

best years

Spring
into better
health

By Kris Schiek

ELDER BENEFIT SPECIALIST

After a long winter, the signs of spring are sprouting up all around us. Now is a good time to focus on your health so you can enjoy all that this season has to offer. And taking advantage of Medicare preventive benefits is the perfect way to spring into better health!

Preventive services can help you prevent illnesses and detect health problems early, when treatment works best. People with Medicare have access to a wide range of preventive tests and screenings, most at no extra cost. If you're new to Medicare, a "Welcome to Medicare" preventive visit is covered during the first 12 months you are enrolled in Part B. The visit includes a review of your medical and social history as well as education and counseling about preventive services, including certain screenings, shots and referrals for other care, if needed. Once you've had Part B for longer than 12 months, you can get a yearly "Wellness" visit to develop or update a personalized prevention plan based on your current health and risk factors. Note: The Wellness visit is not the same as an annual physical exam.

You pay nothing for the "Welcome to Medicare" visit or yearly "Wellness" visit if your doctor or other health care provider accepts Medicare assignment. If additional tests or services are performed during the same visit that aren't covered under the preventive benefit, you may have to pay coinsurance, and the Part B deductible may apply.

Medicare also covers screening tests for breast cancer, diabetes, heart disease, obesity management, and osteoporosis, just to name a few. You can find a complete list of Medicare-covered preventive services in your Medicare and You 2021 handbook or on the Medicare website at www.medicare.gov. Talk to your doctor about what screenings and shots are right for you.

For local assistance with Medicare questions or other health insurance counseling contact the ADRC of Oneida County 715-369-6170 or 800-379-7499.

Rhinelanders Revisited: Dr. Lois Almon
remembered as pioneer woman

By Stephanie Kuski

RIVER NEWS FEATURES REPORTER

There's no question that women have played an instrumental role in our country's history, but their stories have not always been chronicled as such. Celebrating women's accomplishments in U.S. history began as a grassroots movement in 1978 during a local, week-long celebration in California. But when the movement caught on, communities across the country initiated their own women's history celebrations the following year. By 1980, a consortium of women's groups and historians successfully lobbied for national recognition.

President Jimmy Carter issued the first presidential proclamation declaring the week of March 8, 1980 as Women's History Week. Subsequent presidents proclaimed similar national celebrations, until 1987 when Congress declared the entire month of March as Women's History Month. Since 1995, each U.S. president has issued annual proclamations designating March as Women's History Month and International Women's Day is celebrated worldwide on March 8 every year.

As part of that celebration, one brilliant woman who played an important role in our own local history deserves to be honored not only for her philanthropy, but for her persistence in defying societal expectations while adamantly pursuing her own passions.

A gifted educator and naturalist later in life, Dr. Lois Almon came from humble beginnings. She was born to a single mother in Milwaukee on April 28, 1904. The duo lived frugally, often visiting Milwaukee's public parks and museums in their free time. Almon grew up in a neighborhood surrounded by children of diverse ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds, and she expressed a keen interest in birds from a young age.

After high school, Almon continued her education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where she graduated with a major in botany and minor in zoology — an unusual choice for a woman of her age at this point in history. She spent a year teaching high

