

Volunteer Newsletter

Volume 5, Issue 2



We are so excited and grateful to have our volunteers back at our centers! The volunteers are the backbone to so many of our programs.

We want to thank you all for being so patient with us while we were dealing with the COVID crisis.

We truly appreciate everything you do and wanted to say

Thank You!

Monthly calendars for each center are available at
www.stepcorp.org/Center-Calendars

Valentine's Day ♦ St. Patrick's Day ♦ Easter

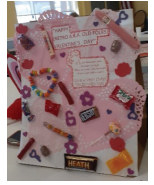
Things that we do!

Jane Thompson – Centers for Healthy Aging Manager –

I always make corned beef brisket and cabbage for St. Patrick's Day. An old friend from the Messiah Senior Center (now RiverWalk) gave me some tips on how to make a perfect brisket ...her secret...after the brisket is boiled place it side up in a baking dish and pat the fat with dark brown sugar until it is covered. Put it in the oven on low temperature while cabbage boils in the pot, it turns out great every year!



Erin Bissman – Renovo Center – For Valentine's Day we had everyone at the Renovo Center decorate their own bag. They were judged by an independent consultant and prizes were awarded. We are going to have a pot of gold competition for St. Patrick's Day. Hoping to see some very creative pots of gold!



Tara Coleman – CCCC Center – We added a new member to our team!!! Lane David Coleman was born on Wednesday, February 9th, at 8:03 am. He was 10 pounds 4 ounces and 21.5 inches long. Tara and family are doing great.



Tammy Frye – Lincoln Center – I'll be enjoying a fun day wearing green and playing games at the Lincoln Center with all our friends.



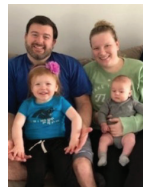
Becky MacIntyre – Mill Hall Center – I can't wait until St. Patty's Day!!!! I lived in Michigan for over 30 years, so my holidays are usually based on what "Detroiters" do. St. Patrick's Day is a day of drinking green beer, eating lots of corn beef & cabbage and going to the St. Patrick's Day Parade in downtown Detroit. This year will be a little different since I will be in Mill Hall, Pennsylvania, but I plan to make a HUGE pot of cabbage and watch the parade via the internet.



Amber Newell – Riverwalk Center - My husband and I usually don't celebrate St. Patrick's Day, but we do celebrate Easter! We attend a resurrection Sunday service and celebrate Jesus Christ rising from the dead. We then like to have a lunch with family.



Brenda McDermitt – Jersey Shore Center - On Easter weekend, the family gets together for good food and lots of fun and love. Last year we had an Easter egg hunt on Saturday for our granddaughter, Maddie, who was 21 months old. She had so much fun finding the "stuffed" plastic eggs of all sizes that we ended up doing a second hunt the next day as well! Now she's another year older and so this year might be even better!! It's always so much fun with the little ones around. This year we have a grandson, Declan, who will be 4 months old at Easter. Maddie will have to find Declan's eggs, too. I'm sure she won't mind!



Carly Engel - Loyalsock Center - My family and I are Irish and it is one of my dad's favorite holidays, so for St. Patrick's Day my family always gets together to celebrate. My mom makes a corn beef and cabbage dish every year and we listen to Irish music. I hope to have some fun St. Patty's Day crafts at Loyalsock Center coming up in March!



Sarah Noble – Meck Center - I am always excited to celebrate St. Patrick's Day because my husband's family makes an Irish themed meal every year. To end the meal, we have Welsh cakes. The cakes are shaped like little pancakes, with currants and spices in them. They are one of my favorite deserts. My favorite Easter activity is coloring Easter eggs. My family always has an egg decorating party the week before Easter. It is so much fun to see all the different colors and designs we come up with. Have a happy Easter and St. Patrick's Day!



Helen Grosso - Volunteer Coordinator Liaison - Festivities at the Meck Center include making your own Mardi Gras mask, along with trivia and other activities. More people seem to come out for Mardi Gras than St. Patrick's Day.



