

# Moving Forward

## Westhampton Council on Aging

Programs and Services for Active Living at 60+



July 2020

### In Memoriam:

Leonard Day 7/3/33– 5/15/20 (from COVID)

### Reflection from the COA Coordinator

When I started this job in June of 2019, I never dreamed that I would be acting as COA Coordinator during such a historic time: a once-in-a-century pandemic! I have found that not only have I been personally affected by COVID-19, but I have also been professionally impacted by it along with my colleagues on the COA Board and the Friends of COA. We were all forced to shift gears overnight from our comfort zone: the calm, predictable routine of planning COA programs, board meetings, processing of invoices and monthly budget prep to something totally unexpected: a radically new world; one we'd never confronted before.

While it may have seemed like everything came to a standstill once our in-person COA events were cancelled, you may be surprised to hear that quite a bit has been churning just beneath the surface. Along with other COAs, we have had to re- envision just what the Council on Aging should look like now that we are confronted with this unprecedented challenge that lacks a definitive ending. I have asked myself these questions: How can we best keep seniors engaged and connected during this time? Can seniors make the transition to "Zoom" with help, even those who are not internet-savvy? Will they *want* to? What can we offer that will make the most difference during this time?

Our first idea was to reach out with phone call check-ins to our oldest seniors (75 and up). Since then, we conducted a pilot "Zoom Luncheon" (see photo) which encouraged us to schedule the annual COA Picnic this month with entertainment via Zoom as well. In the midst of this upheaval, the

simple idea of writing old-fashioned letters in the form of pen pals, matching seniors to 4<sup>th</sup> graders came to my mind (not everything good has to be costly or tech-related!).

Meanwhile, a rush of grant opportunities came our way, requiring swift turnaround. I found myself researching a number of possible ideas for improving communication with seniors, upgrading COA equipment and initiating senior-focused services. We were also offered 10 lb frozen meat boxes from Highland Valley Elder Services (via USDA). This last offer required that I identify who in our community would want these boxes and figure out logistics (15 seniors responded). Select-board member, Maureen Dempsey, helped connect me to Julie and Steve Holt who kindly agreed to refrigerate the boxes at the Sugar Shack with very little notice. Three COA board members (Louise Jaisonkowski, Chuck Horn and Ray Fontaine) joined Julie Holt and me at the Sugar Shack where we distributed the boxes curbside to those who picked up, along with masks from the Board of Health (from Robby Armenti) and delivered them to others. For a time the COA members and I became like "essential workers." It felt very good to do something tangible to help those most impacted in our community by COVID-19, which has made everyday needs like food shopping into a stressful ordeal. It was also wonderful to see how well we were able to coordinate with others in our community. *(Continued on next page.)*



Westhampton COA ✦ 3 South Road ✦ Westhampton, MA 01027 ✦ Seniors Helping Seniors  
Coordinator: Amy Landau 413-203-9808 ✦ westhamptoncoa@comcast.net

And this brings me to my most fundamental realization concerning this crisis: we will not be able to get through this alone. But we WILL be able to prevail together. By combining our creative energy, talents and our know-how, we can and WILL get through this. And though it will certainly continue to be a work-in-progress, we will be stronger and better in the end. If YOU have ideas to contribute to this group endeavor, please don't hesitate to contact me at (413) 203-9808 or WesthamptonCOA@comcast.net. In the meantime, please do whatever you can to stay healthy and well in mind and body. ~ Amy Landau

## COA EVENTS:

### ◇ Annual COA Zoom Picnic!- Thurs. 7/2 12pm

Although we will not be able to gather together in person like last year at the Elk's Club, we can still gather via Zoom on **Thursday July 2<sup>nd</sup> at 12 noon!** And we can still enjoy some wonderful musical entertainment once again from Roger Tincknell. Show off your red, white and blue and join us for ***This Land is Your Land***, an interactive music program that celebrates our country with traditional folk, Americana and patriotic songs performed on guitar, banjo, mandolin, ukulele, harmonica and Irish Bodhran. Afterwards, you can join "break-out rooms" to chat with one another. **Email Amy Landau at WesthamptonCOA@comcast.net for Zoom instructions.** As always, this event and all COA events are FREE!

### ◇ Zoom COA Breakfast - Fri. 7/17 at 9AM

Start your day connecting (or reconnecting) with your neighbors. Grab your coffee cup and brush your hair (maybe). If you want to join by Zoom, email Julia Lennen at [jslennen@gmail.com](mailto:jslennen@gmail.com) to get the Zoom invitation. New to Zoom? **Call Julia at 413-537-9880 if you have questions.**

### ◇ Chair Yoga via Zoom with Michele Morales

Michele Morales has continued Chair Yoga Classes in Northampton and Southampton on **Thursdays at 9:30.** She is working on improving her audio quality (awaiting a new mic). If you are interested in trying out a class, email her at: [morales.wolk@gmail.com](mailto:morales.wolk@gmail.com) and she will reply with the Zoom details.

