Moving Forward

Westhampton Council on Aging

Programs and Services for Active Living at 60+



January 2021

COA Events

January Zoom at Noon Program: Eagles and Other Local Birds



Thursday, January 7th

Chuck Horn will present a 20 minute photo program on our local eagles. After that, we plan to show a few pictures by a local photographer and some of your own, if you'd like. Just get the picture onto your computer desktop, and with a couple clicks, we can show it. In a pinch, just hold your photo up to the computer screen. Identifying? Discussing? No problem. Great program for a winter day.

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

Breakfast with Friends Friday, January 15th at 9:00 am

Mark your calendars for the January Zoom breakfast. Enjoy camaraderie and catch up on the latest neighborhood news. Did you know you can join from your landline phone if you don't have a computer, tablet or smartphone? True you cannot see your friends but you can join right in on the conversation. Please contact **Julia Lennen** at **413-537-9880** or **jslennen@gmail.com** to

get the zoom link and instructions.

January Library News

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

Climate Change Film Discussion

Tuesday January 19, 7PM - 8:30PM

Care about climate change and how it affects our community? We are excited to announce that Westhampton Public Library has received a Resilient Communities: Libraries Respond to Climate Change stipend from American Library Association (ALA)! Grown in Westhampton and the library will co-host a film discussion on the PBS/NOVA film "Decoding the Weather Machine". Public performance rights for this film have been made possible through the library's ALA award. "Decoding the Weather Machine" explores the long history of scientific exploration of weather and how it relates to climate or the earth's "weather machine". Travel across the globe to meet scientists uncovering evidence of climate change by studying the earth's oceans, weather patterns, and how humans can remain resilient in the face of big changes. We hope you can join us for this important community conversation. Please email westhampton@cwmars.org to register, for a link to view the film and for Zoom login.

Virtual Book Group

Tuesday January 26, 7pm

This month Book Group is reading "The Brief and Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao" by Junot Diaz, winner of the 2008 Pulitzer Prize and described as "a true literary triumph". Please email

westhampton@cwmars.org for Zoom login.

Book Group meets once a month and is open to new members.

A Community of Readers

A new monthly feature celebrating the reading interests of local seniors!

January 2021 - By Rita Horn

I have enjoyed browsing in the library recently. It gave me an opportunity to scan the text of unfamiliar authors and books that I might like to explore. I have discovered the poetry of Poet Laureate and Native American Joy Harjo for its description of her tribe's experiences. I especially enjoyed revisiting more familiar poets like Maya Angelou and Mary Oliver, whose poetry book "Devotions" help me find peace and quiet amidst the trials of COVID. Meaghan has been helpful in suggesting mystery writers, such as Louise Penny's Inspector Gamache series. She also suggested Ann Patchett's "The Dutch House", which has received many well deserved good reviews. She introduced me to Kate Atkinson's Jackson Brodie mystery series, all of which develop interesting characters.

A few years ago I underwent several surgeries that required medication and therapy which made it difficult to concentrate. I found short stories very appealing, especially those of Alice Munroe, who has several short story collections that helped me focus on excellent writing, rather than the ordeals of surgery. The librarians have been so helpful and patient helping me with the CWMARS website. I suggest you try using it to find all books in MA that can be borrowed online through the library. When this library is closed for browsing, you can find the image of each book on the website. It provides a paragraph that describes the theme of the book to help you make the right choice for you. ~Rita Horn

COA News



New COA/Westhampton Bulletin Board

Have you seen the new bulletin board outside Town Hall? Thanks to a CARES grant from Highland Valley Elder Services awarded to the Westhampton COA, we now have an all-weather bulletin board with protective doors, in place of the old, rather antiquated sign. As COA Coordinator, I thought that using some of our funds for this purpose would be particularly useful as a way to safely communicate with seniors during the pandemic who may not be connected via the Internet, and thus out of the loop on what's happening. Everyone should be receiving the newsletter, but having another route to share important information seemed like a good idea. You may, on occasion, see other information on one of the boards related to important public health news (for instance) shared by the Town as well. So keep your eyé out and check it regularly!