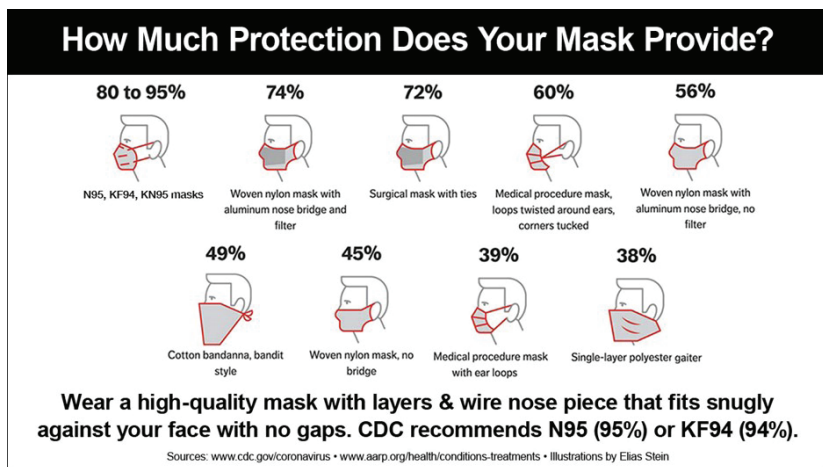


COVID Tests & High Quality Masks!

Tests and high-quality masks can now be had without cost. Your household may order three free at-home tests at **www.COVIDtests.gov**, or by dialing **1-800-232-0233**.

Health insurance companies, soon to include all Medicare beneficiaries, are also required to reimburse individuals for up to eight COVID-19 tests/month/person when purchased commercially, and some in-network pharmacies even provide test kits directly to subscribers with no out-of-pocket charges. The federal government is also distributing 400 million free N95 masks. They were set to be shipped first to CVS and Rite Aid pharmacies, with other pharmacies and community health centers that were previously approved as COVID-19 vaccination sites to stock them next.

The sketch below indicates the importance of wearing N95, KF94, or KN95 masks.





HELEN'S HELPFUL HINTS

All Shamrocks are clovers, but not all clovers are shamrocks!

What's a CLOVER

"Clover" can refer to any of the approximately 300 species within the Trifolium family. The term "trefoil" also describes this family of plants and gives us a hint as to its literal meaning—the tri- or tre- prefix meaning "three" and the root -foil or -folium meaning leaf. Thus, trefoil plants are those that have a three-leafed structure.

Some of the most common clover species include strawberry clover, white clover, red clover, Swedish clover, Alsatian clover, and black clover.

What's a SHAMROCK

A "shamrock," on the other hand, has some more specific parameters. The term itself comes from the Gaelic word seamróg, which literally means "little clover." While there is not a 100% consensus, most botanists agree that a shamrock most likely refers to either the white clover (*trifolium repens*) or the suckling clover (*trifolium dubium*).

More than anything, the shamrock is a symbol for Ireland and St. Patrick's Day. And notably, this symbol specifically has three leaves, not four. This particular point has to do with the lore around St. Patrick, who was a Christian missionary. The stories indicate that St. Patrick used the shamrock in his mission to demonstrate the principles of the Holy Trinity – three leaflets united by a common stalk.

But what about four-leafed clovers?

Since, by definition, a "normal" clover only has three leaflets, a clover with four leaflets is technically just a mutated clover. This mutation is quite rare, and Druids (priests of the ancient Celts) claimed that a four-leafed clover was a good luck charm against evil spirits. These days, most people have forgotten about the "evil spirits" part and just remember that they are supposed to be good luck.

Similar to how St. Patrick used the three leaves of the shamrock to explain the Holy Trinity, some people also believe that the four leaflets on a four-leafed clover represent faith, hope, love, and luck.



AARP to offer free tax prep at STEP Inc.

Appointment scheduling began Jan. 31

AARP Foundation is providing tax assistance and preparation through its Tax-Aide program at STEP Clinton County Community Center, 124 E. Walnut St., Lock Haven beginning Feb. 7.... and it's completely free!

