

THE BEST OF TIMES

DECEMBER, 2011

Published Monthly by the Upper Merion Senior Service Center

a Non-Profit 501(c)(3) Organization

Serving the Senior Community

1997-2011

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HOURS: MONDAY THRU FRIDAY 9:00 AM TO 3:00 PM

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

THE OBJECTIVE OF THE UPPER MERION SENIOR SERVICE CENTER SHALL BE TO IDENTIFY AND TO ASSIST IN MEETING THE NEEDS OF OLDER ADULTS IN A MULTI-USE ENVIRONMENT FOR PHYSICAL, EDUCATIONAL AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES.

DECEMBER MESSAGE

Well, here we are already in the beginning of the holiday season. Can you believe it? We are looking forward to the New Year with hope that it will be a better one for all of us.

With the world in the turmoil that it is in right now, we're sure many of us feel that this will be a long, lean year. But, before we get tied up in what we have to do to prepare for this holiday season and New Year, it would be nice to give thanks for all the good things that we have encountered throughout this past year. For example, the good friends that you have established at the center, that you have had good health to participate in the activities at the center or that you have now regained your health after an illness enough to come back to the center and participate in the activities of your choice.

Almost everywhere we look there are signs reminding us that we should be aware of "Peace on Earth, Good Will Toward Men" but, do we apply these words in our every day lives? After our family and friends should we not consider these sentiments right here at our Senior Center? The giving of yourself by volunteering and participating in various activities is one way to show your appreciation of all that the UMSSC has to offer. Remember, this is a non-profit organization with limited resources so the gift of giving whatever you can to the Center will always be greatly appreciated.

There is one other way to show our thankfulness and that is by taking advantage of what the Center offers to all membership, at no cost, and that is to remember the brave men and women who serve in

the armed services. Remember they will not be able to spend the holidays with their families and friends. One small way that we can give good will and lift their spirits is by sending holiday greeting cards and well wishes. So, beginning Monday, November 28, greeting cards will be at the sign-in desk and we ask you that when you sign in, please also sign a card which will be forwarded to our Outreach Program, "The Adam Conboy Memorial Foundation", to be shipped off to our service men and women who are stationed in a foreign land away from home. Just to remind you, Adam Conboy was a young Marine who bravely gave his life to protect all of us and he asked his mother to remember the men in his platoon and also any other service men and women who were brought to her attention, with small reminders of our thankfulness for the unselfishness and willingness to protect our country and all of us with their lives.

We are looking forward to the New Year with hope that it will be a better one for all of us. Unfortunately, UMSSC is losing the presence of our President, Frank Luther, and we all thank him sincerely for his many years of devoted service. They say that when a door closes a window opens and so, we welcome our new President, Gerry Roth and wish him much success in this new endeavor.

In closing, we wish you all "Peace on Earth, Good Will Toward Men" and remember, "Love Weighs More Than Gold".

Happy Holidays,

Harlyce, Helen and Marie

Upper Merion Senior Service Center (UMSSC) is an equal opportunity institution that will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religious affiliation, national origin, sex, age, marital status or disabilities in its activities, programs or employment practices.

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OFFICERS:

Frank Luther, President
Mary F. McCree, Vice President
Helen Cabrey, Secretary
Harlyce Grossman, Treasurer



MEMBERS OF THE BOARD: Paul Buce, Marie Fischuk, Ed Freudenberg, Pari Hoorfar, Ethel Hutchinson, Gerald Roth, Ruth Shand and Janet Sheehan.

HONORARY MEMBERS: Mary Meere, Arthur Powell, Constance H. Williams

STAFF: Thomas E. Stanback, Executive Director, Shirley Robey, Administrative Assistant, Beth Cassidy, Receptionist

"Best of Times" Editors: Mary F. McCree, Shirley Robey. **Contributing Editor:** Frank Luther

Contributing Writer: Leo Dolan

GOALS FOR 2011

- Increase membership.
- Work to increase funding for operational support: investigate new sources of funding in cooperation with local businesses and government agencies.
- Continue the development of innovative programming.
- Maintain our working partnership with the Upper Merion Area School District and Upper Merion Township.
- Explore the potential for new opportunities for services.
- Search for educational opportunities for members as part of our lifelong learning efforts.
- Help members remain healthy and active through participation in recreational, educational and leisure activities.

