DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA OFFICE ON AGING

Spotlight On Aging

VOLUME XVII, ISSUE 10 A newsletter for D.C. Seniors October 2002

Executive Director's Message

By E. Veronica Pace

ELDERFEST, the annual outdoor festival geared to seniors, was a big success. The event is presented by the D.C. Office on Aging, Family and Child Services of Washington, D.C., Inc., and the Office on Aging Senior Service Network to showcase senior talent and creativity and to help support seniors and the programs they attend.

This year the event featured the Legendary Orioles, information exhibits, a health and safety exhibit, an antique car exhibit, handmade arts and crafts for sale, homemade baked goods for sale and much more.

The honorary chair for the event was Walter Washington, the first appointed and elected Mayor of the District of Columbia. He received the E. Veronica Pace Award for his contributions to the seniors of the District. Among many other accomplishments, he was responsible for building and acquiring 16 new housing developments for seniors.

We are grateful indeed to our corporate sponsors, including Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, which received the ELDERFEST Corporate Sponsorship Award. Additional sponsors for this year's event include COMCAST, D.C. Lottery and Verizon. We thank them for their generous support.

We are also grateful to our supporters and volunteers for the event. Without their assistance, we would not be able to present this event. Photos from the event are included in this issue.

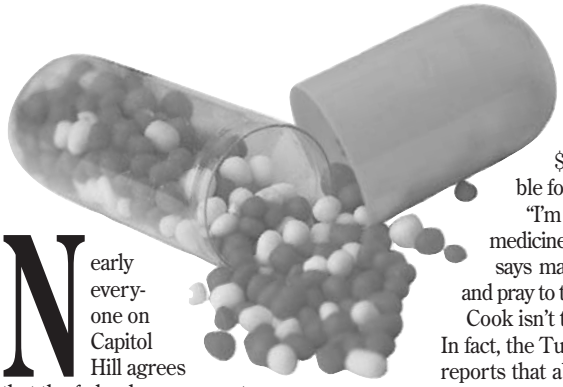
Sometimes life is not fair. Find out more about seniors who are coping with the high cost of prescription drugs. Many seniors pay more than $500 a month for their prescriptions and are faced with the choice of buying medicine or buying food. Some opt to cut their pills in half, further jeopardizing their health.

While we wait for Congress to pass a drug benefit prescription bill that helps seniors pay for their medication, more seniors are cutting costs.

The Legal Counsel for the Elderly can also assist seniors with managing their bills. Read more about this program and the Self Help Office (SHO).

From October 6 to 12, the District will be observing National Fire Prevention Week. Seniors represented seven of the 11 fire fatalities in the District for FY '02. These statistics are startling — don't be a victim. Find out how you and your household can prevent fires in the home during fire prevention week.

Medicare Senior Swallows Some Bitter Pills



Nearly everyone on Capitol Hill agrees that the federal government must help seniors pay for their high-priced prescription drugs.

But the Senate, after a heated debate this summer, failed to pass a bill. Republicans were pushing for using private insurers, and Democrats wanted an extension of Medicare.

Meanwhile, almost 40 million Americans, mainly seniors, won't be getting help from Medicare any time soon for their rapidly-escalating pharmacy bills.

One of those millions is Candies Cook, a soft-spoken 84-year-old who lives by herself just down the road from the Capitol.

The other day, Cook welcomed a visitor to the cheerful red brick home she owns in the Deanwood section of town. The house is festooned with religious sayings, and on the living room wall, prominently displayed, is a portrait of Martin Luther King, flanked by John and Robert Kennedy.

But it is today's leaders who concern her.

"I'd like to show them my bills," she says.

Before long, she is displaying her drug bottles on the dining room table. A bottle of Lipitor for her high cholesterol costs $100 a month. Another medicine, Declomycin, an antibiotic, is priced at $550 for a month's supply.

That's stiff medicine for anyone, but when your monthly income is only $800, mainly from Social Security, those are bitter pills to swallow.

There is no help from the District of Columbia Medicaid office, which is supposed to pick up the tab for the city's poor. Medicaid tells Cook that she is not poor enough. She makes more than $400 a month, so she is not eligible for free Medicaid drugs.

"I'm going to have to stop taking the medicine when this supply runs out," she says matter-of-factly. "I'll just take Tylenol and pray to the Lord."

Cook isn't the only one who thinks like that. In fact, the Tufts-New England Medical Center reports that about one of four seniors don't fill prescriptions because of the cost — or they stretch out the drugs by skipping some doses.

