



Moving Forward

Activities and Services for Resident 60+



December 2023 Calendar of Events

MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI
				1 Community Movie Night 6:30pm, Library
4 Knitting Group 6pm, Library	5 Fitness with Friends Town Hall, 11:30-12:30pm Hospice 101 Session 2 10:30, Library Scrabble 2pm, Library	6 Coffee & Chat 10-12, Library Wellness Clinic w/ Public Health Nurse 10-11:30am, Library Mahjong WW, 1:30-3pm	7 Chair Yoga Town Hall, 10-11am Happy Hanukkah! 	8
11 Computer Class 10-Noon, Library Knitting Group 6pm, Library	12 Fitness with Friends Town Hall, 11:30-12:30pm Scrabble 2pm, Library	13 Coffee & Chat 10-12, Library Mahjong WW, 1:30-3pm	14 Chair Yoga Town Hall, 10-11am Dane Kane Concert 1:30, Church	15 Last Day of Hannukah
18 Knitting Group 6pm, Library	19 Fitness with Friends Town Hall, 11:30-12:30pm Scrabble 2pm, Library	20 Coffee & Chat 10-12, Library Wellness Clinic w/ Public Health Nurse 10-11:30am, Library Mahjong WW, 1:30-3pm	21 Chair Yoga Town Hall, 10-11am Hot Lunch Program Noon, WW	22
25 Merry Christmas! 	26 Fitness with Friends Town Hall, 11:30-12:30pm Scrabble 2pm, Library Book Group 7pm, Library	27 Coffee & Chat 10-12, Library Mahjong WW, 1:30-3pm	28 Chair Yoga Town Hall, 10-11am	29

Westhampton COA ✦ 3 South Road ✦ Westhampton, MA 01027 ✦ Seniors Helping Seniors
Coordinator: Amy Landau 413-203-9808 ✦ coa@westhamptonma.org

The Dan Kane & Friends Christmas Concert

Thursday, Dec. 14th, 1:30pm
Westhampton Congregational Church



What better way to start the Holiday season than by attending a Christmas Concert?

The Friends of the Westhampton Council on Aging is sponsoring a Dan Kane and Friends Christmas Concert and would like to invite our neighboring seniors to join us. The concert will be held in the sanctuary of the Westhampton Congregational Church, located at 1 Tob Rd. in Westhampton on Thursday, December 14th beginning at 1:30 p.m.

Come join your friends and neighbors in what promises to be a fun filled, toe tapping time. (This concert is free to all who attend and light refreshments will be served after the concert.)

Westhampton's First COVID Vaccine Clinic & Health Equity Survey

On October 23rd, the Hilltown CDC worked with the Council on Aging and the Town of Westhampton to host its first ever COVID Vaccine Clinic in the Westhampton Town Hall. We had a great turn out with a total of 43 participants who were able to choose between the Moderna and Pfizer vaccine.

Joan Griswold (L) and Michael Archbald, RN (R) of the Whately Board of Health.



Trained RNs administered 39 COVID boosters and 18 flu vaccines. Some folks opted for both while others took only one. The flu shot included the stronger, age 60+ version as well. In addition, free Covid test kits were provided by the Board of Health, through their agent, the Foothills Health District.

We also had 11 folks complete the state's Health Equity Survey and those folks were gifted with Mobile Market food bags on the following Thursday at Westhampton Woods. The survey, which dealt with access to health services, was particularly important for a rural community such as ours in Westhampton.

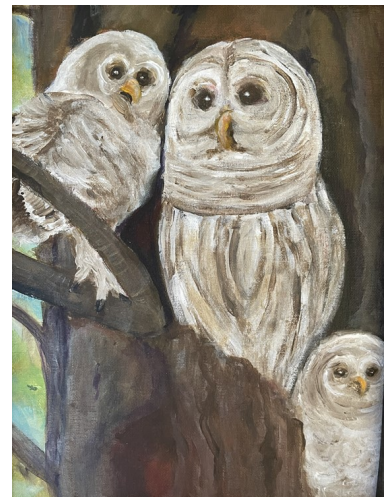
**Library Hours: Mon & Thu 2pm - 8pm;
Tue & Wed 9am - 12pm & 1pm - 5pm;
Sat 10am - 1pm**

Closed Saturday, December 23 in observance of Christmas Eve, Monday, December 25 in observance of Christmas Day and Monday January 1 in observance of New Year's Day.

