



Plus! People NEWS!

The center that builds community

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May 2020

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People Plus supports an engaged, healthy, and independent life for older adults, while joining others to build community for all ages

"We've got you covered"



PEOPLE PLUS STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS are helping out in various ways as Mainers are staying home and practicing social distancing. Volunteers are making face masks and donating them to People Plus for our members and others in the community. The upper photo shows face masks ready for pick-up at the Center. In the photo at the right, Office Coordinator Sarah Deck is shown delivering food. As part of its effort to stay safe and connected, the People Plus Volunteer Transportation Network is now picking up food items, supplies, and even prescriptions and delivering them to our home-bound seniors.



VTN becomes delivery service

Program expands to help home-bound seniors

The Volunteer Transportation Network has always been an important program offered through People Plus, providing free rides for medical appointments and more for adult residents of Brunswick, Harpswell, and Topsham. But the value of this vital service has greatly increased over the past few weeks.

As Mainers do their bit to help stem the spread of the coronavirus, mostly by staying home and limiting visits to businesses that remain open, more and more people are turning to VTN to address their immediate needs. It has gone from taking riders to grocery and drug stores to now picking up food items, supplies, and even prescriptions and delivering them to our home-bound seniors.

"The VTN has become so valuable during this time," said VTN Coordinator Lynne Smith. "Our drivers have been amazing and have been delivering food and supplies so that our seniors do not have to leave their homes."

There are now 70 people utilizing this service and

more than 30 volunteer drivers willing to help. The process involves contacting People Plus by phone or email and filling out a short one-page application to be registered into the program. Participants and drivers are then matched.

Under the current system, those seeking assistance leave a list of what they need, along with payment, on their front door/porch. The driver will then pick it up, with no contact involved, do the shopping and then return the supplies to the front porch with a receipt and change.

"Without this service and our committed volunteers, our at-risk seniors would have to go out on their own or go without necessities," continued Smith.

"Many thanks to our drivers, who have answered the call and are doing an outstanding service," said People Plus Executive Director Stacy Frizzle-Edgerton. "It is another way for all of us to stay connected, and help those who need it the most."

If you need help with the VTN program, please contact Lynne Smith either by calling and leaving a message at People Plus (207-729-0757), via email at driver@peopleplusmaine.org or visit our website at www.peopleplusmaine.org.



People Plus stays 'connected'

Online videos, emails keep members informed

People Plus supports an engaged, healthy, and independent life for older adults, while joining others to build community for all ages.

One simple sentence, set off by italics because of its importance. It is our mission statement, and at no other time during the Center's history has our purpose for existing been put under the test as much as it is being now. These are truly unprecedented times.

With Mainers urged to stay at home and limit their engagement with any essential services, it has become a paramount issue for People Plus and its staff to remain connected to our all-important members. Despite the fact that our Union Street facility is currently closed to all activities and programs, we are doing our best to stay engaged, while at the same time keeping everyone healthy and independent — just as our mission statement puts forth.

And this is being accomplished in several ways. Because of physical distancing and all that entails, online content and emails have become our link to all of you. Along with the constant revising of our Facebook page and website, Executive Director Stacy Frizzle-Edgerton and Programming Coordinator Jill Ellis have become a bit of a production unit as they present the latest happenings in the greater Brunswick area by way of the Center's Community Update videos that are shown every weekday. This visual messaging has turned out to be especially important to keeping our members informed.

Also, in order to help members stay active, most of the Center's exercise classes are being offered on video, along with some club activities. Other key components for remaining connected involve our Volunteer Transportation Network, which has become a delivery service for our

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'Touch Points'

*** Video viewing, emails**
Links to the Center's videos will be posted daily, Monday-Friday, on our website (peopleplus-maine.org) and Facebook pages, showing the programs on our Vimeo and YouTube channels, and will run daily on local cable channels TV3 Brunswick and Harpswell TV14 as the schedule permits. And we will send a daily email as well.

*** Face masks**
Do you need a face mask? Volunteers are making face masks and donating them to People Plus for our members. We've been able to get masks to our members, volunteer drivers, senior housing units, and community members. Contact the People Plus Center by calling 729-0757 and leave a message.