There have been changes made to how the program works this year. Taxpayers interact with IRS-certified Tax-Aide volunteers in two short, in-person meetings to exchange documents.

You will schedule your first appointment on a Monday to fill out paperwork and give your documents to a Tax-Aide volunteer and then leave the site. If you wish, you may bring copies of your documents instead of originals. Your tax return will be prepared and documents kept in a secure location during this time.

A second appointment will be scheduled for the following Monday. At this appointment your completed tax return will be explained, and your documents returned. Masks that cover your nose and mouth are required.

Plan to arrive no more than five minutes before your appointment time. If you are ill, please call the STEP Center to cancel the appointment and the appointment will be rescheduled.

If married filing jointly, both husband and wife must be present to have their return prepared.

Help is available starting Monday, Feb. 7, and ending Monday, April 11, at the center. Appointments are required. Starting Monday, Jan. 31, you may call 570-858-5800 weekdays from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. to schedule an appointment.

AARP Tax-Aide provides free tax preparation help to people with low to moderate incomes, giving preference to people over age 50. The program is offered in conjunction with the IRS and AARP membership is not required. You must have 1 or 2 letters from the IRS this year. The IRS will mail the letters on Jan. 19. Letter #6475 states exactly what you received in 2021 stimulus money. Letter #6419 states what you received in 2021 Advanced Child Tax Credit.

AARP will not prepare your return without this documentation. Bring your federal and state tax returns for the previous two years, 2019 and 2020.

Bring any of the following tax documents that you received:

- Photo identification (example: driver's license)
- SSA-1099 form if you were paid Social Security
- Birth dates, photo ID and Social Security numbers for all taxpayers and all taxpayer's dependents. (You can use either your Social Security Card or Benefit Statement Form SSA-1099)
- RRB-1099-R US Railroad Retirement Board forms
- Checking account routing and account numbers for direct deposit
- Form 1095A if you purchased health insurance through the Marketplace (Exchange)
- All wage and earning statements (for example, Form W-2 or Form W-2G)
- All 1099-INT, 1099-DIV, 1099-B showing interest and/or dividends and documentation showing original purchase price of assets sold
- All pension and retirement statements (Form 1099-R)
- 1099-MISC, 1099-K, or other 1099 forms.
- A copy of last year's federal and state returns
- Property tax receipts or signed rental certificate for the Pennsylvania Property Tax/Rent Rebate program
- Any other documents showing income not reported on above documents (for example, 1099 MISC)

Questions? Call STEP Office of Aging at 570-323-3096.



St. Patrick's Day is celebrated annually on March 17, the anniversary of his death in the fifth century. The Irish have observed this day as a religious holiday for over 1,000 years. On St. Patrick's Day, which falls during the Christian season of Lent, Irish families would traditionally attend church in the morning and celebrate in the afternoon. Lenten prohibitions against the consumption of meat were waived and people would dance, drink and feast—on the traditional meal of Irish bacon and cabbage.

Who was St. Patrick?

Saint Patrick, who lived during the fifth century, is the patron saint of Ireland and its national apostle. Born in Roman Britain, he was kidnapped and brought to Ireland as a slave at the age of 16. He later escaped, but returned to Ireland and was credited with bringing Christianity to its people.

In the centuries following Patrick's death (believed to have been on March 17, 461), the mythology surrounding his life became ever more ingrained in the Irish culture: Perhaps the most well-known legend of St. Patrick is that he explained the Holy Trinity (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) using the three leaves of a native Irish clover, the shamrock.

When was the first St. Patrick's Day celebrated?

Since around the ninth or 10th century, people in Ireland have been observing the Roman Catholic feast day of St. Patrick on March 17. The first St. Patrick's Day parade took place not in Ireland, but in America. Records show that a St. Patrick's Day parade was held on March 17, 1601, in a Spanish colony in what is now St. Augustine, Florida. The parade, and a St. Patrick's Day celebration a year earlier were organized by the Spanish Colony's Irish vicar Ricardo Artur.

