

Boston Seniority

Elderly Commission

Thomas M. Menino, Mayor of Boston



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www.cityofboston.gov/elderly

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(617) 635-2360

Email articles and comments to
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Mayor's Spotlight



Election Day was a tremendous day for Americans, not just because of who we elected, but because this election re-invigorated a sense of civic engagement that had not been seen in any election in recent history.

Regardless of which candidate you supported, we can all be proud of the fact that so many people participated. As was the case with cities across the country, this excitement over a new direction for our country was obvious on Election Day here in Boston. At polling places around the City, we witnessed not only great turnout but great cooperation from voters as well. Long lines were not a deterrent to most.

The desire to be a part of this historic election was evident from the thousands of voter registration applications that the Election Department processed in the weeks leading up to Election Day. On November 4, there were approximately 378,000 registered voters in Boston.

I knew that this Election Day was special when I arrived at my polling place in Hyde Park shortly before it opened that morning. Instead of being first in line, there were people waiting ahead of me excited to cast

their ballot before work. Voters across the City encountered similar crowds from the time polls opened at 7:00 am until they closed at 8:00 pm. Polling places like Holy Name Parish Hall in West Roxbury and Cathedral High School in the South End had lines of anxious voters that stretched around the block for most of the day.

When the polls closed on November 4th, 234,514 Bostonians, nearly 62% of those registered, had voted. All told, nearly 26,000 more Bostonians voted in this election compared to the 2004 presidential contest.

I also want to thank those who not only did their civic duty by voting but made the extra effort to help out a neighbor in need by donating a canned good that day as well. In total, Election Day donations to the Boston Can Share program resulted in 5,000 pounds of food that will help restock the shelves of the Greater Boston Food Bank during the high demand holiday season. As part of the ongoing Mayor's Food and Fuel Campaign, these donations represent nearly 4,000 meals for those most in need. The United Way was a great partner in this effort.

Election Day was a great example of what we can achieve by working together and participating in the democratic process. It's my hope that this level of energy and enthusiasm will carry over for many elections to come.



HeatWorks Plus

Winter is coming! Let **HeatWorks Plus** help you stay warm.

HeatWorks Plus is a program offered by the Department of Neighborhood Development in partnership with National Grid and Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD).

We offer grants up to \$5,000 and/or 0% interest deferred loans for:

-  Replacement of older or inefficient heating systems
-  Weatherization / Insulation
-  Home Energy Audits

Who can apply:

-  Boston homeowners who are 60 years or older.
-  Boston homeowners who have children under six years old living in their home.
-  Owner-occupant of a residential 1-4 family property.
-  Household income does not exceed 80% of median income as determined by HUD.

Other restrictions apply

Apply Now!

**To learn more about HeatWorks Plus
or to get an application, contact:**

**The Boston Home Center
617-635-HOME (4663)**

or visit our website at www.bostonhomecenter.com.



**Thomas M. Menino, Mayor
City of Boston**

Evelyn Friedman, Chief and Director
Department of Neighborhood Development

nationalgrid





Visit
DTV.gov

THE DIGITAL TV TRANSITION

What You Need To Know About DTV



What Is The Digital TV (DTV) Transition?

Currently, many over-the-air stations are broadcasting in both analog and digital TV formats. After February 17, 2009, full – power TV stations will broadcast only in digital. The DTV transition will affect those who watch free over-the-air television (through a rooftop antenna or “rabbit ears”). If you watch over-the-air programs on an analog TV, you must take action before February 17, 2009.

Why Are Broadcast Stations Switching to Digital?

Federal law requires the switch, which will free up the airwaves for police, fire, and emergency rescue communications, allow broadcasters to offer programming with better picture and sound quality and offer more programming choices, and allow for advanced wireless services for consumers.

What Should I Do to Be Ready?

You have three choices:

- 1 Connect your analog TV to a digital-to-analog converter box. Digital-to-analog converter boxes are in stores and have a one-time cost of \$40-\$70. To help you pay for the boxes, the U.S. Government is offering two \$40 coupons per household. (Please note that these coupons will expire 90 days after mailing). For more information on the coupons, visit www.DTV2009.gov, or call 1-888-388-2009 (voice) or 1-877-530-2634 (TTY). Plus, you should not need a new antenna if you get good quality reception on analog channels 2-51 with your existing antenna. **Or**
- 2 Buy a digital television (a TV with a built-in digital tuner). You do not need a High Definition TV (HDTV) to watch digital broadcast television. You only need a digital TV (or an analog TV connected to a digital-to-analog converter box). Plus, you should not need a new antenna if you get good quality reception on analog channels 2-51 with your existing antenna. **Or**
- 3 Subscribe to a paid TV service. If your TV set receives local broadcast stations through a paid provider such as cable or satellite TV, it is already prepared for the DTV transition. Cable companies are not required to transition or switch any of their channels to digital. However, if you have an analog TV that does not receive local broadcast stations through your paid provider, you will need a digital-to-analog converter box to watch digital broadcasts on that TV.

For More Information:

1-888-CALL-FCC (Voz)

DTV.GOV

1-888-TELL-FCC (TTY)



Visite
DTV.gov

TRANSICIÓN A LA TELEVISIÓN DIGITAL

Todo lo que debe saber sobre la TV digital



¿Qué es la transición a la DTV?

Actualmente muchas de las televisoras que transmiten por aire lo hacen en formato analógico y digital. A partir del 17 de febrero de 2009, las emisoras de televisión de alta potencia sólo transmitirán en formato digital. La transición a la televisión digital (DTV por sus siglas en inglés) afectará a los usuarios que reciben la programación de televisión gratuita por aire (a través de una antena colocada en el techo o con una antena más pequeña en "forma de V" que se coloca sobre el televisor). Si usted mira la programación por aire en un televisor analógico, tendrá que tomar las medidas pertinentes antes del 17 de febrero de 2009.

¿Por qué se hace este cambio?

El cambio a la DTV debe hacerse por mandato federal. Este cambio liberará frecuencias que podrán ser utilizadas por la policía, los bomberos y en casos de emergencias, permitirá que las televisoras transmitan una mejor imagen y calidad de sonido, ofrecerá más opciones de programas y permitirá el suministro de servicios inalámbricos comerciales avanzados.

