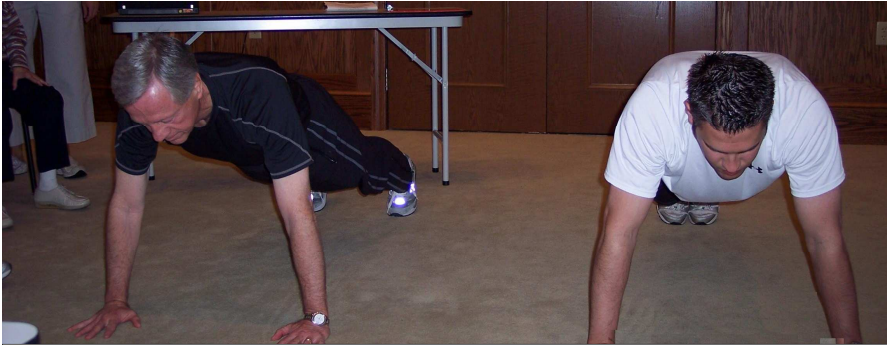


THE SENIOR ADVOCATE

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3rd Annual Mayor's Healthy Lifestyle Day a Success



Mayor Joines competes with Jay Matthews to see who can do the most push ups

The annual Mayor's Healthy Lifestyle Day was held at Salemtowne on April 21st, with about 100 seniors in attendance. Participants engaged in a variety of activities designed to test physical fitness. The testing done by students of Wake Forest University. There was plenty of food, information, door prizes and "entertainment" as Winston-

Salem Mayor Allen Joines engaged in a push up competition with Jay Matthews, Salemtowne's health care administrator. Slow and steady *almost* won the race; as the Mayor paced himself through the one-minute contest, the younger Jay started off full speed ahead, slowing down about half way through. In the end, the Jay won the contest by a slim margin of two push ups.

One very popular activity was Wii bowling, a virtual reality game where participants "bowl" with a controller in their hand and the "alley" is on a television screen. A Wii game console was given as a door prize by Mayor Joines and won by Mt. Zion Senior Life Center. A great time was had by all; we hope to see YOU there next year!

Who is Representing YOU? State Legislators Representing Forsyth County

Representatives	Dist.	Room	Phone #	Email
Larry R. Brown	73	609	919-733-5607	Larry.Brown@ncleg.net
Dale R. Folwell	74	306A1	919-733-5787	Dale.Folwell@ncleg.net
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Mailing address for all state legislators:

300 N. Salisbury St., Room # _____, Raleigh, NC 27603-5925

Fitness Training for the Aging Brain

Recently, researchers have found more positive news about the brain. For some time the idea of a naturally declining brain has been challenged by research showing continued plasticity and cellular regeneration. However, more recently researchers suggest that if kept in good shape, the brain can continue to build pathways that can enable some problems to be solved even faster than when younger. For example, the brain, as it traverses middle age, gets better at recognizing the central idea, the big picture. The trick, however, is finding ways to keep brain connections in good condition and to grow more of them. “The brain is plastic and continues to change, not in getting bigger but allowing for greater complexity and deeper understanding,” says Kathleen Taylor, a professor at St. Mary’s College of California.

Educators say that one way to nudge the neural pathways of adults in the right direction is to challenge the very assumptions they have worked so hard to accumulate over the years. With a brain already full of well-connected pathways, adult learners should “jiggle their synapses a bit” by confronting thoughts that are contrary to those they customarily have, says Dr. Taylor, who is 66. Continued brain development and a richer form of learning may require that you



“bump up against people and ideas” that are different from the one’s you currently know. In a history class, that might mean reading multiple viewpoints, and then reflecting on how what was learned has changed your view of the world.

“ If you always hang around with those you agree with and read things that agree with what you already know, you’re not going to wrestle with your established brain connections.... We have to crack the cognitive egg and scramble it up. And if you learn something this way, when you think of it again you’ll have an overlay of complexity you didn’t have before — and help your brain keep developing as well,” according to Dr. Taylor.

Along these lines, Jack Mezirow, a professor emeritus at Columbia Teachers College, proposes that adults learn best if presented with what he calls a “disorienting dilemma,” or something that “helps you critically reflect on the assumptions you’ve acquired.” Thirty years ago, Dr. Mezirow studied women who had gone back to school. The women took this bold step only after having many conversations that helped them challenge their own ingrained perceptions that women could not do what men could do.”

New York Times by Barbara Strauch, Jan. 3, 2010, Education, 10.

WOO—Computer Classes



Free computer classes are available at Forsyth County Public Libraries. Selections include Computer ABCs, Internet Basics with Email, Caring for your Computer, Word Basics, Ancestry Search-Genealogy, plus many others. For more information contact the Computer Training Bridge at the library, 703-3079 or visit their website, www.forsythcomputertraining.org

A beginner’s computer class specifically for adults 50+ who have little or no computer experience is available at the Central Library. The next 6-session course runs July 19-30. Contact Theresa Edwards at the Shepherd’s Center (748-0217) or call the library at 703-3079 to register.

Advocacy—Why is it Important?