*** Friendly call**
In our new "Friendly Phone Call" program, People Plus staff and volunteers are calling local seniors on a regular basis to have a chat. If you would like to participate, please contact Office Coordinator Sarah Deck by way of email at reception@peopleplusmaine.org or leave a message by calling People Plus at 729-0757.

*** Delivery service**
The People Plus Volunteer Transportation Network, which has always provided free rides for medical appointments and more, is now picking up food items, supplies, and even prescriptions and delivering them to our home-bound seniors. If you need help with the VTN program, please contact Lynne Smith either by calling and leaving a message at People Plus (729-0757), via email at driver@peopleplusmaine.org or visit our website at peopleplusmaine.org.

Congratulations to Stacy and Jonathan

Yes, these are unusual times we are living in at the moment, but it didn't stop one recent happy occasion. Stacy and Jonathan literally tied the knot!

Deciding not to wait any longer, People Plus Executive Director Stacy Frizzle and her partner, Jonathan Edgerton, who had intended on getting married on July 18, 2020, officially became husband and wife on April 19, 2020, during a small ceremony at their home, Mossy Ledge Farm in Bowdoin.

Jonathan made Stacy's crown of flowers, while his sister, Louisa, performed the ceremony, and Stacy's brother, Don, read a passage from "The Prophet." Stacy's two daughters sang a song, while family members looked on via Zoom at the Sunday event. Everything was done with social distancing in mind.

And what about the knot? Because the joyous occasion was lacking

wedding rings, the couple formed their union by using a rope, tying a fisherman's knot at each end and drawing them together without



breaking the bond ... of marriage.

In explaining the move-up date, Stacy said, "We were afraid one of us might get sick and we have no legal rights if something happened. It also looks like our wedding planned for July is probably not going to happen, so we figured why wait?"

She continued, "So without wedding rings or wedding guests, we tied the knot in a very small and simple marriage ceremony at our farm. (After the ceremony) we popped champagne from the region in France where we got engaged. Because we didn't have wedding rings, we undertook the traditional ceremony of tying a fisherman's knot demonstrating that we are now bound together for all eternity."

So congratulations to the newlyweds, Jonathan and Stacy. They still hope to hold some type of celebration in the future so everyone can share in their happiness.

May is Moving Forward with People Plus!



CAN'T MISS A MEETING! The board of People Plus all dialed in remotely using Zoom to conduct the monthly board meeting. Their leadership and guidance has continued to support Executive Director Stacy Frizzle-Edgerton and her staff through this difficult transitional time.

Apple Club will be getting together online on May 14 at 2 pm!

Contact Stacy at director@peopleplusmaine.org or leave a message at 729-0757 for information about how to access the online group.

Healthy Living offers free programs

In response to the coronavirus pandemic and the need for social distancing, Healthy Living for ME, a division of Spectrum Generations, is offering two free programs that can be completed from the comfort of your home.

They include:

— **Virtual Tai Chi For Health & Balance.** May 4-June 29, Mondays and Wednesdays at 10 am. You can now take our popular Tai Chi program virtually. This 16-session class can help quiet the mind with slow methodical movements that have been proven to improve balance and lessen the pain associated with arthritis.

— **Better Health Now.** May 8-June 12, Fridays at 10 am or May 11-June 22, Mondays at 4 pm. You will learn tools to manage your ongoing conditions, such as communication skills, working with health-care professionals, action planning, decision making, healthy eating, and problem-solving. This program meets weekly and can be held telephonically or through Zoom. Participants will receive the Better Health Now toolkit in the mail prior to starting the workshop.

If you are interested, send an email to info@healthylivingforme.org or call 1-800-620-6036.



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People Plus stays 'connected' continued from p. 1

home-bound seniors; the monthly People Plus newspaper, and our Pulse Page in The Times Record. Another important aspect to all this is giving people, many of whom are on their own, the opportunity to express how they are feeling — through submitted writings and photos — as they experience this difficult situation.

People Plus also has partnered with community members and now offers dozens of videos featuring guest hosts and exercise instructors. With topics designed to entertain and engage members at home, the videos include nature, book readings, beekeeping, birdwatching, gardening, building a sauna, cold water plunging, healthy nutrition tips, cooking shows, and more.

In addition to all of these great videos, the historical library of all People Plus lectures and presentations is available on the People Plus Vimeo page and YouTube free of charge. There are presentations by Sen. Angus King; Captain Kirk of the Zumwalt; Clayton Rose, the president of Bowdoin College, and more.