**Need Help with Zoom?** Bob Miller, our resident COA Computer teacher, is available to assist you! Contact him at his home: **(413) 527-2404** or cell: **413-329-4180** or email: [miller.r.e@comcast.net](mailto:miller.r.e@comcast.net)

### Join the COA Email List

Please email Amy Landau at [WesthamptonCOA@comcast.net](mailto:WesthamptonCOA@comcast.net) if you would like to be on our email list to find out about upcoming activities.

## Foot Care Home Visits Available at Reduced Rate

While the Foot Care Clinic at Westhampton Woods has not resumed (because of COVID-19), Debra Deane, RN, IS doing home visits at a reduced rate of \$55.00. Contact her at: **(413) 667-5363** or by email at: [deane.debra55@gmail.com](mailto:deane.debra55@gmail.com).

## Library News: Curbside Pick Up Available

The Westhampton Library is excited to once again be able to provide books, movies, and audiobooks for your enrichment and entertainment via curbside pick-up! Note: Only Westhampton Public Library titles may be requested at this time and requests are limited to 10 items/person. For more information, please call the library ahead of time at **413-527-5386** or [westhampton@cwmares.org](mailto:westhampton@cwmares.org)

Westhampton Public Library is now an Overdrive Advantage Library! Westhampton residents will have first access to new eBooks purchased by the library. To borrow eBooks and audiobooks, contact the library at [westhampton@cwmares.org](mailto:westhampton@cwmares.org) or call **413-527-5386**.

*Also, the library building might still be closed to the public, but our beautiful yard is free for you to use. Our Custodian, Jared Brown, recently set up our outdoor furniture in the front library yard. Please practice social distancing and wear face masks when unable to practice social distancing while using the library yard.*

## A Successful "Pilot Virtual COA Luncheon" via Zoom!

On June 14, 2020, a total of 13 seniors met up for our first-ever Zoom COA Luncheon! We enjoyed a friendly check-in and conversation on what we're doing to keep us busy during this unusual time.



*Deb Barthelette, Amy Landau, Chuck Horn, Julia Lennen, Carol and Bill Magrone, Louise Jaisonkowski (her hand!), Janet Haas, Connie Dragon, Bob & Pat Miller, Shirley Raymond (no video) & Ray Fontaine (no video).*

## Meat Box Distribution to Seniors

On June 5<sup>th</sup>, a total of 15 (10 lb.) meat boxes were distributed to Westhampton seniors. Thank you Julie and Steve Holt for generously agreeing to refrigerate the meat boxes at the Sugar Shack! Thank you Julie and COA Board for helping to distribute them to seniors! (See COA Coordinator Message for more on this story).



Louise Jaisonkowski, Julie Holt, Chuck Horn and Ray Fontaine

Julie Holt in action



(Photos taken by Amy Landau)

## iPads for Seniors?

If you do not have internet at home and would be interested in using an iPad with internet included, please leave a voice message for Amy Landau at: **(413) 203-9808**.

## Save The Dates: Town Elections and September Primaries

According to the Town website, Town Elections will be held on July 25<sup>th</sup>. Information about candidates and other matters will be available from Town Hall.

State Primaries will be held on Tuesday, September 1<sup>st</sup>. In Massachusetts, a voter who is affiliated with a political party can vote only in that party's

primary. Voters unaffiliated with a political party may vote in the primary of their choice. Wednesday, August 18<sup>th</sup>, is the last day to register for the Primary or to change your party affiliation.

Questions about changes to voting due to the Coronavirus should be directed to the Town Clerk or you should check the Town Website.

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## Reminder: Landfill Returns to Dual-Stream Recycling

Starting July 1<sup>st</sup>, paper and cardboard recyclables must be separated from plastic, glass and metal materials. Annual sticker fees are \$65 for the first vehicle and green bag stickers are \$1.00 each.

See <https://tinyurl.com/yctqe843> for more information.

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## Interview with Freedom Rider, Charles Person

Our COA Coordinator, Amy Landau, recently created a podcast episode in which she interviewed Charles Person, who participated in the first-ever Freedom Ride through the segregated South in 1961 at the age of 18. To listen to the online interview, go to: [underthesurface.pinecast.co](http://underthesurface.pinecast.co) and click the link at the top.



