



# THE OAKHAM HERALD

December 2023

Published by the Oakham Council on Aging

**Mission Statement:** It is the mission of the Senior Center Council on Aging to identify the total needs of the community's Senior Citizens, to link services to those needs and to improve the quality of life of our seniors by providing an active outreach program, providing intergenerational opportunities for community involvement, and providing services as needed.

## **OAKHAM SENIOR / DROP-IN CENTER:**

**HOURS:** Mon thru Thurs, 11 am-12:30 pm

**CLOSED:** Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays  
major holidays, school snow days.  
**CLOSED:** 12/25 till 1/2/24

**PHONE:** 508-882-4072 (Backdoor Cafe);  
508-882-4073 (COA)

**Activities Coordinator:** Melanie Silva

## **COA BOARD MEMBERS:**

**Chair:** Barbara Wreschinsky  
**Vice-Chair:** Jan Handrahan  
**Treasurer:** Clare Hendra  
**Secretary:** Rick Hendra  
**Members:** Priscilla McGlynn  
(Secretary of Celebrations)  
**Alternate:** Becky Austin  
**Volunteers:** Jane Pease, Judy Menard, Susan  
Richard, Paul Rochette

## **BACK DOOR CAFÉ:**

**Coordinator:** Jan Pierce  
**Volunteers:** Pauline Dwelly

**NEWSLETTER:** Rick Hendra (editor)  
Melanie Silva (star reporter)  
Jan Handrahan (photographer)

## **DECEMBER EVENTS: (see also p. 2)**

**Blood Pressure Clinic: Thurs., Dec. 14,** from  
11 till 11:45 am. Walk in - no charge!

**Podiatry Clinic: Monday, Dec. 18,** from 9 – 1 pm  
(call for appointment).

**December 6: Meet Jeff Stearns from Careforth**  
(caring for caregivers): 10 am till 1:00

**December 7 – 15: Hannukah**

**December 8: Council on Aging meeting – @ 12:00**

**December 11: Bemis Creations! – 1pm @ Fire Sta.**

**December 13: Film – “Elf” @ 12:30**

**December 15: The Lunch Bunch will go The Duck**  
restaurant in Sturbridge @ 12:30 pm  
**THEN take the Christmas Lights Walk at**  
Old Sturbridge Village.

**December 20: CHRISTMAS PARTY!**

**And cookie swap(!) followed by:**

**Film – “Miracle on 34<sup>th</sup> St.” @ 12:30**

**December 25: Christmas.**

**December 27: Film – “Simon Birch” @ 12:30**

***We will be open from Dec. 26 – 29 -***

**Zumba Gold Mondays – from 10:30 - 11:15 am**

**Wii Bowling Tuesdays: from 10 - 11 am**

**Cards & Cribbage Tuesdays: starts at 1 pm**

**Coffee Wednesdays: Social hour – 9 till Lunch**

**BBC Thursdays: at 12:30 – Crafts & BBC miniseries**

**FUNctional Fitness Fridays – 10:30 am in the**  
New Braintree Town Hall.

## **MOVIE WEDNESDAYS 12:30 pm @ the SenCen:**

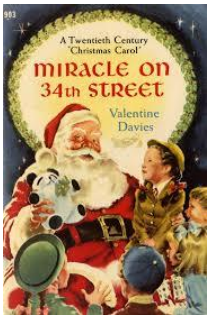
### **DECEMBER 13: "ELF"**



Starring Will Ferrell, James Caan, Zoey Deschanel, Ed Asner, and Bob Newhart, "Elf" is a 2003 holiday comedy about a baby who crawls into Santa's bag, gets taken back to the North Pole, and raised as one of the elves. Except his size tells him he doesn't really belong. So he runs off to NYC, still in his elf costume, to find his lost parents.

He finds love and rejection and finally a happy ending, of course – It's a Christmas movie! Rated by Fandango as the best holiday film of the 21<sup>st</sup> century! Also, **rated PG**

### **DECEMBER 20: "MIRACLE ON 34<sup>th</sup> St." (G)**



Miracle on 34th Street is a 1947 American Christmas fantasy film directed by George Seaton. It stars Edmund Gwenn as Kris Kringle, a department store Santa Claus who claims to be the real Santa. Maureen O'Hara, John Payne, and Natalie Wood co-star.

The film tells the story of a young girl (Wood) who comes to believe that Kris Kringle is the real Santa Claus. When Kringle's sanity is questioned, a lawyer named Fred Gailey (Payne) defends him in court by arguing that he's not mistaken.

The film was a critical and commercial success, grossing over \$6 million at the box office. It was nominated for three Academy Awards, including Best Picture, Best Actor, and Best Adapted Screenplay.