Over the last four weeks, there have been more than 5,500 views of our videos on our Vimeo and YouTube channels! Local cable stations Brunswick TV3 and Harpswell TV14 are airing the exercise videos, along with other taped presentations from past events at the Center. More than 40,000 households have been able to watch them on TV.

Combating isolation by maintaining social connections is vital during this time. People Plus is pleased to have some of our regular clubs move online so members can stay connected. The Wednesday Outing Club, Spanish Club, Fiber Arts Club, and Apple Club, as well as board and committee meetings have started meeting via Zoom! More clubs are looking into this option as well.

In our new "Friendly Phone Call" program, People Plus staff and volunteers are calling local seniors on a regular basis to have a chat. Office Coordinator Sarah Deck called more than 400 people to check in on them and see if they would like a daily phone call.

Do you need a face mask? Volunteers are making face masks and donating them to People Plus for our members. We've been able to get masks to our members, volunteer drivers, senior housing units and community members. Contact the Center if you need a mask and we can arrange for you to get one.

By the way, we haven't been entirely idle as far as at the Center itself goes. When we all come back, you will notice some fresh paint on several of the facility's rooms, along with the completion of a paving project in the parking lot.

As previously stated, these are indeed tough times. But the most important thing is for everyone to stay safe, happy, and healthy. We truly are looking forward to welcoming you all back to People Plus, with open arms and hugs all-around. Please call the Center at 729-0757 if you need any of these services and visit us online at www.peopleplusmaine.org.

Do you get our daily community update emails & Friday "Peek at the week?"

It's the quickest way to get updated news about the Center! The weekly email also includes a wrap-up article written by Stacy our Executive Director, a Teen Center update from Jordan and of course, Frank's weekly Two-Cents article. If you aren't getting it, just let Sarah know at the front desk and she can add your email to the file!

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Common Good awards grant to Teen Center

Some very good news has arrived at our Union Street facility. Brunswick Area Teen Center Coordinator Jordan Cardone has received word that the Center has been named a recipient of \$2,840 in funding through Bowdoin College's Common Good Grant program for 2020.

In its notification letter, Common Good officials stated that it received 42 proposals with requests totaling more than \$100,000 in funding this year. Its student committee was impressed with the Teen Center's proposal and "felt that it outlined a clear need that you were prepared to address."

"This is fantastic news," said Cardone. "We are so grateful to Common Good for its generous funding award."

A celebration recognizing the Teen Center and the other recipients of the 2020 Common Good Grants was conducted with an online awards ceremony on April 28. When social distancing restrictions are removed, an in-person ceremony will be held at a later date.

Two People Plus board members welcomed the good news. "Congratulations, Jordan. It's very nice to hear some very good news given the times we find ourselves in. Thanks for the job that you and the staff do for the teens. It is very important work and you all make the lives of the teens you serve that much better," said Thomas Farrell, who is also Director of the Brunswick Parks and Recreation Department.

And David Forkey said, "Awesome. Congratulations on the award, and for the recognition of the impact (the Teen Center) has on the young folks in the community."



THE PEOPLE PLUS PARKING LOT at 35 Union St. was last constructed nearly 20 years ago and was beginning to show signs of deterioration, including settlement causing puddling during rain events and icing in the winter months. According to Ryan Barnes, Town Engineer of Brunswick, the current project includes the replacement of the existing paved surface, installation of a closed-drainage system, and a new raised sidewalk adjacent to the building. Also, the existing pavement between the trees along the edge of the parking lot is being removed and replaced with loam and seed to help protect the trees in the future.



Bowdoin BRUNSWICK AREA **TEEN CENTER**

Books A La Carte

While people now have more time to read, some may have read all the books available at home. An old saying is that if a book is worth reading once, it is worth reading again. Try rereading some old favorites. You will probably discover things you missed the first time through.

Here are some interesting novels:

Someone by Alice McDermott. A well-written story of an ordinary but unforgettable woman set in Brooklyn in an Irish-American enclave, beginning just

before the Depression of the 1930s.

By Invitation Only by Dorothea Benton Frank. A light-hearted story set in the low country of South Carolina and Chicago. It follows the life of the heroine in the two different worlds.

