



# THE OAKHAM HERALD

March 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.

**PHONE:** 508-882-5501

**Activities Coordinator:** Melanie Silva

## **COA BOARD MEMBERS:**

**Chair:** - seeking -

**Vice-Chair:** - seeking -

**Treasurer:** Lucy Tessnau

**Secretary:** Priscilla McGlynn

**Members:** Steve Ober  
Jane Pease

**Alt. Members** Tammy Gehring

**Assoc. Members:** Jan Pierce  
Meg Goodrow

## **BACK DOOR CAFÉ:**

**Coordinator:** Jan Pierce

**Volunteers:** Pauline Dwelly  
Diane Rochette

**NEWSLETTER:** Rick Hendra  
Lucy Tessnau

## **MARCH CALENDAR:**

**Lunch Bunch:** March 17 at 12:30 - TBD

**Blood Pressure Clinic:** March 12 from 11 till  
11:45 am

**Podiatry Clinic** (by appointment only):  
March 20<sup>th</sup> from 9 till 12:30 pm

**Coffee, Corn Hole, & Cards:** Every Tuesday  
from 10 - 11 am

**Coffee Wednesdays - with friends!** social  
hour – Every Wednesday 9 - 10 am

**Movie Wednesdays – after lunch:**

**2/08: "The Commitments"**

**2/24: "Waking Ned Devine"**

**Zumba:** Every Tuesday and Friday, from  
10:30 - 11:15 am in the voting room

## **NEW TO-DO: MOVIE WEDNESDAYS!**

**2/08: "The Commitments":** Set in the Northside of Dublin, the film tells the story of Jimmy Rabbitte, a young music fanatic who assembles a group of working-class youths to form a soul band named "The Commitments".

**2/24: "Waking Ned Devine":** When Ned Devine dies from shock after winning the lottery, two longtime friends discover the body and agree Ned would want them to benefit from his good luck. They embark upon an outrageous scheme to claim the ticket but first they have to get all the townsfolk to go along with their plan!

## MEMOIR WRITING GROUP:

For the past 4-5 years, a group of about a dozen folks, mostly from Oakham but from some surrounding towns as well, met monthly at the Senior Center. A second group, formed later, met at the Library until COVID things down. Even then, they met outside on the Common in the warm weather, it meant that much to them. Sharing the stories of their lives – often overlapping – had forged strong bonds among them.

Last month they held a parting session with their initial instructor on how to preserve their memoirs in books that can be passed down to family or gathered together in a compendium for the Oakham Historical Association. It's easier than we thought.

We would like to see a new Memoir Class get started, with new members looking to recall days past and leave their history as a legacy to their children and grandchildren. It's an opportunity to learn your neighbors' stories, share your own, and add another chapter to the history of our Town. The COA would be happy to supply the instructor to get things started and share the cost with participants. Just let Lucy know you're interested, or leave a message on our phone: 508-882-5501.



**REMEMBER!** Clocks “spring ahead” an hour on **March 12** at 2:00 am!



## IN SYMPATHY...

We were saddened to see that old friend **Claudia Lacerte**, of Flint Rd., died January 9. She left no family we know of and there was no obituary published. Fortunately, the Herald did a profile on Claudia back in October of 2017, and perhaps it will do:

*We scaled back our Senior Center yard sale this year due largely to the reduced role of long-time yard sale dynamo, Claudia Lacerte. Claudia's not getting around like she used to and couldn't be there to help us organize and price everything. We missed her expertise. Claudia ran yard sale fundraisers for years as a volunteer in the North Brookfield schools, one of her many volunteer efforts over the years – including Abby's House, the women's shelter in Worcester.*

*Before that, she had a 22-year career at Thom McCann's in Worcester – where, as union steward, she led a successful strike for the right of expectant women to work their jobs as long as they wanted, instead of being terminated, per company policy, after their first trimester.*

*Claudia and Everett built their own house over a small running brook in a remote corner of Oakham. Animal lovers, they fed the local critters, who soon grew comfortable stopping by their front porch for food – raccoons and possum, even bears were welcome. Still are.*

*Less welcome at Claudia's home are all the electronic devices that distract us from being there, being present, with the world around us and those we love. She has no computer, no smart phone, no app's of any description. Just a CD player, for the music she loves. Claudia lives alone, somewhat precariously since Everett passed. But she has the support of an active network of friends among the police and fire departments, the Senior Center, and even St. Joseph's Abby, who perhaps see a kindred spirit.*

*They're all glad to give something back to someone who has given so much over the years. And visiting with Claudia is just a delightful way to while away the hours... One of Oakham's originals.*

RIP, old friend.



We were sad to see that **Rosemary (Crampton) Zalneraitis** passed on Feb. 1. Born in 1929, she was married at 15 and never finished high school. But it never

slowed her down. She had 9 children, 6 boys and 3 girls, and even took in another boy, who'd lost his father. She rarely rested and never complained. When her boys were in school, she provided day care for other working mothers.

She loved music – country, oldies, light rock – and she loved to dance. She carried that with her into assisted living, even when her legs gave out. She was kind and giving, she laughed and loved, and was wise with experience.

She was predeceased by her husband, Herbert, in 1998, by her brothers Elmer and Gilbert and her sister Audrey, and by her sons Raymond, Roger, and by Joseph Chase, her special son, and by Andreas Panagiotopoulos, her son-in-law. She leaves sons Herbert Jr., (Jan), Edwin (Andrea), Donald, Richard (Shelly) and daughters Nancy (Alan), Sherryanne (Bob), and Sheila.

She had dozens of grandkids and great-grandkids, including James, Raymond Jr., and Karen, who grew up here in Oakham. All of us who knew her, miss her.



On Feb. 3, we also lost a friend to many in Oakham with the passing of **Art Gray**, age 78. Art was born and raised in Oxford, where he starred in football and was president of his class at Ansonia High. He got a degree in Biology from UConn, but decided on a 50-year career instead as a financial advisor. He and partner Richard Turner founded Schooner Financial Associates in 1992.

Art came to Oakham when his wife, Joanne, became pastor of the Oakham Congregational Church. He was a friend to the food pantry and active in fundraising. He raised funds for community members in need for many years through an annual golf tournament at Quail Hollow.

He liked fishing and traveling with Joanne and continued to enjoy competition after his football days were done: he played golf, badminton, card games, Scrabble, and other games of skill and liked to win, gracious as he was about it.

Art leaves Joanne and their children from their blended family: Julie G. Banks, Joseph R. Gray (Meggan), Melissa Gray-Murphy (Shawn), Jacquelyn Jones (George), Jerie Phinney (Craig), Julie Sleeper, and Janice Sleeper. And he leaves many friends in Town. Our condolences to them all.

We also note with sadness the passing of **Debi Holmes**, after a battle with cancer. She was sister to Karen (Julian) Votruba on E. Hill Rd., whom she stayed with in her illness. She was a human services professional and a larger-than-life figure, loved by all. Our condolences to her family.

**Oakham Council on Aging  
2 Coldbrook Rd. #6  
Oakham, MA 01068**

**The printing of this newsletter is partially  
funded by the Executive Office of Elder  
Affairs**

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**THE VIRTUAL JUKEBOX: A Monthly Feature**



We've got 2 jukes this time, one for dancing and one for listening. The Zumba Juke has snappy tunes to make you move by bands you may not have heard of – but you really ought to hear!



The “Hits of Our Lives” Juke continues to review the #1 hits in different years when we were young – this month, looking at the years ending in 4 and 9 ('54, '59, '64, etc.) – featuring better known artists from Webb Pierce to the Animals to Jan & Dean!