



DON'T CALL ME SWEETIE!

by Laura Lee Yates for North Fork Senior Connections

How many of us have heard a solicitous nurse (grocery clerk, bank teller, mechanic) call a gray-haired lady “Sweetie”? To me it’s a word that belongs on one of those chalky little Valentine candies that few people actually enjoy eating. It usually sounds patronizing, not the best way to address a near-stranger just because they’ve seen a few score of years... And being called “young lady” isn’t any better.

Ageism, a word coined in 1969, is defined as discrimination and prejudice based on someone’s age. The American Psychological Association states that it’s “one of the last socially acceptable prejudices.” Across the globe, 1 in 2 people are ageist toward the elderly. Doctors may even dismiss concerns about physical pains and depression as “normal for someone your age”—something to get used to... Being categorized as “other” can be socially isolating and lead to more rapid cognitive decline, poorer health, and even premature death. If that’s not enough to convince you that ageism is a real problem, consider the 2020 study published in *The Gerontologist*, which estimated that ageism costs our country \$63 million every year! Not to mention the anti-aging products industry, which rakes in billions of dollars...

However, some of us ask for ageism. Carolyn Ringo, a local coach and guide who enjoys working with elder women, says, “We project what we believe about ourselves. Our culture has told us that old people are to be hidden away and forgotten. Some elders tell me they feel ‘invisible’, therefore that is what

they are projecting. We train people how to treat us.”

Our own attitudes definitely have a lot to do with how successfully we age. Research by Yale professor Becca Levy found that elder individuals who had positive beliefs about aging had more resilience after setbacks and lived an average of 7.5 years longer. Her book *Breaking the Age Code* is available at the Pannonia Library.

Who wants to be a stereotype? Most of us aren’t cranky (at least not all the time!), terminally creaky, and/or ready to give up our active lives. For men, who too often have defined themselves by their occupations, it may be about “What’s next?” Just because our first career may be a thing of the past doesn’t mean we have no further value. It’s all about what we can do, not what we can’t. Some of us finally find the time and focus to come into our creative power as elders. So if retirement doesn’t bring you satisfaction, maybe you should think about “unretiring.” That doesn’t always mean rejoining the workforce. In the North Fork Valley, many elders find new meaning in volunteering, even joining the boards of local nonprofits. It’s our chance to follow our hearts, perhaps overriding that sensible voice that’s kept us in line for so many years. Let’s defy the stereotype.

In February, celebrate love in all its forms. But don’t call me “Sweetie”—unless you really mean it!

Enjoy a Wonderful Thursday Lunch!

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We're excited to continue the special Thursday lunches originated by newly-retired Senior Center president Linda McCone. The meals are presented by local restaurants and caterers for only \$5 or \$6, with the rest of the cost funded by grants and private donations. Because food & space are limited, this popular program requires RESERVATIONS and is open to all adults over age 60. It's a great way to enjoy a delicious, low-cost meal in congenial company. Our monthly Calendar in this and every newsletter lists the upcoming offerings. But we need your help!

- Margit Yates has generously offered to come in early each week and help us set up in preparation for the meal, as well as spearheading the all-important dishwashing & cleanup, often assisted by Bonnie Quinn, Pat Hunter, Dave Knutson, Bruce Lemire, Amanda Lovell and/or Geoff Rauch. Please let us know if you're willing to assist with these chores.

- Many of our wonderful restaurants & caterers provide us with a great meal that doesn't include dessert—and those with a sweet tooth are left wanting. If you like to BAKE, please let us know and we'll sign you up to supply dessert for an upcoming lunch as needed.

- Speaking of SIGNING UP: We need you to make your needs known WHEN YOU CALL or come by the Senior Center to sign up. (We can no longer accept email registration.) Options available: VEGETARIAN & GLUTEN-FREE. Be kind and speak clearly. You MUST leave your phone number so kind volunteer Kathy Baes can confirm with you. You can call 527.3435 anytime after midnight on the Friday before the next lunch.

- CANCELLATIONS: Please let us know ASAP if you're unable to keep your reservation so we can notify someone on the waiting list. We know things happen, and of course we don't want you to attend if you're contagious. Please understand that we have to order a specific number of meals and then pay for them. Unless you're sick or injured, please expect to pay for SAME DAY cancellations that can't be filled by someone on the waiting list.

We want to make this great Thursday Lunch program sustainable, continuing the work of the amazing Linda McCone (now wintering in Costa Rica!)