Please check the town website or Facebook or Instagram @WesthamptonPublicLibrary for library updates. The library is open for in-person browsing and materials pickup as well as curbside pickup. To place a request for curbside pickup, please email westhampton@cwmar.org or call 527-5386.

December/January Artist - Angela Griefen

Shortly after I moved to Westhampton, almost 7 years ago, I was kindly invited to join the Hilltown Plein Air painters, a group of painters living in the Westhampton, Northampton area. And so, I began painting outside, surrounded by nature; something I had never tried before.



My paintings concentrate on form, composition, color and contrasting placements of shapes. I am primarily a landscape painter, taking advantage of the beauty of our local area, the Adirondacks and Martha's Vineyard. I work both in oil and acrylic on canvas and wood panels. Most of my work is started plein air and finished in the studio. I am mostly a self-taught artist, interested

in capturing what I see and feel. This current show at Westhampton Library is a compilation of paintings that I have finished over the past several years." ~Angela Griefen

Cooley Dickinson VNA & Hospice Information Series

Understanding home health care can be challenging and sometimes daunting. Learn more about home health services, end-of-life care, and bereavement support.

Session 1 was Tuesday, November 7th.

**Session 2 -
Navigating the Journey of Grief and Loss
Tuesday, December 5th at 10:30am**

**Session 3 -
Making the Right Choice -
Learn Options for Home Health Care
Tuesday, January 2nd at 10:30am**

Community Movie Night: Little Women (2019) PG Directed by Greta Gerwig

Friday, December 1st at 6:30pm

Jo March reflects back and forth on her life, telling the beloved story of the March sisters - four young women, each determined to live life on her own terms.

We are showing the 2019 adaptation of the Louisa May Alcott novel which was called an "absolute gift" by the NY Times. All ages are welcome. Pop-corn and refreshments will be served.



Message from the Westhampton COA Hikers for December 2023



Westhampton COA Hikers at the Brewer Brook Hike on October 4

December is a tough month to schedule hikes since sometimes it's nearly snowless throughout the month or there's two feet of icy snow on the ground, but we'll be on the lookout for reliable weather in hopes of getting a hike or two in before the end of the calendar year. So stay tuned!

If you want to get out and get some exercise and fresh air, reacquaint with old friends and make new friends, come join our hikes! Email us at westhamptoncoahikers@comcast.net and we will add you to our email hikers list. Please note that all group emails are sent as blind copies (BCC) for your safety and privacy.

Happy trails, Chuck & Ray

Residents urged to apply for fuel aid

Out of 9,000 applicants, about 8,000 received financial support last year

By Mary Byrne, Staff Writer
(Reprinted from the Greenfield Recorder with permission)

With temperatures beginning to drop, state and local agencies are encouraging eligible residents to apply for fuel assistance through the Home Energy Assistance Program.

HEAP, offered through Community Action Pioneer Valley, is a free service that helps pay a portion of winter heating costs for income-eligible households. To qualify, a person must be a renter or homeowner and meet certain income guidelines. At least one person in the household must be a U.S. citizen, a legal resident or a person with documented immigration status.

(continued on next page.)

“Oil prices have the prospect of going up, so I think the need will be high,” said Clare Higgins, executive director of Community Action Pioneer Valley. “We’re never able to meet everybody’s fuel needs, so we can usually do maybe a third of the cost, depending. We always encourage people to apply, but to the best of their ability, plan a little bit ahead, which most of our clients know that, or do that.”

Community Action provides fuel assistance money for residents in Hampshire and Franklin counties, while other organizations, including Valley Opportunity Council, covers Hampden County.

