

Moving Forward

Westhampton Council on Aging

Programs and Services for Active Living at 60+



December 2020

In Memoriam

Daniel Grant Webster

April 4, 1940 - October 18, 2020



link, call **Julia** at **413-537-9880** or email at **jslennen@gmail.com**.

COA News Articles

Mass Appeal COA Holiday Show on TV!
Tues. Dec. 8 at 11am
Channel 22 / WWLP.com



The COAs of Western Massachusetts have teamed up to create a special collaborative Holiday Program which will be broadcast on the "Mass Appeal" TV show on Channel 22 (or online at WWLP.com). The program will include several COA-local musicians performing holiday songs as well as interviews with professionals in our area on a variety of important topics for staying healthy and connected during the pandemic. This should be a real treat and for a change, there is **NO NEED to Zoom!** The show runs from 11am to 12 noon. **Watch the program on your TV on Channel 22.** You can also watch it live online at: www.wwlp.com/watch-live/ For more information, see the back page of this newsletter.

December Breakfast
December 18th at 9am

Check in with your friends or make new friends. Grab your coffee and have a lively conversation about anything and everything. Join via Zoom on your computer, tablet, smartphone. No computer? you can call in from your phone! To get the zoom

Greetings from the Friends of the Council on Aging!

Hello Everyone!

All of us on the Friends Board just wanted to let you know that although we have not seen you in a while, that we are still thinking about you. We continue to meet as the need arises and are forever searching for trips and events that we can all share once this pandemic is over.

We hope that you and your families are all safe, healthy and doing as well as you possibly can during these challenging times.

Stay safe, stay healthy and above all
KEEP SMILING!

Deb, Shirley, Betty Anne, Charlotte and Marion

Library News

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

Virtual Book Group
Tuesday December 22, 7pm

This month Book Group is reading a fun title recommended by one of our regular participants - "No! I Don't Want to Join a Book Group: Diary of a Sixtieth Year" by Virginia Ironside, described as "A screamingly funny and poignant story about embracing life beyond middle age". Please email **westhampton@cwmar.org** for Zoom login. Book Group meets once a month and is open to new members.

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

December Adult Craft Kit Snowflake Stencil Ornament



The library is offering a do-it-yourself wooden round ornament with a snowflake stencil this month. All you will need to complete this craft is acrylic or craft paint. To request your kit please email **Meaghan** at mschwelm@cwmar.org. Please note that supplies are limited.

Quilt Raffle

This lovely queen-sized quilt was created and donated anonymously by a Westhampton resident to benefit the Friends of the Westhampton Library. It is 89.75" W x 86.75" L, in blue, purple, green and pink batiks with a navy rose border & backing, quilted using a double rose pattern. The quilt is on display inside the library and can be seen during "browsing" time, by appt. only.



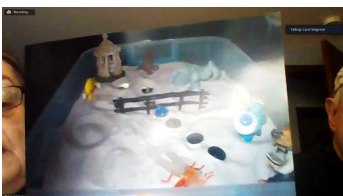
Tickets are \$2.50 each or 5 tickets for \$10. Send your payment, the number of tickets desired, and your name and phone number to Friends of the Library, 1 North Rd., Westhampton, MA 01027. One half of a ticket will be filled out with your name and phone number and deposited into a large jar. The corresponding stub will be either mailed or delivered to you. There is no limit to the number of tickets per individual. The drawing will be held at the library on **March 1, 2021**. Good Luck!

We are a Talented Bunch in Westhampton!

On Thursday, Nov. 5th, ten of us gathered remotely on Zoom to get to know each other better by sharing our stories and hobbies. What ensued was extremely varied and impressive. Here is a brief description of what was shared.

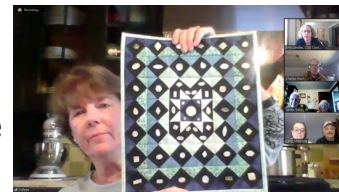
Carol Magrone: Sand Play

Carol keeps an elevated sandbox in her home where she and her friends and family can explore their feelings through small objects in sand. She says it is a little like living a dream while awake. She was inspired by the psychology of Carl Jung. Here she holds a photo of one person's creation.



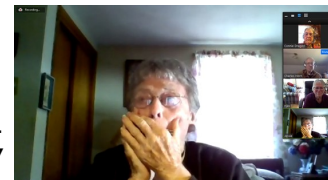
Colleen Basile: Antique Button Quilts

Colleen has a collection of antique buttons of historical significance, including some from the Button Mill in Leeds. She makes these beautiful quilts and incorporates the buttons by sewing them onto the quilts.