¿Qué debo hacer para estar listo para la transición a la DTV?

Usted tiene tres opciones:

1 Conectar su televisor analógico a una caja convertidora que convierte la señal digital a analógica.

Esta caja convertidora está disponible en las tiendas y se puede adquirir por un solo pago que oscila entre \$40-\$70. Para ayudar a los consumidores a comprar la caja convertidora, el Gobierno de los Estados Unidos está ofreciendo dos cupones de \$40 por hogar. (Por favor note que estos cupones se expirarán 90 días después del envío). Si desea más información sobre los cupones, visite www.dtv2009.gov, o llame al 1-888-388-2009 (voz) o 1-877-530-2634 (TTY). Además, usted no debe necesitar una nueva antena si tiene recepción de buena calidad de los canales analógicos del 2-51 con su antena actual. ○

2 Comprar un televisor digital (un televisor con sintonizador digital integrado).

Recuerde que no tiene que comprar un televisor de alta definición (HDTV por sus siglas en inglés) para ver la programación en formato digital. Usted sólo necesita un televisor digital (o un televisor análogo conectado a una caja convertidora de señal digital-a-análogo). Además, usted no debe necesitar una nueva antena si tiene recepción de buena calidad de los canales analógicos del 2-51 con su antena actual. ○

3 Suscribirse a un servicio televisivo por cable o satélite.

Si su televisor recibe la transmisión de las estaciones locales a través de un proveedor de servicio pagado como cable o satélite, entonces su televisor ya está preparado para la transición. Las compañías de cable no están obligadas a hacer la transición en sus sistemas o cambiar ninguno de sus canales a digital. Sin embargo, si tiene un televisor análogo que no recibe la transmisión de estaciones locales a través de un proveedor de servicio pagado usted va a necesitar una caja convertidora para ver la transmisión digital en esa TV en particular.

Para Más Información:

1-888-CALL-FCC (Voz)

DTV.GOV

1-888-TELL-FCC (TTY)

Reduce Heating Costs With These Money Saving Tips

If you live in a region that is cold in the winter, heating costs take a big bite out of your monthly budget for 25 - 50% of the year. Due to the rapidly escalating costs of home heating oil, propane, and kerosene, you may be paying twice as much to heat your house as you did just a few years ago. You can cut your heating costs significantly by following these money-saving tips.

- Do an energy audit of your house, identifying areas where heated air is leaking out. Check around doors, windows, fireplaces, and other areas that may feel drafty. Use caulk, weather stripping, door sweeps, plastic, and other appropriate means to close off these leaks. If your house is poorly insulated, adding additional insulation will pay for itself in reduced heating costs.
- Minimize your use of ventilation fans such as bathroom fans and kitchen hood fans in winter. A bathroom fan can suck all the heated air out of the average house in little more than an hour. Over the course of the winter, ventilation fans can increase your heating costs by a surprising amount.
- Don't heat areas of your house you don't use regularly, such as guest rooms. Close heating vents or turn back thermostats in those areas and close the doors for a painless reduction in heating costs.
- Turn down the heat and use space heaters to heat the room you spend time in.
- Keep your furnace, heat pump, or other heating equipment in top operating condition. Dirty filters reduce the efficiency of your furnace or heat pump. Poorly tuned units are inefficient and use more fuel. An annual maintenance agreement is well worth the money to ensure that your equipment is properly maintained and will last as long as possible.
- Don't turn your thermostat up above the desired temperature. It won't heat up any more quickly and will make your furnace work harder. Also, while it makes sense to turn the heat back when you're sleeping or not at home, turning it down too low can actually cost you more because the contents of the house have to be re-heated in addition to the air. 68 to 70 degrees while you're home and awake, and 60 to 65° while you're asleep or not at home are reasonable temperatures.
- Consider a programmable thermostat to raise and lower the temperature at pre-set times.

- Check the temperature setting on your hot water heater. If you have a dishwasher, your water should be heated to 120%. Otherwise, it can be somewhat lower.
- If your water heater is in an unheated space like an unfinished basement, wrap it in an insulation blanket available at hardware stores to prevent heat loss.
- Wash clothes in cold water whenever possible.
- It's tempting to stand under a hot shower on a cold morning for as long as possible, but cutting your shower time in half can save up to 33% on your hot water heating costs.
- In winter, open the blinds and curtains on the sunny side of the house (the south-facing side) when the sun is shining and close them as soon as the sun goes down to retain the solar heat. Close curtains on the shady side of the house (north-facing side). If you don't have curtains, consider installing some. Curtains made from heavy fabric with lots of folds (fullness) can prevent cold air from seeping in and warm air from seeping out, which reduces your heating costs.

The City of Boston
Elderly Commission
Senior Companion Program



20th Anniversary
SCP Appreciation Luncheon
Thanks for making a difference!

For more information on how you
can get involved, please call
(617) 635-3987

**“I volunteer because I have the time now and I like
knowing that I am making a difference”.**

- Senior Companion

Older Americans More Likely to Be Hit Harder by the Flu

Vaccination Can Save Your Life

Older Americans have been around the block a few times and know plenty about surviving life's challenges—big and small. But one challenge that many will face this and every flu season is “influenza,” which might present more than a minor setback. For most people, getting influenza, commonly known as “the flu” means feeling achy and feverish for a week or so. But for people 65 years and older, the flu can be much more serious, even deadly. People in this age group are at high risk of serious flu complications because they have weaker immune systems, making them more vulnerable to illnesses such as flu.

Each year in the U.S., an average of 36,000 people die and more than 200,000 are hospitalized from serious flu complications. Ninety percent of flu deaths and more than half of hospitalizations occur in people 65 years and older. However, about 30% of persons 65 or older don't get vaccinated each year.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is urging people 65 years and older to get their annual flu vaccine. While vaccination is important for all age groups, it is particularly important for people 65 and older. Those who have chronic medical conditions such as asthma, diabetes, kidney disease,

or cancer, should be especially proactive in getting an influenza vaccine this year.

The flu is a contagious disease that can cause symptoms such as high fever, sore throat, headache, coughing, tiredness and muscle aches, and can easily spread from person to person. Worst of all, the flu may result in major health complications such as a deterioration of pre-existing health conditions, bacterial pneumonia and dehydration.