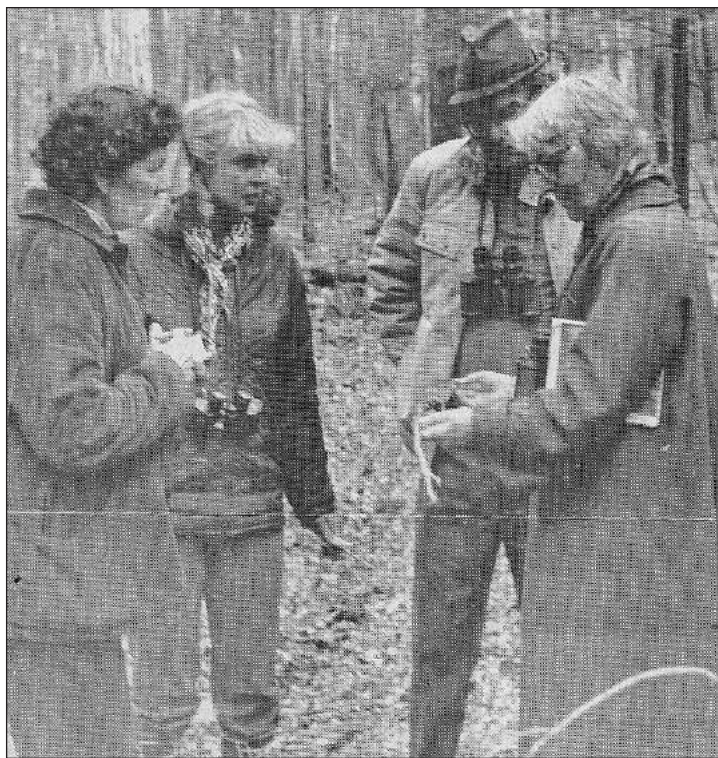


PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ONEIDA COUNTY FORESTRY DEPARTMENT ARCHIVES

When Dr. Lois Almon donated her Buck Lake property to Oneida County in 1967, she also advertised her services as a resident naturalist to guide hikers on nature walks free of charge. Pictured is Dr. Almon, right, leading a group at the Almon Recreation Area Nature Trails in June of 1974.

school after graduation, then returned to the University for her master's degree. Afterwards, she received her doctorate in bacteriology and botany from UW-Madison in 1932.

Dr. Almon taught until the Great Depression took its toll on higher education. As a result, she took a position conducting research on pathogenic fungi at the Wisconsin State Lab of Hygiene. This job actually brought her to Rhinelanders for the first time in 1942, at which time she took charge of a lab housed at the Oneida County Courthouse.

After just one year living in Rhinelanders, Dr. Almon purchased a 157-acre tract of land on Buck Lake that included a small farmhouse. Although the home lacked basic amenities like running water and heat, she was particularly enthusiastic about the land because it included a swamp. Unlike others, she appreciated the beauty and interconnectedness of swamp habitats as well as the creatures it housed.

Alternating between teaching and conducting research, Dr. Almon's career was characterized by change and motion. Following her appointment at the Oneida County Courthouse, she took a teaching position at UW-Eau Claire. She then spent a year as an exchange

teacher in Chichester, England, which allowed her to travel to destinations like Ireland, France, Denmark and Switzerland. Despite her various teaching positions and love for travel, Dr. Almon returned to the Northwoods each summer to enjoy her Buck Lake property.

When her mother fell ill years later, Dr. Almon returned to Milwaukee to care for her and taught medical technology at Mt. Sinai Hospital during this time. After her mother's death, Dr. Almon moved South, where she taught at Miles College in Birmingham, Alabama, a predominantly Black college. Accordingly, she fought passionately on behalf of her students and colleagues during the Civil Rights Movement in the early '60s. She participated in marches and rallies, and even became a lifetime member of the American Civil Liberties Union and served on the Alabama Council of Human Relations.

Dr. Almon retired from conventional teaching in 1966 at the age of 62. She divided her time between Alabama and Wisconsin, still spending her summers in the Northwoods. Her retirement was filled with travels, contributions to the American Association of University Women (AAUW) and leading nature

walks on her Buck Lake property.

On March 6, 1967, Dr. Almon entered into an agreement with Oneida County to donate her 157-acre property and 2,700 feet of lake frontage for the public to enjoy. But the deed which transferred the land from Dr. Almon to the county included several restricted covenants. The eastern half of the property was to be left in its natural state with no harvesting of trees allowed except for maintenance, while the western half was to be developed and maintained as a day-use recreational facility.

Beginning in the summer of 1967 and for many years afterwards, the county developed the beach at Buck Lake and added amenities like restrooms, a shelter, grills, picnic tables and a parking area, while Dr. Almon assisted in laying out two nature trails.

"I hope this facility will help make a better world for the future," Dr. Almon said at the dedication ceremony. "People naturally respond to the strength and placidity of an outdoor environment; as a result, they seem better equipped to solve their problems."

For many years, she continued to reside on the property and led nature walks for those enjoying the trails, even advertising her services as a resident naturalist with a sign indicating directions to her home. Dr. Almon was an expert on flowers, trees, shrubs, animals and insects, although she loved wildflowers and plants best. She said teaching ecology to children and adults was what she enjoyed doing most in her life.