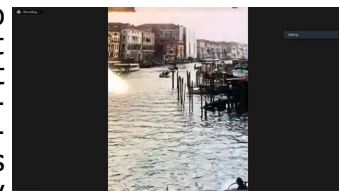
Jessie Krug: Harmonica Player!

Jessie has played harmonica since she was a child and she is quite skilled at it! She regaled us with "You Are My Sunshine", "Red River Valley" and "Big Rock Candy Mountain"!



Connie Dragon: Photographer

Connie took this photo in Venice, Italy and it was exhibited in a past artist show at Smith College. Connie has organized 135 photo albums of her family! In many of her photos, her children are wearing clothing she made for them with her own two hands!



Bill Tracy: "Country Prose"

Bill, who co-hosted this COA event with Chuck and who was the inspiration for this get-together, shared some of his beautiful writings, such as a reflection on generations past and present as well as a powerful piece on the absurdity of ageism. As he noted, Ruth Bader Ginsburg was 87 and only about 5' tall, but a dynamo right up until the end!



Chuck Horn: Life Stories

Chuck gave us a glimpse into his past lives, sharing stories that left a lasting impact on him. He grew up in the segregated South in Virginia during the 50's and 60's -- and when he moved north, he and his twin brother were taunted for their jean overalls and southern accents! In the photo above, he is at a high school reunion with 5 friends (including his twin brother), each with a compelling story.



December Westhampton COA Hikers Update

While we await progress on the pandemic front, Chuck and I continue our small steps forward. Soon via our Westhampton COA Hikers email, we will have a list of potential hikes that you, your family or trusted friend can use for your own hikes. If you have not already joined our group, please do: westhamptoncoahikers@comcast.net. Before too long, we hope to be hiking again.

I do have to apologize for not putting together the promised instructions for a Lead Mine Hike. After exploring that area in the Hartnett-Manhan Memorial Forest over the last few months, we've been unable to find usable and reliable landmarks to designate an accurate path to either the smelter or the mine shaft which are in the woods well off of the trails. So, not wanting to risk any of our seniors getting lost in search of these, we've decided to wait until spring and do this as a regular COA Hike.



Chuck and I just finished hiking the Rhodes Road trail from Rte. 66, near the Huntington line to its connection with a trail from the Stevens Property, Huntington and its connection with the old Spruce Hill Road*. It's about a moderate to difficult three mile hike to and back. Some moderately steep sections, also lots of rocks, so watch your step. Took us 1 1/2 hours.

*Spruce Hill Road goes straight ahead where Tob Hill Road trail curves to the right, heading north well above the Church and Town Hall area.

~Ray Fontaine

Free Masks available at the Library

Cloth masks will once again be available at the Library because of the surge in Covid cases. Pick them up during normal service hours. Schedule a pickup time by calling **413-527-5386** or emailing westhampton@cwmar.org.

Get Your Flu Shot Now

Just a reminder to please be sure to get your flu shot as soon as possible. Encourage all your friends and family to do the same. With COVID out there, we need to reduce our chances of any illness. For more information on how to protect yourself from the flu, check out this resource: www.mass.gov/flu-facts

Would you Like A Phone Pal?

At the start of this pandemic, many of us thought that our daily circumstances requiring social distancing 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 email: WesthamptonCOA@comcast.net.

Senior Tablet Program

We may still have some tablets left over to distribute to those who are eligible for them. If interested, please contact COA Coordinator **Amy Landau** at **413-203-9808** (leave a message) or via email at WesthamptonCOA@comcast.net. Also, please help spread the word if you know of another senior who might be interested.

UMass Interview Study

UMass is conducting an Interview Study and seeking seniors (age 60-90) and younger adults (18-35) to participate in an interview (1-1.5 hours) by video or phone regarding COVID-19 and your experiences. They will be sharing their findings with COAs which will be helpful to all of us. Participants will receive a \$15 Amazon Gift card! If interested please contact nrvlab@gmail.com or **413-545-1023**.

RMV Senior Days - December

Mass Law requires drivers age 75+ to renew their license in person. At 17 RMV Service Centers, including Springfield and Greenfield, Wednesdays have been designated as days for Senior License Renewal only. This is to provide a safer space to renew your license but other locations will still process license renewals. For more information call **857-368-8005** or email MassDOTRMVSeniors@dot.state.ma.