Vaccination is the first and most important step in protecting yourself and the people you love against this serious disease. After getting the vaccine, the body takes about two weeks to build up immunity to the flu viruses in the vaccine. This is why getting the vaccine is recommended as soon as it becomes available in your community, continuing into December, January, and beyond. While flu outbreaks can happen as early as October, most of the time flu activity peaks in January or later.

The flu vaccine is safe and effective, and because the three influenza viruses in the flu shot are killed, you cannot get the flu from the vaccine. Since flu viruses change every year, the flu vaccine is updated annually, making it necessary to be vaccinated each year.

To learn where to get a flu vaccine, contact your doctor or local health department. To learn more, call CDC at 1-800-CDC-INFO or visit www.cdc.gov/flu.

Did you know you can

Call 2-1-1

Everyday, someone somewhere in Massachusetts needs to find essential community services, an after school program, a food bank, or where to secure care for an aging parent. Many face these challenges, but don't always know where to turn for help.

The solution is to dial 2-1-1.

With the support of social service organizations that provide health and human services throughout Massachusetts and in collaboration with Massachusetts Association of Information and Referral Specialists (MAIRS) the United Way introduces this statewide Information & Referral System.

Mass 2-1-1 Call Center Information & Referral Line...

- Is an easy to remember telephone number that connects callers to information about critical health and human services available in their community.
- Serves as a resource for finding government benefits and services, non-profit organizations, support groups, volunteer opportunities, donation programs, and other local resources.
- Is a confidential call.
- Maintains the integrity of the 9-1-1 system saving that vital community resource for life and death emergencies.
- Is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Is an easy way to find or give help in your community.
- 2-1-1 responds immediately during times of crisis, to field calls regarding the crisis and to direct callers to services most appropriate for their needs.
- If you are unable to reach 2-1-1 due to your telephone or cell phone carrier, a toll-free number is available: 1-877-211-MASS (6277).

NEW INFORMATION ON DRIVERS LICENSE RENEWAL APPLICATIONS

Heads up drivers! Effective immediately the Registry of Motor Vehicles will no longer be mailing out License renewal applications or reminders to renew your driver's license. It is now your responsibility to know when your license is expiring and renew it on your own.

The RMV will no longer mail out the following materials to customers:

- License renewal notices
- Mass ID renewal notices
- License reinstatement letters:
 - Letter sent to a licensed customer when his/her license is reinstated, provided that the license is still active
 - Letter sent to an unlicensed customer when his/her right to operate is reinstated
- Registration reinstatement letters:
 - Letter sent to a person or corporation whose suspended registration has been reinstated
 - Letter sent to a person or corporation whose revoked registration has been reinstated
- Vehicle Inspection reminder letters for vehicles that are overdue for inspection
- Change of address labels (customers can create their own)



Great Job!

The lovely ladies from **East Boston YMCA** created a **2009 Calendar**. Proceeds that were made from the sales of 110 calendars will benefit the Children's Scholarship Fund of East Boston YMCA

Free Introductory computer classes at Suffolk University.

For more information call Kate at 617-573-8251



Utility Rights:

What you should know

There are key protections under the law to help you keep your utilities on.

1. **SERIOUS ILLNESS** -

Utilities CANNOT be shut off if there is ANY person in the household (adult or child) who has a serious illness. The illness can be physical, mental, short-term, or long-term. The utility company does not get to decide what a serious illness is. All you need is a letter from a doctor and documentation that you have “financial hardship” in paying bills.

2. **CHILD UNDER 12 MONTHS** -

Utilities CANNOT be shut off if there is a child under the age of 12 months in the household. The child’s age can be documented by birth certificate, baptismal certificate, or any other reasonable means. “Financial hardship” must also be shown.

3. **WINTER MORATORIUM** -

Utilities CANNOT terminate service that is heat-related between November 15th and March 15th, if the household has “financial hardship”.

4. **ELDERLY CLIENTS** -

If EVERY person in the household is 65 or over, the company needs explicit approval of the Department of Public Utilities to terminate service, which is almost never granted.

Additionally, you might be qualified for:

1. **DISCOUNT RATES** - You might be eligible for low-income discount rate. You can call your utility company to see if you are on the rate. Discount rates are mandated by law and all companies have them. Clients on Fuel Assistance, TAFDC, Food Stamps, Mass. Health, WIC and other income-test programs are eligible for the discount.
2. **PAYMENT PLANS** - Everyone is entitled to payment plans. This allows someone who is behind on their bills to spread the payments over several months. Always insist on a payment plan that you can afford.

REMEMBER:

1. You cannot be denied services because of a past due balance from an old address when you request service at a new address. If you are denied service, request a “Cromwell Waiver” from the utility.
2. Legal status in the U.S. is completely unrelated in getting utilities.
3. Utility service CANNOT be terminated on Friday, Saturday, Sunday or day before a holiday.

If you have trouble getting a utility to comply with any of the protections of programs described above, call the Elderly Commission at 617-635-4366 and ask to speak to **an advocate**. The front-line phone representative should get involved on your behalf. If not, ask to speak to his or her supervisor.

Retired Senior Volunteer Program Recognition 2008



Senior Count



Covenant House



Sophia Snow
Craft Group

9th Year Anniversary for the Elder Fire Safety Program

By John O'Neill



The Elder Fire Safety Program is going into its 9th year providing free smoke detectors for seniors living in the City of Boston. The program is offered by the Boston Fire Department in association with the Elderly Commission.

The Fire Safety Program started out with a regular smoke detector but since then the detector has been upgraded to a photo-electric alarm. There are also alarms for the hearing-impaired and for those who are legally blind.

Carbon monoxide alarms are also available for seniors who live in the City of Boston. Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless gas which is emitted by combustion.

The Elder Fire Safety Program is managed by Ernie Deeb, a retired Boston firefighter.

For more information please contact Ernie at 617-635-2359.

Seniors will feel safer with alarms offered through the Elder Fire Safety Program.

MEET A 65.6 MILLION YEAR OLD *TRICERATOPS* NAMED CLIFF

On November 15, 2008, dinosaur lovers of all ages met one of the world's rarest treasures: a 65.6-million-year-old *Triceratops* named Cliff, who lived and died in the last age of the dinosaurs. Cliff is one of only four widely known, near-complete *Triceratops* skeletons on public display in the world—and the only near-complete *Triceratops* on public display in the northeastern United States.