### **MEET & GREET: JEFF STEARNS from CAREFORTH**

Careforth is an organization formed to support caregivers. They provide coaching, connect you with services, and even provide financial support. Their

services are free to Medicaid eligible individuals and their families. Jeff will be here awhile to talk with folks  
**THE OAKHAM HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION:**



The Oakham Historical Assoc. is still selling tickets for their Annual Lottery until December 18th. There are 20 chances to win \$50 with each ticket. It runs from January 9

to March 14, '24. Every Tuesday and Thursday, the middle two numbers of the evening drawing of the Mass Lottery Numbers Game is our winning number. A check for \$50 will be sent to the winner. A ticket is \$20. You can win as often as your number comes up.

You can also purchase a ticket through December 18, by sending a check for \$20 made out to Oakham Historical Association, PO Box 236, Oakham, MA 01068. There are only 100 tickets and they go fast. If you have any questions call Kathy at 508-882-3137. Please leave a message if there is no answer and I will get back to you. Thank you.

### **DECEMBER 27: "Simon Birch" (PG)**



*Simon Birch* is a 1998 American drama film directed by Mark Steven Johnson and starring Ian Michael Smith, Joseph Mazzello, Ashley Judd, and David Strathairn. The film is based on John Irving's novel "A Prayer for Owen Meany". It tells the story of

Simon Birch, a young boy with dwarfism who lives in Maine. Simon is an outcast, but he is also a kind and compassionate person. He is best friends with Joe Wentworth, a popular boy who is an outcast too.

The film follows Simon and Joe as they grow up together. They face many challenges, including bullying, poverty, and death. But through it all, they remain friends. Simon eventually sacrifices himself to save Joe's life. *Simon Birch* is a powerful and moving film. The film is beautifully shot and well-acted. It is a

film that will stay with you long after you have seen it.

**FLASH FICTION:**

**“CHILD’S PLAY”  
By Becky Austin**

*From a distance, I see a couch sitting on the side of the road. Why would anyone put a couch out in the rain?*

*Later, I drove by to find it wasn’t a couch, but a child’s plastic playset.*

Like to try your hand at the micro-fiction form? Here’s the rules:

- You get 100 words or less.
- There can be no profanity, vulgarity, politics, or other offensive language.
- This is NOT a contest – it’s a fun challenge.
- No one will edit your work, except for any typos or spelling mistakes you’d want us to correct.
- Your name will appear only with your written consent.

Throughout the next 12 months, your stories will be printed here and there throughout the Herald.

**POEM: by Becky Austin**

*We are a community,  
though small we may be.  
Coming together  
in harmony.*

*For coffee chats, movies, and more  
Being there for our seniors is at the core.*

*We are a community of elders  
Within this Town  
And at the Senior Center  
Is where we can be found.*



**CHRISTMAS LUNCH at THE DUCK in Sturbridge**



For its next culinary expedition on December 20, the Lunch Bunch has chosen to go to **The Duck** at 502 Main St. (Rt. 20) in Sturbridge. Some of us may remember this restaurant as the Whistling Swan, with a second restaurant attached, the Ugly Duckling – now the Duck. They serve “New American Cuisine” which gets 4.4 stars out of 5 on 848 Google reviews! RSVP at the SenCen or call: 508-882-4073.

**AND THAT’S NOT ALL!**

**“CHRISTMAS by CANDLELIGHT” at OSV:**

On December 20, you are invited to join us for a stroll through Old Sturbridge Village’s “Christmas By Candlelight” festival. We’ll stroll through the decorated Village and Christmas Tree Trail, listen to stories and live music, sample sweet treats, ride the horse-drawn carryall, and more. What better way to get into the spirit of the season? Tickets will be lightly subsidized.

**PEN PAL NEWS :**

Our second Student Pen pal letters will be ready for pickup at the back door of Forbes Library on 12/15/2023. Senior Response letters are due back to the box by 1/3/2024.

Thank you for your timely response to this great learning experience for our grade 4 students.

- Jane Pease

## NEW COA OUTREACH COORDINATOR: JAN H.



My name is Janice Handrahan. I am the Outreach Coordinator for the Oakham Council of Aging. With volunteer Judy Menard, I have been helping residents locate and secure services for

housing, medical transportation, elder bus transportation, medical clinics, as well as sitting with those may need a visit.

If you have questions about services that may be available to you or a family member, please call the Oakham Senior Center at 508-882-4073. There are volunteers at the Center most days at least limited hours. If you leave a message, one of us will contact you to determine if we can help you or refer you to an agency that can.

\*Jan's also the Herald photographer

## THANKSGIVING LUNCH AT ELLER'S IN LEICESTER



What a great time! (photo by Jan Handrahan)

## GIVING THANKS:

This Thanksgiving we had so much to be grateful for, beginning with the dinner provided to Oakham's vets and seniors by Jonathan Poe, the COA, and other volunteers around Town. There were also the breakfast and lunch for Oakham's

veterans – November was very much a month of remembrances.