In retirement, Dr. Almon also attended conferences for the International Fellowship of University Women (IFUW) in Mexico, Japan and Australia. She was the chairperson of local international relations and religious study groups and served as vice president in charge of those programs.

In 1976, Dr. Almon received the Women of the Year award by the Wisconsin Business and Professional Women's Organization in honor of her career accomplishments and community service.

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SeniorCorps Retired Senior Volunteer Program

SeniorCorps is a unique opportunity for local adults age 55 and older.

According to a press release issued by the local ADRC (Aging and Disability Resource Center) the program "taps the skills, talents, and experience of Americans age 55 and over to meet a wide range of community challenges."

"RSVP volunteers deliver meals to

homebound individuals, give volunteer escort rides, support local food pantries, animal shelters, promote education, mentor others, and provide other services," the release states. "When you join AmeriCorps you choose how you want to give back. Find a service opportunity that you are passionate about! With RSVP, you can use the skills and talents

you have learned over the years, or develop new ones while serving in a variety of volunteer activities. AmeriCorps RSVP programs are open specifically to adults age 55 and older."

To learn more about volunteer opportunities in Oneida County, contact Dawn Johnson, RSVP Coordinator, at 715-369-6307 or email djohnson@co.oneida.wi.us.

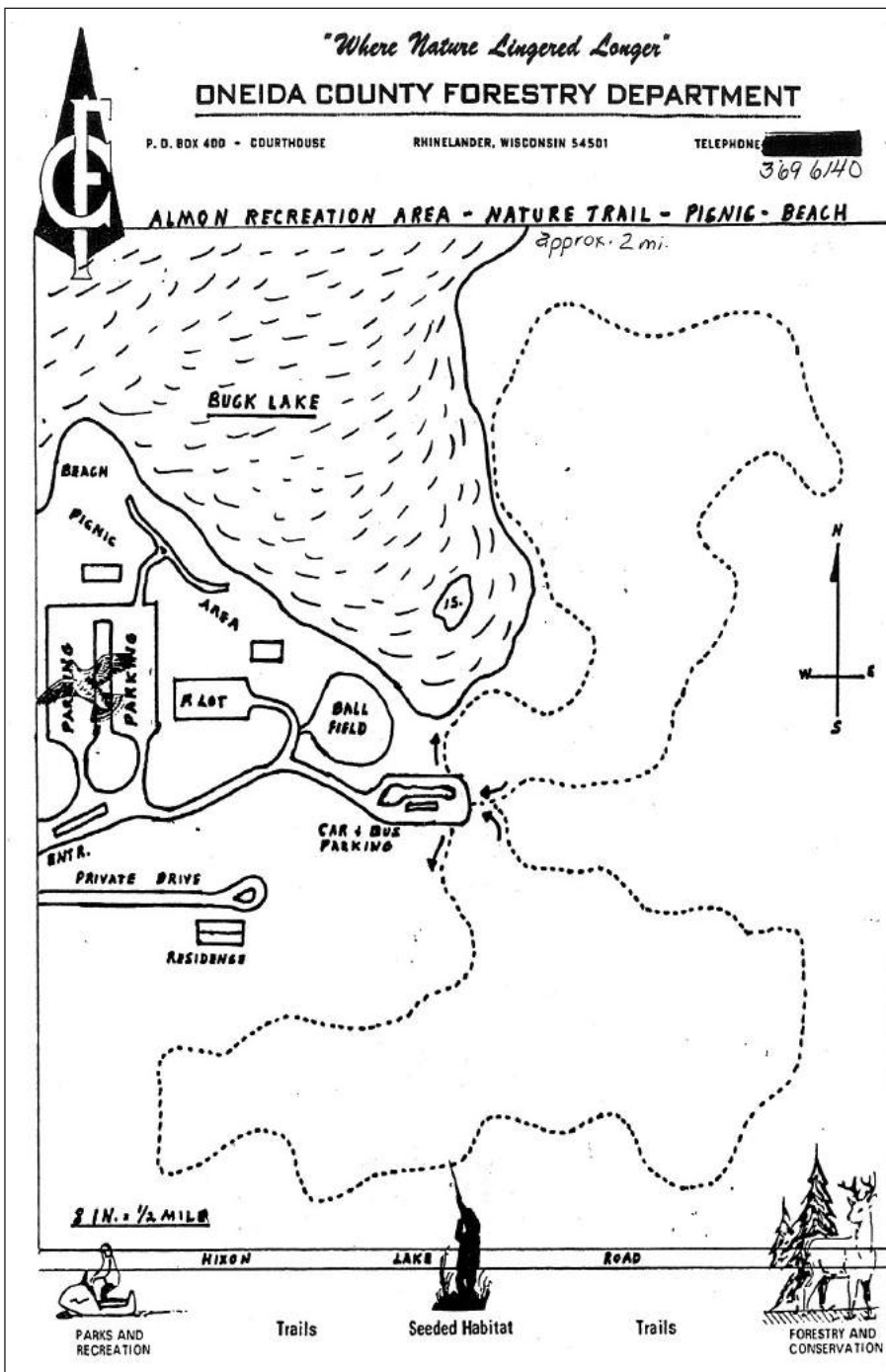


PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ONEIDA COUNTY FORESTRY DEPARTMENT ARCHIVES

The Almon Recreation Area at Buck Lake is a go-to summer destination for Northwoods residents and tourists alike. The 157-acre land parcel in addition to 2,700 feet of lake frontage was originally purchased by Dr. Lois Almon in the early '40s. The resident naturalist generously donated the land to Oneida County in 1967 for the public's enjoyment.

Almon

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Indeed, Dr. Almon is remembered as a generous, well-educated woman who was a leader of her time. As such, she was constantly thinking and evaluating the world around her. Her love of nature, attitude towards money and concern for others was evident to many.

"Preserved wilderness has no monetary value," she once said. "How do you put value on the sun shining on pines evoking their special fragrance? What is the worth of a pond full of frogs in full chorus? How do you estimate income from a calm lake reflecting a sunset with only a loon breaking the perfect upside down picture? Can you sell a family of young weasels, tumbling with each other in play among the rocks? Have you ever tried to put a carpet of anemones and violets into your bank account? These things have infinite value, and therefore, no monetary value... A walk in the woods or a meditation by the lake can lead to love, compassion, peace and creativity."