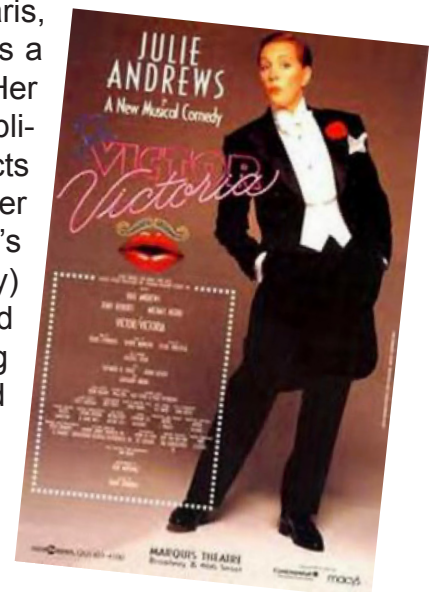
Drivers Needed!

Our Operations Manager Faye Sullivan is working hard to expand our Neighborly Rides program, enabling North Fork elders who no longer drive free access to all Delta County has to offer. Want to help? Call Faye at 970.527.1735 and sign up!



Free Senior Movie 2/13 at the Paradise

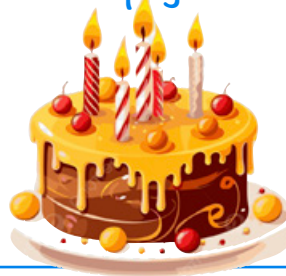
It's hard to make it in show business—even for Julie Andrews. As a struggling female soprano in 1934 Paris, she ends up posing as a female impersonator. Her personal life gets complicated when she attracts a Chicago gangster who's shocked that he's drawn to a (seemingly) male performer. Filmed in 1982, also starring Robert Preston and James Garner, Roger Ebert wrote: "Not only a funny movie, but, unexpectedly, a warm and friendly one." Seniors receive a popcorn and fountain drink along with free admission on the second Thursday of the month at 10AM through the Philip Salembier senior film series..



February Birthdays

Janice Thorup 2/4
 Norm Lewark 2/9
 Shelley Schmitzer 2/14
 Paula Martin 2/25
 Jeriel McAndrews 2/28

Happy Birthday to:



Bruce Lemire 2/6
 Marilyn Stone 2/10
 Betsy Topper 2/16
 James Schott 2/26

February Calendar

What's Happening in January

NEW!!! Put TUESDAYS@2 on your calendar. Something different at 2:00 each week at Paonia Senior Center.

- 2/4 **Hoshindo** w/Basil Webb (See article pg 4)
- 2/11 **Join the Song Circle** just for the joy of singing with others. No skill or talent required, lyrics provided. Facilitated by singer/songwriter Ellen Stapenhorst. Second TUESDAY@2.
- 2/18 **Aging w/Purpose & Intention** w/Carolyn Ringo (See article pg 4)
- 2/25 **Book Club** gathers at the Paonia Senior Center on the fourth TUESDAY@2. We'll discuss our Favorite Book/Books of 2024, fiction or nonfiction. We'll also pick topics for upcoming gatherings.

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

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 Memorial Hall – Mon & Thurs @9:30; Crawford Town Hall 10-11 Mondays and 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

Catered lunches @ Paonia Senior Center Thursdays @ Noon. Rio Bravo 2/6; Chick-a-Pea 2/13; Sweetgrass 2/20; Clemmie Bouton 2/27. Sign up starts Friday before next Thursday's lunch by calling 527.3435, or signing up in person at the Senior Center. \$5-6 per person. See article pg 2 .

Thanks to our generous sponsors:



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



February
2025

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The Secret Life of Bees

Hoshindo is a Japanese form of honey bee venom therapy. Local teacher and practitioner Basil Webb will be talking about the sweet and beautiful honey bee and their amazing contributions to life. A primary focus of the conversation will be how the gentle and restorative healing practice of Hoshindo and the medicine of the bees help to reduce chronic pain, inflammation, nerve issues and overall increase the body's strength and vitality. TUESDAY@2, February 4 at Paonia Senior Center.



Aging with Purpose & Intention

Wondering what comes next? Join transition guide & coach Carolyn Ringo for a lively interactive afternoon 2/18, TUESDAY@2 at the Paonia Senior Center, when we'll explore:

- Discover what your vision is for this time in your life
- Be inspired to open to new possibilities
- Bring your life purpose to the forefront for a more meaningful elderhood



NFSC volunteers provide free transportation for seniors within Delta County. Plan ahead and call

NEIGHBORLY RIDES!

Do you need help with a small household task? Call **HANDY HELPERS** for volunteer assistance.

(970) 527-1735