



# Friends of Dennis Senior Citizens NEWSLETTER

Spring/Summer 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



Sunny yellow daffodils are the quintessential symbol of Spring! In March, the Friends brought 90 bouquets to Elder Services/Meals on Wheels for distribution to clients all across Dennis. I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to Blossoms of Cape Cod in Dennis Village for generously providing these lovely flowers.

The Friends hosted their semi-annual American Red Cross blood drive on Saturday, April 11, at Howell Hall in the Dennis Center for Active Living. Donating blood is crucial, as it can save lives. The next blood drive is scheduled for October.

Mother's Day should be a joyful occasion that celebrates moms, but for some it's like any other day. This year the Friends will once again send out cards to mothers who otherwise would not receive one. Some of these moms are Dennis seniors who are the primary caregivers for their disabled adult children. We do this because all mothers need to feel honored and remembered.

The Friends' jazz luncheon, previously held in May, will now take place in October. Since spring tends to be a busy time for many, we thought an end-of-summer celebration would be ideal. Expect the same excellent food, music, and a prize raffle. Visit our website for updates on this Octoberfest event.

A quick reminder: the George DeShaw Memorial Golf Tournament will take place on June 8th at Kings Way Golf Club, Yarmouth Port. Registration covers 18 holes, a golf cart, buffet lunch at Il Montebello Restaurant, and plenty of fun raffles. As our biggest fundraiser, your involvement helps support local senior citizens. Please check our website for information, registration forms, or easy online registration.

James (Ed) France,  
Board President

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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## SAVE THE DATE

**George DeShaw Memorial Golf  
Tournament**

Luncheon & Raffle Prizes

Monday, June 8th  
8:30 am start

At Kings Way Golf Club  
Yarmouth Port

Registration information online  
[FriendsOfDennisSeniors.com](http://FriendsOfDennisSeniors.com)

## WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBER

The Friends of Dennis Senior Citizens would like to welcome Patricia Zwirko as our newest Board member. Patty is a retired Registered Nurse with years of experience in adult & pediatric care. Patty brings to our Board a long history of volunteerism and her passion for helping people in the community. She especially enjoys working with older adults with nutritional insecurity. A few organizations where Patty has volunteered include Easthampton Community Center and Food Pantry, Council on Aging,

and Health Care For the Homeless in Springfield, MA.

After living and working in western Massachusetts she moved to Dennis in 2023 to enjoy her retirement on Cape Cod. When Patty is not volunteering, she spends time with her family in Connecticut, reading with her book club, gardening and playing mah jongg with friends.



- 1.) Forward I am heavy, backward I am not. What am I?
- 2.) What has one head, one foot, and four legs?
- 3.) What gets wetter as it dries?
- 4.) What has a bottom at the top?

## FAMILY TABLE COLLABORATIVE

Friends Support Fresh Meals

When our newest board member Patty Zwirko told us about Family Table Collaborative, we decided to help. This organization prepares fresh meals and distributes them throughout our area. What started out small, but with a big idea, has grown into an amazing collaboration of volunteers, businesspeople, and chefs. Family Table brings together food suppliers and grocery stores who donate great amounts of fresh food that may be about to expire but is still good quality and needs to be cooked or frozen right away. Then a collection of chefs from area restaurants put on their aprons and get to work. They decide what meals to prepare based on what ingredients

have been donated that week. It's always different and unpredictable, but it always turns out delicious.

The food pantry at the Dennis Center for Active Living (DCAL) receives meals weekly, but there is much more demand for this service. Because of this, the Friends have given the Family Table a \$4,000 grant to cover some of the costs for meals going to DCAL for the next 6 months.

We are always thinking about ways to help our senior population in town and Family Table is another local organization we can get behind.



### THE VETERAN'S COLUMN

By Joseph Lawrence, Director

Welcome to our 2026 Spring edition. This year we are taking a different approach. Rather than looking at the issues surrounding veterans who have been out of the military service for some time and are looking for some clarity on the medical issues confronting them, I want to focus on a relatively new program with the Veterans Administration.

Veterans who are just preparing to get out of military service, or have just been retired, often do not know how to transition to civilian life. The VA has very kindly put together a multi-step approach to guide the Veteran along the way. It is called "**VA Programs for Newly Separated Veterans**". It is comprised of programs that cover a myriad of issues facing veterans on this journey.

The VA does this by providing several key programs for newly separated veterans, most notably **VA Solid Start (VASS)**, which ensures three personalized calls within the first year of leaving service. Other key programs include the enhanced **Transition Assistance Program (TAP)**, the **Veteran and Spouse Transitional Assistance Grant Program** for employment, and the **Benefits Delivery at Discharge (BDD)** program.

**VA Solid Start (Calls & Support):** Newly separated service members receive three calls from VA reps at roughly 90, 180, and 365 days post-separation to help navigate benefits, including mental health, education, and health care. These calls are tailored to your specific needs rather than a "laundry list" of programs. Following each call, you will receive a **personalized email** that recaps the conversation and provides direct links to the resources discussed.