DON'T FORGET TO SIGN-UP FOR THESE UPCOMING EVENTS

SENIOR CENTER CLOSED: MONDAY, DECEMBER 12 FOR THE HOLIDAY PARTY.

CENTER CLOSED: THURSDAY, DECEMBER 22 AT 12:00 PM THROUGH MONDAY, JANUARY 2 IN OBSERVANCE OF CHRISTMAS. WE WILL REOPEN ON TUESDAY, JANUARY 3.

BEGINNER'S PRIMER ON USING A COMPUTER: *IMPORTANT NOTE: THE DECEMBER 5 CLASS HAS BEEN RE-SCHEDULED FOR DECEMBER 7.*

SENDING/RECEIVING E-MAIL AND SURFING THE NET: *IMPORTANT NOTE: THE DECEMBER 5 CLASS HAS BEEN RE-SCHEDULED FOR DECEMBER 7.*

UM TOWNSHIP HOLIDAY HOOPLA: Friday, December 2 from 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM in the Township Bldg (upper level). The UMSSC Band will be performing at this holiday event.

ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY: Monday, December 12 from 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM at the Crowne Plaza. Entertainment will be provided by Hal Martin and the UMSSC Band. Tickets (\$23.00 for members and \$26.00 for non-members) will be on sale beginning October 17 through December 2 or until sold out. Menu selections will be posted on the bulletin board and at the ticket sales desk. ***Be sure to reserve your table!***

COMMUNITY OUTREACH DONATIONS TO UMSSC

Upper Merion Senior Service Center is now a member of the *United Way Donor Program*. Anyone wishing to make a donation to the UMSSC can designate UMSSC as the recipient of their donation. (Reference UMSSC ID #45796, UW Agency #8229767.) Please consider a tax-deductible donation to the Upper Merion Senior Service Center. ***As a non-profit organization 501(c)(3) we rely upon outside donations and gifts to help finance some of our programs, activities and services to our members.***

UPPER MERION EMERGENCY AID

Dried goods donations collected for families in the community. Donation box is in the lobby. The Upper Merion Emergency Fund is requesting donation of gloves and socks for any age. If you are able to donate, please bring them to the Center no later than Friday, December 16th. Thank you for your generosity.

ST. JOHN'S SOUP KITCHEN

St. John's Soup Kitchen is in need of canned goods as their numbers are growing. They do not need any

desserts. Any donation you can give will be greatly appreciated. The collection box is on the table outside of the Lounge. **Specifically, for their holiday dinner they need the following food donations by Tuesday, December 20: Cans of Turkey Gravy, Powdered Turkey Gravy, Cans of Vegetables and Frozen Turkeys.** St. John's Kitchen is run by volunteers of the Women's Club of Upper Merion.

PUT BOOKS INTO THE HANDS OF CHILDREN WHO NEED THEM - Frank Luther

Our **PUT BOOKS INTO THE HANDS OF CHILDREN** project continues. I received a "thank you" letter from Mary Beth Adiletto, Reading Specialist at Bridgeport Elementary School:

It has been a long time since I have been in contact with you. I feel badly that I haven't written you but there was a reason. In April I hurt my back and subsequently had back surgery in May. I was out of school for two months and have been recovering since then. I am back at school this fall and using a cane. It is wonderful to be back with the kids. I am slowly getting organized.

You can imagine my surprise when a box of books was waiting for me when I returned in September. I did call and leave a message on the Center's voicemail system to thank you. I hope you received the message. We used those books to enrich a Pre-Kindergarten's classroom library, gave books to our new kindergartners in our small groups and shared some more of the books at our Title 1 Open House.

