

# Friends of Dennis Senior Citizens NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2026

Welcome to the Friends of Dennis Senior Citizens' Newsletter  
PO Box 287, South Dennis, MA 02660 508-385-5376  
For more news, visit us at [www.friendsofdenniseniors.com](http://www.friendsofdenniseniors.com)

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER



Happy New Year everyone! 2025 was a busy year for the Friends. We were able to assist many Dennis seniors in our community. Individuals who needed help with everything from heating and electric bills, to auto repairs, rent, dental bills and groceries.

The Springtime Jazz In Bloom was enjoyed by many as was the George DeShaw Memorial Golf Tournament fundraiser. The Friends once again sponsored American Red Cross blood drives in April and October of 2025. A total of 57 units were collected, with an impressive 34 units given in April alone! Thank you to all the people who come and give the gift of life, many who have been donating for several years. The next blood drive will take place on Saturday, April 25 at the Dennis Center for Active Living. Check our website for full details.

The Holidays are a busy time for the Friends. Months of planning go into our Christmas Giving Program. We get help and guidance from the staff at the Dennis Housing Authority, COA Outreach Coordinator, Julie Benoit and Transportation Coordinator, Dan Kiley. In addition, 30 volunteers participated in The Big Wrap, on December 11<sup>th</sup> and 10 volunteer drivers delivered 150 gift bags on the following Saturday. Thank you to all these amazing people who help us care for Dennis senior citizens!

To all our supporters who have donated to our 2025 Annual Appeal, your generosity allows us to help seniors in Dennis and supports social events and the important Christmas Giving Program. We greatly appreciate your contribution. If you haven't already, please consider making a tax-deductible donation. Your gift will go a long way in helping Dennis seniors in need.

Wishing you all a Happy and Healthy New Year!

James (Ed) France,  
Board President

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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## **SAVE THE DATE**

### **American Red Cross Blood Drive**

**Saturday, April 25  
9am - 2pm**

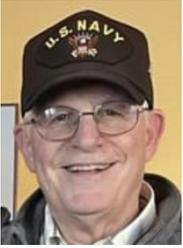
at the  
Dennis Center for Active Living  
1045 Route 134, South Dennis  
-Schedule an appointment online-  
[redcrossblood.org/give](http://redcrossblood.org/give)

## **THANK YOU TO ALL OUR CHRISTMAS GIVING VOLUNTEERS**

On December 11<sup>th</sup> volunteers gathered to participate in our Big Wrap. In 4 hours, over 2000 gifts were wrapped! On the following Saturday, volunteer drivers picked up the bags and made deliveries to 150 Dennis seniors bringing them Holiday cheer. We would like to thank all our volunteer elves who make this possible.

WRAPPERS: Deborah Adkins, Patty Sakellis, Jan Bogardus, Sherry Coletti, Gail Connell, Kathy Connors, Bill Creighton, Maryann & Lou Daniele, Kathy Delehunty, Margi Eckhouse, Pat Edwards, Gail Fleischer, Ed France, Mary Pat Furey, Patti Higgins, William Hopper, Ginny McCabe, Maddyson McKay, Priscilla Simons, Mary Lou & Dave Tanner, Bev Hall, Jean Tkachuk, Bonnie Willey, Nancy Wolf, Deborah London, Jennifer Ort, Patty Zwirko

DELIVERY: Jan Bogardus, Harle Carlsen, Kerry Cassin, Patti Higgins, Louise Hopper, Alex Hopper, William Hopper, Dan Kiley, Nancy Wolf, Kathy Connors



## THE VETERAN'S COLUMN

By Joseph Lawrence, Director

In this new year I want to follow up on our discussion of PTSD, (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.) This disorder not only has a direct impact on a Veteran's behavior and reactions to various stimuli, it can and usually does, create "Secondary Conditions". For many Veterans, PTSD develops into more than a mere diagnosis. The evolution of this condition over time begins to impact almost every part of a Veteran's existence. What I mean is that it goes beyond emotional and psychological effects, or adverse reactions to things or events that trigger responses in the Veteran.

These Secondary Conditions are issues affecting the daily life of a Veteran and I believe ought to be claimed with the VA, so a Veteran can get additional benefits. The criteria, of course, will be based on how much each of these conditions affect your everyday life. Each of these conditions have their own diagnostic code and rating criteria. So, it will be very important to establish the presence of PTSD and already be getting benefits for this condition. Once established, Conditions ordinarily considered Secondary to PTSD are:

- Hypertension- can be worsened by chronic stress.
- Sleep Apnea- triggered by anxiety or sleep disruption, potentially caused by events of the day.
- Migraines- a side effect of stress or trauma and depends on the frequency and severity of the migraines
- Gerd- stress-related acid production which causes a disruptive reaction of acid-reflux. This condition adversely impacts daily life and also disturbances during the night.

While most of these Secondary conditions may seem self-evident, the VA is normally looking for a medical diagnosis or evidence that may substantiate your opportunity for additional benefits.

