

Finding Solutions to Help Seniors Age in Place

## Winter Wonderland?

Nobody remembers who said this first, but that doesn't make it any less true. With Valentine's Day approaching, many stores are decked out in pink and red hearts—but not everyone looks forward to this holiday. Those who have suffered loss may even dread its approach. For North Fork Senior Connections, every day is about love: it's not only chocolates and flowers but the little things that can make a difference in the lives of older adults. Sometimes it's as simple as bringing folks together. In a recent Johns Hopkins study of more than 5,000 Americans 65 and older, those who were socially isolated had 28% greater chance of developing dementia than their better-connected counterparts. But more than cognitive decline is at stake: other research links social isolation to a plethora of problems, including a weakened immune system, high blood pressure, heart disease, obesity, anxiety and depression. At a recent presentation by active volunteer—and architect—Bob McHugh at the Paonia Senior Center, twenty-five seniors learned about the architecture and planning of Machu Picchu while enjoying glorious on-screen photos. Most of them had earlier attended a delicious catered polenta lunch from Root & Vine, provided by the Center through a program spearheaded by super-volunteer Linda McCone. It's easy to feel left behind when others are

using technology that seems more like a foreign language. Another amazing volunteer, John Valentine, wants to take the mystery out of "gadgets." His class on Thursday, February 2, at 2:00 will help older adults understand how to manage those great photos captured with your phone or digital camera. John is also a master gardener who will be teaching

a series of classes for Senior Connections focused on growing plants that thrive in the North Fork Valley, with such topics as dealing with our local pests and watering efficiently. These classes, free and open to all older adults, will be held Thursdays at 1:30 beginning 2/16. (See article for more details.)



Snow Buddy Ron Hanna

Some of our generous seniors serve as "Snow

Buddies" to keep sidewalks clear—and safer—for others who can't shovel for themselves. In development now is a "Book Buddies" initiative in conjunction with the Friends of Paonia Library, delivering reading materials to homebound seniors. If you or someone you know needs access to books, please contact us. (See article for more information on this work-in-progress.) Others cook nutritious meals for those with food insecurity, deliver fresh produce in season, or drive folks to medical appointments—we all have something to offer. So here's to the volunteers: too often unsung-heroes, helping to make our Valley a better place to age through many small acts of love.



Please join North Fork Senior Connections for a Valentine's Day



## ♡ Soup Lunch!

Tuesday, Feb. 14 @ noon

Come share the love with senior friends & neighbors. Our Board members are cooking up hearty soups for all tastes and diets. **Please bring your own bowl and spoon.**



A Lively Afternoon of **GAMES** will follow  
1:30-3:30



**Paonia Senior Center** 106 3rd Street

**\*\*\* RSVP is required for lunch \*\*\***

We'll supply breads, too, but if you'd like to bring dessert, call 970-527-3482 or email [nfseniorconnections@gmail.com](mailto:nfseniorconnections@gmail.com)



## Let's Snowshoe!

Save the date: Tuesday afternoon,  
February 21

Whether you're a total beginner or an "old hand," it's time to take advantage of winter in the North Fork Valley. Our Director Medeina Ryan is experienced at teaching and leading snowshoe excursions. We plan to travel to Crawford (snow-dependent, of course) by carpool—let us know if you require a ride. If you need gear, we will borrow snowshoes and poles from the Cedaredge Library through their partnership with the Nature Connection. *RSVPs are important for this event* so we can obtain the needed snowshoes and contact you if weather requires a time or location change/give out the precise location of the trip (destination to be announced.) Call 970.527.3482 or email [nfseniorconnections@gmail.com](mailto:nfseniorconnections@gmail.com).

## "Love for Grownups"



The Paradise Theater offers its monthly Senior Movie on Thursday, February 9, at 10:00, featuring Sean Connery and Audrey Hepburn. Connery stars as an aging Robin Hood, fighting in France for Richard the Lionheart, played by Richard Harris. When Robin returns to England he reunites with Friar Tuck and Will Scarlet in Sherwood Forest, where he learns that Marian—a luminous Audrey Hepburn—has become the abbess Mother Jenet. Plenty of adventure but also the grace and wisdom that comes with life well-lived. Enjoy complimentary popcorn and a fountain drink along with free admission. All Points Transit can provide a ride if you contact them in advance at 970.874.7334.

When Robin returns to England he reunites with Friar Tuck and Will Scarlet in Sherwood Forest, where he learns that Marian—a luminous Audrey Hepburn—has become the abbess Mother Jenet. Plenty of adventure but also the grace and wisdom that comes with life well-lived. Enjoy complimentary popcorn and a fountain drink along with free admission. All Points Transit can provide a ride if you contact them in advance at 970.874.7334.

Thanks to our generous sponsors:



Thanks to our generous coffee sponsor:  
Both Senior Connections and the Paonia Senior Center appreciate their support!