Last year, the nonprofit received close to 9,000 applications, of which it was able to provide some level of assistance to about 8,000. Higgins expects a similar demand this year.

“That’s usually the range we get,” Higgins said. “Some years we’ve gotten more.”

She noted that the application can now be filled out online, though applicants are still welcome to visit in person at 377 Main St., Greenfield.

Community Action Pioneer Valley serves as the local agency for HEAP, a statewide, federally funded service, which offers assistance from Nov. 1 to April 30.

“The Massachusetts Home Energy Assistance Program is free because no resident should have to worry about heating their home during the wintertime,” said Ed Augustus Jr., Secretary of Housing and Livable Communities in a statement. “High fuel costs can have a devastating effect on household budgets and can even endanger Massachusetts’ most vulnerable residents. We encourage anyone who needs heating assistance to explore their eligibility by applying online or visiting the nearest administering agency. And to please share the information with loved ones or neighbors who could benefit from this free resource.”

Higgins added that applying for the fuel assistance program also acts as a gateway to other services the agency can provide, including weatherization.

“There are a lot of old homes in our region,” she said. “If you need some weatherization done, or heating system services, we can help with that.”

Mary Byrne can be reached at mbyrne@recorder.com or (413) 930-4429.

For more information or to apply, visit www.communityaction.us/program/fuel-assistance/ or call (413) 774-2310 or 800-370-0940

**Northampton: By appointment only
155 Pleasant St, Northampton MA 01060**

**Greenfield: Walk Ins or Appointments
377 Main Street, Greenfield MA 01301**



Join the COA Email List

If you have an email address, please consider joining our email list so that you will receive reminders for our monthly COA activities. Email: coa@westhamptonma.org (don’t forget the “MA” in this email!) to join. Your email will not be visible to others in order to protect your privacy.

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 holiday season is upon us. Here are a few ways by which you can keep your celebration bright and safe:

Senior 
SAFE

- Buy lights and electric decorations that are listed by an approved testing service.
- Replace lighting that has frayed wire, broken plugs, sockets or switches.
- Never overload outlets. Use no more than three (3) strands of lights on a single extension chord.
- Never, ever use candles on trees, near live and other flammable decorations.
- Never leave a burning candle unattended.
- Consider using energy efficient LED lights that stay cool.

Keep the season bright SAFELY!

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

The Senior SAFE program is sponsored by many of your fire departments and the MA Dept. 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!



December's Good News

By Deb Hollingworth

In time for the Holidays: some good news from Boston. Governor Healy came through on the proposed increase for the Circuit Breaker benefit. Doubled it! From \$1200 to \$2400. The Circuit Breaker is a "rebate" on your property tax for low income home owners. That was the original premise. But low income means you qualify if your property taxes represent more than 10% of your gross income. And you can add your water/sewer bill to that amount too if you are billed for that. Example: if your property taxes and water/sewer bill are \$5,000 and your income is less than \$50,000/year, then you'd qualify for the Circuit Breaker benefit. For more information, you can contact your senior center for details and they can help you apply. NOTE: to apply you must file a Massachusetts income tax return (whether or not you have taxable income) and include a Schedule CB. You tax return is processed, and you are sent a check!

And if that wasn't enough, there are more presents under the tree. Mass Senior Action has been working on this for years, and has succeeded in getting the asset eligibility limit removed for the MassHealth Buy-in programs. I'll say that again: assets will no longer be counted. This means that if your income is less than \$2,734/month, or, if you are married, less than \$3,698/month, the State of Massachusetts will pay your Medicare B premium and you will get a letter from social security saying your check will be increasing because they are no longer deducting for Medicare B.

This is huge. And many of you will qualify.

We may have to wait a while until MassHealth is able to process ourready for this?....2 page application! The regulation change goes into effect January 1st, 2024, and hopefully we won't have to wait long before they are up and running, ready to process our applications. Stay tuned for updates.

Who knew we'd get two such great benefits to start next year! Happy Holidays!