About *Triceratops* Cliff, a “fossilized superstar”

Discovered in 2004 in North Dakota, the 22-foot-long, elephant-sized colossal fossil made international headlines last April when it became the world's first *Triceratops* to go on public auction. The only other dinosaur ever to be auctioned is Sue, a *Tyrannosaurus rex* that sold in 1997. The highly coveted *Triceratops* fossil was purchased for \$942,797 by an anonymous American collector. A *New York Times* editorial supported the position of North Dakota state paleontologist, Dr. John Hoganson and said that “this fossilized superstar deserves a public audience...” Shortly after the auction, the Museum of Science received a call from that same anonymous collector who had loved visiting the Museum as a child. Wanting to share this discovery with as many people as possible, the collector offered the fossil on long-term loan to the Museum of Science.

The Museum, which already had a full size model *Triceratops* as well as two full-size models of *Tyrannosaurus rex* on display, is excited to share this real fossilized dinosaur skeleton with the 1.5 million visitors that come to the Museum every year.

“The Museum is honored to be the new home for *Triceratops* Cliff,” said Paul Fontaine, Museum vice president of education. “We are grateful to the donor, who was committed to sharing this amazing discovery with as many people as possible. The Museum is thrilled to open *Colossal Fossil*, which we hope will inspire future paleontologists and dinosaur enthusiasts of all ages.”



Triceratops Cliff

The exhibit is ongoing and included with regular Exhibit Halls admission: \$19 for adults, \$17 for seniors (60+), and \$16 for children (3-11). For more information, the public can call 617-723-2500, (TTY) 617-589-0417, or visit mos.org.

Holiday Blues - Depression in the Elderly

The holiday season is quickly coming upon us. If you are a caregiver for an elderly loved one, you may notice a change in your loved one's mood as the holidays approach. Perhaps you visit elderly parents and family during the holidays who live a distance away. When you visit you may notice that loved ones are not as physically active, or they show symptoms of fatigue or sadness and have no interest in the holiday or in their surroundings.

According to the National Institutes of Health; of the 35 million Americans age 65 or older, about 2 million suffer from full-blown depression. Another 5 million suffer from less severe forms of the illness. This represents about 20% of the senior population -- a significant proportion.

Depression in the elderly is difficult to diagnose and is frequently untreated. The symptoms may be confused with a medical illness, dementia, or malnutrition due to a poor diet. Many older people will not accept the idea that they have depression and refuse to seek treatment.

What causes depression in the elderly? It is not the actual holiday that causes depression, but the fact that holidays tend to bring memories of earlier, perhaps happier times. Additional contributing factors that bring on depression may be the loss of a spouse or close friend, or a



move from a home to assisted living, or a change with an older person's routine.

Depression may also be a sign of a medical problem. Chronic pain or complications of an illness or memory loss can also cause depression. In addition, diet can also be a factor when proper nutrition and vitamins are lacking.

As an example, Selma's husband passed away, a few months before Christmas. Her family lived close by and would call or drop in often to check on her. Selma seemed a little preoccupied and tired, but this was to be expected as she had been the caregiver for her husband for many years. It wasn't until the family noticed that her holiday decorations were not out and her yearly routine of Christmas card writing was not happening that they began questioning her mental and physical well being. A trip to her physician confirmed depression, caused by not only the loss of her spouse, but a vitamin B12 deficiency. There were both mental and physical reasons for her depression.

Treating depression in older people

Once the cause of depression is identified, a treatment program can be implemented. Treatment may be as simple as relieving loneliness through visitations, outings and involvement in family activities. In more severe cases antidepressant drugs have been known to improve the quality of life in depressed elderly people. Cognitive therapy sessions with a counselor may also be effective.

As a care giver or family member of a depressed older person, make it your responsibility to get involved. The elder person generally denies any problems or may fear being mentally ill. You can make the difference and remove the Holiday Blues from seniors suffering from depression.

Symptoms to look for in depression might include:

- Depressed or irritable mood**
- Feelings of worthlessness or sadness**
- Expressions of helplessness**
- Anxiety**
- Loss of interest in daily activities**
- Loss of appetite**
- Weight loss**
- Lack of attending to personal care and hygiene**
- Fatigue**
- Difficulty concentrating**
- Irresponsible behavior**
- Obsessive thoughts about death**
- Talk about suicide**



All seniors over 60 years of age who are interested in playing Basketball are welcome to join us every Thursday from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Roslindale Community Center, 6 Cummings Highway (on the corner of Washington St and Cummins Highway). You can just shoot around or you can participate in 3 on 3 Half Court games.

**For more information, please call
Ed Conway at (617) 327-6831
or e-mail him at
edconway14@yahoo.com**





Sweets and Your Feet:

A Guide for Seniors with Diabetes

by Dr. Barry Rosenblum

Many elderly patients with diabetes are concerned about their feet. Often there are cases where a relative or a friend lost a toe or a leg due to diabetes. This, as you might expect, promotes a sense of fear in patients once they are diagnosed with diabetes. Fortunately, many problems that we see with diabetic patients and their feet are preventable.

The two main areas that a diabetic patient needs to worry about are the circulation and the sensation. These are two separate issues, as the circulation involves the arteries while the sensation involves the nerves and their ability to send messages to the brain appropriately.

A quick examination of the circulation entails a conversation with the patient regarding symptoms. One of the earliest signs of poor circulation is called “intermittent claudication”. This describes the pain that a person may experience when they are walking. Specifically, this type of pain is usually seen in the calf, and often responds to rest, such as stopping the walk, then continuing once the pain has resolved. Frequently, patients describe this as a cramping sensation. One of the easiest ways for the patient to tell if he or

she has poor circulation is to have their doctor or nurse feel their pulses.

The presence of good strong pulses in the foot almost always ensures that the circulation is adequate. If the circulation is adequate, most amputations of the leg can be avoided.

If the circulation in the leg is not delivering enough blood to the foot, then additional tests or procedures may be recommended. These range from a simple ultrasound of the blood vessels, to more elaborate tests using dye. Nowadays there are many options available to improve circulation in the legs and feet of a diabetic patient, long before any discussion of amputation takes place.