To qualify for a PTSD VA rating, which needs to precede any claims for Secondary conditions, there are three things that a veteran needs to have:

- A current **diagnosis** from a psychiatrist, psychological, licensed social worker, or a mental health care practitioner who must diagnose the Veteran with PTSD.
- An in-service **stressor**
- A **connection** between the current diagnosis and the stressor

We do need to understand that PTSD is not presumed to

be related to service, unlike many of the other presumptive conditions related to Agent Orange or other toxins. Therefore, the Veteran needs to show that the stressful event causing PTSD occurred during service. However, this does not mean the Veteran must have been in combat. Any event that created a highly stressful situation could be considered a sufficient stressor. However, there are different rules for combat vs non-combat. The word of a Veteran may be sufficient, in and of itself, if the stressor occurred in combat. There are also records that can assist in proving a combat event that we need to keep in mind, Such as:

- Veteran's DD-214
- Specific medals and awards received by the Veteran
- Various unit records showing a specific date and location of the unit assignments.

In the event the Veteran was not in combat, more evidence may be required. This collection of evidence may fall into the following areas, which highlight an adequate stressor now causing a condition of PTSD.

Some examples are:

- Statements from fellow Veterans who served with you.
- Statements from family and/or friends who know you before and after service.

Finally, there needs to be a **Nexus** between the Veteran's PTSD stressor and the Veteran's in-service stressor. (Nexus is defined as a central link or connection. The Veteran would be viewed as right in the middle of this connection. This is similar to standing in the middle of an intersection). In this case, the Veteran must prove there is a strong connection between the PTSD diagnosis and the in-service stressor. Most likely, this needs to be some medical opinion that supports the NEXUS. In the event this is difficult to obtain, I would highly recommend obtaining records from the Vet Center nearest you. These locations have licensed social workers that can document the connection between the Veteran's stressor and the current diagnosis.

I realize that getting through this process may be long and arduous. I recommend persistence and dogged attention to gathering detail, as a formula for success. My friend who I have mentioned before took multiple years to get a proper rating of PTSD. Then the secondary diagnoses seemed to move along more smoothly.

References:

- 1- Hidden Struggles: The Physical effects of PTSD, by Dr. Sal Raichbach, Chief Clinical Officer
- 2- PTSD Symptoms in Military Veterans, by Hill and Ponton, Veterans Disability



## ED'S GARDENING TIPS

By Ed France, President

I always check the Old Farmer's Almanac for weather forecasts in our area. This year's forecast says winter temperatures will be above normal, while precipitation and snowfall will be below normal. It predicts the coldest

periods will occur in early January, and the snowiest periods will occur in early January and late February. April and May will end up warmer and drier than usual. The forecast for the summer says it will end up warmer and drier than normal with the hottest periods being in early June and early and mid-July. The Almanac also says to watch for tropical storms in late June and mid-August, while September and October temperatures and precipitation will be below normal.

## THE BIG WRAP AND CHRISTMAS GIVING

For the Friends, Christmas begins in September. Deciding on gifts, shopping and reaching out to volunteers. The reward for these months of planning is the joy it brings to everyone. Here are a few photos from the Big Wrap, where happy elves are wrapped in the joy of Christmas.



### GIFT BAGS DECORATED BY LOCAL CHILDREN

Thank you to all the children who stepped in to decorate 150 of the most beautiful bags ever! Their time and creative talents are very appreciated.

The seniors who receive these bags love seeing the art work and it makes them feel connected to the youngest members in our community.

All the children learned lessons in giving back, and helping their Community, and the Girl Scouts earned their Good Neighbor Badges!

The students at Scargo Preschool

The Sunday School class at the Dennis Union Church

The first grade Daisy Girl Scout troop #63510 from Ezra Baker Innovation School in West Dennis with troop leaders Brittany Binnig and Rebecca Farrell.

The Board of Directors would also like to thank the **Christmas Giving Committee** members who worked for months planning this event: Nancy Wolf, Carol & Joseph Lawrence, Deborah Adkins, Karin France, and Jan Bogardus.





Friends of Dennis Senior Citizens, Inc.  
 PO Box 287  
 South Dennis, MA 02660

Non-Profit  
 Organization  
 So. Yarmouth  
 MA 02664  
 Postal Permit #55



***Become a Friend... Join a Friend... Stay a Friend***

The Friends of Dennis Senior Citizens is a private charity funded by citizens like you. Your contribution supports programs like our Christmas Giving. The Dennis Council On Aging is a town agency and, although separate from the Friends, we have funded this municipal organization with annual grants and gifts. Today we support our seniors more directly by helping individual seniors in need. Our Planned Giving includes but is not limited to: Elder Services/Meals on Wheels, Golden Age Program at Dennis Center for Active Living, Visiting Nurse Association, Alzheimer's Family Support Group and the Sight Loss Services of Cape Cod.

Please consider donating to the Friends with a one-time donation, membership dues or an endowment. For \$10.00 per person per year or \$75.00 per person for a Lifetime Membership you will receive our quarterly newsletter in the mail.

***Please make checks payable to: Friends of Dennis Senior Citizens, PO Box 287, South Dennis, MA 02660***

***\*Donations can also be made securely online by visiting our website [www.FriendsofDennisSeniors.com](http://www.FriendsofDennisSeniors.com)***

Mr. Mrs. Ms. \_\_\_\_\_ Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_ Town \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

- 2025 Annual Appeal *(our fiscal year begins in July)*
- Membership

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_ Amount \_\_\_\_\_

To save postage, please send me an email acknowledgement *(please print clearly)*