**These representatives can assist with a wide range of topics, including:**

- **Mental Health Services:** Prioritizing contact for those who accessed mental health care in their last year of service.
- **Health Care & Dental:** Connecting you to VA medical centers, or civilian doctors.
- **Education:** Guidance on using the GI Bill.

- **Housing:** Information on VA home loans and resources for those experiencing housing instability.
- **Employment:** Accessing career planning, job training, and guidance.
- **Claims Status:** Representatives can also check the status of pending disability compensation claims.

#### Important Tips for Veterans

- **Save the Number:** Add **1-800-827-0611** to your contacts as "**VA Solid Start**" so you know when they are calling.

#### Additional important steps in this process include:

- **Transition Assistance Program (TAP):** Provides comprehensive training, including a "**VA Benefits and Services**" course focused on career, education, and health benefits, accessible online or in-person up to two years before retiring or one year before separation. This consists of a one-day, in-person course.
- **VA Pre-Discharge Claim (BDD Program):** Allows veterans with a known separation date (180 to 90 days out) to file for disability benefits before leaving service, for faster compensation after discharge.
- **Veteran and Spouse Transitional Assistance Grant Program (V-STAG):** A new grant program for organizations that provide employment-based resources, career training, and financial assistance to veterans and their spouses.
- **Military OneSource:** Offers free, confidential counseling and services for up to 365 days after separation for veterans and their families.
- **VA Home Loan Program Reform Act:** A new program helping veterans in financial hardship avoid foreclosure by allowing the VA to assist with up to 30% of their unpaid loan balance.

**Remember, if you have any questions, please call your nearest Veterans Service Office:**

**Discover.VA.gov**

## MAY 25 ☆ MEMORIAL DAY



## DAFFODIL DAY

Bringing springtime cheer to seniors who are living alone has been a Friends tradition for many years. With help from Meals On Wheels coordinators and the drivers, 90 beautiful bouquets were delivered on March 19th. Once again, the Blossoms of Cape Cod florist in Dennis Village donated buckets of these happy yellow blooms. We hope we accomplished our mission and brought smiles to those receiving these cheerful harbingers of spring.



## JACK DELANEY LANE



There's a new road in the Town of Dennis and it was named after one of our founding members. John "Jack" Delaney was a well-known figure in the Town of Dennis and active in many community affairs. In 1979 the Friends of Dennis Senior Citizens were incorporated as a nonprofit with the intention to build a senior center. Jack was a founding member of the Friends and instrumental in the success of this mission.

When the Friends purchased the land to build the center on, it was Jack who convinced the other board members into buying extra land in case it was needed. After the original senior center was built and given to the Town of Dennis in 1984, and after extensive renovations were completed in 2024, the Friends still owned a remaining unused parcel of land which Habitat for Humanity purchased from the Friends to build homes on.

If it were not for Jack Delaney, who had foresight and determination, the land would not have been available for Habitat for Humanity and four new families who can now call Dennis their home. Everyone at the Friends are grateful to the Town of Dennis for allowing us to name this new street in memory of Jack.

On March 27, Habitat For Humanity held a Home Dedica-

tion for a dream that has been in the works since 2024. A large crowd gathered outside to listen to volunteers and sponsors as they spoke about their experiences in making this dream come true. Jack Delaney's daughter Judith Barnwell attended the ceremony and thanked everyone for honoring her father and wished the new homeowners well.

It was amazing how many people came together to make this possible: Volunteers in construction and landscaping, business sponsors, community organizations and local business that donated supplies. The list is vast and heartwarming. It was a cold, blustery March day, but everyone felt the warmth of community support in the air.



## ED'S GARDENING TIPS

By Ed France, President



It may not be a great year for blue hydrangeas. It's not the record-breaking snow fall that is detrimental for the bush, it's the temperature. It's the long, sustained single-digit temperatures that came before the blizzard that create harm. Blue hydrangeas put out their buds a year in advance, so they are more vulnerable to death by cold. Other hydrangea types, such as Annabelles, are not affected in the same way.

May is when you will be able to assess the damage, if any, to your hydrangeas. At that time, you can check to see if there are buds on the stalks coming directly from the ground. Once temps go into the single digits, it may cause little black buds that won't bloom. Check carefully to see if all the buds on a stalk are black before cutting off

the cane and cut only canes where all the buds are black. If some start to green up in late May, that cane may get some blue flowers this year after all. Black buds don't mean that the whole plant is dead. You just might have fewer blooms, but the plant will survive. If, after a close inspection, all the buds on the cane are dead, you should cut it off near the base.

You can overwinter blue hydrangeas by digging up the plants and storing them in pots someplace warmer. This can be quite a feat if you're talking about older, mature plants. Some hardier varieties from Proven Winners are Let's Dance Can Do! and Let's Dance Sky View. They do die to the ground but come back. They are slightly shorter and don't get as tall as other hydrangeas.

Answers: 1.) The word "Ton" 2.) A bed  
3.) A towel 4.) Your legs





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 \_\_\_\_\_

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