Samsung Tablets Still Available

We still have four Samsung tablets available to distribute to seniors who need 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 Westhampton senior who might be interested.

Become a Pen Pal with a 4th Grader

Do you ever miss receiving an old-fashioned handwritten letter in the mail? There's a new opportunity right now to become Pen Pals with a 4th Grader at Westhampton Elementary School. This activity will help both you and the student to



stay connected and also help develop and maintain the students' writing skills in the process. As Chuck Horn wrote in September's newsletter, "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." So why not try it for the winter? If interested, please send an email with your name and address to

WesthamptonCOA@comcast.net and we will get you matched up!

Sand Deliveries for Westhampton Seniors

Walking out to your mailbox more now that you are driving less? Keep your steps and walkway safe with sand delivered to you by the Highway Department.

Please note that the sand does include some salt - it is the same mix used on our roadways. Con-

tact **Julia Lennen** at **413-537-9880** or by email at **jslennen@gmail.com**. Please specify the location (for example, near the garage, at the top of the steps) for your delivery. If you have an old bucket with only a little bit left, please leave it out for collection.

Illustration Credit: Emily Wayne, Westhampton Youth Librarian

Free Medical Equipment for Loaning

Although our COA's used medical equipment may be moved before long, the items remain available to Westhampton residents. The equipment includes this tub brace (see photo), wheelchairs, a commode, and various kinds of walkers. If you



and various kinds of walkers. If you need one, call the COA at **413-203-9808**, leave a message via the Town website's "Contact Us", or just ask one of our Board members. You need only sign out your item and sign it back in on returning it. These are all used items, so we can't guarantee their performance. However, many have been used each year with great success. Please understand that we need a little time to pick up the Annex key and to have your item ready. We will contact you to arrange pick-up and return. You may keep the equipment as long as you need it, but please return as soon as you are done.

Thanks, Chuck Horn

Radio Plays

Growing up in the valley during the fifties and sixties, I missed the final years of network radio. There and then radio was only for music and talk. So I'm discovering the wonders of sophisticated radio fiction later in life. I did get a smattering of it on public radio some thirty years ago, unfortunately that also went away. But now with the many audio formats available, I am experiencing a whole new world of enjoyment.

By radio plays, I mean stories with actors, music, and sound effects, usually in a half-hour format (with commercials). As much as it's fun to listen to recordings of live radio comedy like Red Skelton and Jack Benny, it's more of an experience in nostalgia, a lot of the humor being lost in the past. A good radio play though is timeless. And as much as programs like *Audible* do a great job in presenting stories, they are essentially the written stories read aloud sans sound effects or music (Does anyone remember Bill Cavness's *Reading Aloud* show originating from WGBH?).

The 1940s and more-so, the 1950s (even as the radio networks were in decline) were the golden age of quality radio plays. The programs that first come to mind are *Suspense*, *Escape*, *Gunsmoke*,

Frontier Gentleman, The Whistler, as well as the experimental CBS Radio Workshop and Crime Classics. These shows for the most part had great writing (many were adapted short stories from writers like H.G. Wells, Ray Bradbury, Cornell Woolrich, etc.), great acting (frequently with Hollywood stars like Joseph Cotton and Agnes Morehead, and later radio and TV character actors like William Conrad, John Dehner, and Harry Bartell), and great music (frequently music written for specific shows by the likes of Bernard Herrmann, Hitchcock's most celebrated collaborator).

Since most of these radio plays are out of copyright, they are readily available on the internet to download or stream — although some of the recordings are a bit rough. RadioSpirits.com offers many plays, cleaned-up for more pleasant listening, as downloads or CDs for sale. They also have a website that lets you stream their radio show for free (check it out). I don't do satellite radio, but I know that radio shows are also available there, such as Jim French's wonderful revival shows, The Classic Adventures of Sherlock Holmes and the noir detective Harry Nile series.

