Billerica Housing
16 River Street • Billerica • MA • 01821 • Tel (978) 667-2175 • Fax (978) 667-1156

FEBRUARY 2021

NOTES & NEWS

Do Something Sweet
Whether it’s for your sweetheart, child, best friend, co-worker or neighbor, do something nice that will make them smile today!

Easy, Breezy Furniture Trick
You may think that pushing your couch and other furniture against the walls creates more room, but decorators say that pulling some pieces away from a wall, even just a few inches, will give your space an airy, comfortable vibe.

Tickled Pink
The latest taste in chocolate will have you seeing pink. Ruby chocolate gets its natural pink color and smooth, slight berry flavor from ruby cocoa beans. Picture-perfect for the Valentine’s Day holiday, this colorful sweet is being called the fourth chocolate, joining milk, dark, and white chocolate confections.

Try a 30-Day Challenge
If your New Year’s resolution is fading fast, try a 30-day challenge instead. Completing a daily goal or task for the shorter time frame is more attainable for most people. But 30 days is still long enough to be challenging and to create a habit that can become part of your life for the long haul.

Digital Decluttering
When you find yourself in a holding pattern, whether it’s waiting in a line or riding out a commute, use the time to declutter your device. Delete old photos, text messages, emails and notes from your smartphone.

Highlights

OUR STAFF

Bob Correnti—Executive Director
Berlande Edouard—Tenant Selection Coord.
Debbie Souza—Administrative Aide
John Simolaris—Maintenance
Derrick Yates—Maintenance
Mark Simolaris—Maintenance
Katie Houle—Resident Service Coordinator

TELEPHONE NUMBERS

BHA Office/Maintenance Emergency: 978-667-1661 & 978-667-2175
RSC Office: 978-989-5487
Elder Services/Supportive Care On-Call: 978-273-0362
On-call available 24/7 to residents of 13 River, 16 River & 33 Talbot for non-life-threatening emergencies (NOT maintenance issues).

BHA Office Hours: Monday thru Thursday 8:00 AM–4:30 PM; Fridays 8:00 AM–1:30 PM
RSC Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays 8:30 AM–4:30 PM
Tenant Meeting TBD.
Commissioner’s February Meeting: Thursday, February 4, @ 4:00 PM
16 River Street Common Room, masks and social distancing required.

February’s Riddle Me This! What did the hamburger buy his sweetheart?
The first 5 people to call in and answer this month’s riddle will get a $10 gift card. 978-989-5487. (January’s Riddle: A man left home running. He ran a ways and then turned left, ran the same distance and turned left again, ran the same distance and turned left again. When he got home, there were two masked men. Who were they? Ans: Catcher and Umpire) Last month’s winners: Randy Brant, Yvonne Lauetta, Barbara Celli, Margie Bevere, Dave Jordan
TRIVIA WHIZ

Flapjack Facts
Piled high on a plate, a stack of pancakes is a classic meal served up on Mardi Gras, aka Fat Tuesday, which is also Pancake Day. You’ll flip for these fun facts about the dish.

- Flapjacks, slappjacks, hotcakes and griddlecakes are other names for pancakes.
- The first printed recipes for them were published in English cookbooks in the 16th century.
- Cooks in Colonial America made pancakes with buckwheat or cornmeal. They were a staple meal and called hoecakes, johnnycakes or journey cakes.
- Pancakes are often topped with a drizzle of maple syrup. Canada is the world’s top producer of the sweet stuff.
- IHOP, the International House of Pancakes, sells more than 700 million of its buttermilk pancakes each year. They’re the restaurant chain’s most popular menu item.
- Two pancakes with butter and syrup have about 520 calories.
- The first ready-made pancake mix product was created in 1889.
- Have you ever described something as “flat as a pancake”? People have been saying that phrase since the 1600s.
- The record for largest pancake made and flipped measured 49 feet across and weighed over 6,000 pounds! The highest toss for a pancake? More than 31 feet!
- Nearly every country has its own version of pancakes. There are sweet and savory crepes from France. In Russia, they eat blinis, and Australians serve pikelets, both of which are similar to small silver dollar pancakes.

Simple Ways To Show Yourself Some Love
Taking time for self-care doesn’t have to be complicated or costly. There are many quick, simple habits that can help keep you happy and healthy.