The simplest ways for a diabetic patient to maintain good circulation and avoid difficulty is to maintain good blood sugar control, and to stop smoking if you already do so. If agreed to by your doctor, a good exercise program-as simple as walking-may be extremely helpful. Above all, if you are concerned about poor circulation, see your health care professional and let them evaluate you.

In the next issue we will take a look at diabetic neuropathy.

BOSTON'S GOLDEN GREEK

By Mike Flynn

Once upon a time football was a local game. No talk of an America's team. Before the advent of television and the popularity of the NFL, thousands flocked to local high school and college football games. Town or school pride was on the line. Some of the players became as famous as our professional players today. One was especially destined for the heights of greatness, if only for a brief shining moment in time.

Aristotle George Agganis was the seventh and youngest child of George and Georgina Agganis, immigrants from Sparta, Greece. His nickname of Ari soon morphed into Harry. He grew up in Lynn immersed in Greek culture, language and religion. At the time, Lynn had a large Greek enclave and jobs were plentiful at the new General Electric plant. Harry grew taller and stronger than his friends and was blessed with superior athleticism.

By 1946 Harry had become the quarterback of Lynn Classical High School. In his two years leading the team he threw 48 touchdowns, ran for another 24 and amassed a 21-1-1 record. Harry was an athlete of great humility and integrity. As a passer who possessed such natural ability, his coach threatened to bench him in one game if he did not throw more. After connecting for four touchdowns he asked the coach, "Can I let the other guys run now?" He also led Lynn Classical to the State Baseball title, hitting .352. During the off season he moonlighted

as the first baseman for the local semi-pro baseball team, even traveling to Chicago for an All-star game at Wrigley Field.

By now most of the country had heard of the quarterback phenomenon from Massachusetts and close to 80 colleges tried to recruit him. But because his father had recently passed away, he wanted to stay close to home with his widowed mother and family. Boston College was then, as today, the best football school in New England.

But Harry began to hear stories about how the B.C. community might not want a Greek Orthodox as the star of their Jesuit school. Whether the rumors were true or not, Harry decided to look elsewhere. A couple of Greek super market tycoons were big boosters of the smaller college just down Commonwealth Ave, Boston University, and asked Harry to consider their school. B.U. played their home games at Fenway Park and the men were friends with Tom Yawkey who owned the Red Sox and he also lobbied Harry. Agganis liked the underdog role and sure, they were not a big time program, but Harry thought he could bring them respect. He became a Terrier.

Since the N.F.L. was still a fledgling league much more attention was given to college football. Back then first year players were not allowed to compete in varsity sports and freshman games drew sparse crowds. But because Harry's reputation had preceded him, B.U.'s frosh games drew record crowds. Harry played on both sides of the ball, offense and defense, and he was also the punter. He never came off the field.

His sophomore year Harry set a school varsity passing record with 15 touchdowns,

rushing for 5.4 yards per carry and leading the country in punting with a 46 yard average. That year Harry was named second team All-American behind the University of Kentucky's Babe Parilli who ironically would become the Boston Patriot's quarterback and punter and also play his home games at Fenway.

While in high school Harry had enlisted in the Marine Corps Reserves, so in 1950 when the Korean Conflict broke out Harry was called to active duty, interrupting college. But Harry never saw combat as he was assigned to play on the Marine baseball and football teams at Camp LeJeune in North Carolina where he was named M.V.P. of the National Baseball Congress Tournament. Returning to B.U. in 1951 he set another school record of 1402 yards passing and was named the Lowe Award winner as the Outstanding New England College Football Player.

B.U., with the backing of some powerful alumni and the expectations of large crowds to watch their star, began scheduling games against larger and more advanced football schools. One of those was on November 1, 1952, when number 2 ranked Maryland visited Boston. Fenway was packed with over 35,000 fans and the game was broadcast nationally on radio by up and coming sports announcer Vin Scully. From the opening play it was clear what Maryland's strategy was. Get Agganis out of the game. It worked. The B.U. offensive line was no match for Maryland's defense and Harry was gang tackled continuously. He was so badly beaten up he was forced from the game and would

miss the next two weeks. Many think that this game may have been the cause of Harry's future problems.

Even though he had missed a year of school for his military commitments, he was still able to eclipse 15 school records including 34 T.D. passes and over a 54 percent completion average. After his M.V.P. performance in the Senior Bowl that year, Red Grange called him the best college player in America.

Upon graduation, Harry was selected by the Cleveland Browns as their first pick in the N.F.L. draft. He was to be the replacement for the legendary Otto Graham.

But Harry shocked everyone by signing a contract with the hometown Boston Red Sox for half the money Cleveland had offered. At the time he said "I've been torn between baseball and football for a long time, but I've finally made my mind up to concentrate on baseball. I've already proved myself in football."

Harry began his baseball career in minor league Louisville where he finished



second in Triple A MVP balloting to Don Zimmer who would later go on to manage the Red Sox. The second year he won the starting first base job and was on the opening day roster at Fenway for the Red Sox. He finished the year with 11 homers and a .252 batting average. A memorable highlight of that first year was Harry hitting a two run homer to break a tie and stop the game from going into extra innings, then tearing up Comm. Ave in his cap and gown to make his graduation ceremony at B.U.

Early in May of the next year, after a double header against the Tigers in which he had 5 hits, Harry complained of chest pains and was admitted to Sancta Maria Hospital in Cambridge. Team physician Dr. Timothy Lamphier's diagnosis was pneumonia and Harry spent ten days in the hospital. In his first game after returning, he hit a rocket in the right-center gap, but was barely able to make it to second where he promptly sat down on the base, totally spent. He was put on a plane back to Boston and Sancta Maria where a blood clot was discovered in his left leg along with the recurrence of pneumonia. Dr. Lamphier suggested surgery to remove the clot but the procedure was not performed. He could possibly lose speed and agility or his career could be over. On June 25, after a visit from teammate Ted Williams, Harry began coughing up blood. The clot had loosened from his leg and travelled to his lung. Two days later, as he went to sit up, he grabbed his chest and was gone within minutes. Harry Agganis was 26.

