



VOLUN-PEER NEWSLETTER

A Publication of the Schuylkill County Ombudsman Program
Dedicated to Volunteers and PEERs

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Christmas

Word Search

Name: _____

S L E S N O W M A N S T A R S
T F N R Z Q G R E E T I N G S
O C R F R O S T Y Y J I N A G
C Z A U E O Q M T M Y I P Y B
K F A M I L Y I M Q D B L A H
I S R R F T V G W I A N G E L
N L C P E I C E T R N V V P D
G E Y H T I U A S Q E I F J S
F I F A R W N Z K M C A B B R
Z G N P I I E D F E A S T T Y
X H U R B J S G E Y O N U H L
Y Q S P I R I T G E Q E G Q H
S S C O L G P K M N R O A E Z
P Q B G I F T C Q A O O P C R
P R E S E N T S G J S G Y X S

Word list:

ANGEL	FROSTY	NATIVITY	SPIRIT
CHRISTMAS	FRUITCAKE	PRESENTS	STAR
EGGNOG	GIFT	REINDEER	STOCKING
ELVES	GREETINGS	SLEIGH	TIDINGS
FAMILY	MANGER	SNOWMAN	WREATH

SunCatcherStudio.com

Training Calendar

Ombudsmen who volunteer their time and talent are invited and encouraged to participate in online training modules offered by the PA Department of Aging, Consumer Voice, the Learning Management System (LMS) as well as

in-person Network Meetings. All Certified Ombudsmen (Staff and Volunteers) are required to log 18 hours of continuing education for each federal fiscal year (October 1 through September 30). The next **Network Meeting** will

held virtually via Zoom on February 12, 2026. Details and the link to the meeting will be provided as soon as they are available.

PEER Meetings are held in individual homes and when requested.



Did you know?

- The names of two of Santa's reindeer come from weather phenomena - Donner (thunder) and Blitzen (lightening)
- President Ulysses S. Grant made Christmas a Federal Holiday in 1870
- 364 gifts were given in the "12 Days of Christmas"
- The real-life department store in the movie "Miracle on 34th Street" is Macy's in New York

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Let's Go Ice Skating!

Ice Skating is the recreation and sport of gliding across an ice surface on blades fixed to the bottoms of shoes (skates). The activity of ice skating has given rise to two distinctive sports: figure skating, which involves the performance of various jumps, spins, and dance movements; and speed skating and short-track speed skating, both of which are forms of racing on ice skates. Ice hockey is the best-known team sport that involves skating.

The first skates were likely made from shank or rib bones of elk, oxen, reindeer, and other animals. It is not known when the metal runner was introduced, but early Dutch prints depict skates with metal blades. Until the middle of the 19th

century the metal portion of the skate was fastened to a wooden base or foot-plate and the whole of the skate was fastened to the foot with leather thongs or straps. A major improvement came from the United States in 1850 when E.W. Bushnell of Philadelphia introduced the all-steel skate, which replaced the cumbersome wooden foot-



The first skates were likely made from shank or rib bones of animals.

plate. The main developments in the figure skate after 1900 were the addition of the toe pick, a group of sawlike teeth located at the toe of the blade, which enabled skaters to obtain better purchase in the ice when doing certain jumps.

Research suggests that the earliest ice skating happened in southern Finland more than 4,000 years ago. This was done to save energy during winter journeys on naturally frozen bodies of water such as lakes, ponds, and rivers.

Courtesy of Britannica.com

Resident Rights Review

Our quarterly review includes the Right to Receive or Refuse Visitors.

This is the time of year when nursing homes, personal care homes, assisted living centers, and older adult day living centers receive the most visitors they will see all year.

You, as residents, have the right to receive any visitor of your choosing and may refuse a visitor

permission to enter the room or may end the visit at any time.

You have the right to immediate access by family and reasonable access by others (with consent).

You have the right to communicate confidentially with others.

Members of community organizations or legal services may visit at a time that is convenient for you.

Visitors may talk to you and offer you personal, social, or legal services.

Visitors may help you claim your rights and benefits through individual assistance, counseling, organizational activity, legal action, or other forms of representation - including Ombudsman Services.

You may receive visitors at any time of the day or night, but should be cognizant of your roommate(s) and can opt to meet in a private area so as not to disturb them or disclose private/confidential information.

"Residents may also accept visitors at any time of the day or night".

The Story Behind the Poinsettia

The Poinsettia, a vibrant red flower that graces our Christmas décor, has a rich history of cultivation and symbolism, beginning with the ancient Aztec people of Mexico, where it thrives as a tall perennial shrub, often growing over 10 feet in height in its native environment. Poinsettias have since become one of the most popular blooming houseplants to celebrate the Christmas season, with an estimated 35 million sold annually as gifts

and décor.

The ancient Aztec people of Mexico cultivated this plant and saw it as a symbol of purity long before the arrival of Christianity in the Western Hemisphere. They called it *cuexilaxochitl*, which translates to "mortal flower that perishes and withers like all that is pure." The red bracts were used to make dyes for fabrics and milky sap



Native Mexican poinsettias thrive as a tall shrub, and often grow over 10 feet!

served as medicine to treat a variety of ailments. In the 17th century, the Poinsettia was adopted in the *Fiesta of Santa Pesebre*, a nativity procession, since it naturally blooms during the Christmas season.