Following a lifetime of work as an educator, naturalist and advocate, Dr. Almon died of cancer on March 9, 1981.

Despite her passing, Dr. Almon's spirit and

legacy can still be felt on a walk through the nature trails at the Almon Recreation Area — she continues to share her love for Wisconsin's Northwoods as thousands flock to her Buck Lake property every year.

Without doubt, countless Rhinelander residents and tourists — myself included — can recall fond memories of summers spent at Buck Lake. In the process of researching Rhinelander's history and upon hearing stories like Dr. Almon's, I personally have come to develop a much stronger sense of place and connection to my hometown. For me, having a rich knowledge of local history makes me appreciate these places I've visited at different times in my life; in a way, it's like I'm rediscovering my hometown all over again.

Dr. Almon is an important figure to honor during Women's History Month. Rather than going along with

the status quo, she defied the stereotypes and expectations of her time. She embraced her skills, interests and passions and shared those with others; she continuously fought for the rights of the people and environment around her; she volunteered her time with civic duties and offered her services as a naturalist to guide hikers enjoying her donated property. But most importantly, she believed passionately in sharing her love of the Northwoods, and her legacy will live long in the hearts of its residents.

This installment was written based on information originally found in "From Pioneer to Present: A Tribute to Rhinelander Women" and "Wisconsin Women: A Gift Heritage." Special thanks to those authors and contributors in addition to the Oneida County Forestry Department for providing historical records on the Almon Recreation Area.

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YMCA Senior Advisory Committee assists with senior programs

Active older adults at the YMCA of the Northwoods share their time and talents as part of the Senior Advisory Committee which meets monthly to give ideas and suggestions for active older adult programs.

"Since the inception of the Active Older Adult department at the Y, the Senior Advisory Committee has been instrumental in providing a strong, active senior membership at the Y," according to Marilyn Duschl, Active Older Adult Coordinator. "I rely on them to suggest new program ideas, help with fundraisers, keep me in touch with the needs of the seniors in our area and help me stay connected to our members and the community. They are a diverse group so they have much to offer."

