

Finding Solutions to Help Seniors Age in Place

One Young Woman's Dream

Rylee Lopez read an article about connecting with elders, where the author mentioned a goal: to build a world where caring for each other happens not at the fringes of society, but at its heart. That inspired her to create North Fork Flowers CSA under the auspices of North Fork Senior Connections. Rylee believes flowers are one small way we can let elders in our community know we're thinking of them. Studies show that flowers help to reduce feelings of isolation and improve short term cognitive memory.



A bouquet thrilled one Hotchkiss senior to tears, for nobody had brought her flowers for thirty-five years. Rylee hopes to continue delivering these mason-jar bouquets, created with the invaluable help of organic grower Carol

Sikora (shown with Rylee in the upper photo) to seniors in the North Fork Valley. Please let us know if you or someone you know would like to support this much-appreciated endeavor.

Thanks to our generous sponsors:




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



RVLOVE

You might catch Julie and Marc Bennett at their part-time home in Silver Leaf here in Paonia—or cross paths with them out on the road in their home on wheels, accompanied by their dog Coda. At a special Coffee Klatch on Monday, July 8th at 9:30, these best-selling authors/digital nomads will share the journey that turned a love of travel and being together into a profitable lifestyle, with lots of tips for us amateurs. Don't miss it!



War Film or Romance?

The Paradise Theater presents its monthly free Senior Movie (complete with complimentary popcorn and drink) on Thursday, July 11, at 10am, when they screen "Captain Corelli's Mandolin." During WWII, mandolin-playing Nicolas Cage leads his company of Italian soldiers—plus a few Germans—to the isle of Cephalonia, where he falls in love with the doctor's daughter, portrayed by Penelope Cruz. A turning point arrives when Italy surrenders to the Allies.



If you need a lift, plan ahead by calling Neighborly Rides in advance. Our Volunteer Coordinator, Faye Sullivan, at 970.209.9721, can help!

New York Transplant Gladys Thrives in Our Corner of Colorado

by Laura Lee Yates for North Fork Senior Connections

One thing I love about Paonia is that even though we're lacking in racial diversity we make up for it in what I call "Neural Diversity." The North Fork Valley is peopled with truly interesting characters—including Gladys, the alter-ego of local actress-director-counselor-educator Merrily Talbott, here's the scoop.

"So I moved out here during The Covid—I love New York but was ready for a change. It's important to take a risk and do something different, and I wanted to live in the mountains."

Many studies demonstrate the importance of staying active, and Gladys concurs. Dressed in her signature houndstooth-check jacket (always stylish) she explains: "I like to exercise

every day and ride my bike a lot—don't be shy about riding a trike if that's your thing, they're cool. Sometimes I do Zumba—but I don't compare myself to Christy Eller, the teacher. After all, I am 83 years young! The important thing is to have fun and keep moving."

Months ago, during a variety show, Gladys was asked about dating in the North Fork Valley. Off the cuff, in a comedy setting, she quipped, "Ladies, you gotta lower your standards!" in her broad Brooklyn accent. But when we spoke at Paonia Espresso, she elaborated: "Truth is, you deserve the best. Here, of course, there are fewer men to choose from—I love men by the way—but you have to think about what you really want. Are you just looking for a little nookie? Why not—of course you should protect yourself—but then just have a good time. But if you're looking for a long-term partner first you gotta love yourself."

When I ask if there's currently a man in her life, Gladys enthuses: "Oh yeah! I met my boyfriend Rodney at a Yankees game—he's a Red Sox fan, and that helps fuel our passion. Rodney lives in Boston, and that keeps things fresh. When

the Yankees are on top, I'm on top..."

I ask about her participation in the Burlesque Show at the Paradise Theater (upcoming when we did this interview). "I've never done anything like that before," she giggles. "I plan to find an unsuspecting man in the audience—did I mention that I really like men? I find so many men are attracted to me—you know I really love people and so they love me back. Anyway, back to the Burlesque Show—I plan to take off a piece of clothing and then do a lap dance... You know these days we see bigger women as models and on TV. As far as body issues go: I don't have those. We all need to celebrate the body we got! And don't get all twisted up about it—unless of course it's a pole dance..." (Note: At the show, Gladys received a standing ovation...)

