

February 2026

The Story Behind Valentine's Day

As Valentine's Day approaches, many of us think of cards, flowers, and sweet treats—but the holiday has a much deeper and older story rooted in love, courage, and kindness.

The most well-known legend centers on Saint Valentine, a priest who lived in ancient Rome nearly 1,800 years ago. During this time, the Roman emperor Claudius II believed unmarried men made

better soldiers and outlawed marriage for young men.

Valentine believed strongly in love and commitment. Defying the law, he quietly continued to perform weddings in secret. When his actions were discovered, Valentine was imprisoned. According to legend, before his execution on February 14, he sent a note signed, "From your Valentine." That simple message has endured through the centuries.

Over time, February 14 became a day to honor Valentine's sacrifice and his belief in compassion and human connection. By the Middle Ages, the date was closely associated with romance, as people believed birds began pairing off in mid-February. Handwritten love notes soon became a tradition,

leading to the Valentine's cards we exchange today.

Today, Valentine's Day is about much more than romance alone. It is a celebration of:

- Love and companionship
- Friendship and community
- Thoughtfulness and kindness

At its heart, Valentine's Day reminds us that love takes many forms—and that small gestures, shared moments, and genuine connection matter deeply.

Whether you're sharing a card, a smile, or time with friends, we hope this Valentine's Day brings warmth and connection to you and those around you.

Happy Valentine's Day from all of us!



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From the Director

Dear Friends,

As we move into a new month, I want to take a moment to thank each of you for being such an important part of our senior center community. Whether you join us daily, stop in when you can, volunteer your time, or support us from afar, you help make this center a

place of warmth, connection, and belonging.

Each month brings new opportunities to gather, learn, and enjoy one another's company. From shared meals and activities to conversations that spark laughter and friendship, these moments matter more than we sometimes realize. For many, the senior center is not just a building, it is a place where faces are familiar, stories are heard, and everyone is welcomed just as they are.

I am continually inspired by the resilience, kindness, and generosity of the people who walk through our doors. Our volunteers give so selflessly of their time, our staff show incredible compassion and dedication, and our participants remind us every day of the importance of community. Together, we create a space where

no one has to feel alone.

As the season changes, I encourage you to stay connected by joining an activity, try something new, check in on a neighbor, or simply stop by for a cup of coffee and conversation. If you are new to our center, please know you are more than welcome and each new addition to our community is a great one.

Thank you for being part of our mission and for helping us continue to serve, support, and uplift one another. I look forward to all that this month will bring and to seeing you around the center.

*With gratitude and
warm regards,
McKayla Peers
Executive Director*



February Participant of the Month

Joe Scarbrough has been a valued participant at the Senior Center for many years. You can count on seeing him at Coffee Hour and noon meals nearly every Tuesday and Thursday, sitting in the same seat at the same table, surrounded by friends. Joe's gentle nature, friendly demeanor, and warm smile are well known to everyone here. Our servers especially appreciate his kind words and sincere compliments, which he never fails to share. While Joe enjoys light conversation in the café, those who take a moment to sit with him one-on-one quickly discover he has an incredible collection of stories to tell.

Joe often says he was simply in the right place at the right time throughout his life. That journey began when he joined the Navy at just 17 years old because he needed a job. He was sent to San Diego and later assigned as a boiler maker aboard a destroyer during the Korean War. During his nearly three years at sea, Joe traveled to ports in Hawaii and Japan and took part in transporting refugees and civilians from North Korea to South Korea. He recalls witnessing a Russian submarine being bombed and remembers one mission so dangerous that a priest aboard the ship performed a blessing beforehand. Joe was eventually sent back to the

United States after the rear of his ship was blown up.

After his military service, Joe became an aircraft mechanic. On one occasion, he was invited to fly with test pilots, an offer he found flattering at the time, only to later realize they wanted him on-board to stand behind his work. Using the GI Bill, Joe went on to become an electronic engineer, a career that opened many doors, including work with computer equipment and classified projects involving a U.S. president's plane. He also helped design equipment for the Air Force.

Perhaps most remarkably, Joe played a role in training astronauts. He was responsible for teaching them how to unload, set up, and operate a generator, skills they needed when they became the first men to land on the moon. What an extraordinary contribution.

A lifetime of being "in the right place at the right time" has given Joe Scarbrough an incredible collection of memories. Now, the Friends in Action Café community gets to know more about the adventures behind his familiar smile. We deeply respect Joe as a veteran and as a member of our community. Thank you, Joe, for your service and for sharing your stories with us.