Now, a new box has arrived. We will share these with the children receiving reading support in our small groups and at a Parent Workshop we are hosting tonight.

Please thank all of the generous donors who are gathering and purchasing books. Rest assured that every child who receives these books is delighted to be able to "keep" the book in their home library.

All I can say is to keep them coming. I am thrilled to share these books with the children who need them. Please let us know what we can do for you and the members of the Senior Center.

Members might keep in mind how valuable these books are to young readers, and while doing their holiday shopping, might consider purchasing a book or two for a young reader. We can all **PUT BOOKS INTO THE HANDS OF CHILDREN.**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
GRACIAS! THANKS! DANKE! MERCI!
ARIGATO! GRAZIE! OBRIGADO!

★ Thank you to ***Suzy Jo Donuts*** for their generous donation of the best donuts on earth which we sold at the Holiday Craft & Bake Sale on October 15.

★ A very special thank you to ***Sicilian Delight*** for their generous donation of two gift certificates for the First Prize Winners of UMSSC Jeopardy II on October 24. ***Sicilian Delight*** also provides the Senior Center with great discounts on pizza (Everyone raves about their pizza!!!).

★ Thank you to Bottom Dollar for their donation of water bottles and soda can holders that were awarded to our UMSSC Jeopardy II teams.

★ Thank you also to ***Angelo's Pizza*** - Birthday Hoagie every month, to ★ ***LeBus Bread*** - Member Raffle every month and to ★ ***Sun Joe*** - who generously donates the baked goods we put out for snacks. We also thank ★ ***Mary thanks to*** ★ ***Brown + Bunn, Inc.*** for their donations of Tastykakes. Yum!!!

THANK YOU, BILL! - Frank Luther

While many of us were enjoying the Labor Day weekend, Bill Alvini began working on the revision of the website for the senior center. Bill volunteers his expertise, time, and service to help non-profits to develop websites for their organizations and the center is fortunate to have Bill volunteer to help UMSSC.

The new website will be easier to navigate and to read. Data and changes will be able to be made by the webmaster from any computer, so the individual will not need to be restricted to working at the center to do updates and changes. One unique advantage of this feature is that the webmaster can put a notice under ***ANNOUNCEMENTS*** that "The center is closed today because of weather conditions".

The new website will allow the center to have the same calendar that is published in the monthly newsletter. In addition, the monthly newsletter will be available on the website. Not only that, the newsletters can be archived so that members can refer to back issues for information.

The addition of the newsletter to the website is critical. As the center faces future economic issues, cost cutting savings must be considered. If every member who has a computer read the monthly newsletter via the website and did not receive a paper copy, the center would be ahead of the game financially!

As the website continues to be developed, look for other features as well. To see the new website, go to umssc.org. I think you will like what you see!

UMSSC thanks Bill Alvini for his willingness to help the center to continue to move into the 21st century!

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

1. Once again, I would like to thank Evelyn Cavaliere and Rose DiDonna for preparing the November newsletters for mailing.
2. A very special thank you to Pat Perkins for volunteering to staff the Reception Desk in Beth's absence.
3. A thank you to Ethel Hutchinson for her donations to the center in memory of Marie Osinski and Frank Palladino.
4. Our library circulation for October was 55 books.
5. Evelyn Cavaliere and I would like to thank those members who donated baked goods to our bake table at the Craft Fair or who made a donation to our bakeless bake sale. We also want to thank non-members Megan Bishop and her students from the high school, Chris Cavaliere, and Kerrie Erb for their generous donations of baked goods. Notes of appreciation have been sent.
6. Notes of appreciation have also been sent to Sicilian Delight and Anthony Del Buono, manager of Bottom Dollar, for their donations of prizes for our JEOPARDY game on Monday, October 24.
7. At the request of board member Ethel Hutchinson to have a school district person available at the center to distribute Lifetime Senior Passes, Dr. Jamula, Superintendent, has agreed that following our December 14 General Membership Meeting, passes will be available for those members wishing them.

