

News and Notes, Thursday March 9th, 2023

Hi folks. Here at the COA we have just completed a switch from a Google email/operating platform to a Microsoft program and, as you can imagine, it was not fun for us. There are still some bugs needing to be ironed out here and they may include links. If the links here don't work, sorry! They will if you type them into your browser yourself. We'll get this ironed out, along with the rest of the bugs soon!

Here's a message from the Social Security Administration. Apparently, the scammer creeps are poking at people again...

The Inspector General for the Social Security Administration (SSA) has designated March 9, 2023, as National "Slam the Scam" Day - an outreach campaign to raise public awareness of Social Security scams and other government imposter scams. In 2022, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) received over 191,000 complaints of government imposter scams. Of those, 14.6% said they lost money to a scammer - a total of \$508.96 million. To prevent further losses, we urge everyone to use caution when receiving calls or messages from someone claiming to be from a government agency.

Recognizing the basic signs of a scam is helpful in stopping fraudulent activity. Remember:

Scammers pretend to be from an agency or organization you know to gain your trust.

Scammers say there is a problem or a prize.

Scammers pressure you to act immediately.

Scammers tell you to pay in a specific way.

Social Security will never do any of these things. For more information on Social Security scams and reporting them, try this link;

<http://oig.ssa.gov/scam-awareness/scam-alert/>

When you receive a text or email from an unknown or unfamiliar name, number or address, remember this: Don't know? Don't Click! Don't Respond!

BCAC (Berkshire County Community Action) has launched a community needs survey to get feedback to inform their program planning for the next three years. Responses will help BCAC to design or modify programs to better meet needs as they go forward. As always, the information you have provided will be confidential. To take the survey, follow the link;

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/T6K8G9N>

We also have paper copies if you would prefer those.

Next Friday, March 17th, is, of course, St. Patrick's Day. We'll be offering a corned beef luncheon and then entertainment in the form of Robin O'Herin, a musician whom we've not yet met. This will be fun. Reservations for this gathering are required and can be made by calling us at 413-458-8250 or dropping by in person.

On Tuesday, March 21st, Mary Mueller will be here to offer an introduction to Reiki. Reiki is an approach in which practitioners place their hands lightly on or just above a person, with the goal of directing energy to help facilitate the person's own healing response. It's based on an Eastern belief in an energy that supports the body's innate or natural healing abilities. This is an introduction; an ongoing class may be scheduled. She is at 1:00 preceded by ziti and meatballs for lunch.

The AARP Tax schedule is filling up for this year so if you haven't made an appointment but need one, act sooner rather than later. This afternoon a gentleman called looking for a Saturday morning appointment, the nearest I could find was on April 1st. Appointments are still available for Tuesday evenings from 6-9, and Saturday from 10-noon. You can make an appointment by calling 413-458-8250 Monday through Friday.