

Moving Forward

Westhampton Council on Aging

Programs and Services for Active Living at 60+



November 2020

In Memoriam

Eleanor Gugenberger

August 6, 1935 - September 29, 2020

Kathleen Witherell Gainey

October 7, 1955 - September 6, 2020



COA Events

Let's Share! With host Bill Tracy Thurs. November 5 Zoom Luncheon

We are actively planning our COA Zoom "Luncheon" at Noon for Thursday, November 5. And I do mean us as we will be looking to all of you for participation. Topic? We are considering two areas: Short Stories from our past - in Westhampton and beyond, or a Hobby or Interest to share. Bill Tracy will moderate in the same mellow fashion he did last year when pressed into subbing for a last-minute luncheon program cancellation. We figure (per person) five-ten minutes of presentation and maybe a few minutes for Q&A. Bill will need our list of volunteers by November 1st so he can organize, so please RSVP to either Bill or to Amy Landau at **WesthamptonCOA@comcast.net**. It's going to be easier than you think. No worries: you can certainly join us without doing any presenting. It's just another nice way to get to know each other better. Email Amy Landau for the zoom link:

WesthamptonCOA@comcast.net

Zoom shy? Need help? We'll open the meeting 15 minutes early to help you, or we can assist you with loading the free and easy Zoom application ahead of time. (Call **Amy Landau** at **413-203-9808** or email her: **WesthamptonCOA@comcast.net**)... we're looking forward to it!

November Zoom Breakfast Friday November 20th at 9:00 AM

Join your Westhampton neighbors on Friday, November 20th for a friendly chat. No need to change out of your pajamas! Bring your own coffee and relax.

Call **Julia (413-537-9880)** or email **jslennen@gmail.com**. Let me know if you want to be on our email list and get the link automatically.

November Library News Schedule of Service Hours BY APPOINTMENT

- ⇒ Mondays: 1pm- 7pm curbside only
- ⇒ Tuesdays: 9am- 12pm SENIORS ONLY
browsing
1pm- 5pm browsing for all
- ⇒ Wednesdays: 1pm- 5pm browsing for all
- ⇒ Thursdays: 1pm- 7pm curbside only
- ⇒ Saturdays: 10am- 1pm curbside only

**For the most up-to-date schedule of library services please visit our website at:
www.westhampton-ma.com/westhampton-public-library**

Wowbrary

Do you miss browsing at the library? Good news! The library has a new weekly online newsletter of new materials added to the collection. To sign up for Wowbrary, visit **www.wowbrary.org**. Search by zip code, select Westhampton Public Library and enter your email address.



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

Book Group Tuesday, November 24 at 7pm

Join Book Group for a virtual meeting on Zoom. Please email westhampton@cwmars.org for log-in details. Book Group meets once a month and is open to new members!

Calling all Gardeners

The Library has been awarded a \$500 Resilient Communities grant from American Library Association. The award will be used to bring programs on climate change and pollinator habitat to the library. A large portion of the monies will be spent on new pollinator friendly and native plants for the library yard. We are looking for seniors with a passion for gardening or landscaping to be part of our community planning group for the grant. It's too early to plant seeds, but it's not too early to plan ahead! Please contact **Meaghan** at westhampton@cwmars.org if you would like to participate.

Senior Tablet Program

Through a special grant through Highland Valley Elder Services (CARES Act, Title III), a limited number of Samsung (10.1") Tablets have been purchased for seniors in need on a first come, first serve basis. In order to be eligible for this device, you must have internet and WiFi in your home. This program is prioritizing seniors in need, such as those who receive financial help from a public benefit program. If you have no such device (but are willing to learn) or possess an old device that is lacking the capabilities you need, this is a good opportunity for you. You must have a family member (or someone else) available to provide you with tech support on your device. In addition, you must also be willing to check in with the COA Coordinator at least two times -- after 3 months and then 6 months of use by phone to answer some questions about how your experience with the device is going (a survey may also be required). The purpose of this program is to help seniors take care of important needs, such as the need to connect with doctors via telehealth (video), as well as to help them more generally connect with others (such as family members and friends) via video-conferencing software such as Zoom. If interested, please contact COA Coordinator, **Amy Landau** as soon as possible at **413-203-9808** or WesthamptonCOA@comcast.net.