The Book- Part 4. Household Matters

By Jean O' Neil and Deb Hollingworth

Our home may be our castle (Sir Edward Coke, 1604). But Jean and Deb do not have serfs to run things, and we assume neither do you. Therefore, we have to do it all.

Some of these items will not apply to renters but many will, so use what fits you.

Household Overhead

What does it take each month, each quarter, to keep things running? Include information on utilities, heat, electricity, phone and internet. Who is the provider, how to contact them, what is the monthly cost, how is the bill paid (write a check, automatic from bank?). You might repeat information on house or renter insurance. It doesn't hurt to double count, meaning you may have already provided a password for an account reading from one of our previous articles, but adding it here may be helpful to someone else trying to arrange to keep things going.

Household Management

What has to happen to keep things running? Change the water filters, change the air filters, clean the water softener, clean the washing machine and clothes dryer vents, check and replace fire and smoke detectors. Outdoors: oil the garage door, clean the gutters, refresh a deck finish, clean the grill pan. Just in case anyone else was irritated by the huge invasion of Asian lady beetles this year – no, they are not ladylike – add in a check of places around the house where bugs and larger animals (mice, anyone?) can get in.

Both Jean and Deb keep a file of potential contacts, meaning folks who might come in useful. That might include a backup for snow clearing, or a new person to clean gutters.

Computers have become indispensable to many of us in managing our affairs. Include who you get to fix or update your computer. And again, it doesn't hurt to repeat the password to open the computer. Add appropriate backups to your Book file, meaning the location of a backup hard drive and any password for access.

Household Improvements

It is really useful to keep records of major home improvements, both for warranty purposes and possible tax credits. Consider if you have done a heating system upgrade, installed solar power, done ra-

don mitigation, made major roof repairs, added insulation or new windows and doors, made handicap modifications, or other major renovations.

Specific to you

Do you have a plant that came from your grandmother? Include watering instructions.

So about that heirloom clock – when Jean's husband's father and stepmother got married, they each had pieces and parts of the same old striking kitchen clock. They assembled a single clock and got it working. We now have it and enjoy it. But if you don't hold your mouth right when you wind it and if you don't wind it twice a week, it gets quite petulant. So the directions for running the clock are in our instructions on household management.

And P.S. We know this is a lot, truly we do. Next month, the last month, is a wrap-up with suggestions for taking bites of the elephant (or whatever large image you want to use). So be brave and of good cheer – the end is in sight!



If you or someone you know is age 60 or older and has been a victim of fraud, help is standing by at the National Elder Fraud Hotline.

1-833-FRAUD-11

1-833-372-8311

www.justice.gov/stopelderfraud

10:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m. eastern time, Monday–Friday

English/Español/Other languages available

Reporting is the first step.

Reporting can help authorities identify those who commit fraud and can also prevent others from becoming victims. Our experts will help victims navigate this process.

No fear, total understanding.

The hotline is staffed by professionals who know how to support victims of fraud. Callers can count on our case managers to be caring and understanding.

Personalized service at no cost.

Callers will reach a case manager who will help them through the reporting process at the federal, state, and local levels. Victims will also be connected with other resources on a case-by-case basis.

Providing Help, Restoring Hope

Financial scams and abuses that target older people are happening more and more. This hotline is a free resource created by the U.S. Department of Justice Office for Victims of Crime to help people report elder fraud.

What to expect when calling 1-833-FRAUD-11 (1-833-372-8311).



We will respond quickly. We will connect you to a live contact as soon as possible.



Victims will be assigned a case manager.



Callers will always be treated with understanding and respect.

On the Road Again... 2024 Trips



Contact Francine Frenier to reserve your seat **before** mailing any payments to determine availability: 413-296-4291, francine.frenier@gmail.com. Mailing address: 11 Stage Rd., Williamsburg, MA 01096.