So what is Cook to do about this nightmare?

Oh, the neighborhood pharmacist is nice about Cook's dilemma. He gives her a 10 percent senior citizen discount, knocking her bill down from $650 a month to just under $600.

"When I look at those bills, I sit down and cry," says Cook. "I just don't understand why the Senate doesn't help. I would work if I could."

But that is not an option for Cook, recently back from the hospital after a long stay because of a negative reaction to a flu shot. Her working days are long over.

She is known as "Nana" in the neighborhood. Everyone knows her. She spent years singing in the choir and doing community service for her church. And she served as an elections official — she is a lifelong Democrat.

Now, when she needs some help herself — well, her social worker from the Office on Aging's Senior Service Network agency Project KEEN, Rosemary Butler, puts it this way, "Social workers are only as good as their resources. How can I help her when there isn't anything in place?"

Not that Butler, a determined woman, is giving up. She is trying to cobble together some stop-gap help — financially hard-pressed private charities may pay a bit and the folks at the church haven't forgotten Cook.

But with those huge costs, private help only goes so far.

See **BITTER PILLS** *page 52*

D.C. OFFICE ON AGING NEWSLETTER

Money Management Programs Offered by Legal Counsel for the Elderly

Legal Counsel for the Elderly (LCE) is accepting new clients for its money management and representative payee program. The program, funded by the D.C. Office on Aging, is administered by LCE for clients in the District of Columbia.

The program offers daily money management services to elderly, disabled and low income persons who find it difficult to budget or simply pay routine bills and keep track of their financial matters. The program matches trained and bonded volunteers with needy individuals who do not have friends or relatives able to help.

Two types of money management assistance are generally available for clients: bill payer services and representative payee services.

The bill payer client maintains control over all decisions about his or her funds, and only needs help keeping things organized.

The representative payee client is not able to handle funds and make decisions; the volunteer appointed to serve as the client's payee has authority to manage federal benefits on behalf of the client.

Volunteers can be appointed as representative payees for federal benefits on behalf of clients only from such agencies as Social Security, the Veterans Administration, the Railroad Retirement Board and the Office of Personal Management.

If clients have other sources of income, such as a private pension, they are eligible only for the bill payer services.

The program also provides insurance coverage of the clients' funds as well as monitoring of the volunteers' assistance.

The program is available for D.C. residents who are age 60 years or older with incomes of less than $20,069 per year ($28,399 for couples) and assets (excluding home) of $30,000 or less.

Call Terry Cooney of LCE at 202-434-2048 for more information or to make a referral.

Free Services to D.C. Residents 60+

Got a Question. . . Problem?

Together we will **SHO** you how to:

- ✔ Get answers to legal questions
- ✔ Write a consumer complaint letter
- ✔ Ask for D.C. services
- ✔ Get a health care power of attorney
- ✔ Complete a small claims complaint
- ✔ Check for benefits
- ✔ Contact an attorney
- ✔ and MUCH MORE!

Delay no more! Come in today!

Self Help Offices:
Walk in — first come, first served

IONA Senior Services,
4125 Albemarle St., N.W., • 202-895-9492.
Open Mondays and Fridays from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

St. Luke Catholic Church Rectory,
4925 E Capitol St., S.E., • 202-582-2660.
Open Wednesdays and Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Gingras Ecumenical Center,
St. Augustine Catholic Church,
1419 V St., N.W., • 202-387-6866.
Open Mondays and Tuesdays from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

AARP • IONA Senior Services • AARP Legal Counsel for the Elderly
Part of the Senior Service Network, supported by the D.C. Office on Aging.

Attention District Residents
Utility Discount Day

You may be eligible for discounts on your utility bills.

One place... One Application

October 17, 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.
at the
Washington Convention Center
900 9th St., N.W., Washington, D.C.

We will be accepting applications from District of Columbia residents.
With one form, you may be eligible for discounts on utility bills from:

Washington Gas • Pepco • DC Water & Sewer Authority • Verizon

You will also be able to apply for the
Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).

For more information, please call the D.C. Energy Hotline at ***(202) 673-6750.***

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

of Persons in Household	Maximum Annual Salary
1	$13,290
2	$17,910
3	$22,530
4	$27,150
5	$31,770
6	$36,390
7	$41,010
8	$45,630

For family units with more than 8 members, add $4,620 each additional member.