Would You Like a Phone Pal?

At the start of this pandemic, many of us thought that our daily circumstances requiring social dis-

tancing and isolation would be a temporary phenomenon. Now, we know that is not the case and that this situation is unfortunately ongoing with no clear ending in sight. This is all the more reason to take the time to connect with a neighbor. Making such a connection is of mutual benefit, not just to you, but to your neighbor. If you would like to exchange phone calls with someone just to say "Hi" and have a chat at a frequency that meets both your wishes, please leave a message for **Amy Landau**, COA Coordinator at **413-203-9808** or WesthamptonCOA@comcast.net.

The Importance of Monitoring Your Healthcare

On Thursday, October 1st, we held our COA Zoom "Luncheon" program with an excellent presenter from the Senior Medicare Patrol team who taught us the importance of documenting our health visits in order to prevent huge amounts of money from being wasted through Medicare fraud and abuse each year. A sizable group "turned out" for this talk where we learned about how to 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. Participants were able to pick up a Personal Healthcare Journal from the Library front porch to put their knowledge into direct action and the recording of the session was sent out so that if anyone missed an important detail, they could listen to it again. Here are some important phone numbers that were shared in the session:

- Call **Medicare** at **1-800-Medicare (800-633-4227)**
- Call the **Office of the Attorney General: Medicaid Fraud Control Unit, Insurance & Financial Services Hotline** at **888-830-6277**
- Call the **Elder Consumer Hotline** at **888-243-5337** or **617-727-8400**
- Contact the **Massachusetts SMP Program** by calling **1-800-892-0890** or going to www.masmp.org. Report a scam by calling **1-800-946-1243** or Reportscam@masmp.org.
- Call **KEPRO** to: Appeal Hospital Discharges or Skilled Nursing Facility Discharges Make Quality of Care Complaints **Call: 888-319-8452 OR 216-447-9604**
- To be connected to a local **SHINE** counselor and schedule an appointment call MassOptions at **1-800-243-4636**.

Also, if you missed this program and would like to view the recording online, please email **Amy Landau** at WesthamptonCOA@comcast.net or call her at **413-203-9808**.

Hooray for Outdoor Chair Yoga

Starting in September, the Westhampton COA hosted some much-needed, in-person exercise on Wednesday mornings for a small group of willing seniors. Elizabeth Nett, a new instructor, guided these Chair Yoga sessions in a safe, masked, socially-distanced manner in the parking lot area outside the Westhampton Church. The area was carefully sealed off from cars with orange cones and sanitized chairs were provided from the Church. Elizabeth is an experienced Yoga Teacher with 200 hours of Vinyasa Yoga training under her belt. Her mantra is "Yoga for ALL." We do not know how much longer we will be able to conduct these yoga sessions since the weather is growing colder. However, if you would like to get an update on this, please contact **Amy Landau** at **WesthamptonCOA@comcast.net** or **413-203-9808**.

Elizabeth Nett, Yoga Instructor (center) with Wendy Blow and Ilene Lorow. Also in attendance was Louise Jaisonkoski who took the photo.



How Old is Old?

Remember when you were a teenager? Back in the days of rotary phones and three channel television. You were told not to trust anyone over thirty. And those 30 year olds were old! Then you got to be 29 and 30 didn't look so bad, did it? Then it was 50, 50 was really old. Soon you were 49 and 50 wasn't that old. Next milestone was 60 and now, maybe now, you were teetering a bit because 60 seemed kind of old. But you passed 60 and you were only 40 in your head so all was right with the world. Next up was 70 and now you kind of had to admit you were a senior citizen. Oftentimes that senior citizen discount was given without even asking. You talk about the elderly and then realize you are the elderly. So how old is old? Really you are as old as you feel. And some days you may feel 100 and others much younger. It is important to stay engaged as much as you can. Volunteer, continue to socialize, stay involved in life. Most of us are retired now, so pursue

those hobbies and enjoy not having to rush out of the house every morning.