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## Inspirational Quote of the Month

*"It is only in our darkest hours that we may discover the true strength of the brilliant light within ourselves that can never, ever, be dimmed."*

-Doe Zantamata





## TRIAD COUNCIL

Seniors, Police, and Support Services Together — Learning ~ Informing ~ Empowering  
Contact: Ginny Curtis – 529-9873

### Safety: A View from your Personal Bridge

As I write this at the beginning of June, we are in the 8<sup>th</sup> day of reacting to the open wounds of racial bias, discrimination, and injustice across our Country. Many are also reacting with anger toward the distracting senseless acts of destruction of property and violence. Armed with our detailed social instructions teaching us to "Stay at Home", wear masks, and keep social distancing, we strive to smother and extinguish COVID-19 impacting our lives. We find that mission has been temporarily derailed. Our daily focus is now blurred. We each must adapt, listen, wait for the results of the many who have dismissed the medical warnings, and find a new perspective defining safety. I share this quote:

### Simple Thoughts ~ Acceptance of Beliefs

Teaching by her example, a friend wrote she could live more comfortably with the concept of "Simple Thoughts".

"Individuals will have to arrive at their own personal code of behavior, their own philosophy of life, their own view from the bridge. What has become sufficiently clear to me is that no one can change another's form of thinking. However, I do believe that the energy sent forth from enough loving hearts is far more expansive, will travel further, will creep silently into the bones and marrow of all those who are yearning for this stance in life.

Kindness is better than cruelty.  
Openness is better than contraction.  
Trust is better than fear.  
Truth is better than lies and deception.  
Honesty is better than denial.  
Embracing life in all its aspects is better than retreating from it.  
Living in harmony with others is better than being in reaction.  
Life is sacred.  
The Earth is sacred.  
All creatures upon the Earth are sacred.  
We belong to the Earth.  
The Earth does not belong to us.

For each individual to even begin to incorporate into their daily lives the beliefs they have formulated is perhaps their greatest accomplishment, not easily achieved, because they have moved from thought into action making them tangible on this earthly plane. I, for one, cannot believe we can ever defend our most sacred tenets by abandoning our dreams."

*Wishing you Harmony, Dreams & Safety*

***The views and opinions expressed in the TRIAD column are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of The Council on Aging.***

***The Westhampton Council on Aging counts on YOUR support to continue our important programming for local seniors!***

I would like to contribute to the Westhampton COA. My contribution of \$\_\_\_\_\_ is attached.

*(Please write your check to The Friends of the Westhampton Council on Aging, write "program support fund" in the memo line, and mail to Charlotte Wood, 14 Perry Hill Rd. Westhampton, MA 01027.)*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*Thank You for Helping to Support Your Neighbors!*

**Westhampton Council on Aging**

## Seniors Aware of Fire Education



This is going to be a different kind of July with 4th of July events cancelled due to COVID 19 and the need to keep socially distanced. One of the events many of us will miss are the fireworks displays exploded by professionals. We may be tempted to make up for this by firing off fireworks and handing out sparklers to children and adults on our own. It is illegal to transport and use fireworks in Massachusetts. Here are a few reasons why:

- Fireworks are very dangerous. Every year fireworks use results in serious injuries and structure fires.
- One third of the serious burn injuries are suffered by children.
- Children imitate adults and know if and where adults have fireworks.
- Even sparklers are very dangerous. They burn at 1200 degrees F. That is very hot considering that wood burns at 575 degrees and glass melts at 900 degrees.

So, please leave fireworks to professionals and help first responders enjoy the holiday with their families. Have a SAFE and quiet July!

--Worth Noyes, SAFE Educator  
Williamsburg & Cummington Fire Departments

*The Senior SAFE program is sponsored by many of your fire departments and the Massachusetts Department of Fire Services.*

**Would you like to receive your newsletter by email instead of snail mail?**

If so, please email Kristen at [regionalcoanews@gmail.com](mailto:regionalcoanews@gmail.com) to be put on the email list. Include your address so I will know which mailing list to take you off of. Thanks!



## Eternal Electronic Life – or will it end?

This is one thing we did not think about before the last several years! Our social media platforms don't automatically shut down when we do. Our electronic banking apps remain until we tell them to quit. Folks who do not go online don't have to worry - if that is you, feel free to skip to the next newsletter item or go sniff a flower with joy.

Just for grins, the top 7 social media sites this year are Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Snapchat, Pinterest, and Reddit. And the phrase I found for eternal electronic life is "digital remains." Okay...