The Lowland by Jhumpa Lahiri. A family saga set in India and America in the 1960s.

Maine Public Television has been airing a series on the Roosevelts. Teddy Roosevelt was a very interesting, fascinating person. To find out more about him, try the following works:

Mornings on Horseback by David McCullough.

The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt by Edmund Morris

Theodore Rex by Edmund Morris. Note: Theodore Roosevelt's first wife and his mother both died on the same day. How do you survive that and prosper? Read and find out.

Comments: news@peopleplusmaine.org

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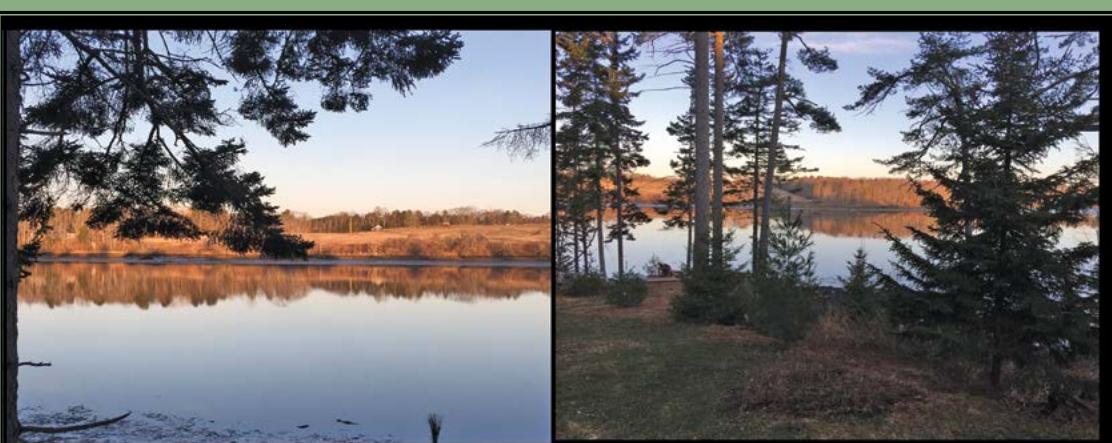
Poor America
 I wonder if the rest of the world laughs at the United States for our toilet paper panic, while their main concerns are about shelters, hospital care, meds, food and water. Admit it... we are spoiled! So, appreciate what we have. Pray for those who have not.
 — Bonnie Wheeler

Confinement

I open one eye and look at the clock, It's already a few minutes past nine. This is usually when I am getting up, but things have changed since we've been confined. I don't hear any sound out in the hall and it's not my day for the housekeeper. Do I really have to get up right now? I could stay put and be a late sleeper. A terrible virus is going around and normalcy has come to an end. It's happened before, history says, but it's hard for us to comprehend. Each generation has faced such terror and almost been wiped out. But enough have survived to study and learn how to end this horror no doubt. So, it's happened again and we're all doing our best to keep this virus contained. It means we must stay put and follow some rules, All this has been explained. My yoga has been canceled and the Y is closed, This has been going on for several weeks. At first it was fun not to be on the go, but now boredom has set in as I speak. Slowing down from my usual routine at first felt good and I enjoyed the change. But the past few days, I haven't felt right. A jittery feeling that somehow is strange. I seem very unsettled, can't sit still and my concentration is totally gone. And I know I didn't feel this way when it started early on. As the weeks have passed, I have no more ideas of just how to keep myself busy. I lie on the couch much too long and know when I get up, I'll be dizzy. April has just started and it will soon be May, Will this isolation go on that long? The news keeps saying, "there's no end in sight. We all have to keep being strong." At least I live in a lovely place where others are quarantined too. All activities are canceled, but we do meet for meals, Thank goodness that we can still do! So twice a day the dining room is full of seniors chattering away. We linger over our coffee and cake, before heading back to our rooms to stay. At some point this isolation will end and life will return as before. And maybe we'll be thankful we survived And appreciate life all the more.
 — Doris Weinberg



May Flowers
 This is the month I always look forward to, when forsythia and lilacs and daffodils finally arrive here in Maine. But a horrible plague instead this year has destroyed my dreams. I am scared of what is coming to us all. Now things are growing worse. We are sliding down a slippery slope. Our governor has made new rules; no more gathering together at all. Our president has finally promised to help us more. What will keep us indoors? Reading books is what I love to do, but I am finishing my last library book. I must buy some, but how much will that cost me? I have to look for something cheap, and something I would really like. I have an indoor cat that loves to get into my lap and purr. He is my company. I will be alright. We will conquer this.
 — Elizabeth B. Bates



