

Moving Forward

Westhampton Council on Aging

Programs and Services for Active Living at 60+



September 2020

COA Events

COA Zoom Luncheon: Nutrition Program with Joan Griswold

Thurs. Sept. 3rd at 12pm

Join us for a fun and informative free-flowing discussion on cooking and nutrition with Joan Griswold, a beloved nutritionist and fitness teacher in the Hilltowns. Joan is a passionate and accomplished director of health promotion and programming who always puts a positive spin on things! For the Zoom link, contact Amy Landau at WesthamptonCOA@comcast.net or **413-203 9808**.

PJs Allowed!

Fri. Sept. 18th at 9:00



If you are tired of the same-old same-old, grab your coffee cup and log on to a Zoom Breakfast. Chat with your neighbors and share your latest coping skills. Or, forget the pandemic and pretend this is the new normal! Contact Julia Lennen at **413-537-9880** or by email at jslennen@gmail.com to get the zoom link.

Save the Date:

Learn about Medicare Fraud and Abuse

Thus. October 1st Zoom Luncheon

Get informed about Medicare. Join this free information session from the comfort of your home. Learn to monitor your own healthcare records for healthcare errors and abuse including unintentional incidents, practices or procedures on the part of providers that are inconsistent with sound medi-

cal, business or fiscal practices. Be on the lookout for procedures that result in providers receiving payment for services that fail to meet professionally recognized standards of care or are medically unnecessary or incur unnecessary costs. Materials designed to accompany the program, including a Personal Healthcare Journal, will be available at the Library front porch during September.



The MA SMP Program conducts outreach and free educational sessions across the state to empower Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries, family members, caregivers and professionals on the importance of being an engaged healthcare consumer. Only through consumer engagement can we prevent, detect and report healthcare errors, fraud and abuse which are costly, but too often have health related consequences.

For the Zoom link, contact Amy Landau at WesthamptonCOA@comcast.net or **413-203 -9808**.

Zoom Fitness Class

Are you interested in trying out a live Zoom fitness class geared toward seniors with a favorite teacher in the Hilltowns? If so, please contact Joan Griswold for details at: joan@bybheath.com or **413-537-8337**.

Library News

**Westhampton Public Library is opening
for browsing!**

By Appointment:

Tuesdays: 9am to 12pm **SENIORS ONLY**
1pm to 5pm **FOR ALL**

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

Wednesdays: 1pm to 5pm **FOR ALL**
Curbside pickup only will continue **by appointment:**

Thursdays: 1pm to 7pm
Saturdays: 10am to 1pm

For the most up to date schedule of library services, please check our website:

www.westhampton-ma.com/westhampton-public-library or Facebook @**westhamptonpubliclibrary**.

Browsing appointments are for 30 minutes at a time. Curbside pickup is by appointment at 15 minute intervals. To schedule an appointment, please email **westhampton@cwmares.org** or call **413-527-5386**.

Important Health and Safety Guidelines:

- All visitors to the library must wear a face mask.
- Adults must wear gloves provided by the library and children must wash hands or use hand sanitizer provided by the library.
- All visitors must observe social distancing markers throughout the library.

In Other News:

The library has copies of the book "Walk With Ease", The Arthritis Foundation's program that is proven to reduce the pain of arthritis and improve your overall health. Please email **westhampton@cwmares.org** or call **413-527-5386** to request your personal copy.

Virtual Book Group

Tuesday, September 22 at 7pm

Book Group meets once a month and is open to new members! Please email **westhampton@cwmares.org** for Zoom login details.



Fork in trails at The Greenberg Family Conservation Area in Westhampton.

Greetings Westhampton COA Hikers & Friends,

Just before the publication deadline of the most recent COA newsletter (Moving Forward), I had

the fantasy that we could somehow safely resume hiking with social distancing by sometime this month. Right now though, it doesn't seem likely.

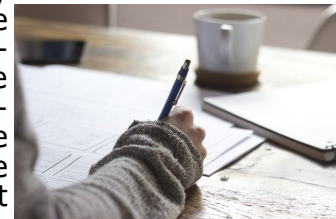
One of the issues has been to mask or not to mask while outdoors and safely distancing. Based on what we know today about the air-borne transmission of COVID 19, it is considered generally safe to be without a mask while socially distancing outside. I personally have breathing issues wearing a mask while vigorously exercising (such as riding a bike up hills) and I suppose wearing a mask would certainly be a hindrance for many seniors while hiking. That said, I cannot in good conscience suggest that we as a group hike without masks. Unfortunately, the statistics for COVID 19 have ticked up in the last few weeks – which is no surprise to me considering the behavior that I've witnessed by younger people, mostly adolescents and teenagers but also many adults that should know better and are ignoring precautions. I find it shocking that this deadly infectious disease can be treated so cavalierly.