So why I am writing this? You may recall I spend some time looking out for scams and identity theft and the like. Well, what a surprise, there are scammers following the obituaries and social media platforms looking for deaths and therefore unattended personal information. They can steal identities, make pleas for money from your friends and followers, use your photos in ads, and in general make mayhem. Something like half of all instances of stolen information were from social media accounts in 2018.

A few of the platforms have a mechanism to allow survivors to manage, close, or delete an account. Some will allow a memorialization, which might be nice to keep for a few months to make sure followers know of the death. In some cases, you can set this up yourself. When you next revise your will, it is a good idea to include these platforms as assets along with instructions. If you follow a social media platform, you should probably search for their policies and figure out what you want.

Yes, life is more complicated,  
Jean O'Neil, TRIAD committee member  
413-268-2228, [jeanoneilmass@gmail.com](mailto:jeanoneilmass@gmail.com)

## Good News!

By Deborah Hollingworth

Another month battling Covid-19, being good about social distancing, being careful when we do have to go out: it seems harder to maintain our vigilance as the weather warms and our gardens begin to grow. We are impatiently waiting for things to “open up” in hopes that we can imagine a future when things get back to our “new normal”.

Meanwhile we continue to come up with new resources and ways to cope. Initial efforts in the hilltowns have been focused on outreach and food security. Each town’s senior center is checking in with residents, and making sure that folks have food, a way to get their Rx, and sometimes just someone to chat with. Whether it’s signing up for Farm Share, Brown bag, or checking out new “pop up” food pantries (in Chesterfield, Worthington and Williamsburg), the effort continues to make sure seniors have groceries, and someone to shop for them if they need. Senior centers are receiving donations of grocery items, gift cards for grocery shopping, and volunteers to do shopping. Call your senior center if you could use help, or if you know a neighbor who could use help getting meals or groceries.

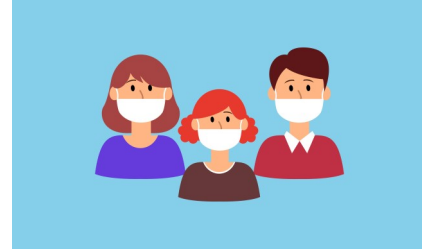
We’re also beginning to see a new way to socialize. Now that we can’t get out to a potluck luncheon, have extended conversations with neighbors at the dump, or get to church, we are learning new ways to do this virtually. Church services by Zoom...who would have imagined? And now we are learning new FaceTime, Google and Zoom skills? Our local legislators are even more aware of our need for Broadband services as efforts to ramp up senior center activities like chair yoga, cooking and writing classes, and book groups begin to spring up. More to come as these new ideas and resources roll out.

It is a “brave new world” as we work on what our new normal will be.



## A COVID Note: Masking Hearing

By Jeane Anastas



Face masks are wonderful and indispensable tools for keeping the COVID-19 virus in check, and I wear one according to state and health guidelines. I feel safer with friends and acquaintances who also wear masks and keep to social distancing rules. Like many, especially among older people, I am hard of hearing (HoH), and age-related hearing loss runs in both sides of my family of origin. When we get diagnosed with hearing loss, most of us have learned that we have unconsciously been reading lips for a long time, and, hearing aids or not, we still use lip reading to enhance our comprehension of speech.

Face masks muffle sound; research shows that the decibels of speech are reduced. In addition, hearing aids or not, the listener cannot see lips moving when people talk, meaning no lip reading is possible. In addition, for those wearing hearing aids, the elastic bands around the ears are not designed to accommodate devices in the ears. When taking off the mask, the elastic can cause the dome of the hearing aid (the part in the ear) to get dislodged, and it is reported that the whole hearing aid may fall out, perhaps getting lost when it is undetected.

While those who communicate using ASL may avoid these particular problems, facial expression is part of the system, compromised by masks. Various websites offer some suggestions to address these mask-related problems. For those using hearing aids, try out fastening systems other than elastic bands. Substitute laces for the elastic that can be tied behind the head. There are small straps for sale that easily connect the elastic bands behind the head. Also for sale are masks that have a clear plastic insert over the mouth area. These are of most help to those who are HoH if others who are speaking with you wear them, and, if you can afford it, they may be worth buying for those one sees most often. When possible, eliminate background noise. Since the speech of others is muffled by the mask, remind people that speaking slowly and enunciating clearly (but NOT shouting) are the best methods of communicating with people with hearing loss, masks or not. Most important, gently remind others about how masks are affecting you since they will want to be supportive. The hardest thing may be to ask.