- Get a houseplant. Studies show that taking care of a plant creates a sense of calm, and being around green things boosts your mood.
- Do a little dance. Find an opportunity to play a favorite tune and get your groove on—maybe while you’re getting ready for the day or when you’re cooking dinner. The physical action will get your blood flowing and put a smile on your face.
- Unplug. Put down your phone, turn off the TV and close your eyes. For five minutes, focus on your breathing and forget about the outside world.
- Engage in a hobby. Carving out 10 to 15 minutes a day to read, sketch, write, play music or work on a craft can help you find balance between work and play.

- Tidy up. Making your bed, washing dishes and folding laundry may seem like routine chores, but you’ll enjoy the feeling of satisfaction that comes with a clean home.
- Help others. Showing kindness to others is a way of showing kindness to yourself, which is what self-care is all about. Holding the door for someone, giving compliments and sending out cards are ways to do good and feel good.

Celebrating Black History Month
Each February, America observes Black History Month. This tribute to African Americans who have made an impact on the U.S. and the world was born from one man’s call to action.

Historian and author Carter G. Woodson found that American history books underrepresented Black culture. He wanted the contributions of heroic Black men and women who helped shape the nation to be recognized and celebrated. At the same time, the Harlem Renaissance was happening and creating a growing interest in African American culture, especially literature, music and art. In 1926, Woodson created a weeklong event to promote Black history, and chose the second week in February because it included the birthdays of abolitionist Frederick Douglass and President Abraham Lincoln.

Fifty years later, after decades of support, the event expanded to Black History Month, a national observance, as part of the country’s bicentennial. When President Gerald Ford signed the proclamation, he urged everyone to join in the “tribute to Black History Month and the message of courage and perseverance it brings to all of us.”

For his efforts, Woodson has been called the father of Black history. The organization he founded, the Association for the Study of African American Life and History, chooses a theme for each year’s celebration. The 2021 focus of Black History Month is “The Black Family: Representation, Identity and Diversity.”
Treats for the Sweetest Day of the Year

Every year on Feb. 14, sharing some candy has become a simple way to say “You’re sweet!” Here’s a sample of Valentine’s Day favorites:
Conversation hearts. “Be mine.” “True love.” “Marry me.” It’s the cutesty stamped-on messages that have made conversation hearts an annual tradition. The sugary treats are only available this time of year.

Hershey’s Kisses. These familiar foil-wrapped drops of chocolate have the perfect name for Valentine’s Day: Kisses! They were one of the first candies to change their packaging for the holidays back in the 1960s. Their valentine wrappers of red and pink premiered in 1986.

M&M’s. Recognized by the “m” on each one, M&M’s have been enjoyed by the handful since they debuted in 1941. The milk chocolate candies show off candy-coated shells in holiday colors of red, pink, purple and white, and limited-edition flavors, such as triple chocolate and cheesecake.

Cupid corn. Traditional candy corn has its fans, especially in the fall months. But with color swaps from yellow, orange and white to red, pink and white, this tri-colored treat is renamed Cupid corn in February.

Red Hots hearts. A switch from most sweets, the spicy, chewy mini cinnamon candies known as Red Hots take the shape of tiny hearts for the holiday, with no color change needed.

Fudgy Raspberry Mug Brownie
This fudgy dessert is a hug in a mug! You’ll satisfy your sweet tooth in minutes because it cooks up in the microwave.

Ingredients:
- Nonstick cooking spray
- 2 tablespoons chocolate chips
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 2 tablespoons packed brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 1 egg yolk
- 1 teaspoon milk
- 3/4 teaspoon raspberry extract
- Whipped cream
- Fresh raspberries

Directions:
Mist the inside of a microwavable mug with nonstick cooking spray.
Place chocolate chips and butter in the mug. Microwave for 30 seconds, or until both are melted. Stir.
Add brown sugar, flour, egg yolk, milk and extract; mix well. Microwave on high for 45 seconds to 1 minute, or until center looks almost set. The mug will be hot, so be careful and use pot holders when taking it out of the microwave.
Let stand 5 minutes. Top with whipped cream and fresh raspberries.

Change the flavor! For a peppermint brownie, swap out the raspberry extract and use 1 teaspoon vanilla extract and 1/4 teaspoon peppermint extract.

Find more recipes at McCormick.com.