NEWSWORTHY

OFFICER AND BOARD ELECTIONS FOR 2012

At the December 14 General Membership Meeting the following slate will be presented for Election by Acclamation:

Officers (term 1 year): President - Gerry Roth, Vice President - Mary McCree, Secretary - Helen Cabrey and Treasurer - Harlyce Grossman.

Board of Directors (term 3 years): Paul Buce, Marie Fischuk and Pari Hoorfar.

SEPARATE CHECKS PLEASE

As you all know we are happy to accept cash or checks for any of the activities or special events that we offer to our members. To keep the accounting simple, we ask you not to combine your payment for membership, activities or special events you wish to attend. We must have separate checks for different activities. Couples or friends attending activity

together can combine their payment as long as its for the same activity. Thank you for your cooperation.

UPPER MERION TRICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

BE A PART OF UPPER MERION HISTORY!

PHOTO ACQUISITION: The photo collection is an ongoing project. We want your photos, videos and/or memorabilia. Go to Tricentennial@umtownship.org, or call Marianne Hooper at 610-265-4805 to arrange for an audio or videotaped interview.

COMMEMORATIVE COOKBOOK: In honor of the Upper Merion's Tricentennial in 2013, the Committee is collecting family recipes for a *Commemorative Cookbook*. Bring or Send us your favorite, best, and/or family heirloom recipes. Include your name, the person whose recipe it is (if different), how long you or your family has been a resident, and the neighborhood/area of the township where you reside (Gulph Mills, Sweetbriar, Swedeland, etc.) If there is a special story that goes along with the recipe, send that along, too! Recipes can be sent to Tricentennial Cookbook, 175 W. Valley Forge Road, King of Prussia, PA 19406 or emailed to: Tricentennial@umtownship.org

WE WANT YOUR STORY: In Upper Merion, we will soon be celebrating the 300th birthday of our great township. The Tricentennial Committee, along with the Library and the Public Information Office are teaming up to make sure that our past is preserved. We want to hear and record (in writing, in an audio file or on video) YOUR memories and recollections of life in Upper Merion (or even those stories that your parents and grandparents passed on). Go to Tricentennial@umtownship.org, Send your written recollections to Tricentennial Stories, 175 W. Valley Forge Road, King of Prussia, PA 19406, or call Marianne Hooper at 610-265-4805 to arrange for an audio or videotaped interview.

2012 MEMBERSHIP REMINDER

The cost of everything is going up – but not membership at UMSSC. Membership is still only \$15.00. Current membership allows you to enjoy so much that we offer at the center such as activities for the mind and body, special events, presentations, movies and theater. The 2012 membership application form is included in this Newsletter. Complete both sides of the form and mail or bring in with your \$15.00 payment. Each individual must complete their form. (**FOR COUPLES:** Only one form is attached so if you need another form please let us know and we will forward one to you.)

Membership Renewals for 2012 will begin on December 1. There will be no membership

cards for the year 2012. We look forward to receiving your membership renewal. If you have any questions, feel free to stop by the staff office.

A CASE FOR A LOCAL CONTINUING CARE RETIREMENT COMMUNITY (CCRC)

by: Ed Freudenberg

Our family has lived in Upper Merion for the last 50 years. It has been a most enjoyable experience and we would like to live in the community for many years to come. Realistically, this may not be in our current home. While not planning an immediate move, we looked at various Continuing Care Retirement communities that offer independent living, assisted living and nursing home facilities.

Sadly, no such facility exists within Upper Merion's borders. Perhaps through encouragement by the business and political community organizations such as ACT's, Sunrise, Brandywine, Brightview or others would be interested to invest in such a facility within the confines of our township. I imagine there would be a demand for such a facility by our residents who wish to remain in the community and others who wish to relocate to Upper Merion.

ACTIVITIES

APPRISE COUNSELOR: Assistance with insurance and Medicare concerns. Call 610.265.4715 and give your name and telephone for the APPRISE counselor to contact you and set up an appointment.