So, I believe that it would be setting a bad example for seniors to participate in group events without masks. If it isn't fun to hike in a group with a mask and we really shouldn't be seen without masks, I find it hard to have any Westhampton COA sanctioned hikes this season– or at least until things change significantly for the better.

So what are Chuck and I up to? We will be continuing our exploratory hikes and will be sending out detailed recommendations for appealing hikes so that individuals, couples, and small (tiny) groups could go out and get some fresh air and exercise, socially distancing and using discretion about wearing masks. Hopefully, things will be a lot better by next year. ~Ray Fontaine

Remember *Writing* Letters? They're still around.

This spring, Amy Landau, our Westhampton COA coordinator, contacted Ms. Overstreet, Westhampton Elementary School 4th Grade teacher, to suggest that 4th graders might (voluntarily) pen-pal with some of us elders. I was interested, as my 'pal' and I have exchanged four letters (each) this summer. We have discussed hobbies, favorite summer vacation spots, even bikes. I now know what a BMX mountain bike is, and described my road bike now used mostly as an exercise. For fun, I wrote a sentence in cursive, but I confessed that I'd been printing since I was 10. He said he's working on his cursive. Mostly, we are enjoying each other's company from afar (My letters are also open to his parents). Indeed, the 'wisdom of the ages' includes all ages. The younger voices lack the adult experience, but



they are also not clouded by the same. It has made for a wonderful experience during this hot summer of difficult times.

Thank you Amy, Ms. Overstreet, and my friend, Mr. Pen Pal. ~Chuck Horn

Finding the Good in a Pandemic

Who would have thought on January 1, 2020 that 3 months later we would be in the middle of a pandemic? And here we are in August and it is still going on.

As bad as this pandemic has been, I always try to find some good in everything. After I retired in 2017, I did seem to have more time but slowly that gets filled in and seems I was pretty busy.

Listed below are the good I can find in this pandemic.

Time – I really do have more time since I don't go out very often. I have started making my own granola. I made strawberry jam and picked blueberries for the first time in many years. I think the pandemic has made people slow down and appreciate what they have.



Meal planning – I have had to be a little more organized in my meal planning and my husband has become more involved in the planning of meals which is a real plus. Now if I could just get him to do some cooking!

Ironing – Anyone who knows me, knows I love to iron. Well I have discovered during this pandemic that if you take certain items directly from the dryer and fold right away they are fine without ironing.

Organization – As I am the designated shopper in our family, I now find myself making lists and leaving the house more prepared for grocery shopping. I also reorganized my pantry so I know what I have.



Making do – There have been times when something wasn't quite what I wanted it to be but since I was not leaving the house, it would have to do. And you know what? It was fine!

Kindness – I have found myself cutting people more slack because I think everybody is doing the best they can in a very difficult and uncertain situation.

Since this is my list, you might want to take a few minutes and find your own "good" during this pandemic. And remember when life gives you lemons, make lemonade. Unless it's a car, then you're in trouble! ~Colleen Basile

Programs for People with Visual Impairment

TeleFun Calls

The Perkins Library is proud to present a new outreach program called "TeleFun Calls". These are recurring scheduled programs happening every week. Patrons can call a special toll free number and enter a special meeting ID to be connected with other Perkins Library patrons from across the state. There are activities scheduled for almost every day. Games like trivia, name-that-song, and family feud, are hosted every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at 1pm. We also have Monday Movie Matinees every Monday at 10am, as well as a Listening Library hour with radio dramas Thursdays at 2:30pm. We are planning on adding a poetry group and a virtual classroom where patrons can listen to audio-described educational videos and documentaries over the phone from the comfort of their own home. The Talking Information Center (TIC) program staff and volunteers provide human voice(d) broadcasts of local news, articles, and items of interest to visually impaired and otherwise disabled listeners throughout Massachusetts to promote independence and enrich quality of life.

To join the fun you will first need to contact Beth at: **617-972-7241** or email: **Elizabeth.White@perkins.org** to sign up.

Immune Supporting Superstars!

As we all continue to combat the coronavirus, it's important to keep your immune system ready to fight off illness as well as washing hands, wearing masks and socially distancing. Here are some immunity foods that are packed with antioxidants, vitamins, and other health promoting nutrients:

- Dark leafy greens—Kale, mustard greens, spinach, etc.
- Berries—blueberries, blackberries, strawberries etc.
- Red Bell Peppers—packed with more vitamin C than oranges!
- Mangos—packed with illness-fighting triple threat vitamins A, C, and B6!
- Nuts & Seeds—provides a dose of vitamin E which supports the body's immune system.
- Broccoli—little green "trees" contain vitamin C, antioxidant lutein, and good plant compounds.