CORONA CHRONICLES

Member submissions during self quarantine



May's Weekly Celebrations
 The weekly celebrations for the month of May are well worth taking the time to ponder. The first full week of May is called National Nurses Week. This month there is in my heart a special appreciation and big thank you for all the nurses that have been stretched and giving of themselves far beyond their means to patients who have contracted the coronavirus. My new celebration for the second week of May is National Doctors Week. Doctors treat and care for patients with the mysteries of the coronavirus. The third week of May celebrates National Police Week. Gov. Janet Mills has issued a statewide "stay-at-home" order for the protection of our citizens. The police are out there enforcing the order to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, putting themselves in the direct path of the virus. The fourth week of May celebrates Emergency Medical Services Week. These men and women are the backbone of our society and laying groundwork, putting their own lives on the line to save even one person. Our doctors, EMS, police, and nurses are appreciated and commended for their duties as trained individuals for service in curbing the spreading of the coronavirus.
 — Nonie Moody

The return of civility
 During a disaster such as the world is now undergoing, the worst and the best of people come forth. People are crueler, as in hoarding and scalping needed items; they are kinder, as in reaching out to one another. And they become more creative in ways to be compassionate. There have been ideas put forth to electronically celebrate birthdays, weddings and other special events. They have come up with ways to provide assistance to the elderly and shut-ins without face-to-face contact, and many people have used the phone to connect with one another in ways seldom seen before. Instead of eating out, friends are emailing recipes to one another and having virtual dinners together. We are more interested in one another, and less worried about previous activities that have kept us too busy to listen and interact. I think civility has found its way back into our lives.
 — Sally Hartikka

I've eaten 14 meals and taken 6 naps and it's still today. are you kidding me

New Normal
 The coronavirus issue across the globe touches all of us with uncertainty and rapidly changing situations for every age. School closings mean disappointing cancellations of end of year activities for thousands of students, shattering their dreams and futures. Families having to make difficult choices due to closures in business and industry, plus adjusting to working from home while caring for children. Everyone in health care, medical research, hospitals, clinics and nursing homes are having historic disruptions with the shortage of needed medical supplies and unknown cures. None of this is news to you, as we hear the tragic daily statistics of illness, quarantine and death. Social distancing, home disinfecting, wearing gloves, face masks, washing hands, produce and packages have become second nature. People are

Stop it!
 You have shelter, you have food, you have water, you are not sick, you have people who care. Help is a phone call away. Stop with the panic of no toilet paper. There are other ways to wipe your butt. Make do and grow up...
 — Bonnie Wheeler



How I Spent my Quarantine
 How many days has it already been? I can't even remember that! Life has changed so drastically, I wonder what "normal" will be like if it ever returns. Where I live, all activities have been canceled while this worldwide menace is dealt with. And we are thankful that no one here has become ill. Although I have never been used to "sitting still," that is how I find myself spending these lonely days. I doze on the couch and then on the chair and may even end up in bed. If the phone should ring it startles me, but it's so good to hear a voice. I often used to talk to myself, but now would you believe that I am answering back? I am sure we all remember when we thought staying home would be a great opportunity for accomplishing something. But now that we have the chance, I can't even list anything that I've done! I do realize that sometimes you have to put yourself aside and follow the rules as given and listen to those wiser who are putting all this in place. So, I will stay put as long as necessary without grumbling or complaining and hope that when "normal" returns I will still be able to get off the couch.
 — Doris Weinberg

Time
 We always say there's no time to do the things we should. Today, we have the time; time to wash the car, rake the yard, clean the garage, clean out the closets, make a vegetable soup, and now we even have time to cut my toe nails. So, what's our excuse now?
 — Bonnie Wheeler



Strange times
 It is a strange time to be living in today when the COVID-19 is stealing lives and shutting down the world. Our freedom is at a standstill. The world leaders are desperate to find a cure. Americans are blessed that our president loves this country and is working hard to make everything better. Today, I see better behavior and I hear people asking to help each other with kindness. There are more important issues than politics and hate. It's sad to see what it takes for us to come together. I would love to give you hugs, but we will all need to stay apart. I can blow you a kiss from afar and pray for us to have a better tomorrow.
 — Bonnie Wheeler