Day Trip Tuesday, May 14. Neil Diamond -The Tribute from Las Vegas - Rob Garrett, known as the King of Diamonds, performs at the Aqua Turf Club, CT. Family style meal of Chicken ala Kathryn & Broiled Scrod included. The \$137 Payment to FNCS is due by March 12. Please mail them to the address above. **ONLY FIVE SEATS AVAILABLE.**

Nine Day Trip May 29- June 6, 2024. Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island & New Brunswick. Passport required. Check your expiration date. Cost \$1,644, per person dbl. occupancy - \$25 discount if paid in full by **February 20th.** Make payment to Diamond Tours and mail next year to the address above. **Wait List Only.** Going on the waitlist is encouraged on this date.

Day Trip June TBD. Lake Sunapee Luncheon Cruise- Vermont Country Store. A two hour luncheon cruise on Lake Sunapee in New Hampshire. This trip includes Luncheon buffet and a stop at the Vermont Country Store.

Day Trip July TBD. Encore Casino. Boston Harbor casino trip. Lunch on your own, options available on site.

Day Trip August 7th. Resorts World Casino-- Catskills, NY trip. Can you get enough of Elvis? Enjoy a lovely ride to the Catskills. Included: King in Concert show, Buffet Lunch and \$25 free slot play, driver gratuity. The \$145 Payment to FNCS is due by May 5. Please mail to the address above. Please include your date of birth for the player card.

Four Day Trip September 30- October 3. Lancaster, PA. Sight & Sound production of the biblical show Daniel. Cost \$646, per person dbl. occupancy - \$25 discount if paid in full by **June 20th.** Includes: Sight & Sound Theater show, tour of Philadelphia, time in Hershey's Chocolate World, 6 meals, hotels, driver gratuity. **Make payment to Diamond Tours and mail next year to the address above. Call now to reserve your spot.**

*Day Trip October TBD. Lake George Cruise-*Take a 2½ hour luncheon cruise through the vistas of Lake George. The Captain's Luncheon Buffet will be served on board. Danny Lombardo performs on the keyboard.

Technology Help and Training for December and January

December **DROP-IN** Center hours canceled. Tech support can be scheduled **by appointment.** See **contact numbers below.**

DROP-IN will be continuing in January on the 1st and 3rd weeks of each month, on Wednesdays, 10am–3pm, at the Chesterfield Community Center. DROP-IN or pre-schedule a time slot online at northernhilltownscoas.org. More DROP-IN days to be added as we identify volunteers willing to commit to time for support. 1/3, 1/17, 2/7, 2/21

Second and fourth weeks computer classes: Continuing in December on Thursdays from 1-3pm, in the Computer room at the Chesterfield Community Center, lower level. Classes scheduled for 12/7, 12/23, 01/11, 01/25, 2/1, 2/15. Class size limited. Please call 296-5080 or email coatechhelp@gmail.com.

Get answers to your tech questions by phone: 413-296-5080, and leave a message. Calls returned within 1 day or sooner. Same day support coming as volunteers are identified.

Get help with your technology questions by email at coatechhelp@gmail.com. Same day response is often provided.

December Tech Talk

Scammers have found a new way to exploit our technology. With the growth in smartphone use, iPhone and Android, our text messages have been invaded. This form of scam is called “Smishing” or “SMS phishing”. This has occurred because texting is low cost for scammers and it works just often enough to keep them doing it. This is what you need to know: No bank will EVER ask for banking info by text message. Report any text like this to your bank and then to the FTC (ReportFraud.ftc.gov). Never click a link or make a call in response to a text claiming to be from your bank. If you do click, immediately call your bank's fraud/security number. Learn more at www.banksneveraskthat.com/

You can block text message senders, similar to blocking unwanted callers. The way to block differs by the type of device. Contact us for help by emailing us at coatechhelp@gmail.com, calling or texting **413-296-5080**. Someone will help you block the annoying texts and calls.

*Adapted from Senior Planet:
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Westhampton Council on Aging
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Westhampton, MA 01027

PRSR STD
US POSTAGE
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PERMIT 183
Greenfield MA

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Need a ride?

Contact Danielle Buzzee at:
(413) 246-0278
or by email:
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