Fingers were pointed everywhere. Why was he taken to tiny Sancta Maria

(which is where Tony Conigliaro would be admitted years later after his beaming) when world renowned Mass. General was right down Storrow Drive? Could Lamphier have suggested other treatment and why was he removed from the case? Did the Red Sox brass not believe Dr. Lamphier's diagnosis or did they downplay the threat of the clot? Who made the call not to do the surgery? Many say it was Harry himself. Dick O'Connell who would go on to be General Manager of the Red Sox always speculated that the beating Harry had taken years before in the Maryland game contributed to his death. Whatever the cause one of Boston's greatest stars was gone. 20,000 people showed up at his funeral. He left his mother, four brothers, two sisters and longtime girlfriend Jean D'Allier who would go on to local fame as Miss Jean of Romper Room.

Harry's #33 was retired from Lynn Classical and Boston University. A B.U. scholarship in his name is awarded to Greek-American students. In Camp LeJuene, North Carolina, the marine baseball field is called Harry Agganis Stadium. He was inducted posthumously into the College Football Hall of Fame. Boston's Gaffney St. has been renamed Harry Agganis Way. It runs from Commonwealth Ave down to the front door of Harry Agganis Arena where B.U. plays hockey and basketball. Where Comm. Ave meets Agganis Way is a bronze statue depicting Harry throwing a football.

Two years after his death his mother said "No longer are we foreigners. Thanks to Harry we are the Golden Greeks once more."

Attention:

Be Aware of New Telephone Scam

The Better Business Bureau (BBB) is warning senior citizens to be aware of a telephone scam that is targeting grandparents. BBB has recently received reports about grandparents from California to New Hampshire who thought they were aiding their grandchildren by providing money for an emergency situation but were in fact giving thousands of dollars to Canadian con artists.

Generally, the scam works like this – the grandparent receives a distressed phone call who they believe is their grandchild. The supposed grandchild typically explains that they are travelling in Canada and have been arrested or involved in an auto accident and need the grandparent to wire money to post bail or pay for damages—usually amounting to a few thousand dollars. While many seniors have reported the scam without falling prey to it, unfortunately, many others

have been victimized.

Paula Fleming, BBB spokesperson, recommends “The key to avoiding this scam is to remain calm despite the ‘emergency’ nature of the call and to verify the identity of the caller. Too often people are allowing themselves to get caught up in the false sense of urgency and they end up making emotional, instead of logical, decisions.”

To protect seniors from this scam, and other scams that may use a distressed loved-one tactic, BBB is advising seniors to confirm the status of the individual by calling them directly or verifying the story with other family members before taking any further action.

If you are victimized by this type of distressed loved-one call, BBB recommends reporting the incident immediately to local the police and the state attorney general’s office.

Thank You to the following sponsors for the success of the Mayor’s Health & Fitness Walk.



• **Golden Sneaker (Major) Sponsors:** CVS, Caremark Corporation and Kindred Healthcare

• **Silver Sneaker Sponsors:** A. P. Levin Company, Eaton Vance Corporation, Partners Healthcare, Sheet Metal Workers Local 17

• **Bronze Sneaker Sponsors:** Boston Athletic Club, Boston Private Bank & Trust Company, Cabot Corporation, Faulkner Hospital, First Realty Management, NSTAR Electric and Gas, S.R. Weiner & Associates Inc, Susan Bailis Assisted Living

• **Blue Sneaker Friends:** Floor Coverers Local Union 2168, International Brotherhood of Painters, Suffolk University

Boston Seniors Interviewed by Teenagers

Submitted by: Pat Beckles



One day this past summer, Sonya Larson from Grub Street called me and asked if I would mind being interviewed by some teenagers about my article in “*Born Before Plastic*”. I thought it was a wonderful opportunity to bridge the gap between my generation and the young generation. So for a month before my interview I tried to think what questions these youngsters would ask, and just what would they want to know about living in the 30’s and 40’s.

On a hot sunny afternoon, I made my way to Grub Street, Inc. I had never been there and didn’t know what to expect. Standing outside waiting to greet us seniors was Eileen O’Connor, the photographer for the Elderly Commission. She was there with Sheila Lawn, also from the Elderly Commission, and she introduced me. We stood talking outside as it was a lovely day, when another author came up and asked if this was the place. We introduced ourselves, and as we talked I realized that this woman grew up on a street I was familiar with in my youth. In fact she grew up right next door to very dear friend of mine named Bootsie Allen. As we stood there another couple that Eileen recognized from South Boston went in and we decided to go inside.

When we stepped off the elevator, I was immediately surrounded by teenagers of all sizes and shapes. I had expected perhaps ten students, instead there seemed to be at least fifty! I watched them all laughing and talking as only adolescents can. They were getting their lunch, and one of them escorted us to special seats they had set aside for us. There were six of us, seniors, and we immediately found out where we came from, what edition of the book we were in, and a little something about each other. After lunch the students were separated into two groups and our group also divided into two. There some of us took the freshman and sophomores, and rest took the juniors and seniors. I learned from the Grub Street teachers that the students were taking a three week course sponsored by Grub Street to teach them how to write. These students had filled out an application to be qualified for the class. They came from all over the area. Then the interview began.

The first thing they wanted to know was what kind of clothes we wore when we were young. We immediately responded almost in unison POODLE SKIRTS! We tried to explain what they were like, but I’m not sure we were successful. One of the ladies had

an old Photo Album, made of intricately carved leather, which she passed around and in it were pictures of people dressed in clothes of the thirties and forties. I had an old lace glove of my mom's which I also passed around. I also had a photo of my five cousins in their nursing uniforms, dressed all in white including white shoes and a nursing cap and contrasted that to what nurses wear today.

Then they wanted to know what we did for entertainment, and once again almost in synch, we shouted, with large grins on our faces, DANCING! They seemed to be able to relate to that. We told them about jitterbugging and slow dancing. We told them about dances held in the YMCA in Charlestown. We told them that dressing for a dance was a big deal. No jeans or sneakers. We wore our Sunday clothes and we were very careful not to get into a fight where we might damage our clothing. They were interested in our religion, and what school was like in our day, they asked questions like whether we thought people had to go to church to be good Christians, or whether someone could be a good person without belonging to a formal religion, I showed them a skate key, and asked if they knew what it was. I then tried to explain how our skates clamped on to the soles of our shoes, sometimes with disastrous results. (Like pulling the sole of the shoe off). But with the kinds of sneakers they have now where you can retract or project the wheels at will, I'm

not sure they got a clear picture. After an hour we ended our interview, they thanked us and we left.

