



Vital Aging Network

# e-Bulletin



March 2012

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**Save the Date**  
**Mayday Eve**  
**Celebration**  
April 30 - 7 to 9 pm  
Open Book, Mpls

Mark your calendar for VAN's second get-together for people in the VAN network-- that's you!

This is going to be a relaxing and fun way to connect with others and welcome the coming warm weather. You won't want to miss it. Plan to bring your friends!

## VAN FORUM



# You've Earned a

**Make your voice heard on Medicare and Social Security.**

**Thursday, March 29, 2012**  
12:30 pm to 1:00 pm - Registration  
1:00 pm to 3:00 pm - Program

**Wilder Center Auditorium**  
**451 Lexington Parkway North**  
**Saint Paul, MN 55104 ([map](#))**

We are at an important crossroads for the future of Medicare and Social Security. And, after a year of non-stop deficit

talks, it is clear that Congress will seriously address changes in Medicare and Social Security in 2013. This forum, led by AARP, gives you an opportunity to add your voice to the discussion.[\[Download a flyer\]](#)

**Register now** and then make a pledge to yourself to get informed.

This forum is free and open to the public. We would appreciate it if you register so we can plan appropriately.

## Five Things to Know

### *About Medicare, Social Security and the Budget Deficit*

Before the forum on March 29, brush up on your knowledge about these entitlements and the budget deficit. Here are five things to know:

1. **Medicare and Social Security are enormously successful** programs that have provided a strong safety net for Americans.
2. **Nearly one half of all healthcare spending** in the United States is by the federal government.
3. **Healthcare in the U.S is the costliest in the world**, yet the U.S. lags behind other countries on many dimensions of quality.
4. **Social Security was intended** to be one leg of a three-legged stool, and revenues from current workers pay for benefits for current recipients.
5. **The costs for government healthcare programs** and Social Security are increasing at an unsustainable pace.

[Learn more](#) about these five things to know.

#### FEATURE ARTICLE

## Dignity and Disaster

*by Ruth Anne Olson, St. James Episcopal Church, Minneapolis, MN*

Dignity and disaster have been much on my mind since visiting Bigonet, Haiti, in November. Nowhere in the world, I suspect, can these two dynamics be seen so clearly as in Haiti, where disaster has shaped this small country since 1492 when Christopher Columbus shipwrecked on its northern coast.

But in the face of unspeakable disaster, so, too, has Haiti been shaped by dignity.

Sadly,



Photo: Daniel Kedar, published by Opus Publishing in Haiti: Portrait d'un pays. 2004



Photo: Louise Robinson and Ruth Anne Olson

ironically, one of the greatest threats to this deep-seated dignity is the community committed to helping - people who give food, clothing, shoes, clean water and countless other material goods intended to make life better in Haiti. For while the act of giving feels good to the giver, the act of receiving exacts a high price -- so much so that my Haitian friend Djalòwki Dessables says, "Haitians are choking on receiving." [\[Read more\]](#)

#### FROM THE CHAIR

### Dignity and Being Older

by Nancy Eustis, VAN Chair



The observation that "Haiti is choking on receiving" caught my attention when I heard Ruth Anne Olson speak recently. (See her article, "Dignity and Disaster," above.) I thought of a comparable paradox that may occur as we get older. People who want to help may threaten our dignity. I'll describe examples of how this can happen along with alternative approaches. [\[Read more\]](#)

### In the News

#### [New Treasury Rules Ease 401\(k\) Annuity Purchase](#)

(New York Times, February 2, 2012)

by Mary Williams Walsh

"It is one of the biggest conundrums of an aging society: Americans have salted away \$11 trillion in retirement plans, yet

millions still risk running out of money in old age." This article discusses new options for annuities, including "longevity insurance". [\[Read the article\]](#)

### [Go Ahead, Run into Old Age](#)

(Los Angeles Times, January 16, 2012)

by James S. Fell

This article reviews research that indicates that running is good for you and that you don't need to give it up, even as you age.

Running does not cause joint damage and it is protective against health hazards associated with a sedentary lifestyle. [\[Read more\]](#)

### [As Baby Boomer Retire, a Focus on Caregivers](#)

(CNN, January 16, 2012)

By Emanuella Grinberg

A recent report has found that "Americans caring for aging and chronically ill relatives report higher levels of stress, poorer health and a greater tendency to engage in unhealthy behaviors to alleviate stress than the population at large." [\[Read the article\]](#)

## Volunteer Opportunities

- **Jewish Family and Children's Service of Minneapolis** - Volunteer Drivers
- **Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches (GMCC)** - Mentors for ex-offenders
- **SeniorNet Minneapolis** - Computer Coaches and Teachers
- **Junior Achievement** - Classroom Volunteer on Financial Education
- **Vital Aging Network** - Website Support

[\[more on these volunteer opportunities\]](#)

## Calendar of Events

- **Fridays March 9, April 13 and May 11 - 10:30 AM -12:20 PM - Seniors Play-Reading Group.** Franklin Library, Minneapolis
- **Friday, March 23 - 1-3 PM - SeniorNet Minneapolis Open House.** Wells Family College Center.
- **Thursday, March 29 - 10:30 AM to 11:30 AM - Reclaiming Joy in Living!** West 7th Community Center, Saint Paul
- **Thursday, March 29 - 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM - You've Earned a Say** - VAN Forum, Wilder Center, Saint Paul

- **Thursday, March 29 - 9:00 to 11:00 AM - Senior Surf Day** - Brooklyn Park Library, Hennepin County. Check the calendar on the the Hennepin County Library [website](#) for a similar class in other locations.

[\[more on these events\]](#)

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