Sitting on the couch & my husband sweetly whispered.. "The best part about all of this is that I get to spend more time with you" as I lovingly realized he was talking to the dog not me



Thank you
 Thanks to the Post Office workers who are on the job every day. Thanks to the police, firemen and first responders who are always on call. Thanks to the doctors and nurses who care for us, and to all those who support their work. Thanks to the grocery stores and restaurants for sanitizing and stocking shelves to get the orders out. Thanks to the stores that allow early shopping for the elderly. Thanks to People Plus for reaching out through channel 14 to keep us in touch, neighbors who call to see if we need anything, children who call to remind us to stay inside, our pastor who calls to remind us that God is still in control, and to thank God for warmth, food and water, and living in the United States of America.
 — Bonnie Wheeler

following instructions to stay at home, determined to be there for each other, and uniting as a community with creativity. I began feeling lazy, staying up later and too long in bed each morning. Not good. I needed a schedule, so this is what I am doing. Back to "early to bed, early to rise," breakfast with news and morning devotions. Disinfect home using Dr. Oz water/Clorox mix, then 10 o'clock exercise on channel 14 with People Plus instructors. Oh yes, quick call to Bonnie reminding her to join me. Energized and raring to go, I check my email; time flies when you are on the computer. It is time for lunch, after which I delve into one of those "some day I will" tasks like reading a book or tackling a box of family history documents, before a daily walk. Returning home, I make a cup of tea, check my vintage address book to select a person who I have not talked with for months, maybe years. What a joy to catch up and an hour or more later, the tea is cold, and we are saying "So long." Then dinner, a bit of TV and at eight o'clock I am joyously ringing my grandmother's school bell at my front door for two minutes, as a symbol of togetherness as a community. I invite Stacy into my home via technology, to share her daily People Plus update video news from her home. Her up-to-the-minute local happenings with suggestions of how we can keep connected are comforting. Sometimes a bedside story with Frank is a treat. You all maybe doing similar activities or maybe I've inspired you during this time of social distancing and staying at home. I am content, finding ways to stay connected, happy, healthy and productive. I look forward to when we can once again be together, but until then prayers of gratitude to all those working around the clock to help those in need. Be safe, healthy and innovated. God Bless America.
 — Betty Bavor



Central Maine Area Agency on Aging - Southern Midcoast Aging and Disability Resource Center
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207-729-0475 | www.spectrumgenerations.org

May 2020

Community partnerships truly make a difference!



Smiling Chefs Gary Hurtubise (L) Chef Jürgen Worth (R) spearhead Meals on Wheels efforts in Spectrum Generations' commercial kitchens at our Muskie and Cohen Community Centers, and stand by thousands of meals ready to be taken to offsite storage.

A call to our community has been answered! A big thank you to Bowdoin College, Performance Food Group (PFG), Snow Pond Center for the Arts, and Caswell's Discount Wholesale Inc for helping us store Meals on Wheels!

Spectrum Generations has ramped up production to ensure that every adult in central and midcoast Maine who needs Meals on Wheels during this pandemic, can receive them.

Preparing and packaging approximately 10,000 meals required additional freezer space - more than our two commercial kitchens could accommodate. We reached out to our friends and they all stepped up to help - we're grateful for these community partnerships that truly make a difference!

Community Support



We are very fortunate to have support from the Sagadahoc County Sheriff's Department! Deputy Carl Fleck and Deputy Jeff Shiers have been helping out, delivering Meals on Wheels for Spectrum Generations in the Bath area.

We are thankful that during these times our community rallies together to make it all possible!



Deputy Carl Fleck



Deputy Jeff Shiers



While 1 in 5 people will experience a mental illness during their lifetime, everyone faces challenges that can impact their mental health. Particularly during this pandemic, we want you to know that it's okay to ask for help. Contact NAMI Maine at 622-5767 or the Statewide Crisis Hotline at 1-888-568-1112 if you, or a loved one, needs to speak with a mental health expert.



Make Your MARK! MAY 2020 | VISIT ACL.GOV/OAM FOR MORE INFORMATION.