## ***Dare to Disrupt Aging!***

### ***Experiences in moving to the Digital World***

*You don't make progress by standing on the sidelines, whimpering and complaining. You make progress by implementing ideas.* – Shirley Chisholm

As we age, women complain of feeling invisible. Sometimes I feel too visibly 60-plus. In a fashion-driven store like Madewell, a saleswoman who looks like a teenager politely meets my gaze, sweetly saying, "Who are you shopping for today, ma'am?" It makes me smile, as it's almost true: I'm usually browsing for my millennial daughter. Sometimes I buy myself a shirt, albeit not a midriff-revealing one.

Other retail experiences are less amusing. When my computer died, Apple had to migrate my data overnight to my new one. A young Ms. Genius brought it out, boxed and ready for its new abode. I wanted to test it first, so I wouldn't have to return to my least favorite "bar."

She reacted as if I'd requested a dozen iPhones for free. She conferred with a Mr. Genius.

Leaning over me, he sternly warned, "I can't teach you how to use the new computer."

"I never asked you to do that. I *know* how to use it," I snapped back.

Grudgingly Mr. Genius unpacked it, complaining as if I'd asked him to take apart the machine's motherboard and reassemble without a manual. Ms. Genius asked, "Do you need to sit down?"

Her tone was insulting. Couldn't she tell I swam laps four times a week? That I wasn't her *grandmother*? — even though, technically, I could be. In her eyes I seemed to be "old lady + computer = nightmare."

An ominous window popped onto the screen of my new computer. *Word could not be accessed.* Ms. Genius said, "Did you originally download it from a disc?"

"Who remembers what I did six years ago?" I regretted my words, not wanting to solidify her ageist impression of me. "I'll ask my daughter." Why did I say that? My humiliation was amplifying externally as if I'd changed my font size to 48.

Meanwhile, my phone was out of juice. I asked Ms. Genius for a charger.

"This table doesn't have adaptors," she said. "I don't want to make you move."

Being treated like a doddering tech idiot at the Genius Bar made me fume. I felt like listing my career accomplishments. Instead I did what any tech-savvy person would do: I took to Twit-

ter, the suggestion of a friend, a crisis management executive. "They hate it when people complain about customer service on social media," she claimed.

I blasted their treatment of older customers: *Insulting ageism treatment @apple*. Immediate reply: "You're a valued member of our family, and we never want you to feel otherwise. Can you send us a DM with details? We'll meet you there."

I met them privately in Twitterland. A store manager apologized, saying they might have to retrain their staff, begging me to return and talk about any technology problems. I was greeted by people in headphones who knew my name. The cheery manager escorted me up a flight of glass stairs as if it were the red carpet at the Academy Awards. I met one of their "greatest geniuses," who never once said, "This is the phone I told my mother to get." They even threw in free accessories.

I'd discovered the power of Twitter. No more archaic customer service complaint letters for me!

I was already crafting a tweet to emphasize how tech companies need to rethink how they treat "older" consumers.

Retailers aren't the only ones at fault. When I tried out a new gym's pool, a lifeguard placed swimmers into appropriate lanes to share. Quickly sizing me up, he pointed to the lane with the oldest man. "He's too slow for me," I informed him, but he insisted I try it out. I had to keep passing the other swimmer like a Corvette weaving in and out of lanes on the interstate. Drying off afterward, I met the gaze of the lifeguard as if to convey: *I hope you learned a lesson. Don't judge people by their age.*

Soon after I signed up for a group tennis class, where four players were randomly placed together. When the instructor saw me next to three 30-year-old men, he delivered my instructions geared to someone who'd need to sit on the bench between points. My competitive streak went into overdrive. Even though the young guys could outrun me, my technique was more consistent. The teacher's tone changed, my ranking was elevated. Not once during the 90-minute session did I collapse on the bench.

Sure, I iced my knees later — so does 37-year-old Serena Williams. I bristle every time the media qualifies her achievements at every match using the phrase "based on her age." No matter our age, it's time to stop grouping us by false stereotypes others have conjured up. We deserve to be treated with respect, as strong and confident individuals. And to speak out against ageism every time it occurs.



*From AARP*

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**This Newsletter is sponsored in part by a grant from The Executive Office of Elder Affairs.**

**Ways to still enjoy summer during Covid-19:**

1. Stargaze
2. Make s'mores in your backyard, or even your microwave!
3. Nap in a hammock
4. Make ice cream sundaes
5. Watch the sun set
6. Make homemade lemonade
7. Go for a scenic drive
8. Bake a fresh blueberry pie
9. Look for fireflies
10. Invite a friend to have a socially distanced talk in the driveway!

*happy*  
**Fourth**  
*of July!*