And remember in the words of Rod Stewart – "In your heart you will always remain forever young."

~Colleen Basile

November COA Hike Report

As you read this, our virtual hike to the lead mine in Southampton should be in your email. It's taken Chuck and I a bit longer to put this together than expected (both he and I have had a lot on our plates this past month) but we're putting the pieces together. We've also explored several new areas in the Westhampton vicinity, including a series of hikes in the Turkey Hill area (both the Westhampton and Northampton sides) as well as other trails adjoining the Hartnett-Manhan Forest. We will continue doing so throughout the fall. Hopefully, we'll be able to resume in-person hikes this coming spring and get back with our wonderful group of hikers. Take care & be safe!

~Ray Fontaine

Chuck Horn in the Horizontal Chimney at the Lead Mine.



Help for Those Living with Dementia

The Alzheimer's Association is still operational and continuing to help families each day living with dementia. Their 24/7 Helpline is available at **1-800-272-3900** to anyone who needs to talk about the challenges of dementia during this time, and they can help address feelings of isolation, and link you to important resources that can help though this uncertain time.

In addition they are now offering all their Educational Programs and Support Groups virtually, learn more at: **www.alzmassnh.org/virtual-programs/**. In the coming weeks they'll be launching virtual ALZ Meetups to offer persons living with early stage dementia social engagement with peers.



TRIAD COUNCIL

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

Be Prepared: Are You Ready For Winter?

“If you were waiting for the opportune moment, that was it”. Before the onset of holiday events, check your to-do list for winter preparedness.

Prepare: Severity of winter weather brings snow storms, extreme cold, fires, and power outages. Go to **www.ready.gov** for detailed preparations for weather related emergencies.

Plan: Make a Home Evacuation & Family Emergency Communication plan. You may not be together when a disaster/ major storm occurs. Know how you will contact each other, reunite, and what you will do in case of any emergency.

Stay Informed: Read 7 day weather forecasts; use website **www.NOAA.gov** for local alerts; sign up/update your contact information at Westhampton’s mass emergency notification system, Code Red on **www.westhamptonfire.org**

Build Emergency Kits: Prepare to Shelter-in-Place for 3 days - **www.ready.gov/prepare** provides specifics for your pet, car, home, medical, workplace kits.

Know weather report terms to monitor storms/ extreme cold:

Watch – possible in a few days; **Advisory** – likely in 24-36 hours; **Warning** – it is on our doorstep

Common Sense Safety Reminders

Exterior/ Interior Lights: Replace exterior bulbs before winter arrives; install (\$14.00) “stick-on” ceiling LED battery operated/ motion sensor lights in hall/ stairways.

Batteries: Replace in Smoke/ CM detectors, flashlights, radio.

Cooking: Kitchen fires are leading causes of house fires. Never leave a stove top unattended.

Fire Extinguisher: In kitchen, keep small one available (\$35.00).

Carbon Monoxide: NEVER use a generator or any gasoline, propane, charcoal burning devices in your home/ garage. Test Smoke/ CM detectors on each floor for early detection. If alarm sounds, IMMEDIATELY get outside; then call 9-1-1.

Furnace/ Wood Stove: Service burner yearly, clean ducts, stove pipe, chimney, and dryer vent.

Ashes: Put in metal containers and place outside away from building and leaves.

Space Heaters: Keep 4 ft. away from curtains, beds, walls. Never use extension cords!

Sand/ Ice melt: Keep containers by doors; check before you step - black ice!

Power Outage Preparation:

Sheltering: Due to COVID-19, stay tuned for Town's Daytime Warming Shelter & Red Cross Smith Vocational policies. Caged pets accepted.

Water: Have water pails ready for flushing toilets & non-drinking purposes.

Frozen Pipes: Prolonged outage - label shut-off valves; drain pipes before leaving home.