Every May, the Administration for Community Living leads our nation's observance of Older Americans Month. We are pleased to announce the 2020 theme: Make Your Mark!

This theme was selected to encourage and celebrate countless contributions that older adults make to our communities. Their time, experience, and talents benefit family, peers, and neighbors every day. Communities, organizations, and individuals of all ages are also making their marks. This year's theme highlights the difference everyone can make - in the lives of older adults, in support of caregivers, and to strengthen communities.

We invite you to celebrate Older Americans Month and make your mark in May!

PEOPLE PLUS COMMUNITY BOARD

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Items to sell? Services to offer or request? Advertise in these classifieds. Cost is only \$10 per inch, per month, paid in advance. Call 729-0757

New/renewing members for April

* indicates new membership
• indicates donation made with membership

- Bath: Lisa Paige*, Nancy Moran*
Brunswick: MaryEllen Banton, Russell Banton, Frank Broadbent, John Cooke, Jacqueline Drapeau, Suzanne Hand, Stephen Kerchel, Paul Krakauske, Nancy Lauckner, Elizabeth Mace, Lucy Moore*
Harpswell: Jane Harris, John Moulton, Susan Moulton
Topsham: Jan Colyear*

'Checking in' is difficult during these turbulent times

Where to begin? What to say? I believe anything I put into words isn't going to do any justice to what we have been and are currently experiencing. The coronavirus pandemic; the big disruption to all of our lives. There has been nothing like it in my relatively short lifetime.

I was born seven years after the end of World War II, so for me there is no comparing that world-changing conflict to what's going on today. Sure, there were scary moments growing up, like the Cold War - I remember the drills in elementary school in case of a nuclear attack - and even other health-related concerns in recent history, such as swine flu, AIDS, and SARS. While none of those things should be taken for granted, or even lightly, our present battle against COVID-19 is a serious matter. But you already knew that.

My major concern throughout this unprecedented time continues to be the health and safety of my immediate family. That said, the circumstances we find ourselves in are just weird. Like when you meet your daughter, who lives elsewhere in Maine, at a park, where you talk from a distance and daren't even give her a hug. But if that's what it takes...

Along with wondering how my other family members and friends are doing, I also worry about my mom, who lives in Michigan. Yes, she still occupies her own place, which is great for social distancing. But the flip side is the fact that she's also socially alone, like so many other people her age. Not good as far as I'm concerned.

I wish I was closer; checking in with her every couple of days by phone just

doesn't cut it. All this reminds me of when I often accompanied my dad as he - almost religiously - dropped in on his mother nearly every other day just to see how she was doing, albeit with no serious virus sweeping the nation.

We'd climb the stairs attached to the side of my aunt's house to reach grandma's tiny apartment. More times than not, dad and I would find her sitting behind a TV tray eating her meal while watching a program. Her first words were usually, "Have you had dinner yet?"

After telling her we were all set, there would be a few minutes catching up on the latest town gossip, and then we'd be on our way. A quick check-in, simple and sweet. I just long to be doing that sort of connecting with my 87-year-old mom, especially now. Sure, living by yourself appears to be a safe avenue in this topsy-turvy situation, but it can't be easy.

I just hope and pray not too many People Plus members are going through the same kind of experience. No hugs. Keeping your distance.

Simply put

Patrick Gabrion



Unable to tell who someone is because of their face mask. This and that store closed. Not even allowed in church, the one place many seek comfort and compassion. The emptiness of it all.

But it must be done in order to get through this terrible ordeal. Like most unpleasant happenings, we will reach the other side of this powerful pandemic. It's just not going to be much fun getting to that point.

The fact that the whole world is grappling with this health scare almost makes it seem unworldly. But it is real and, hopefully, everyone is doing their bit. With that in mind, I'll end with an anonymous quote I came across the other day.

"It isn't the end of the world. It is the most remarkable act of global solidarity we may ever witness."

People Plus in the Media



Viewed on Brunswick TV3, Harpswell TV14, & online any time at http://vimeo.com/harpswelltv



Radio 9 WCME

Here People Plus staff discuss the Center on WCME each Monday at 8:35am on AM 900 or radio9wcme.com

The Times Record

Check out the "Pulse Page" in the Times Record on the 4th Monday each month; and the "People Plus Pic of the Week" every Friday.

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