-June 2020, Prevention





TRIAD COUNCIL

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

Homestead Protection vs “Declaration of Homestead”

In Massachusetts, an estate of homestead is a type of protection for a person's principal residence. There is an automatic homestead protection under The Homestead Act of \$125,000 with respect to a home that does not declare a homestead exemption filed at the County Registry of Deeds. For you to protect the value of your home up to \$500,000, you must file a document called a “Declaration of Homestead”. Filing fee is \$35.00; the simple form is available at the Registry or on the MA website: www.sec.state.ma.us/cis.

Will the Declaration of Homestead protect your home from being taken if you go into a nursing home? Liens imposed as a result of the payments of Medicaid benefits are exempt from the homestead protection as long as the recipient or the spouse of the recipient is alive, the Commonwealth will not look to the residence for reimbursement of Medicaid benefits. If the surviving spouse is also the recipient of Medicaid benefits, the Commonwealth will, however, file a claim for reimbursement from the estate for the entire amount of Medicaid benefits paid once the surviving recipient has died.

If you are over 62 and your spouse is under 62, should you both file? Yes, pursuant to a change in the law in 2011, Ch. 188, Sect. 2(b), an elderly homestead protection for the individual age 62 is personal to the qualifying person and will terminate upon transfer of ownership interest or death. To insure the homestead protection does not terminate unexpectedly for the spouse under 62, one homestead should be filed per owner.

Are there any other exemptions? Yes: a sale for Federal, state & local taxes, assessments, claims, liens; a mortgage on the home; a lien on the home recorded prior to the creation of the homestead; an execution issued by Probate Court for support of a spouse, a former spouse or minor children. Under Ch. 7 & 13 bankruptcy filings there are limited protections. See details on MA website pamphlet, understand your rights, consult a financial advisor.



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



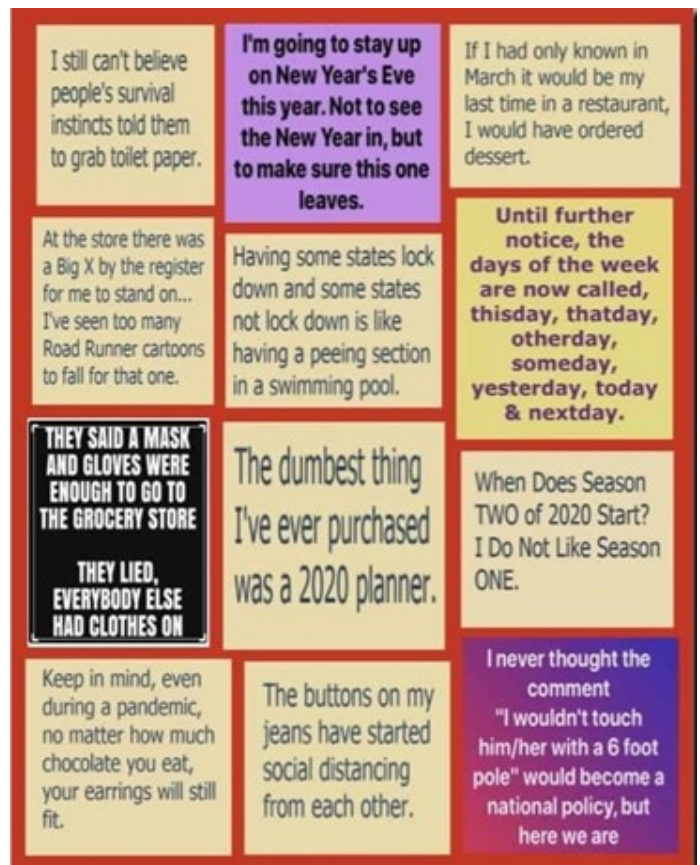
Wow! It is already September and it is still hurricane season, which has already messed with us. With this in mind, here are a few ideas on how to prepare for any emergency.

- Have a plan on how to get out of the house in 3 minutes or less.
- Keep eyeglasses, canes, walkers, hearing aids, COVID masks near where you are sleeping
- Make sure pathways are clear of clutter.
- Install night lights (LEDs work well) throughout the house to prevent falls.
- Make sure your house number is clearly visible from the road so first responders do not have to spend crucial time finding you.
- Get and fill out a FILE OF LIFE from your Council On Aging and post it on the refrigerator.
- Know where you can seek shelter and sustenance; this pre-planning is very important during this COVID time of social distancing.

Stay strong and be SAFE!

--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, in color, by email instead of snail mail?

If so, please email Kristen at 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!

What Luck...

So you know I'm a fan of checking our credit reports to make sure information is correct, that no one has absconded with our information, and as a reminder to do good financial management. The recommended practice is to check one of the three major credit bureaus every four months, so each one is checked once a year at no cost.