Garage Key: Have a key to manually open the electric garage door.

Vehicles: Winterize, keep gas tank full (pumps use electricity!); Refresh Emergency Car Kit.

Cash: Have available, ATMs use electricity.

Do your part: *BE READY* for extremes, exercise common sense, and network with neighbors.

ENJOY THE AUTUMNAL HARVEST!



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



The focus of Fire Safety Month was how to prevent cooking fires. The theme was chosen with a few facts in mind.

1. The leading cause of house fires has been kitchen fires.
 2. The leading cause of kitchen fires is unattended cooking.
 3. Most cooking fires in the home involve the kitchen stove. Here are a few ways by which you can prevent fires in your kitchen:
- ⇒ If you are sleepy or have consumed a bit too much alcohol, do not use the stove.
 - ⇒ Stay in the kitchen when you are frying, boiling, broiling or grilling food.
 - ⇒ Stay in your home when food is cooking.
 - ⇒ Use a timer to remind you that you are cooking.
 - ⇒ Keep anything that can catch fire away from your stove top.
 - ⇒ One extra idea -- don't let pan and pot handles overhang the stove top edge where they can be bumped into and pour scalding liquid on you.

Have a safe Thanksgiving!

--Worth Noyes, SAFE Educator
Williamsburg & Cumington 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!

Phone scams, Medicare style

So my latest irritation is those calls telling me I am eligible for Medicare supplies and they will be HAPPY to send me a back brace, knee brace, or Medical Item of the Day. The source of the calls will be some town in Massachusetts, or most recently a Williamsburg number. So far they haven't sent me anything... what if they do?

From the FTC: "Don't accept medical equipment you get in the mail — unless you or your doctor ordered it. If it comes to your door and you didn't order it, you can keep it as a gift. You don't have to pay for things you didn't order... if you give them your information, they'll use it to fraudulently bill Medicare. This uses up your medical benefits, which means you might not be able to get the right brace later, if your doctor prescribes one."

How do you tell if the scammers have been successful? Every now and again you will get a letter from Medicare in the mail, a Medicare Summary Notice, that says "This is not a bill" and it will show charges that Medicare paid. If you do not recognize a charge, or know it is one of those braces, call the phone number on the letter and report the blinking buggers.

The same rule holds if the mail brings you other merchandise with a bill, but you didn't order it. You can keep it, try to send it back at their expense, give it away, or use it to line a trash can.

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

Good News!

By Deborah Hollingworth

As I sit down to write, we are about three weeks away from the Presidential election, so it's difficult to think about anything else these days. But we are also in the midst of Open Enrollment for Medicare beneficiaries who might like to look over their coverage and compare plans for this coming year, especially if you've received a letter from your Medicare Rx plan saying coverage is changing and cost is increasing. And if that's not good news...our mailboxes are filled with advertising from other insurance plans saying they can do a better job for us. Can all that go straight to the recycling bin? Or do we need to do something?

There are 1,326,207 Medicare beneficiaries in Massachusetts. Many of us can ignore all this advertising, and ignore the fact that it's Open Enrollment season, because we get our health insurance coverage through our retirement/pension plans, or through the VA. And those who have MassHealth or X-tra help (also called the Low Income Subsidy), do not have to make any changes to their coverage. They can ignore and recycle all the advertising in their mailbox.

For the rest of us, we might do well to check out our coverage. Typically the letter from our insurance plan says they have changed their Formulary, switching some of the generics we take into "another tier", which is another way to say they are going to charge us more for our generic Rx than they did last year. You may have received a letter from your Rx Plan that said they were increasing your monthly premium? We expect shrinking coverage and increasing costs as a way of life. But here's a new wrinkle. It has become more important to know where to shop, and which pharmacy to use. Pharmacy chains, pharmaceutical companies and health insurance plans are connected in ways that are not apparent to us, meaning they often own, or are in business with each other. So picking up your medications at Stop and Shop might be a different price than shopping at CVS.