In the inaugural issue of the SENIOR ADVOCATE (2004), we identified our action plan as follows:

- Identify issues and determine appropriate course of action: influence, initiate or change
- Mobilize volunteers to advocate either in person, with individuals, or in groups
- Write personal letters, emails and make personal calls regarding the issue at hand.
- Collaborate with other agencies whose advocacy functions overlay with the Senior Power Think Tank.

The bottom line is that we want to make a difference in how older adults live out their lives; our mission is to help bring into being, a friendly, livable community.

As an advocate for many years, I use as my touchstone the following “**Nine Basic Human Rights for Older Adults**” created by the Federal Council on Aging-Bicentennial Charter. If the issue about which I'm concerned falls within these parameters, then I think I it is appropriate for me to act.

1. The right to freedom, independence and the free exercise of individual initiative
2. The right to an income in retirement which would provide an adequate standard of living.
3. The right to an opportunity for employment free from discriminatory practices because of age.
4. The right to an opportunity to participate in the widest range of meaningful civic, educational, recreational and cultural activities.
5. The right to suitable housing.
6. The right to the best level of physical and mental health services needed.
7. The right to ready access to effective social services.
8. The right to appropriate institutional care when required.
9. The right to a life and death with dignity.



Advocacy focuses on problems, issues, needs. I think it is unfortunate that for some there is the connotation that being an advocate is not only political, but partisan as well. The result is that people shy away from taking a stand, speaking up on issues. To me, advocacy is essentially an educational activity. Advocates shape problems into issues that a governing body can address.

The Forsyth County Aging Services Planning Committee through its various sub-committees has advocated around the following issues: urging city officials to apply for transportation monies, creating sidewalks and curb cuts; monitoring the transportation needs of dialysis patients, increased safety for seniors downtown; dealing with drugs and the safety of seniors in public housing; physical fitness and wellness programs, ways to keep seniors informed of services available, partnerships with influential groups such as CHANGE and Leadership Winston-Salem. There may be others, but these come readily to mind.

On a personal level, I am also finding that I need to be a health advocate, not only for myself, but for a brother as well. Margo Corbett has done a tremendous job in outlining the role of a health advocate in her book “**The Savvy Patient Tool Kit.**” Check it out.

—Nancy Hall, Facilitator, Senior Power Think Tank

WOO-Windows of Opportunity

Senior Financial Care Lends a Hand

At first glance, Judy's home north of Winston-Salem looks idyllic. It's a small, but lovely white frame house surrounded by woods with a pair of dogs sleeping in a well-groomed yard. But its appearance belies Judy's struggle to keep it.

Shortly after she lost her husband three years ago, she discovered that he had borrowed heavily against their home without telling her. Even though she was employed, the \$1,400/month payment was more than she could manage. Her marketing job for a big-box store didn't provide enough to make her payments and pay her bills. She was doing without heat in the winter and rarely had much food in the house. Judy sought help at Consumer Credit Counseling Service (CCCS), a United Way partner agency.

CCCS interceded with her mortgage lender to get her payments reduced by nearly one-half, and helped her budget her resources. Life was still a struggle, but she was making it until she lost her job in early 2010. Once again, CCCS interceded, and was able to get her monthly payment reduced yet again, this time to \$540.

Life's still not easy for Judy, but she's keeping her home and hopes to get a job soon. She is immensely grateful for the help she received from CCCS and the United Way support that made it possible.

If your finances aren't picture-perfect, reach out to a trained and certified counselor at **Senior Financial Care®** a program of Consumer Credit Counseling of Forsyth, Inc. To make an appointment call **336-896-1328** or go online to www.cccsforsyth.org and click on **In-Home Services for Seniors**.

RSVP (Retired & Senior Volunteer Program) provides volunteer assistance to over 50 non-profit organizations in Forsyth & Stokes Counties, including area hospitals, Meals on Wheels/Senior Services, and the Shepherd's Centers of Winston-Salem and Kernersville. If you are interested in volunteering, please call **Joyce Troyer at 336-761-2111** or email jtroyer@nwpcog.org.

I Participate (www.iparticipatenc.org), is a website designed to bring together health and wellness opportunities in Forsyth County for people 50 years of age and better. The site includes activity listings, health information links & local recreation areas and greenways.

The Shepherd's Center of Kernersville, Inc. will be bringing public awareness about Elder Abuse to the Kernersville Senior Enrichment Center, 130 E. Mountain Street, Kernersville, on July 21st at 9:30 AM. We will show the new video, **An Age for Justice: Confronting Elder Abuse in America**, a short documentary that brings you into the homes of courageous American elders to hear their poignant and real stories about the abuse, neglect, or exploitation they have experienced. Following the video the Kernersville Police Department will share information regarding elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation in our area. Join us to learn more about how you can recognize and stop abuse of older adults. Call 992-0591 to register to attend.

The Shepherd's Center of Greater Winston-Salem offers many opportunities for fun, wellness & learning at several locations. Selections include warm water exercise, yoga, card games, Wii games, crafts, computer classes & volunteer opportunities. Call 748-0217 for more information.

The Shepherd's Center of Kernersville Senior Enrichment Center provides life enriching activities, services and growth opportunities for seniors. Selections include: entertainment, games, yoga, golf clinic, billiards, walking club, computer learning center, health & wellness activities & volunteer opportunities. Call 992-0591 for more information.