Finding Solutions to Help Seniors Age in Place

## February Birthdays



Janice Thorup 2/4  
Shelley Schmitzer 2/14  
Paula Martin 2/25  
Jeriel McAndrews 2/28

## Happy Birthday to:

Marilyn Stone 2/10  
Betsy Topper 2/16  
James Schott 2/25

**Gardening in the North Fork**- This year we will start the series over but with extensions and updates beyond last year plus short field trips to illustrate the class material. Topics

include pruning, starting a bed, composting varieties, soils, watering, containers, pests, trees, tomatoes. Seeds, composters, drip irrigation giveaways! (See calendar item below)

## Calendar

What's Happening in the North Fork Valley in February

**You Took Great Photos—Now What? All about Digital Images** *When I make the picture bigger why does it look so bad?* John Valentine will lead us through taking our snapshots to the next level—bring your phone/laptop/IPad and get your questions answered on Thursday, February 2 @ 2:00, Paonia Senior Center

**Valentine's Day Soup Lunch!** 2/14 @ noon, Paonia Senior Center. Senior Connections Board will provide the soup! Fun afternoon of GAMES will follow at 1:30 (See poster on page 2)

**Gardening in the North Fork** Series begins 2/16, continues every Thursday at 1:30 @Paonia Senior Center (See article above)

**Let's Snowshoe!** 2/21 (See poster page 2)

**Stay Active and Independent for Life** Exercise and fall prevention classes presented by the North Fork EMS: Paonia Senior Center – Tues & Fri at 10-11am Hotchkiss Memorial Hall – Mon & Thur, 9:30 am Crawford Town Hall (Advanced) Tues & Thurs 5:30-6:30 pm

**Book Club for Seniors** – February 20, at 1:30 @ Paonia Senior Center. We'll discuss books about "Asia," fiction or nonfiction.

**Write Your Life-** Memoir for Seniors at Paonia

Senior Center on Wednesdays at 1:30. For more info/to join please call the facilitator, Yuri Chicovsky, at 970-314-0303. This group may take a short hiatus when Yuri's child is born!

**Senior Meals**– Senior Centers open for VOA Lunch (also Available for Pick-up) M,W & F: Call Debbie at (970) 874 - 7661 for more info or to sign up.

**Hotchkiss Senior Center** now serves hot meals cooked on the premises Tues and Thurs at noon! 872.3494

**Caregivers' Support Group** Thursdays, 1 – 3 pm via Zoom. Contact Gayla Michaud for information at 970.825.6288 or email GAMich76@outlook.com

**Thursday Lunches** at Paonia Senior Center, with locally-sourced catered meals at noon for \$4. Limited to first 20 to register by calling 970/527-3435 or by emailing scmSPAonia@gmail.com. Fresh and locally-sourced, \$4 donation. 2/2- Kathy Swartz; 2/9-Rio Bravo; 2/16-Simple Cafe; 2/23 Sweetgrass.

**Coffee Klatches** at the Senior Center, Mondays at 9:30. Guest speakers include Sarah Curtis from All Points on 2/6; Julie Sapena from WSCC on 2/13; Police Chief Laiminger from Paonia PD about fraud and scams on 2/20; and Kathy Steckel from EMS on 2/27.





## Board of Directors

Bruce Woodside, Chair

Bonnie Eisenberg,

Vice Chair

Jenn Lukesh, Treasurer

Betsy Topper, Secretary

Marsha Brezonick, Member

Brad Thacker, Member

Medeina Ryan, Director

Laura Lee Yates,

Communication Specialist

February  
2023

Printed by High Country Printing and Graphics  
Print production by John Valentine

**Interviews Online** Last June we screened “Crossing the Generational Divide: Teens Interviewing Longtime Local Elders” on the big screen at the Paradise Theater. Now you can enjoy the film and the full individual interviews on our website. Here’s the link: <https://nfseniorconnections.org/north-fork-interviews/> Much gratitude to all the participants!

## Work-in-Progress: A “Little Library” for Seniors

All across America, “little libraries” continue to appear along neighborhood streets, often housed in old cabinets or hand-made wooden cupboards. For years, the Paonia Senior Center has collected donated books and loaned them to older adults on the “honor system.” Now Senior Connections is taking it to the next level through a partnership with the Friends of Paonia Library. Though we still house a small collection of old VHS tapes and DVDs, we’re accumulating a better assortment of reading material available to all members. If you have books you can bear to part with that will appeal to older adults, we’re looking for: mysteries, historical fiction, suspense, quality westerns, appealing stories of all sorts and relevant nonfiction. Large-print books are especially appreciated.

Do you know homebound seniors who have difficulty getting to our local public libraries? We have volunteers who are willing to be “Book Buddies,” transporting items from our growing collection of books to those who need them. Just reach out to us at 970.527.3482 or by email at [nfseniorconnections@gmail.com](mailto:nfseniorconnections@gmail.com). If you’re mobile, please feel free to browse our offerings!



## You Took Great Photos— Now What?

### All about Digital Images

*Tech expert John Valentine will lead us through taking our snapshots to the next level—bring your phone/laptop/iPad and get your questions answered*

**Thursday, February 2 @ 2:00**

**Paonia Senior Center**