If you like short stories, pulp fiction, those great anthology TV shows like *The Twilight Zone, Alfred Hitchcock Presents*, and *Thriller*, or even comic books, there is a whole universe of good listening out there. So sit in a comfortable chair, turn off the lights, and let your imagination take you to places even the most sophisticated CGI (computer-generated images) can't. ~Ray Fontaine

Start The New Year Off Right

I think we can all agree that 2020 was not the best year. And I am sure we are all wondering how far into 2021 we will be before things are back to normal. And will it ever be normal again? I was recently going through an old scrap book and right in the front was an article by Ann Landers titled "Start the year with a can do spirit" which had some good thoughts. Below are some of Ann's thoughts along with a few of my own.

Be kind. I can't emphasize this enough. Everyone has a cross to bear. Some are larger than others and kindness costs nothing. A friendly smile, an unexpected good deed, a word of encouragement are just a few things that could make someone's day.

If you make a mistake, own it and if necessary, apologize.

If you make a promise, keep it.

90% of life is showing up when you should.

Be good to yourself. Read that book. Take a walk and enjoy our beautiful country. Get a manicure or a pedicure. Do something that makes you happy!

And last but not least Happy New Year!

~Colleen Basile

TRIAD COUNCIL



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

No Place like Home, but is it Lifelong?

In many parts of the USA, most homes were built more than a generation ago to serve family households generally consisting of two parents and two+ children. The floor plan was designed for able-bodied occupants never planning for short or long term physical impairments, visitors' disabilities, or changing physical needs to create a life-long home. The present housing stock doesn't fit its rapidly changing and aging population. A 2019 AARP survey shows 3 out of 4 adults 50+ still want to stay in their homes and communities as they age; many can't see that happening.

America circa 2020 is a nation in which the dominant household type, nearly 30% of all households, consists of single adults living alone. By 2030, one in five people in the U.S. will be 65 or over and by 2034, older adults will outnumber children under 18 for the first time ever.

To accomplish the goal of remaining independent, safe and comfortable in our life-long home, it only makes financial sense to begin modifying and incorporating these "Universal Design" elements when you can afford them. Begin planning smartly designed remodeling projects that are attractive, accommodating, and barrier free regardless of one's age or abilities. You can download the new 2020 AARP Home Fit Guide for a room-by -room guide.

Some common sense safety projects we can do ourselves or at little cost:

- Install halogen light sensor night lights in bathroom and hallway plugs
- Replace traditional light switches with illuminated rocker-style light switches
- Install photosensitive porch/ entryway lighting; Motion sensors on outdoor floodlights
- Install grab bars in bathroom; install lever-style door handles, easier than knobs
- Install swing-away hinges on all doors to add two inches of width for easier access
- Use a rubber-suction bath mat in tub/ shower; install hand-held adjustable shower head
- Install non-slip mats under rugs to make secure; mount railings on all stairwells
- Replace kitchen/ bath cabinet knobs with easier to grip D-shaped handles
- Create a kitchen work surface you can sit at by removing cabinetry beneath a counter
- Apply no-slip paint to walking surfaces inside and out to prevent falls
- Create a Fire Emergency Exit Plan for getting yourself and others out of your home

Spring Home Projects? Start Planning!

If you will need professional help for your project, it's important to be organized. Before you hire someone, you need to verify references, prepare a budget and have a written contract.