BINGO: Thursdays at 10:15 AM. Coordinator: Evelyn Cavaliere. Cash prizes!

BOOK TALK: Monday, December 19 at 1:00 PM. Coordinator: Patricia Ackah (610.265.4290). This month's book is *"The Sunflower: On the Possibilities and Limits of Forgiveness"* by Simon Wiesenthal.

BRIDGE CLUB: Tuesday's at 10:00 AM.

CASINO TRIP: *No Casino Trip in December.*

CRAFTS: Monday's and Tuesday's at 1:00 PM. Coordinator: Dot Price. Instruction provided. Hand-made items are for sale and all proceeds benefit the Center.

CURRENT EVENTS DISCUSSION GROUP: Monday's at 10:30 AM in the Lounge. Coordinator: Joan Shaw. The group meets Mondays at 10:30. Scheduled to go to 12:00 but we never quit on schedule, far too much news to discuss. We have fun learning and keeping current. Come on over.

FRIDAY FLICKS: Friday, December 16 (Pizza at 11:15 AM, Movie at 12:00 PM.) This month we will be showing *"The Help"* starring Bryce Dallas

Howard, Octavia Spencer, Jessica Chastain, Allison Janney, and Mike Vogel.

GARDEN CLUB: Chairperson: Paul Buce. Meets the second and fourth Wednesdays at 1:00. There will be one meeting in December, our annual wreath making session on Wednesday, Dec 14. We work totally with cut greens, so come prepared to get sticky.

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING: Monthly meeting open to all members on the 2nd Wednesday at 10:00 AM. Any member who wants to be put on the agenda at the meeting should contact Frank Luther, President.

LIBRARY: Open Monday through Friday from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM. An excellent selection of large print books, tapes and videos are available to borrow.

MAH-JONGG: Monday's and Friday's at 10:00 Am. All level players are welcome. Interested in learning Mah-Jongg? *We have some members who are willing to teach new players. Come at 9:30 AM if you would like to learn to play.*

OUTREACH: *Representative Tim Briggs' aide* is here the second Thursday of the month - 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM. *Senator Daylin Leach's aide* is here the last Thursday of the month - 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM.

PINOCHLE LADIES AND GENTS: Monday's at 9:30 AM.

POKER CLUB: Tuesday's and Friday's at 9:00 AM. \$5.00 ante, \$2.00 entry. Coordinator: Bernie Zelenak.

QUILTING: Fourth Wednesday of the month at 9:30 AM. Instructor: Ethel Hutchinson. All levels welcome!

MUSIC PROGRAMS

MUSIC INSTRUCTION: Tuesday's at 1:30 PM. Instructor: Ed Hickman.

SING-A-LONG: Friday's at 10:00 TO 11:30 AM. Coordinators: Theresa M. Smith and Dot Morio.

UMSSC EXERCISE PROGRAMS

CHAIR EXERCISE: Every Tuesday and Thursday from 12:30 PM to 1:15 PM. Coordinator: Jim Parvin. \$3.00 per class.

TAI CHI: Every Wednesday from 12:00 PM to 12:45 PM. Coordinator Louise Bailey. \$3.00 per class.

CO-ED BASKETBALL: Wednesday's from 12:00 PM to 1:00 PM in the gym. FREE.

LINE DANCING: Every Wednesday at 1:00 PM in the gym. Coordinator: Loretta DeLucca. \$1.00 fee per lesson.

STAND-UP YOGA: Monday's at 1:30 PM. Certified Instructor: Dr. Christine Grad. \$3.00 per class. Limited to 8 members per class.

COMPUTER LEARNING CENTER

COMPUTER CLUB: Tuesday's 9:30 AM to 11:30 AM. Coordinators: Herman Natanblut and Howard Lurie. No fee; no class limit. Meetings are open to all *members*, all ability levels.