Circuit Breaker Tax Program for Homeowners & Renters

If you are 65+ years of age and your property tax is more than 10% of your annual gross income, then you may be eligible for a property tax exemption through the town. To obtain the benefit you must file for the 2020 tax year beginning in January 2021. For more information or assistance call **1-617-887-6367** or visit

www.mass.gov/guides/personal-income-tax-for-residents





TRIAD COUNCIL

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

Long Term Care Services & Support (LTSS) – Prepared?

One out of three Americans is now 50 or older; by 2030, one out of five will be 65+. In 2018, 14 million adults in the USA needed LTSS. 7.9 million were over 65; 6.1 million were ages 18-64. "On average", today someone 65 years old has almost a 70% chance of needing some type of long term support & services. LTSS are mainly for personal care needs and can be provided in Assisted Living/ supportive housing settings, nursing facilities, at home, or by family unpaid caregivers.

Medicare does not cover costs for extensive LTSS; it pays only for short terms. In 2017, \$235 billion was spent in the USA on LTSS. 23% was paid by patients' "out-of-pocket", 57% was paid by Medicaid (joint Federal & State Health Ins. Program for low income), and an average of \$10,000 per caregiver's "out-of-pocket". One in five caregivers experiences a high level of financial stress due to unplanned care. Visit: Medicare.gov – Skilled Nursing Care.

Planning a strategy and discussing details with a trusted adviser is essential. Unique options are based upon where we live, available services, private insurance, Medicaid qualifications, and personal assets. You have to ask yourself how you will navigate the myriad of costs, services, legal, family, and social forces www.longtermcare.org - "Finding Your Path Forward".

Most long-term care is not medical care, but assistance with daily personal tasks. There are 6 "Activities of Daily Living (ADLs)": Bathing, Dressing, Using the Toilet, Transferring to or from bed/ chair, Caring for incontinence, and Eating. There are 8 "Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADLs)": Housework, Managing money, Taking medications, Preparation & clean-up from meals, Shopping, Using the phone/ computer, Caring for pets, Responding to emergencies

2019 Updated Average Costs in Massachusetts

The cost of LTSS depends on the medical or non-medical care and duration of care you need, the provider & insurance used, and where you live. Knowing the costs of different types of care, whether the care is provided at home or at a facility, can help you plan to pay for these costs. Below are 2019 average monthly costs in MA with a column showing 3% projected inflation rate in 2025: Genworth Financial, Inc. 2019.

TYPES	MONTHLY COSTS 2019	2025
Home Health Care		
Homemaker Services (44 hrs. wk.)	\$4,767	\$5,692
Home Health Aide (44 hrs. wk.)	\$4,862	\$5,805
Adult Day Health Care		
Adult Day Health Care	\$1,549	\$1,850
Assisted Living Facility		
Assisted Living Facility (1 Bed/Private)	\$5,350	\$6,388
Nursing Home Care*		
Semi-Private Room	\$12,645	\$15,099
Private Room	\$13,231	\$15,799

* MA ranks #5: highest monthly nursing home cost. Medicare ends after 100 days.

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 year's holiday season will be very different for many people because of COVID; one of the things many people will do is decorate their homes with bright lights to shine during this dark time. Here are a few suggestions on how to brighten your corner of the world safely:

- ⇒ Buy lights and electric decorations that are listed by an approved testing agency.
- ⇒ Replace old lighting that has frayed wires, broken plugs, sockets or switches.
- ⇒ Never overload outlets.
- ⇒ Use no more than 3 strands of lights on a single extension cord.
- ⇒ Consider using energy efficient LED lights that stay cool.

For outdoor lights consider:

- ⇒ Using only lights rated for outdoor use.
- ⇒ Plug outdoor decorations into a ground-fault circuit interrupter.
- ⇒ Anchor outdoor lights and decorations with insulated holders or hooks.

Have a SAFE and happy holiday season.

--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!

Charity – where does it begin?

Everyone has a favorite cause to support. This time of year, we are inundated with requests to part with our money for a really good organization! So, how to tell if this is a good idea or not? How to tell how much is enough?

First, can you afford it? Your budgetary "needs" should be considered first, like rent or mortgage, heat, and groceries. After that, we have "wants", savings, and discretionary spending. Charity contributions are considered discretionary – I cannot think of an exception to this.