I would like	to contribute to t	he Westhampton COA	My contribution of \$_	is attached.
	r check to The Frie emo line, and mail	ends of the Westhampto to Charlotte Wood, 14	n Council on Aging,write Perry Hill Rd. Westhampt	"program support fund ton, MA 01027.)
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Regional News

Seniors Aware of Fire Education



I am sure that we are hoping that 2021 will be a much better year than 2020. But whatever happens with COVID, January will still be January with its cold, ice and snow; and we Hilltowners will be driving in that stuff. Here are a few things that you can put in your car that will help you if you get stuck in the weather:

- ⇒ A flashlight with extra batteries
- \Rightarrow A first aid kit and manual
- \Rightarrow Jumper cables.
- \Rightarrow Flares
- ⇒ Blanket, hat, mittens, shovel, windshield scraper, sand, tire chains, fluorescent distress flag, caution triangles.

Have a SAFE New Year!

--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!

List Plus Calendar Equals a Plan

So along about this time of year, I often write about things that could be New Year's resolutions, or not, depending. If you don't believe in making resolutions, that's ok, but I have a suggestion for you. Make a list! Associate that list with a calendar, and **ta da!** You have a plan! This a way to make a possibly overwhelming task doable, and so much in life improves with a plan, I do believe.

The plan to which I refer is based on a list which is based on things you really should do to make life easier for yourself and for those who follow behind you. Remember the Big Five? They are the will, health care proxy, durable power of attorney, advance directive, and HIPAA privacy release. No surprise, they will now and again require a review and update. Last year to those five we added the task of keeping up with your credit reports, and I'm going to add three more – writing a Letter of Instruction, compiling relevant information, and preparing a budget.

Why the calendar? If you take these nine items and assign them a calendar month, then you can spend a few minutes a month dealing with them one at a time. You will then have three months to do as you please!

First, pick your lucky number (between 1 and 30, ignoring February's limitation) if you have one. Then pick one of the nine items and pair it with a month. Write them all down on your list and in each month of a calendar on your lucky number day. It doesn't matter a whole lot what month you use, but you might want to use March to check your credit reports because this task is free and easy until the end of April. If you haven't done this, go to **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.

Contact me if you need a refresher on the Big Five, and Plan Away!

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

Good News!

By Deborah Hollingworth

This month's good news is about an often forgotten benefit called Health Safety Net.

This program was started back in the 1950s when

we were investing in our nation's infrastructure, building interstate highways, schools, hospitals and clinics. As is the case with much federal funding, the money to build our hospitals and clinics came with a mandate, a promise to provide care for patients with limited financial re-



sources. Decades ago, this program was called "Free Care" and helped provide medical treatments/services, usually in the hospital's ER, for those patients without insurance, struggling to pay medical bills. More recently it was called "Uncompensated Care Pool" meaning hospitals and federally funded clinics could bill for patients if they had no insurance and limited income.

These days it's called "Health Safety Net" which is a much better name because this program provides a safety net for those whose insurance isn't covering all their bills.

Example: if you are hospitalized and have Medicare, but no supplemental insurance, you are responsible for paying the hospital deductible of \$1400 and most likely some co-pays for medical treatments received. If you meet the income guidelines, Health Safety Net could cover these costs.

The interesting thing about Health Safety Net is that this benefit eligibility regulation does not count assets. If you are single, your income needs to be below \$1,595/month. If your income is as high as \$3,190/month....you would still qualify for partial Health Safety Net. Married couples income needs to be less than \$2,155 for full benefits, but can be as high as \$4,310 for partial coverage.

Health Safety Net covers any co-pays or deductibles for a hospital stay and any medical services you receive in a federally-funded clinic (like the Hilltown medical centers). Yes, this includes dental care you might receive there.

The good news gets better. If you are having difficulty paying for your Rx because even though you have a Medicare D plan, or insurance through your retirement pension, your co-pays are really high: Health Safety Net pays for your Rx if you use the pharmacy in a federally-funded clinic like Holyoke or Chicopee medical centers. Their pharmacies take "outside scripts", meaning your doctor can call in your Rx to that pharmacy and you can pick it up free, or with a very low co-pay. Health Safety Net will be billed.