"How do you keep your brain so sharp?" I inquire.

Gladys replies: "Well, I do a crossword every week, the New Yorker or the Sunday New York Times, which is really hard. And I read a lot of books, including a big stack about mental health—that's one of the passions I share with my friend Merrily. And then I do improv, too, every week with Paonia Players. It's all about letting yourself go and responding in the moment. You know, there's a lot of loneliness out there, but if you're brave enough to put yourself out there, the benefits far outweigh the risks. Just talk to people. There's something to like about everybody."

Gladys continues: "You always gotta try something new. Keep things in perspective and listen to your heart. Be honest and vulnerable, even let your heart break a little." Her eyes twinkle. "But don't take yourself too seriously."

So keep your eyes out for Gladys: you never know where she'll turn up. If the rest of us can live with half her gusto, we'll stay forever young!



July Birthdays

Happy Birthday to:



Connie Hodges 7/2
Kathy Edwards 7/17
Lynn Mattingly 7/21
Marjorie True 7/30

Larry Ribnick 7/4
Mary Bachran 7/18
Bill Crompton 7/23

Betsy Marston 7/6
Lynn Wetherell 7/18
Chris Michelsen 7/27

July Calendar

What's Happening at the Senior Center in July

Join the Song Circle just for the love of making folk music with others. No skill or talent required, lyrics provided. Facilitated by singer/songwriter Ellen Stapenhorst. First Tuesday at 2:00, July 2nd at Paonia Senior Center.

Here & Now MEDITATION—Meg O'Shaughnessy facilitates this ongoing group at Paonia Senior Center Thursday mornings at 9:00-10:00. All are welcome.

The NFSC Book Club is going strong! We gather at 2:00 on the third Tuesday of the month of the Paonia Senior Center. July 17: Nonfiction books about animals—lots of great choices! Please call for more info.

Silver Threads Sewing Club is on hiatus for the summer.

Paonia River Park Walks is on hiatus for the summer. It's too hot.

Neuromovement (Feldenkrais) with Jessi Hastings, RN, LMT, Certified Anat Baniel Method @ Paonia Library Community Room 9AM sharp each Wednesday.

Gourmet organic senior lunches by Chrys Bailey on July 10th @ The Trading Post and July 24th on a local organic farm. Reservations text Faye at 970.209.9721.

Stay Active and Independent for Life (SAIL) Exercise and fall prevention classes presented by the North Fork EMS: Paonia Senior Center Tues & Fri 8:45-9:45 or 10-11; Hotchkiss Me-

morial Hall – Mon & Thurs @9:30; Crawford Town Hall 10-11 Wednesdays plus Advanced classes Tues & Thurs 5:30-6:30 pm.

Write Your Life—Memoir for Seniors at Paonia Senior Center on Wednesdays at 1:30. Please call for more info/to join.

Senior Meals— Paonia Senior Center 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 serves hot full meals cooked on the premises Tues, Wed and Thurs, all at noon. No reservation required, to-go orders available. 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

Coffee Klatch @Paonia Senior Center 9:30 AM: 7/8 RV/Love with Marc and Julie Bennett (see article); 7/22 Madeline Kent BA/BS/CNTP, addressing nutrition and gut health.

Catered lunches @ Paonia Senior Center: No lunch July 4; Berg Harvest (after the movie) 7/11; Flying Fork 7/18; Sweetgrass 7/25. Sign up starts Friday before next lunch by calling 527.3435, emailing scmSPAonia@gmail.com, or signing up in person at the Senior Center, noting date & time.



July
2024

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It's not too late to make a difference: Sponsor an Older Adult's Farm Share



North Fork Senior Connections is teaming up with The Living Farm to distribute 30 CSAs for 30 weeks to seniors in Paonia, Hotchkiss & Crawford through mid-November. This provides our older adults with local, organic food, full of vitality, and delivered right to their door!

\$360 Sponsors one adult for 30 weeks

\$180 Sponsors one adult for 15 weeks

\$120 Sponsors one adult for 10 weeks

Your donation goes directly towards combating food insecurity in the senior community and connects our elders to the abundant high-quality food grown here in the valley. Thanks for your consideration!