I found the whole experience to be interesting. These students seemed to be thoughtful and really trying to make a connection to a time and a place that they would never live, but only read about. I hope that talking to us helped them in some small way reach that goal.

I want to thank Mayor Menino for making this meaningful event not only a fun experience for us old folks, by giving us an opportunity to relive a happier time but also a very educational one for our youth. I want to thank Grub Street for their efforts in trying not only to help people of all ages to write, but in trying to get people of different backgrounds and ages to see that we really are more alike than different.



Born Before Plastic authors (left) Joseph McHugh, Helen McHugh, Patricia Beckles, Norma Lawrence, and Barbara McTigue.

Turkey Mini Meatloaves

Ingredients -

- 1 pound 93%-lean ground turkey
- 1 medium zucchini, shredded
- 1 cup finely chopped onion
- 1 cup finely chopped red bell pepper
- 1/3 cup uncooked whole-wheat couscous
- 1 large egg, lightly beaten
- 2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 cup barbecue sauce (optional)

Instructions -

1. Preheat oven to 400°F. Generously spray a nonstick muffin pan with cooking spray.
2. Gently mix turkey, zucchini, onion, bell pepper, couscous, egg, Worcestershire, mustard, pepper and salt in a large bowl, preferably with your hands, without overworking. Equally divide the mixture among the muffin cups. Spread barbecue sauce on top of each loaf, if using.
3. Bake until the meatloaves are cooked through or an instant-read thermometer inserted into the center registers 165 degrees F, about 25 minutes. Let the loaves stand in the pan for 5 minutes before serving.

Serves: 6

**While turkey can too often lend a depressingly gummy texture to meatloaf, the recipe has been improved by adding couscous, zucchini and lots of spices.

RECIPES

Mashed Maple Squash

Ingredients -

- 1 acorn squash (1 1/4 pounds), halved and seeded
- 2 tablespoons pure maple syrup
- 1 teaspoon butter
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon salt

Instructions -

1. Preheat oven to 400°F. Coat a 9-by-13-inch baking pan with cooking spray.
2. Place squash halves cut-side down in the prepared pan. Bake until soft, about 50 minutes. Let cool for 10 minutes.
3. Scrape the soft squash flesh into a medium bowl. Stir in syrup, butter, cinnamon and salt with a fork, mashing the squash until somewhat smooth.

Serves: 2

Thank You to the following sponsors for the fantastic Halloween Luncheon.

The logo for 'iparty' features the word 'iparty' in a yellow, lowercase, cursive font with a registered trademark symbol (®) at the end. The text is set against a dark blue rectangular background. A pink wavy ribbon graphic is positioned below the blue background.

New Year's Resolution

2009 has arrived and your annual New Year's Resolution is to lose 10 pounds, exercise, clean out your closets, take a long overdue vacation, let your fingernails grow, etc.

These are the same resolutions you have made since 1958!!! Perhaps this year you can change your motivation! Choose only one major project at a time.

Why do you want to lose 10 pounds? It may not be that the 10 pounds will make a big difference in your clothes fitting better, yet you will see a small improvement! You should tell yourself that you will not only look better but you will feel better. You will have better blood sugar readings and you won't be huffing and puffing going up the stairs. You can save money by cooking healthier meals instead of picking up "take out" on the way home from work or shopping.

What diet should you be eating? Everyone thinks his/her diet should be low fat, low carbohydrate, low salt, vegetarian, no red meat or no desserts! Check with your doctor because you may only need to focus on one aspect of your diet. Eating lettuce leaves, carrot sticks and sugar free jello diets will only last for a week, if that. Be realistic. Deprivation diets do not work.

Remember, your doctor will be able to tell if you are trying to lose weight the minute you get on the scale, blood test results,

better breathing, less swollen ankles and most importantly, you will be very proud of yourself when you go to the doctor's office.

Hospital wrist bands

When a patient is admitted to the hospital, the patient is given a wristband with his/her name, hospital number, admission date, doctor's name printed on the wristband.

The American Hospital Association is recommending that all its member hospitals standardize the colors of their alert wristbands. Example:

Red- medication or food allergies,

Yellow- high risk for falls,

Purple- do not resuscitate.

What is the purpose of these alert bracelets? Many hospital personnel work in several hospitals and having the same color code will help avoid confusion and identify that this patient needs to be observed for special precautions. It can be confusing when a red wristband means certain precautions at hospital one and at hospital two the red wristband means something else.

Wearing a "Do Not Resuscitate: wristband may be very distressful for patients and their families so there are ways to discreetly place a small color coded clip on their wrist band.

Why would a patient care about color coded wristbands?

Continued from page 26

Example: if a medicated patient is returning from surgery and needs antibiotics intravenously, the recovery room nurse will know immediately to check the patient's chart to be sure the patient does not have an allergy to a certain antibiotic or a patient with dementia may not remember that s/he has an allergy to sulfa.

If you should need a color coded wristband on admission, be sure to ask the admissions nurse to tell you what the color represents. If no one offers you one of these color coded wristbands, please request one especially if you have an allergy.

Often times in an emergency, a patient's family does not know allergies or if a

W



Dr. Chris Standing
Chiropractor and Reiki practitioner

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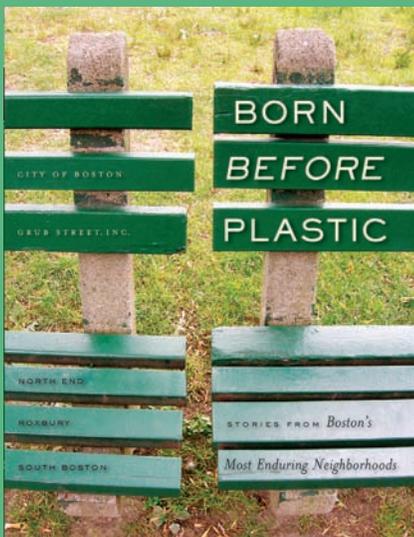
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Repeated Sunday at 11:30 a.m.
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For more information call
Deputy Commissioner
Kathleen Giordano, Producer
at 617-635-4362



The Commission's BNN-TV hosts (left) Marybeth Kelly, Lorraine Capozzi, Connie Mohammed, Marie Barry, Fran Johnnene, Carolyn Barnes and Mike McColgan

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For more information please contact:
Deputy Commissioner Kathleen Giordano at
617-635-4362
or Fran Johnnene at 617-635-3988.