We are in luck because the **Medicare.gov** website can sort this all out for us. By typing in your list of Rx, and the zip code where you live, the website program can sort through the details of all 27 Medicare Rx plans in our area and rank them in order of least cost for best coverage! You can try using the website yourself, or call your senior center for a SHINE appointment.

One more piece of good news is the **Massachusetts Pharmacy Outreach Program**. This is especially helpful for situations where your Rx is expensive, or is not something you've taken before

and you'd like to know more about the drug. The Pharmacy Outreach Program is a free service provided by the University of Massachusetts and Executive Office of Elder Affairs. It's your reference librarian, available by phone, Monday through Friday from 8:30am - 5pm: **1-866-633-1617**. They look for affordable solutions for you, and can help submit Patient Assistance applications if you qualify to get your Rx free or greatly reduced from the pharmaceutical manufacturer. One of my favorite stories is about my Mom calling them to find out if it might be safe to double the dose of her particular Rx and cut the pill in half. That way she'd save almost \$300 for the year. They said it should be OK, and to ask her doctor. She did. And saved enough money to get her chair reupholstered.

Open Enrollment runs from October 15th-December 7th each year. Call your senior center for a SHINE appointment if you need help sorting it all out.



"You get a call from this number about a busted oven, you're busy. Understand?"

Joan Griswold's Zoom Exercise Classes

Thank you to all who join Joan Griswold's zoom exercise classes! We are very thankful that she does such a great job keeping our muscle strengthening class going and that she is interested in continuing this through the winter months.



Most of our COAs receive grants from Highland Valley Elder Services that partially fund many of our classes. We also use donations to keep paying teachers like Joan. Your donations make her classes possible.

In order to continue, we need donations from each of the seven Hilltowns.

Joan works for each town in six-week sessions. When we were meeting in person, we had a donation jar in which we asked everyone to put in a donation that they could afford. We are very thankful for the donations that have been sent in, but we still need your support. Otherwise, we will not have the funds to keep Joan's classes on Zoom.

When sending in a donation, please send it to the town you would like to support. Joan lists them on her email that she sends out every week. If you would like to join Joan's classes, send her an email: joan@bybhealth.com

careconsultationmanh@alz.org to schedule a Care Consultation today.

We know this is an unprecedented time, and no one should be doing this alone. The Alzheimer's Association staff are still operational and continue to help families each day living with dementia. Our 24/7 Helpline is available at 1-800-272-3900 to anyone who needs to talk about the challenges of dementia during this time. Our Helpline staff are available around the clock for any questions or concerns you might have. They can help address feelings of isolation, and link you to other resources.

Additionally, we are now offering all of our educational programs and support groups via video conference or over the phone. We also offer Meet Ups for those living with dementia. Virtual Alz Meet Ups are a fun, social hour that provide an opportunity to connect with others living through a similar experience.



Free Resources from the Alzheimer's Association

Did you or someone in your family recently receive a diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease or another form of dementia? Would you like some help navigating decisions after a diagnosis? Are you worried about how to provide the best care for a loved one? Are you concerned about your own memory?



The Alzheimer's Association provides free Care Consultations that are confidential and personalized to the needs of individuals and families. Consultations can be provided by phone or video conference and can include family members in separate locations. Call 617-393-2100 or email

Diane Meehan retires from the Hilltown Food Pantry after 30 Years

A familiar face to many, Diane Meehan recently retired from her position as Director of the Hilltown Food Pantry in Goshen. She started as a volunteer coordinator of the Pantry which has been in numerous locations (Cummington, Chesterfield, Haydenville and finally, in Goshen).

Thank you, Diane, for your many years of dedication and hard work. As the Goshen select board wrote in their letter to you, "You truly embody the popular phrase, 'Think Globally, Act Locally'. The many volunteers and people whom you have touched have enjoyed working with you and wish you all the best as you retire."

Westhampton Council on Aging
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**Westhampton
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This is going to be the
first year our family
won't be going to Hawaii
because of the virus.

Usually it's because
we can't afford it.



COFFEE AND JELLY BEANS