Example: over the years, I have had folks with inhalers with big co-pays, some medications for osteoporosis or glaucoma with co-pays of several hundred dollars a month. If they meet the income eligibility quidelines, Health Safety Net will pay for their Rx.

Health Safety Net is not MassHealth. It is a Federal program. But in Massachusetts, you apply for HSN by filing a MassHealth application. For help with that, you can call your senior center and ask for a SHINE counselor.

Where in the Hilltowns can you get help with food?

Winter is on our doorstep, the pandemic is still with us and having choices for safe access to food still is a challenge. Here are some of the options available:

- ⇒ **The Hilltown Food Pantry** in Goshen is open on Wednesdays from 1-3pm and every third Wednesday from 1-6pm. It offers food at no cost for everyone.
- Chesterfield residents can pick up food at the Community Cupboard on Tuesdays and Fridays from 9-11am. Located at the Community Center, it's available for people who need to avoid traveling to box stores, facing financial difficulties or could benefit from help for related reasons. No registration or release of personal information needed.
- ⇒ **Highland Valley Elder Services Meals on Wheels program:** Call (800) 322-0551 to find out more about their Home Delivered Meals and to learn the latest in adaptations made during COVID-19
- ⇒ **Take and Eat.** Our Lady of the Hills Church and Williamsburg Congregational Church offer residents in the hilltowns a meal program called "take and eat". Volunteers prepare meals each Saturday and deliver those meals to residents who have requested them. Anyone wishing to receive a free meal please contact Nancy Wood at 268-7978.
- ⇒ **Hilltown Food Bucks**, offered through HCDC. Eligible participants can receive between \$100-\$125 food coupons per month for five months to be used at participating local stores and farms. The coupons double your spending power when you make a purchase, so a shopping basket worth \$80 can be paid for with \$40 of coupons and \$40 of your own money. For questions on the Hilltown Food Bucks program, please contact Kate Bavelock, Director of Community Programs, at kateb@hilltowncdc.org or 413-296-4536 x116. Participating Retailers: Corners Grocery Store in Worthington, Chesterfield General Store, Old Creamery Coop in Cummington, Moltenbrey's Market in Huntington, and the Williamsburg Market.
- ⇒ The Plainfield Mutual Support Network has Continued on page 7

an account set up at The Old Creamery in Cummington for folks in need. In Worthington, the Sawyer Farm is offering food pickup. First-timers get \$20 off their first order. Contact info needed.

- Cummington: Groceries & prescription pick-up/ delivery. Call 634-5452 or email cummingtoncertcvhelp@gmail.com to arrange, as well as grocery deliveries from the Creamery and Sawyer Farm on Tuesdays and Fridays. Orders must be in by Mondays and Thursdays at 2 p.m. Emergency food: If you find yourself in need of food and cannot wait until your next grocery trip or next pick up from the food pantry, CERT can help you. Please call 634-5452.
- ⇒ Westhampton Winter Food Pantry: The food pantry at the church is stocked with items. Anyone needing food is welcome to come: Mondays & Wednesdays 5-8pm, Fridays 11am 2PM, Saturdays 9am-12 Noon. It is located in the church kitchen at the back of the church. When open, the doors will be unlocked. The pantry is anonymous and self-serve. To keep the food bank running, they need volunteers to help open and close the pantry. Those interested in helping can sign up here: www.signupgenius.com/go/20f0544ada82ba5ff2-food
- ⇒ The Take and Eat ministry is a non-denominational effort that serves elders and home-bound people in need, preparing and delivering weekend meals for up to 100 clients in Easthampton, Southampton, and Westhampton, on the first, third, and forth Saturday of the month. St. Philip's Episcopal Church and the Westhampton Congregational Church are working together to provide meals on the 4th weekend of every month. If you have any questions or have a specific need, you can call the church at (413) 527-4204 and someone will get back to you.