Second, which cause do you like? As an ecologist and farmer's daughter, I lean toward environmental, conservation, and agricultural / food issues. We may support medical research, literacy, veteran's programs, animal welfare – the list goes on. We may support local fundraisers or children's programs or the library.

Third, is the cause being considered a valid one, a good one? Valid means not a scam! A good one means considerations such as how much money is spent on management, i.e., does a large percentage of income go to the actual cause. I still like Charity Navigator (www.charitynavigator.org) for analysis of many causes, though they will not feature our local scene. One benefit of this resource is that they now show Advisories: charities "that raise concerns". A second benefit is that you can donate anonymously to a listed organization! That means fewer mailings coming in the mail! Less inundation!

With charity in my heart,
Jean O'Neil, TRIAD committee member
413-268-2228, jeanoneilmass@gmail.com

Experts say they're usually fine — but here's what to consider when choosing your specs

by Sarah Elizabeth Adler, AARP
September 24, 2020



Who needs reading glasses? All of us do, eventually, thanks to a condition called presbyopia — a gradual loss of the ability to clearly see things up close — that becomes noticeable for most people beginning in their 40s. Because presbyopia is caused by age-related changes to the lens of the eye, it isn't preventable or reversible. But experts say that the right pair of reading glasses, including those readily available at retailers like a dollar store or pharmacy, can help bring small print and other objects, like your smartphone screen, back into focus.

Here's how to find your perfect pair.

Over-the-counter reading glasses

"Reading glasses from a drugstore are, in fact, perfectly safe," says ophthalmologist Michelle Andreoli, M.D., a clinical spokesperson for the American Academy of Ophthalmology, who notes that over-the-counter reading glasses, including low-cost dollar store options, can help you focus up close and will not damage your eyesight. But, she adds, once your up-close vision starts changing, you can expect it to continue to worsen into your mid-60s. That means the reading-glass strength you start out with will need to increase as the years go by. "A good rule of thumb is that any strength of [reading glasses] will last someone between 45 and 65 about two years," Andreoli says.

Experts say the best way to determine what strength you need in the first place is with a yearly eye exam, which can tell you what power (notated with a number like +1.00 or +2.50) you need. The higher the number is, the stronger the glasses are. If you haven't been to the eye doctor or want a way to double-check in the store, Andreoli recommends grabbing a greeting card from the stationery aisle to carry out a DIY test: Hold the card at a comfortable reading distance and try on several pairs until you find the ones that work best.

If you're stuck between two pairs? "In most cases, when two reading-glass powers seem equally suitable, choose the glasses with the lower power," says optometrist William Reynolds, president of

the American Optometric Association. "Picking reading glasses that are too strong typically will cause more discomfort problems than reading glasses that are a little too weak."

Another thing to keep in mind is the activity you'll be using the reading glasses for. Working on the computer, for example, typically takes place at a greater distance than reading a book, and thus requires a lower strength.

Prescription reading glasses

The over-the-counter route isn't right for everyone, Reynolds says, including people who have astigmatism

(meaning the eye's cornea or lens isn't perfectly round) and those who need a different strength for each eye.



In those cases, prescription reading glasses from the eye doctor are a better option. The most popular choice of prescription reading glasses are progressive lenses, Reynolds says. They combine multiple prescriptions in one lens, with a gradual top-to-bottom change, allowing someone to wear just one pair of glasses to correct far-away, middle-distance and up-close vision.

For people who otherwise have no vision problems, Andreoli says that reading-glass lenses that are clear (non-prescription) on top are another popular option available from the eye doctor. They can be worn continuously and eliminate the need to take your reading glasses on and off throughout the day.

Fredric Grethel, a board member of The Vision Council, a nonprofit optical industry trade association, notes that prescription reading glasses might also be a better choice for someone who wants more options, such as blue-light blocking lenses or an antireflective coating — not to mention a greater selection of fashionable frame choices. "The world has really changed from some years ago," Grethel says of the numerous reading-glass options — both over-the-counter and prescription — available today. "Now they're fashionable, they're fun, and they can give you personality."



How to Strengthen Your Lungs to Fight COVID-19

by Michelle Crouch, AARP
July 31, 2020



As you know, COVID-19 is a respiratory disease that can cause serious lung damage and breathing problems — along with a host of other health issues. And as the virus continues to spread, you may be wondering if strengthening your lungs will help you fight it off if you are infected.