Well, what luck! Because of the virus we have grown to hate, the bureaus are allowing free weekly access to our reports through April of next year. If somehow you haven't been checking your reports, here you go - www.annualcreditreport.com/reviewYourReport.action. Look at each one now, dispute anything that is wrong, get it fixed, then start the annual cycle of checking.

While you are there, put a freeze on each report. That will keep unsavory people from accessing your report, stealing your information, and gaining credit or opening an account in your name. Just make very very very sure that you print out or write down the pin they give you. You will need that to thaw your report, if / when you want to be considered for credit.

Q. If I have a freeze, do I still need to check my report for correctness? Or can I just trust credit card companies and mortgage holders to always provide the right information? A. Yup. Nope.

With luck,
Jean O'Neil, TRIAD committee member
413-268-2228, jeanoneilmass@gmail.com

Good News!

By Deborah Hollingworth

We should be baking zucchini bread. It freezes well, and by now if we don't watch it, they can get to be the size of baseball bats.

As we enter another month of Covid, stretching resources gets to be more challenging. Families out of work, bills still needing to be paid, groceries getting more expensive- it's good that our gardens are finally producing after what seemed like a slow start. Let's hope for a late frost.

This is a reminder for folks to check out the Hilltown Mobile Farmer's Market which is in Blandford and Huntington on Friday afternoons and Worthington and Cummington on Thursday afternoons. The Market runs July 23rd to October 9th this year and accepts SNAP (food stamps) benefits, HIP (Healthy Incentive benefits as well as cash. Produce is from local farms and looks terrific. Blueberries, peaches, apples soon, tomatoes, squash, corn, kale, onions, beets, you name it, you can probably find it at the Market. If you can't get to the Market, there are volunteers who can shop for you if you call your senior center and ask. And of course, you can be one of those volunteers and shop for a senior, or someone who is having difficulty getting out...or struggling to make ends meet.



This has been an amazing time to watch the generosity of our neighbors helping neighbors. Senior centers are getting donations of food, money and time from a growing band of volunteers. The Food Pantry is in full swing in Goshen on Wednesday afternoons, and the Chesterfield Cupboard is open daily. Chesterfield's effort to help those in town who need groceries has been a real community effort, getting up and running, and now with volunteers helping to shop, stock shelves, clean and manage inventory. It has been exciting to see more families use the cupboard, and more donations come in.

Williamsburg's Take and Eat weekend meal program continues to help seniors every other weekend with a home delivered meal made by volunteers at Our Lady of the Hills, and the Williamsburg Congregational Church. If you know someone who could use a meal, or if you'd like to be a volunteer and help to continue this effort, you can give the Williamsburg Senior Center a call. The office may not be open, but the staff is still working and can be reached daily.

Here's a pitch for those of you who may not have checked out the SNAP program, also known as food stamps. You can apply online. The application process takes about 20 minutes. Don't have a

computer? Call your senior center to get help getting that application started. Benefits have been expanded. So if your income is less than \$1,777 a month for an individual, \$2,146 for a couple, \$2,514 for a family of three....you could qualify. With the price of groceries continuing to increase, this might help at the check out counter.

Meanwhile, let's bake and share zucchini bread?

2 cups of graded zucchini
3 eggs lightly beaten
1 cup salad oil
1 cup sugar
3 1/2 cups flour
2 teaspoons of vanilla
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
A pinch of salt, a pinch of cinnamon
Add raisins, chopped walnuts, if you want



Bake at 350 degrees for an hour. Makes 2 loaves.

Recipe from:

Garden Ways Zucchini Cookbook, 1977.



The 2020 Census is underway! It counts every living person in the USA. From **August 11 to September 30th**, Census takers will interview homes that haven't responded to the 2020 Census.

If you have not responded, you can do so by returning the mailings you should have received from the U.S. Census Bureau.

If you didn't receive your mailings, no problem! You can fill out your information over the phone with a verified Census Bureau representative at 844-330-2020. If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to the Secretary of the Commonwealth's staff to have a conversation about Census operations at 833-621-2020.

Your community depends on your Census response for funding and representation for the next decade to come. The impact on your community include: school lunches, plans for highways, support for firefighters and families in need. Census results affect your community every day. Please respond if you haven't already done so.

Westhampton Council on Aging
3 South Road
Westhampton, MA 01027

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PERMIT 183
Greenfield MA

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

Need something to celebrate?

Here are 12 lesser known holidays in September!

- 5th: National Cheese Pizza Day
- 6th: Read a Book Day
- 9th: National Teddy Bear Day
- 10th: Sewing Machine Day
- 11th: No News is Good News Day
- 12th: Chocolate Milkshake Day
- 16th: Collect Rocks Day
- 19th: International "Talk Like A Pirate Day"
- 20th: Wife Appreciation Day
- 21st: Miniature Golf Day
- 26th: National Hunting & Fishing Day
- 28th: Ask a Stupid Question Day