And so we at the COA would like to remember and thank the Packards, for letting us use the facilities at Pine Acres for cornhole and pickleball; New Braintree too, for letting us use their Town Hall for Zumba.

We're thankful to Jane Pease for connecting us with our 4<sup>th</sup> graders as pen pals again this year; to Steve Dollinger for donating a laptop and printer; and to the Rochettes, Wreschinskys, Judy Menard, and others for items donated to the Senior Center. We're thankful to the Selectboard for supporting us, to Lucy and Melanie for keeping us going, and to all the volunteers who have donated their time and effort to the support of Oakham's seniors and their COA. Thank you!

## THE LONELY OBITER by Rick Hendra

Am I the only one  
who reads the obits every day?  
Who knows who's passed away?

Who knows who's left,  
Who's bereft,  
And where the departed drew their pay?

Who often has to guess  
The cause of death  
And who wrote this obit anyway?

The burden would be lighter  
Were it shared a little wider  
To help this obit writer on his way.

You can help just by repeating,  
Any obit you've been reading  
That tells us that a neighbor's passed away.

Or their loved ones – any warning  
Of an Oakham-ite in mourning –  
So we can lend a kind word on their way.  
Please, let us know if you can help today!



# DECEMBER 2023

Questions/Sign-ups Call Melanie 508-864-9224  
silvalining322@gmail.com

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
26	27 10:30am Zumba Gold	28	29 9am Coffee w/ Friends	30 12:30pm BBC Bring a craft or project to work on or play a game with friends and watch a mini series.	1	2
3	4 10:30am Zumba Gold	5 10:00am Bowling with Wii 10:45am Getting Geeky w Melanie 1:00pm Cards Cribbage	6 9am Coffee w/ Friends 10:00am - 1:00pm Jeff Stearns Careforth	7 12:30pm Best to Be Cool 😊	8 12:00pm COA Meeting	9
10	11 10:30am Zumba Gold	12 10:00am Bowling with Wii 1:00pm Cards Cribbage	13 9am Coffee w/ Friends 12:30pm MOVIE ELF	14 11:00-11:15am Blood Pressure Clinic 12:30pm Best to Be Cool 😊	15 10:30am FUNctional Fitness 12:30pm Lunch Bunch The Duck Christmas Lights Walk at OSV	16
17	18 10:30am Zumba Gold 9:00am-1:00pm Podiatry Clinic 📍	19 10:00am Bowling with Wii 1:00pm Cards Cribbage	20 9am Coffee w/ Friends CHRISTMAS PARTY Cookie Swap Yankee Swap Miracle on 34th	21 11:30am Birthday Lunch 🥳 12:30pm Best to Be Cool 😊	22 10:30am FUNctional Fitness	23
24	25 	26 10:00am Bowling with Wii 10:45am Getting Geeky w Melanie 1:00pm Cards Cribbage	27 9am Coffee w/ Friends 12:30pm MOVIE Simon Birch	28 12:30pm Best to Be Cool 😊	29 10:30am FUNctional Fitness	30

**Oakham Council on Aging  
2 Coldbrook Rd.  
Oakham, MA 01068**

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**FROM THE COUNCIL ON AGING:**

The COA met on the 8<sup>th</sup> of November, regretfully accepting the resignation of Judy Menard (who will continue volunteering at events) and welcoming new member Clare Hendra.

We are grateful to the Selectboard for replacing our (very) old laptop in the COA Office and giving us 3 working iPads to make available to seniors. We are also grateful to Steve Dollinger for offering a laptop so the SenCen to replace the one we had for open use. Our phone lines are now worked out as well: the COA can be reached at 508-882-4073. Reservations for lunch can be made at 882-4072. Along with our Good Geek support from Melanie and our growing familiarity with the MySenior Center software, we're in good shape now, technically. Take advantage!

The COA has been working with Jan and the kitchen operation to ease access and to try out different table seating configurations for ease both of conversation and access. We'll be gathering lunchers' reactions and recommendations all this month.

Under "New Business", Clare Hendra was nominated and elected to the Treasurer's position on the COA in Lucy's place. The position was deemed too critical to leave vacant while Lucy recovers. Jane Pease and Barbara LaBorde spoke to the meeting about Lucy's rehab and suggested we initiate a collection point for cards and other items of support to greet her when she gets home. Done!

The COA also wanted to thank the Rochettes for the microwave and the Wreschinskys for Wii Bowling (every Tuesday at 11 am, starting Dec. 11) – and thanks all of you, who make it so worthwhile!