"One of the first things that happens with COVID is that you get short of breath and your oxygen saturation begins to fall," says Raymond Casciari, a pulmonologist at St. Joseph Hospital in Orange, California. "The better condition your lungs are in, the better off you will be."

To get your lungs into better shape, the top critical-care pulmonologists we interviewed all agreed that the best option — hands down — is regular old physical activity, the kind that gets your heart rate up. "Anything that makes you breathe faster is basically a breathing exercise," says Joshua Denson, a pulmonary and critical care specialist and assistant professor of medicine at Tulane University School of Medicine. "My first advice would not be, 'Go sit in a chair and breathe deeply.' I'd say, 'Get on a bike and ride 20 minutes a day,' or 'Go for a brisk walk.'" Aim for activity that ramps up your breathing.

Staying active is especially important for older Americans, because lung function decreases as you age. Over time, the muscles that support your breathing become weaker, lung tissue loses elasticity and the air sacs inside your lungs become baggier. Studies show exercise can slow that decline and boost lung function.

Aerobic activity also helps air get into the deepest parts of your lungs that you don't use when you are sedentary, says Bruce Levy, chief of the Division of Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston.

"If there are any secretions or pollutants you've breathed in, aerobic activity helps you clear them out of your lung and decreases your risk of infection or pneumonia," he says. "Aerobic fitness also helps your body obtain oxygen from the environment and use it in the most efficient manner," he says. "If you happen to get COVID, if you've been doing cardio, that's going to help you."

What's important for lung health, Levy and others say, is to exercise at an intensity that quickens your breathing rate and leaves you feeling breathless, whether it's swimming, biking or walking briskly.

"Some older adults are deathly afraid of feeling 'short of breath,'" Casciari says. "I have to convince them that it's a good thing."

How breathing exercises can help: Deep breathing exercises are another way to get air deep into your lungs and clear secretions. Although they're not as effective as physical activity, they are better than doing nothing for people who are sedentary, pulmonologists say, and they can be particularly helpful for people who have mobility issues.

"If you're bedridden, or caring for someone who's bedridden, doing some controlled breathing can be very useful because there is no other way to train," Levy says. "If you are not exercising, the base of your lungs can partially collapse, which increases the risk for infection if you breathe in a virus."

Levy notes that if you already exercise regularly (and don't have a chronic lung condition), breathing exercises may not confer any additional respiratory benefit, but they certainly won't cause any harm. Besides, you may reap other benefits: Research shows slow, controlled breathing can help lower your heart rate, stabilize your blood pressure and ease anxiety.

Good News!

By Deborah Hollingworth

Already December! The Good News is that the deep frost arrived late and with the last spurt of warm weather there was still time to plant more tulips. There's hopeful news about a Covid vaccine, and the election is behind us. Perhaps there is reason to believe that the next few months will not be so stressful.

Dealing with Covid may mean not seeing the whole family for holidays, but senior centers are coming up with new ideas to celebrate. Whether it's a drive by and pick up Turkey dinner, or holiday gift cards that may arrive in your mail box, we are inventing new ways to reach out to family and friends. The theme song for the long winter that lies ahead is....don't hibernate....keep in touch.

Zoom meetings for coffee and chat, book clubs, writing groups, puzzle exchanges, cooking classes and/or recipe exchanges and exercise classes are still happening.

Senior centers are also making calls to "phone buddies", so if you'd like a phone call, for no reason other than to chat, let them know. As the days get shorter and colder, it's important to keep in touch.

Times like these, we need to be inventive, thoughtful and on the look out for ways to help.



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'Mass Appeal': *Special Senior Edition!*

Council On Aging Directors from throughout Western Mass have been working with Mass Appeal co-host Patrick Berry on a special edition of the show that will focus on older adults. What began as a collaboration to highlight area Senior Center holiday performers, morphed into an entire show dedicated to the topic of aging adults in our area.



Tune in to WWLP Channel 22 for Mass Appeal on Tuesday, December 8th at 11am for an hour filled with information and local entertainers performing both original holiday pieces as well as traditional favorites. Topics that co-hosts Alanna Flood and Patrick Berry will delve into the physical, psychological and emotional well-being of older adults, caregiver stress, nutrition, and fitness. When a group of dedicated, compassionate, committed Senior Center Directors teams up with a talented television duo, the results are definitely worth watching!