More than a century later, homesick Irish soldiers serving in the English military marched in New York City on March 17, 1772, to honor the Irish patron saint. Enthusiasm for the St. Patrick's Day parades in New York City, Boston and other early American cities only grew from there.

Growth of St. Patrick's Day Celebrations

Over the next 35 years, Irish patriotism among American immigrants flourished, prompting the rise of so-called "Irish Aid" societies like the Friendly Sons of Saint Patrick and the Hibernian Society. Each group would hold annual parades featuring bagpipes (which actually first became popular in the Scottish and British armies) and drums.

In 1848, several New York Irish Aid societies decided to unite their parades to form one official New York City St. Patrick's Day Parade. Today, that parade is the world's oldest civilian parade and the largest in the United States, with over 150,000 participants. Each year, nearly 3 million people line the 1.5-mile parade route to watch the procession, which takes more than five hours. Boston, Chicago, Philadelphia and Savannah also celebrate the day with parades involving between 10,000 and 20,000 participants each.

The Irish in America

Up until the mid-19th century, most Irish immigrants in America were members of the Protestant middle class. When the Great Potato Famine hit Ireland in 1845, close to 1 million poor and uneducated Irish Catholics began pouring into America to escape starvation.

Despised for their alien religious beliefs and unfamiliar accents by the American Protestant majority, the immigrants had trouble finding even menial jobs.

When Irish Americans in the country's cities took to the streets on St. Patrick's Day to celebrate their heritage, newspapers portrayed them in cartoons as drunk, violent monkeys.

The American Irish soon began to realize, however, that their large and growing numbers endowed them with a political power that had yet to be exploited. They started to organize, and their voting bloc, known as the "green machine," became an important swing vote for political hopefuls. Suddenly, annual St. Patrick's Day parades became a show of strength for Irish Americans, as well as a must-attend event for a slew of political candidates.

In 1948, President Harry S. Truman attended New York City's St. Patrick's Day parade, a proud moment for the many Irish Americans whose ancestors had to fight stereotypes and racial prejudice to find acceptance in the New World.



The Chicago River Dyed Green

As immigrants spread out over the United States, other cities developed their own traditions. One of these is Chicago's annual dyeing of the Chicago River green. The practice started in 1962, when city pollution-control workers used dyes to trace illegal sewage discharges and realized that the green dye might provide a unique way to celebrate the holiday. That year, they released 100 pounds of green vegetable dye into the river—enough to keep it green for a week.



St. Patrick's Day Celebrations around the World

Today, people of all backgrounds celebrate St. Patrick's Day, especially throughout the United States, Canada and Australia. Although North America is home to the largest productions, St. Patrick's Day is celebrated around the world in locations far from Ireland, including Japan, Singapore and Russia. Popular St. Patrick's Day recipes include Irish soda bread, corned beef and cabbage and champ. In the United States, people often wear green on St. Patrick's Day.

In modern-day Ireland, St. Patrick's Day has traditionally been a religious occasion. In fact, up until the 1970s, Irish laws mandated that pubs be closed on March 17. Beginning in 1995, however, the Irish government began a national campaign to use interest in St. Patrick's Day to drive tourism and showcase Ireland and Irish culture to the rest of the world.

What do Leprechauns have to do with St. Patrick's Day?

One icon of the Irish holiday is the Leprechaun. The original Irish name for these figures of folklore is “lobaircin,” meaning “small-bodied fellow.” Belief in leprechauns probably stems from Celtic belief in fairies, tiny men and women who could use their magical powers to serve good or evil. In Celtic folktales, leprechauns were cranky souls, responsible for mending the shoes of the other fairies.

Though only minor figures in Celtic folklore, leprechauns were known for their trickery, which they often used to protect their much-fabled treasure. Leprechauns have their own holiday on May 13, but are also celebrated on St. Patrick's, with many dressing up as the wily fairies.



Article provided by the History Channel