

Senior Center has something for everyone

Brack Llewellyn is the director of the Senior Centers of Surry County, located at 215 Jones School Road, inside of the Jones Family Resource Center.

Its mission is to enhance the quality of life for senior adults.

Llewellyn is proud of the many activities currently available to seniors and how well they are received by the seniors as well.

"Our seniors are pretty active folks," Llewellyn acknowledged. "We see ourselves as always trying to serve our seniors needs and interests."

For example, one class features crocheting at 11 a.m. on Tuesdays. Another features painting at 9 a.m. on Tuesdays. Others include Tai Chi, bowling, a variety of dance classes, covered dish lunches, painting with Phyllis, bridge and other card games, and social dance nights, to name just a few. In addition, Jasper Nye, well-known in the area according to Llewellyn, will be coming back to the center as a dance instructor. Starting on March 3, the center is bringing back Shag dancing.

Tracie Artim teaches line dancing — for free — at the Senior Center in Mount Airy at 11:15 a.m. on Mondays. She also is starting another free dance class called "The Granite City Kickers" starting at 12:30 on Mondays in Mount Airy that features chorus line dancing.

"We're excited," Artim said. "We're always looking for new ideas for seniors."

Pilot Mountain also has a senior center. Artim teaches a similar line dancing class in Pilot Mountain at the Satellite Senior Center in the Senior Civic and Recreation Center at 1 p.m. on Tuesdays.

A new, free class in self-defense especially designed for seniors will be offered at 11:30 a.m. on Fridays starting Jan. 31. It will be taught by Eric Latza, a veteran martial arts instructor and two-time Sport Jujitsu World Champion. Latza also is an officer with the Surry County Sheriff's Department.

The Knitting Club (at 12 p.m.) and the Quilting Club (at 12:30 p.m.) meets at the Pilot Mountain Satellite Senior Center every Monday — at no charge.

"We're a growing center," he said. "We'd like to involve more of the baby boom generation."

"Ten thousand baby boomers are turning 65 every day," Llewellyn said. "And, this trend will continue for the next 19 years."

This is definitely a group Llewellyn would like to see start using the programs available at the center. He is expanding the programs available partially to that end. He plans on keeping the "tried and true" programs, but also is going to try to start incorporating some new events, including weekend programs, as well. He is starting a program



Tracie Artim, far right, has been giving free line dancing classes at the Senior Center in Mount Airy for the past four years. She's been dancing for roughly 35 years. "I love to dance," said Carolyn Graham, in the same line to the left of Artim. "It's great exercise ... It's great for losing weight."

By Lucie R. Willis | The News



Brack Llewellyn, director of the Senior Center in Mount Airy, tries to offer as wide a variety as possible for area seniors. "We're open to everyone 50-years-old and better," he added. The center offers a wide variety of classes, from crocheting, painting, Tai Chi, and bowling, to several dance classes, bridge and other card games, to name just a few. "But we're always open to new ideas," he said. "We're always trying to serve the whole person."



Blanche Waddell, center in the back, has been teaching this free yoga class at the Senior Center for about 5 years, but has been doing yoga for 10 years.

called "A Lifelong Learning Series." Every month a new topic will be presented. Most recently, a program on Blackbeard was given. In February, a program on Black History is planned, as well as a program on Edinburgh, Scotland.

A new computer class will start on March 6 that will provide information on basic computer knowledge.

"A lot of seniors out there know they need to know about computers," Llewellyn said, "because it's

part of the fabric of our lives now. Everything is technology. It will be a basic class, but hopefully a useful class."

A Life Line Screening event is returning to the Senior Center on April 24. Health professionals from the Helping Hands Program will conduct a series of in-depth wellness screenings vital to the well-being of all seniors. Screenings are by appointment and a fee is required. Sign-ups are limited and will start to be taken in March. For updates, watch

the center's website at: www.surryseniorcenters.org.

Seniors also can sign up for the upcoming Yadkin Valley Senior Games — to be held in May — between March 1 and 31 at the Surry County Senior Center.

On March 31, folks can get a mammogram — by appointment — between 9 a.m. and 3:45 p.m. at the Pilot Mountain Senior Center. Call Shirley Key at 786-6155 for more information, as well as to register.

A Valentine's Dance for folks 50 and older will be held on Feb. 14 between 7 and 9 p.m. at the Pilot Mountain Satellite Senior Center. The event will feature the Magnum Country Band.

Free legal advice will be available on March 7 on 4ALL Statewide Service Day — a program at the N.C. Bar Association Foundation in conjunction with the N.C. Bar Association. Attorneys will be available to take calls between 7 a.m.

and 7 p.m.; for Spanish speakers, calls will be taken between 8:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. Call the Senior Center at 786-6155 in February for the phone numbers for this legal advice program.

Two more free financial seminars for folks 50 and over will be held at 1:30 p.m. on Feb. 12 on Retirement Planning Strategies and at 1:30 p.m. on March 12 on Estate Planning Made Easier.

A St. Patrick's Bingo event will be held at the Pilot Mountain Senior Center between 1:30 and 3 p.m. on March 14.

For those who need help with their simple federal and state income tax returns can call the Senior Center at 786-6155, ext. 222 or ext. 225, to make an appointment with a VITA Income Tax Assistance Program trained volunteer. Folks will be seen by appointment only. This free help is available to moderate or low-income people who make

\$58,000 a year or less.

The center also has a drama group that meets at noon on Tuesdays. This year, the group is writing its own production to perform.

The center also is in the process of creating a Senior Community Garden consisting of a series of raised gardens — so folks don't have to bend down so much.

"Seniors can work in the garden from a chair," Llewellyn said, adding that several of the seniors who currently attend classes and activities at the center are "excellent" gardeners already. Many seniors have moved into smaller homes and don't have their own garden any longer, and miss not being able to tend one, as well as missing the fresh fruits and vegetables they had been used to growing themselves. With this new gardening program, many will benefit, including the gardeners themselves and several local food-donation organizations. The center also may take the produce to the Farmers Market to sell. Llewellyn currently is looking for a Master Gardener to start helping with the program.

The center also always hopes for any support and donations folks are willing to provide. "Because we're a nonprofit," he reminded folks.

In addition, the Senior Center and YVEDDI Transportation are hosting a Volunteer Fair on Feb. 28 between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. at the Human Resources Center, 1218 State St., in Mount Airy. This is the location of the former Lowe's Home Center off of Highway 601.) Many other local nonprofits also will be there looking for volunteers. Snacks, door prizes, free health screenings and more will be provided.

The center's website is www.surryseniorcenters.org. To reach Llewellyn, call 786-6155, ext. 225, or email him at: brack@yveddi.com.