BRING THE FOLLOWING

- Proof of household income
- ID
- Social Security card
- Recent lease/rent receipt if your heat is included in your rent
- Recent utility bills for:
  - Electric
  - Gas
  - Telephone *(Proof of Age)*
  - Water *(Proof of Homeownership)*

PLACE

Washington Convention Center
900 9th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C.

Metro/Orange/Red Blue

Metrobus:
42, 60, 62, 64, 67, 80, S2, P6, S3, S4. S5, X2

Apply and Save

District of Columbia Energy Office

BITTER PILLS

From page 51

There are a couple of other possibilities. The biggest enemy will be the paperwork.

Medicaid has a "spend down" program. So, Butler and Cook are collecting all of her drug bills for the last six months. They hope they can convince Medicaid that because Cook has spent so much money on drugs, she really is eligible for Medicaid drug relief — at least $400 a month.

This is a tortured applications process. Butler expects to be turned down the first time around, but it could bring results eventually.

And Cook is looking into whether she can get cheaper generic drugs or maybe buy in bulk through the mail from a discounter.

The drug industry also offers free or low-cost help. The Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (www.phrma.org) has a directory of prescription drug assistance programs. The address is 1100 15th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005.

But wouldn't it be nice, Cook muses, if Congress figured out a way to pass a federal program? That would be the best medicine of all.

—Joe Volz, Copley News Service

D.C. OFFICE ON AGING NEWSLETTER

Community Calendar

October events

9th • 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Barney Senior Program will host a forum presented by Washington Hospital Center titled "The ABC's of Diabetes, Continued" at the Samuel Kelsey Apartments, 3322 14th Street, N.W. For further information, contact Donna Ellis at 202-939-9020.

9th • 1 to 1:45 p.m.

Washington Hospital Center's Senior Focus program presents "Grief and Loss" at the Model Cities Senior Wellness Center & Columbia Senior Center, 1901 Evarts Street, N.E. For information, call 202-635-1900.

10th • 9:30 a.m.

Go to the Big Apple Circus, a show for all ages. Enjoy clowns, trapeze artists and more with Senior Citizens Counseling and Delivery Service. Cost is $10. Bus leaves for Dulles Town Center from 2451 Good Hope Rd., S.E. For ticket information, call 202-678-2800.

10th & 11th • 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

55 Alive Mature Driving Program. This driving program is a classroom refresher course for drivers 50 years of age and older, presented by AARP. Students who take the course may receive a premium discount on their automobile insurance. Cost: $10. Lunch will be available for students. For more information, contact the Senior Citizens Counseling and Delivery Service Center, 2451 Good Hope Rd., S.E. Call 202-678-2800 for details.

11th • Deadline for reservations

Columbia Senior Center will be taking a trip to New York City and Atlantic City December 3rd to 5th. Cost is $300 per person, double occupancy, $45 additional single supplement. The trip includes: round-trip motor coach transportation, day trip to Atlantic City, two nights in New Jersey, two breakfasts, two dinners in NYC, ticket to The Producers, ticket to the Radio City Music Hall Christmas Show, a guided tour of NYC or a visit to the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island, baggage handling, taxes and meal gratuity. You must reserve your space and pay in full by October 11. Contact Monica Carroll at 202-328-3270.

16th • 1 p.m.

Senior Citizens Counseling and Delivery Service presents a workshop called "Balancing Your Skin Health From Age 1 to 100." Learn how to give your skin the best care at any age using healthy and holistic alternatives. Event is located at 2451 Good Hope Rd., S.E. and is free. For further information, call 202-678-2800.

17th • 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Pennsylvania Dutch Tour. Enjoy a tour of an Amish home, the Hayloft Candle Barn, a tour of Amish farmlands and lunch at the Kitchen Kettle The cost is $25 (lunch not included in price). The bus leaves and returns to the Senior Citizens Counseling and Delivery Service, 2451 Good Hope Rd., S.E. Call 202-678-2800 for more information.

18th • 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

United Planning Organization/Project Keen cordially invite you to the 35th Anniversary of the Phillip T. Johnson Senior Center at the Washington Navy Yard, Crystal Room, 1411 Parsons Avenue, S.W. Donation: $20. Free parking, ID required. RSVP: Robinette Livingston, 202-398-5948.

22nd • 12:30 to 2 p.m.