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

GOOD FOOD/GOOD HEALTH WITH PARI:

Monday, December 5 at 10:30 AM. Instructor: Pari Hoorfar will be making *Persian Stew*. Cost: \$6.00. **Minimum of 10 - limited to 15. ADVANCE SIGN-UP AND PAYMENT IS REQUIRED SO THAT ENOUGH FOOD CAN BE PREPARED.**

NURSE: Every 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month from **10:00 AM to 12:00 PM**. Our favorite Nurse Lori Gnacek is from Bryn Mawr Hospital/Main Line Health & will check our blood pressure.

LEGENDS of LEO

BEST CHRISTMAS TIMES REMEMBERED

Those of you who grew up during the "Great Depression" may relate to some of my personal remembrances of Christmas times I enjoyed the most. One that stands out in my mind was in 1943. My Uncle Bill had been stationed in Europe until after V-E day. He was a special uncle as was his wife, Marjorie (Madge), as we called her. Unbeknown to us six kids, my Aunt had received word that my Uncle would be arriving at Fort Dix, N.J. a day or two before Christmas. Somehow everyone was able to keep this great secret from us. In fact he walked in our front door as we were putting the final touches on the Christmas tree. Bedlam broke loose as we all rushed to hug him and say "Welcome home, and Merry Christmas!"

It is hard to concentrate about Christmas. As I write this on Election Day and it is 65 degrees outside and very sunny. In fact I know I should be out raking leaves to the curb for the township pickup next week. As they say today, "It is what it is" (so you might as well live with it!)

We young boys were far from angels. I recall making frequent trips to Strawbridges in Ardmore after school. We were young enough to line up to sit in Santa's lap, convey our wish list and get rewarded with a lollypop. We would then scoot to the back of the line and go thru the routine again (changing our wish list, of course) and nab another lollypop. This was working pretty well until one of our gang's dad got a job playing Santa Clause...the jig was up but it was fun while it lasted!

We were virtual angels reporting to church to serve as altar boys for the 5:30 a.m. Mass. I recall taking a short cut across a neighbor's back yard on the way to church, walking across encrusted snow that did not break under my footsteps. At one of those early morning Christmas masses, I was fasting prior to receiving Communion and during the solemn high ceremony suddenly I felt like I was going to faint. I was able to reach the exit where Sister Loretta Loyola, the mentor of the Altar servers, put her arm around me and led me to a bench where she made me get my head down below my knees and I started feeling much better. She made me lie down on the bench and took her heavy shawl and put it over me. Nuns have taken a bum rap about corporal punishment....this was one of many instances where their true humanity offset any of the bad stuff. After Mass, I recovered sufficiently to line up for the traditional silver dollar and box of hard candy from the Pastor, Father Kelly.

At home on Christmas Eve we got to hang a stocking on the banister of the stairway. I found that my sister's long brown uniform stocking held more goodies than any of my socks could hold. Christmas morning the stockings were loaded with walnuts, fruit, chewing gum, a couple of dollar bills, hard clear candy in the shape of animals, a new toothbrush and toothpaste (surely needed after devouring all that great stuff!) I guess today I would be charged with concealing a dangerous weapon but the only thing I really wanted for Christmas was a pair of leather boots that had a little sleeve that held a Boy Scout knife. You know "be prepared" was very important. You never knew when you might have to peel an apple or whittle a branch to skewer a hot dog for a campfire, or be challenged to a game of Mumbly Peg. A real game, look it up.

Before the age of TV, after Christmas dinner, everyone retired to the living room. From the hallway to the living room there was an archway that provided a perfect stage for putting on little skits and plays. All of the kids had to do something: sing a song, tell a joke, etc. We did actually "exit left" and it was only a few steps to the kitchen where we could carve up a few slices of turkey. We aptly named this detour, "The Turkey Trot."

In last month's article, I praised Andy Rooney who could actually make people laugh on his weekly segment of "Sixty Minutes." Andy passed away on November 4th at the age of 92. We have lost a great talent. R.I.P.

Leo Dolan