February Volunteer of the Month

Shari John has been an important volunteer for Friends in Action since August. When she first joined the Transportation Services team, she focused on providing rides for neighbors close to her home in Brooklin. Over time, her commitment has grown, and she now regularly drives well beyond the Blue Hill area. Shari is deeply dedicated to ensuring seniors get safely to medical appointments and grocery stores, and she often goes the extra mile by helping pick up prescriptions or delivering groceries.

Shari brings more than just transportation, she brings connection. Through her work, she has come to understand that many seniors live alone and greatly appreciate conversation. Her riders enjoy sharing stories and discussing a wide range of topics, and they are fortunate to have such a thoughtful and attentive listener. Shari consistently goes beyond the basic responsibilities of volunteering to make sure the people she works with feel supported and cared for.

Shari moved to Brooklin from Vermont in 1999 with her husband

and children to be closer to aging parents. While getting her children settled into school, she was offered a position as a long-term substitute teacher in a second- and third-grade classroom.

In addition to her volunteer work, Shari keeps busy with many interests. She enjoys gardening and traveling, and while waiting for clients, she can often be found knitting or reading in her car. She is also active in the performing arts, having served as both an actor and director with the Winter Harbor Meeting House Theatre Lab. Their productions are held at Hammond Hall, with at least one show each year. Shari is truly a woman of many talents.

It's easy to see why Friends in Action selected Shari John as February's Volunteer of the Month. She finds joy in her volunteer work and loves spending time with individuals, and her passengers feel the same way. These meaningful interactions help build lasting relationships and when someone gets to ride in Shari's car, it often puts a sparkle in their day.



Our number: 207-664-6016

Winter In Maine

Winter in Maine arrives like a quiet promise kept.

It begins with a stillness that settles over the land, a pause so deep you can almost hear the earth exhale. The first snow doesn't rush in it drifts, light as a secret, softening the sharp edges of pine needles and stone walls that have stood for generations. By morning, the world is transformed. Trees wear coats of white, branches bowed not from burden, but from reverence.

The cold here is honest. It doesn't pretend to be gentle, yet it carries a kind of beauty only those who stay learn to love. Lakes seal themselves with glassy ice, reflecting winter skies that glow pale blue by day and burn with stars by night. Footsteps crunch in perfect rhythm, a sound so familiar it feels like home. Chimney smoke curls upward, carrying the scent of wood and warmth, a signal that someone is inside, waiting.

Along the coast, the ocean does not sleep. Waves roll in, dark and determined, while ice clings to the rocks like lacework shaped by time and tide. Lighthouses stand steadfast against the cold, their beams cutting through snow and darkness, reminding everyone, land and sea alike, that guidance still exists, even in the harshest seasons.

In small towns, winter draws people closer. Doors open more readily, coffee stays hot longer, and conversations linger. Neighbors shovel side by side without being asked. Children bundle themselves into layers of color and laughter, their cheeks red and bright, their joy echoing across frozen yards. Sled tracks carve stories into hill-sides, erased only to be written again the next day.

Nights come early, but they are never empty. The moon reflects off fresh snow, turning fields into quiet silver oceans. Inside, quilts are pulled tighter, stories are shared, and the cold outside becomes part of the comfort within. There is a knowing in these moments that winter will be long, but so is resilience.

Icy winters in Maine are not just endured; they are lived. They teach patience, gratitude, and the rare beauty of slowing down. They remind you that even in the deepest cold, there is warmth waiting in lamplit windows, in shared silence, and in the steady heartbeat of a place that knows exactly who it is.

And when spring finally comes, it will be sweeter for having been earned but winter, with all its frost and grace, will always leave its mark on the soul.



MENU

February 2026

Tuesday, February 3rd Bread Fish Sandwich, Tater Tots, Corn, Mandarin Oranges	Tuesday, February 10th Corn Chowder, Dinner Roll, Carrots, Peaches	Tuesday, February 17th Chicken Marsala, Salad, Rice, Cinnamon Pears	Tuesday, February 24th Deviled Egg Sandwich, Split Pea Soup, Cauliflower, Mandarin Oranges
Thursday, February 5th Chicken Florentine, Green Beans, Mozzarella Breadstick, Cinnamon Applesauce	Thursday, February 12th French Toast, Potato Hash, Bacon, Eggs, Banana	Thursday, February 19th Meatloaf, Mashed Potatoes, Dinner Roll, Pineapple	Thursday, February 26th Wicked Chicken Pasta, Cheddar Biscuit, Peas, Grapes



Desserts To Be Announced Daily! Subject To Change
Please call 664-6016 before 4:30 on Monday & Wednesday to reserve lunch for
Tuesday & Thursday.