The Elderly Commission

Seniors - are you eligible?

Food Stamp requirements have changed for most senior applications.

The Department of Transitional Assistance no longer counts -

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We accept editorial articles

Thank you to the following sponsors for the wonderful Italian Heritage Luncheon.

Speaker Of The House Salvatore DiMasi, Senator Anthony Petrucci,
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Mike's Pastry, Piccolo Venezia, Polcari's Coffee, Salumeria Italiana,
Spirit Of Boston, Sulmona Meat Market, Twilight Designs, Umberto's,
Union Oyster House



Congratulations to the recipients of the 2008 Edward L. Cooper Awards!

The Cooper Awards honor the legacy of Edward L. Cooper, founder and creator of the Community Gardens and Education Center and the President of the Boston Urban Gardeners. Zealous in his efforts to inform people of the importance of Open Spaces in an urban setting, he is best remembered for his commitment to both the youth and senior populations in the city of Boston. He was a member of the Mayor's Senior Advisory Council for many years and served with distinction as the Council's President.



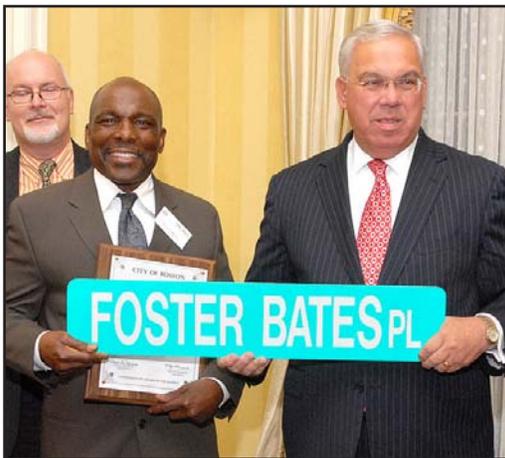
Outstanding Senior Advocate
Mary Frasca



Outstanding Senior Volunteer
Louise Aucoin



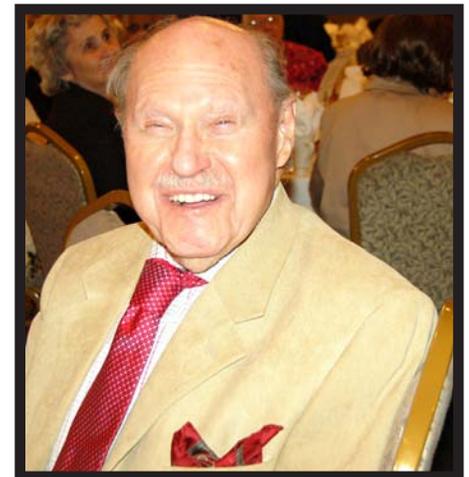
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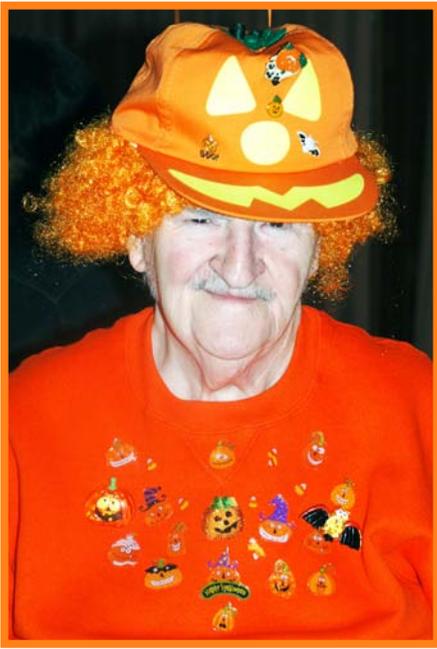
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Mrs. Angela Menino with Senior Companion volunteers at their SCP Appreciation Luncheon.



Couples celebrating at the 50th Golden Wedding Anniversary.



Senior Companion volunteer Jose Alvarez and Beulah Providence of Caribbean Foundation.



These seniors have a blast during the Halloween costume contest.



Senior Companions Sarah Blakeney (left), Commissioner Greenberg and Joyce Bailey.



Mayor Menino greets guests at the Italian Heritage Luncheon.



Kay and Vincent Ryan married for 51 years.



Theresa (left) with Josephine Gaeta, 99, and Carol Fabiano.



Taking healthy steps at Mayor Menino's Health & Fitness Walk.



Happy 100th Birthday to Marcia Collins.



Mrs. Angela Menino with Senior Companions Irma (left) & Ilya Magid



Wally the Red Sox mascot practices his bear hug Eugenia Smith at the Halloween Luncheon.



These happy walkers have fun at the Mayor's Health & Fitness Walk.

Barbara Peckins, Pauline Costello (back row)
Connie Rosato, Ann Pemberton and
Alice Palumbo of Hyde Park





Bernie (left) and Ellie Scannel have been married for 67 years.



Mayor Menino's daughter Susan Fenton with Chung Nin and Thin Tsang Choi who have been married for 71 years, alongside Commissioner Greenberg and Arthur Chi.



Patti Geier (left) leads everyone in a quick warm up for the Health & Fitness Walk.



Wilma and Ralph Browne married for 57 years.



Sarah Dellarusso gets the party started with her electric guitar at the Italian Heritage Luncheon.



Having a blast on the dance floor at the Halloween Luncheon.

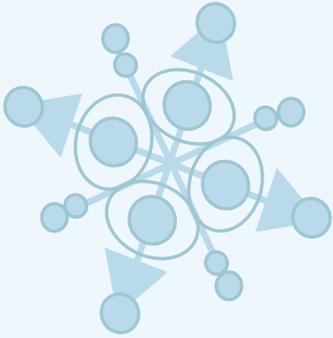


Happy Holidays



and

Happy New Year



From

Mayor Menino

and

The Elderly Commission

