May 14

Dennis Rath—May 14

Ronald Shepherd—May 15

Reini Martin—May 16

Barbara Olind—May 16

Richard Stark—May 16

Lori Hall—May 17

Gary Sparks—May 17

Elaine Zink—May 17

Lon LaCross—May 18

Roddy Rost—May 18

Vicki Grimmett—May 20

Harold Miller—May 21

Rodney Morris—May 21

Gloria Hepperle—May 22

Kathleen Sieler—May 23

Robert Boggs—May 25

Dolores Erlenbush—May 25

Bunny Kouf—May 25

Jerry Maurice—May 25

Peggy Niemerg—May 26

Wayne Thompson—May 26

Linda Wagner—May 27

Cindy Wang—May 28

David Meccage—May 31