“Take care, be kind, be considerate of other people and other species, and be loving.”
—John Lithgow

“People are pretty because they’re nice and they care about other people, and they have a good heart.”
—Lauren Alaina

“We should surround ourselves with things we care about, that have meaning.”
—Nate Berkus

“We take better care of our smartphones than we do ourselves—the phones are always recharged!”
—Arianna Huffington

“It comes down to taking care of the people in your program and making them the best they can be—not giving up on them and never failing to be there for them.”
—Pete Carroll

“If you find it in your heart to care for somebody else, you will have succeeded.”
—Maya Angelou

“Politeness and caring for each other cannot be a thing of the past.”
—Peter Frampton

“When you take care of yourself, you’re a better person for others. When you feel good about yourself, you treat others better.”
—Solang Knowles

“Some people care too much. I think it’s called love.”
—A.A. Milne
Playing Word Games & Stress Relief - Did you know that playing word games can reduce stress and tension? It will relieve all the pressures of your daily life and help you rejuvenate. Call Katie, RSC, for free word game books delivered to your door.

All Things Aging on BATV - WE WANT YOUR FEEDBACK!
Tune in and join RSC Katie Houle every Tuesday at 4:00 PM Comcast, Channel 8, Verizon, Channel 31. All Things Aging is a show for folks in the Merrimack Valley and North Shore that discusses local programming for older adults and people with disabilities. Each episode we interview people living and working in the Merrimack Valley and North Shore who are making a real difference in the communities they serve.

Call Katie with any reactions to the show; what can we do better? Suggestions for new guests, topics that interest you, etc. 978-989-5487.


If you are interested in making pop-up Valentine's Day Cards with the Billerica Public Library virtual crafting session, RSC Katie will be providing material kits to you at no cost (call to request yours 978-989-5487). See the Library updates below for more information, including how to access the class online, or when/where to watch it on public access television!

St. Patrick's Day (home-delivered) Door Decoration Craft KIT, sign-up by Thursday, February 18th, @ noon.
To be delivered on Thursday, February 25th. Ring in March with a home-delivered craft to celebrate the comeback of springtime and Saint Patrick's Day! These kits will include all you need to make a green clover-covered craft, step-by-step instructions will be included to guide you through the process. Call Katie to sign-up, please leave your name, Choices’ Getting Started Tool Kit along with a handy discussion guide, “5 Things to Talk About with Your Care Providers.” And more.

These programs are brought to you with federal funds provided by the Institute of Museum and Library Services and administered by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners. These programs will be available to watch on BATV. You can watch library programs on Comcast 8/Verizon 31 at 7 pm on Monday, 9 am on Tuesday, and 4:30 pm on Saturday. Or join us online anytime by visiting BATV’s Video On Demand site at http://bit.ly/bplpresents.

Call-In Programs: Call Lizzie Meier for more information and to register for programs: 978-671-0948 ext. 4113
• Gratitude Call-In: Tues/Thurs at 9 am; call in to share something you’re grateful for.

Number and reason for calling in your voicemail.

~*~ Birthday Cards for BHA ~*~ Have a Birthday card you want to send to another resident at BHA? A Birthday card drop-off box will be placed in the laundry room at 16 River Street, 13 River Street and 33 Talbot Ave. Simply drop your card into the B-Day card drop box, and it will be delivered to the resident of your choosing.
Please make sure to put their first and last name WITH the building number (apt # for Talbot) on the front of the envelope.

*DO not put anything of monetary value into the drop-box or any packages/gifts—it is only for Birthday cards. Any gifts or packages left in the box will be disposed of.*
The Birthday Card Boxes will be checked on the Third Tuesday of every month and delivered shortly afterwards. There is no guarantee your card will make it to the recipient before or on their Birthday, but all cards will be delivered in the month they are placed in the box.
The Lunch Program with Valley Collaborative is still suspended.

• Coffee Chats Call-In: 1st and 3rd Wed. at 11 am; discuss different topics of interest.
• Armchair Travel Call-In with Lizzie and Katie: Every 1st Thursday of the month at 1 pm; we will “travel” to a different place in the world over the phone.

Featured Virtual Event: Exploring the Legacy - Thursday, February 25th, 7pm on Zoom
Join Rosalyn Delores Elder, author of Exploring the Legacy: People and Places of Significance, which is a history of the contributions of African Americans to Massachusetts state history and a guide to the 742 sites around the state that signify the histories of important individuals and events. (This event is offered in collaboration with area libraries.)