Support group for caregivers of individuals with early-stage dementia meets at IONA Senior Center, 4125 Albemarle Street, N.W. Registration required. Share your concerns, achievements, and frustrations about caregiving. No fee, but donations are accepted. The facilitators are Cheryl Shreiner and Danny Wilson. Call 202-895-9478 or e-mail cshreine@iona.org for more information.

24th • 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Barney Neighborhood House will sponsor a trip to Baltimore Harbor and the Baltimore Aquarium. The trip leaves from 504 Kennedy Street, N.W. The cost of $20.50 includes the bus trip, box lunch and tickets to the aquarium. To reserve your spot, contact Donna Ellis at 202-939-9020.

25th • 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

A Halloween sidewalk sale will be hosted by the Senior Citizens Counseling and Delivery Service outdoors in front of center at 2451 Good Hope Rd., S.E. This annual event is growing larger each year due to its success. Don't pass up this fun event where everyone gets a bargain. Vendors will be showcasing a variety of products, including: arts & crafts items, cosmetics, men's, women's and children's clothing, home accessories, jewelry and much more. Vendors are invited to participate. Vendors fee: $50. For more information, call 202-678-2800.

26th • 1 to 5 p.m.

Participate in a program called "Mama, Do You Know Me?" a caregivers' guide to coping with Alzheimer's disease. Professionals trained in the area of gerontology will present a workshop to family members and caregivers who are responsible for caring for individuals diagnosed with Alzheimer's. Participants in the workshop will receive information on such topics as who is affected, how is it diagnosed, and the mental and physical resources in the community that can provide assistance. The event is free; however registration is required. This event is hosted by Senior Citizen's Counseling and Delivery Service and will be held at the Geriatric and Alzheimer's Medically Supervised Day Treatment Program, 2B#4 DC Village Lane, S.W. For additional information, call 202-678-2800.

30th • 10 a.m. to noon

Barney Neighborhood House will host a free workshop on "Advance Directives & Living Wills." The workshop, to be conducted by attorneys, will take place at the Samuel Kelsey Apartments at 3322 14th St., N.W. For reservations, call Donna Ellis at 202-939-9020.

30th • 1 to 3 p.m.

Celebrate Columbia Senior Center's 30th anniversary at its open house. Lots of fun with entertainment from the Columbia Senior Center Line Dancers and Choir. The open house is at 1250 Taylor St., N.W. For more information, call 202-328-3270.

31st • 1 p.m.

Senior Citizens Counseling and Delivery Service's Annual Halloween Party! Everyone is invited to dress up in their favorite costume and come out to have fun. Participate in the costume fashion show and win a prize. Enjoy a Halloween trivia game, refreshments and more. The event is located at 2451 Good Hope Rd., S.E. and is free. For details, call 202-678-2800.

November events

November 6th • 1 to 1:45 p.m.

Washington Hospital Center's Senior Focus program will be presenting a program on nutrition at the Model Cities Senior Wellness Center & Columbia Senior Center, 1901 Evarts Street, N.E. For information, call 202-635-1900.

November 23rd • 8 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Harlem Song at the New York's famous Apollo Theater. Don't miss this exciting opportunity to see the foot-stomping musical by George Wolfe. *Harlem Song* is appearing for a limited time, and only a few weeks remain to see this production of talented dancers and vocalists. Immediately following the show, guests will enjoy a dinner at the famous Sylvia's Restaurant located in Harlem. The bus will leave from Senior Citizens Counseling and Delivery Service headquarters located at 2451 Good Hope Rd., S.E. Cost: $90. For more information, call 202-678-2800.

Ongoing

2nd and 4th Wednesdays of each month • 2 to 3 p.m.

The Coping with Memory Loss Support Group offers support to seniors with early dementia. Members talk about the emotional impact on themselves and their loved ones. The group meets at the IONA Senior Center, 4125 Albemarle St., N.W. No fee, but donations accepted. The facilitator is Sean Hall. To register, call 202-895- 9462 or e-mail shall@iona.org.

"Team Up for Fire Safety"

FIRE PREVENTION WEEK

October 6 to 12

***Kick-off* Monday , Oct. 7, 2002**

Location: Engine 24, 5101 Georgia Avenue, N.W. • Time: 10 a.m.

SPOTLIGHT ON AGING

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Cherishing Freedom

Playing Freedom

Vintage Freedom

The Honorable Walter E. Washington, the first appointed and elected Mayor of D.C., receives award from Mayor Anthony A. Williams honoring his many years of senior leadership.

Singing Freedom