Nanette's Nook

Nan Clark, a writer of children's animal stories, has provided a story, in couplets, that brings a lighter side to life as we face a new year. It reminds us of two things: that love is more permanent that one thinks and happy endings to stories still lighten an otherwise dreary day. As Nan writes: "This is a true story about my grandmother and a piglet she raised on their farm in Pennsylvania in the 1800s. Her name is Lida Andre." The pig's name is Ted. Looks like Lida was quite a lady. Nan may soon be providing more of Lida's farm stories. We need stories now more than ever. Do you have one you'd like to share? If so, send it to coa@townofchesterfieldma.com.

Pig in the Parlor: A Pig's Tale with a Twist

By Nan Clark

"A pig in the parlor!? Never!" you say: But that is where Ted was discovered today.

His Missy was missing- "a 'birthing'", they said, Which, of course, didn't make any sense to her Ted.

He considered this woman to be his Pig Mother And didn't desire a sister or brother.

After all, she had raised him since he was a runt; "She can't do without me", he'd boast with a grunt.

A box by the wood stove she'd fixed for his bed; Nothing was ever too good for her Ted.

His bottle she'd filled with warm milk from her Bossy; In no time at all Ted was plump, pink and glossy.

She'd scooped out a grapefruit and filled it with mash; Young Teddy would slurp up that slop in a flash.

He grew and he grew, getting Bigger and BIGGER; Til famous he was for his Fabulous Figure!

You'd think he was merely a mite of a mouse, The way that he wandered all over the house.

Today it was different, there could be no doubt; Ted couldn't push open the door with his snout.

Looked out his kitchen—it couldn't be true! Just what would you do if it happened to you?

Ted shoved and he grunted and made such a fuss-That the hired man chased him and told him to hush.

So he settled quite quietly down by the door; It seemed that he waited forever — or more.

In his pig-perfect mind Ted was wishin' and hopin' Someone would forget him and leave the door open.

And that's how he wangled his way to the kitchen; With a rush, and a grunt, and his curly tail twitchin'.

He knew with a sniff there was no one around, So he searched through the house without making a sound.

He hid when he harkened an old neighbor lady-A'fussin' and cooin' 'bout someone's new baby.

"You best be a'namin' the darlin'", she said; And she went to the kitchen, but didn't see Ted.

He waited until he was sure she was gone — He had to find Missy, he'd lingered too long.

Teddy peeked in the parlor and felt all undone, On the day-bed his Missy was snugglin' her son.

But seein' her pet pig, she cried out with joy, "Come closer, my Teddy, you're still my Big Boy!"

"Oh Teddy, you will never know how I missed you; And now that you're here I am just gonna kiss you!"

Well, Teddy's pig-heart was 'bout burstin' with bliss, And he squealed his excitement, expectin' her kiss.

Just then the old neighbor returned to the parlor-Saw Ted by the day-bed and how she did holler!

She tossed her starched apron up over her head; She shivered and shook and she finally said-

"In all me born days as a birthin' mid-wife I never did see such a thing in my life!

A Pig in the Parlor! - You callin' him Teddy-Me thought you be naming' your baby already."

She snatched up her shawl and homeward she hurried; Missy laughed and told Teddy he needn't be worried.

She showed him her baby, all pinkish and pouty, Ted touched his wee toes with the tip of his snouty.

The baby, so small, didn't show any fear-And he curled a fat fist around Teddy's tough ear.

So Missy and the baby and Teddy were glad; It was surely the best day that they ever had.

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WANTED: Internet Technician

to coach, consult and problem solve transitions to using computers and life on the internet. Flexible hours, access to work space and resources needed. Looking for someone with experience, good interpersonal skills, patience and pride in seeing people succeed.

Do you know anyone who might be interested in this part-time role?

If so, please contact Jan Gibeau,
Director of Chesterfield Council on Aging:
413-296-4007 or
coa@townofchesterfieldma.com