The YMCA of the Northwoods is currently open for many senior programs with special guidelines due to COVID. Group exercise classes, such as, Senior Fit, Senior Cardio, Senior Classic and Stretching are being held throughout the week. In addition the pool is open for water exercise and lap swimming and pool walking. Reservations are required for all of these programs.

At this time the Y is only open to members, but the Y accepts SilverSneakers, Silver & Fit and Renew Active senior memberships. The Y also provide income based memberships for all ages. The AOA department holds programs to support those with chronic conditions, such as, co-facilitating "Living Well with Chronic Conditions" virtual programs with the ADRC of Oneida County, Live-Strong at the YMCA cancer support exercise program, Blood Pressure Self-Monitoring Program, Moving for Better Balance and Healthy Living with Diabetes. The Y also collaborates with Learning in Retirement through Nicolet College and is looking forward to resuming some of the social events that were done in the past.

For additional information about the senior programs at the Y go to www.ymcaofthenorthwoods.org or call Marilyn Duschl at 715-362-9622 ext 118.

APRIL 2021 MENU				
Oneida County Senior Dining				
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
<i>Delicious Meals by Lynn's Catering</i>	Suggested Donation of \$4.25 for Home Delivered \$3.50 for Congregate (for adults over 60). \$8.15 if under 60	Chef salad a menu option every day On-site only You must request Salad when you reserve your meal	Lasagna Carrots Tossed Romaine Lettuce Salad w/ Dressing Garlic Breadstick Jell-O w/ Strawberries Dessert	1 2 Closed Happy Easter!
5 Seasoned Baked Chicken Mashed Potatoes Gravy Pickled Beets Whole Wheat Bread Peaches & Vanilla Pudding	6 Sirloin Tips Egg Noodles Squash Key West Blend Veggies Whole Wheat Bread Fresh Berries	7 Chef Salad w/ Romaine Lettuce, Tomatoes, Turkey, Hard Boiled Egg Shredded Cheese Dressing Fresh Roll Lentil Bean Soup Cookie	8 Swiss Steak Parsley Buttered Potatoes Seasoned Broccoli Banana Pineapple Upside Down Cake	9 Peach-Glazed Pork Loin Baked Potato Coleslaw Rye Bread Grapes
12 Tuscan Bean Soup Egg Salad Sandwich on Marble Rye Romaine Leaf Tomato Slice Mayo Grape Juice Peach Crisp	13 Spaghetti & Meat Sauce Broccoli Garlic Breadstick Diced Pears Rhubarb Cake	14 Herbed Baked Fish Tartar Sauce Parsley Buttered Potatoes Pea, Cheese, & Onion Salad Sourdough Bread Pineapple	15 Roast Turkey Mashed Potatoes Gravy Key West Veggie Blend Whole Wheat Roll Raspberry Sherbet Jell-O	16 Beef Chop Suey Whole Grain Rice Oriental Blend Veggies Egg Roll Sweet & Sour Packet Mandarin Oranges Cookie
19 Beef Stroganoff Mashed Potatoes Broccoli Salad Whole Wheat Bread Strawberries Angel Food Cake	20 Crab Pasta Salad over Romaine Lettuce Tomato Wedge Dinner Roll Peaches Lemon Bar	21 Roast Pork Au Gratin Potatoes Steamed Red Cabbage Rye Bread Cinnamon Applesauce	22 Chicken Breast Mushroom & Bacon Sauce Diced Seasoned Potatoes Country Trio Veggies Biscuit Honey Bee Ambrosia	23 Hamburger on a Bun Grilled Onions Ketchup Tomato & Cuke Salad Calico Beans Craisin Cookie
26 Boneless BBQ Pork Rib Scalloped Potatoes Whole Kernel Corn Mini Muffin Grapes	27 Paprika Chicken Baked Sweet Potato Peas Raisin Bread Vanilla Yogurt & Berries	28 Chili w/ Cheddar Cheese Crackers Romaine Lettuce Salad Dressing Rye Bread Mandarin Oranges Cookie	29 Roast Beef Gravy Mashed Potatoes Brussels Sprouts Whole Wheat Bread Pumpkin Bar	30 Creamy Chicken Vegetable Casserole Broccoli Oat Bran Bread Mixed Fruit Carrot Cake