Poinsettias were introduced to the United States in the 1800s and, to date, there are over 100 different varieties.

Volunteer Opportunities

The following Homes and Centers have openings for a caring volunteer:

NURSING HOMES:

Broad Mountain (Frackville), Edenbrook (Pottsville), Green Valley (Pottsville), Greenwood Center (Hometown), Orwigsburg Center, Ridgeview (Shenandoah Heights), Rosewood (Schuylkill Haven), Seton Manor (Orwigsburg), Shenandoah Senior Living Community, and St. Luke's University Health Network Long-Term Care Unit (Coaldale).

PERSONAL CARE:

Heritage Mills (Tower City), Renaissance Senior Living at Pinebrook (Orwigsburg), Providence Place (Pottsville and Pine Grove campuses), The Birches at Shenandoah Senior Living Community.

ASSISTED LIVING:

Luther Ridge at Seider's Hill (Pottsville)



Volunteers are always needed to visit our long-term care consumers.

OLDER ADULT DAY LIVING:

Eldergarden (Pottsville)

LIFE CENTER:

LIFE Geisinger at Miner's Loft (Minersville)

Free training is provided, including on-line and virtual modules.

Contact Eileen for further details.

Easy Christmas Punch

Everyone can enjoy this holiday drink - courtesy of The Pioneer Woman.

INGREDIENTS:

For the Ice Cubes:

8 sprigs of rosemary
1 - 4 oz. container of pomegranate arils

For the Punch:

3 cups unsweetened pomegranate juice

1 cup orange juice
1 (2 inch) piece of fresh ginger, peeled and sliced
1 (25.4 oz) bottle of sparkling apple juice (such as Martinelli's)

DIRECTIONS:

For the Ice Cubes: Snip the rosemary into 1 inch pieces. Add a few pomegranate seeds and a sprig of rosemary into two ice cube trays filled with water. Freeze 12

hours.

For the Punch:

Combine the pomegranate, orange, and pineapple juices. Add ginger and let sit overnight (or up to 24 hours).

When ready to serve, place a few ice cubes in a tall glass and fill halfway with the fruit juice mixture. Top with sparkling apple juice and serve immediately.



Holiday Dad Jokes

What do Snowmen eat for Breakfast?

Frosted Flakes!

Why did the Christmas Tree go to the barber?

It needed a "trim"!

What do you call Santa when he stops moving?

Santa Pause!

Why did the Christmas lights go the principals office?

They were too bright for their own good!

Why does Santa go down the chimney?

Because it "soots" him!

What do you call an elf who sings?

Elf-is Presley!

What do you get when you cross a bell with a skunk?

Jingle Smells!

What do you call an old snowman?

A puddle!

Where do snowmen keep their money?

In a snowbank!

What do you get when you combine a snowman and a vampire?

Frostbite!

Why did the gingerbread man visit the doctor?

He was feeling crummy!

Why are Christmas trees bad at sewing?

They are always dropping their needles!



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Ombudsman Services are provided by
MidPenn Legal Services under a contract
with the Schuylkill County Office of Senior
Services. The program is monitored by the
Pennsylvania Department of Aging.

"Redefining A.I."

Every Sunday morning at 9:10 am, my cell phone "pings" and I receive a "Screen Time" Report. When I first starting getting these reports, I was logging a little over 2 hours of screen time. Not bad, considering. Over the summer, I received a report that really opened my eyes - the report said I was spending 6+ hours PER DAY on my phone! I was appalled with myself! Did I suddenly turn into a 14 year-old? What was I doing? Full Disclosure: Doom Scrolling at night. Most importantly, HOW do I make this number go down?

The answer was simple: STAY. OFF. THE. PHONE. Easier said than done. But with willpower, and a deeper concentration on things that matter, I am slowly, but surely, making that number decrease. In fact, this past Sunday's report said I was "down" 18% from the previous week.

Christmas is just a few short weeks away and many of our young people, and those young at heart, may receive some type of technology as a gift from Santa, or a family member.

I have visited with many long-term care consumers and noticed signs on the

doors that say "Recording Device in Place" so that family members can keep a watchful eye on their loved ones.

Many of these same residents also have



digital picture frames that allow precious memories to be uploaded from another location. All well and good, but, is it now becoming a substitute for an actual visit? We live in a world that is becoming very distant and we now have devices doing our thinking for us (can anyone travel anywhere without a GPS?).

Artificial Intelligence and Chat GPT can be useful tools as long as they are not used to replace the "human touch". Let's redefine A.I. and make it **"Actual Intervention"**. A picture may be worth a thousand words, but an in-person visit is worth its weight in gold.

Our volunteers make sure that every resident they visit is made to feel like they are the most important person in the world. It's the gift that keeps on giving.

As we close another year (WOW! How did THAT happen???), please accept my sincerest wish for a Merry Christmas and a Happy, Healthy, and prosperous New Year!

Eileen