

Moving Forward

Activities and Services for Residents 60+



December 2025

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Do not miss:

Dear Ella Holiday Show



**Ideas for Articles?
Recipes to Share?
Let us know!**

**Westhampton COA
3 South Road
Westhampton, MA
01027**

**Christine Blakesley,
Coordinator**

413-203-9808

coa@westhamptonma.gov

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1 Knitting Group 6 pm Library Yoga 6pm, Library	2 Fitness w/Friends Town Hall 11:30 – 12:30 Games 1:45–3 pm, WW Scrabble 2 pm, Library	3 Wellness Clinic Public Health Nurse 10:30 am, Library Coffee and Chat 10-12, Library Mahjong WW, 1:30 – 3 pm	4 Chair Yoga WW 10-11 am *Recycled Greeting Card Ornaments Library 6 – 7:30 pm	5
8 Computer Help Library 10-12 Knitting Group 6 pm Library Yoga 6pm, Library	9 Fitness w/Friends Town Hall 11:30 – 12:30 Games 1:45–3 pm, WW Scrabble 2 pm, Library	10 Coffee and Chat 10-12, Library Mahjong WW, 1:30 – 3 pm	11 Chair Yoga WW 10-11 am COA Holiday Concert Church 1:00 pm *Holiday Small Works Show Artists' Reception 5:30 - 7:30 pm	12
15 Knitting Group 6 pm Library Yoga 6pm, Library *Small Art Drop-off this week	16 Fitness w/Friends Town Hall 11:30 – 12:30 Games 1:45–3 pm, WW Scrabble 2 pm, Library	17 Wellness Clinic 10:30 am, Library Coffee and Chat 10-12, Library Mahjong WW, 1:30 – 3 pm Energy Advocate Office Hours 1-2	18 Chair Yoga *Church Dining Room 10-11 am HVES Hot Meal Pickup WW Noon TechConnect Library 2-4 pm	19
22 Computer Help Library 10-12 Knitting Group 6 pm Library Yoga 6pm, Library	23 Fitness w/Friends Town Hall 11:30 – 12:30 Games 1:45–3 pm, WW Scrabble 2 pm, Library	24 Coffee and Chat 10-12, Library Mahjong WW, 1:30 – 3 pm Library Closed	25 Christmas Day Library Closed	26
29 Knitting Group 6 pm Library Yoga 6pm, Library	23 Fitness w/Friends Town Hall 11:30 – 12:30 Games 1:45–3 pm, WW Scrabble 2 pm, Library	31 Coffee and Chat 10-12, Library Mahjong WW, 1:30 – 3 pm	Happy New Year! Library closed January 1. Reopens Saturday January 3 rd .	

* See more Information inside in the Newsletter.

Holiday Concert

December 11 at 1:00 pm

Mark your calendars!!! The Westhampton Friends of the Council on Aging will be sponsoring a Holiday Concert, featuring “**Dear Ella**” on December 11th. This concert will be held in the dining room of the Westhampton Congregational Church starting at 1 p.m. A light snack will be served after concert.



From their website: **Dear Ella** is a dynamic musical trio from Western MA that includes Ann Percival (Wild Asparagus, The O-Tones) on guitar, uke, and snare, Mary Witt (The O-Tones) on bass & Annie Patterson (Girls From Mars & Rise Up Singing creator) on banjo, guitar, cajón, and snare. These three talented and seasoned performers hope to bring joy, hope, and resilience through their music to their audience members and fans. Dear Ella’s repertoire includes folk, jazz, roots music, R&B, and original tunes.

Winter and Hiking

During the colder weather, hikes are hard to schedule far in advance. To get on the mailing list for the latest hiking news, email Ray Fontaine:

Westhamptoncoahikers@comcast.net ... please note that all group e-mails are sent as blind copies (BCC) for your safety and privacy.

Turkey, gravy, potatoes and more!

November Luncheon



Thanksgiving came two weeks early for many Westhampton residents who enjoyed Turkey and more at the monthly COA lunch.

Our intrepid carver, Dave Goddard served up (by all reports) moist and delicious turkey while everyone dug into their meal. Thanks to all the bakers and chefs who provided

us with a great meal.

Raking in the Dough

Thanks to all the pie bakers and the pie buyers. The Friends of the COA received 40 donated pies for the Westhampton Fall Festival and made \$620 in the sale.



The Friends of the COA funds special events and programs such as our recent trip to Magic Wings. If you would like to contribute to the Friends of the COA, we always include a form at the end of the newsletter for your convenience.

Hampshire Regional Students Shine in Intimate “Macbeth”

Performance On November 5th, Hampshire Regional High School’s theater students brought Shakespeare’s Macbeth to life in a special dress rehearsal performance for the Council on Aging. Performed in an intimate, black box–style setting, the production offered a powerful and up-close look at one of Shakespeare’s most haunting tragedies.

The students delivered an incredible performance, impressing everyone in attendance with their talent, focus, and deep understanding of the material. Audience members were particularly amazed by how confidently the cast handled Shakespeare’s complex language — every line was delivered with emotion, clarity, and conviction.

The COA guests were thrilled to be included in this behind-the-scenes event and left with high praise for the students’ hard work and professionalism. It was a wonderful afternoon of art, community, and connection — and a shining example of the creativity and dedication found at Hampshire Regional High School.

If you missed this performance, have no fear, we have been invited back for their next performance. Look for details in the upcoming COA Newsletters. A recent call went out for students to audition for “Oliver” — exciting performances lie ahead!

SAND!

Apologies if you called the wrong number last month! You would think I know my own phone number....

If you would like a bucket of sand (with some salt — like what they use of the roads) delivered to your home, contact:

Julia (413) 537-9880 or jslennen@gmail.com

to arrange a delivery. Please specify where you want the bucket placed and if you have last year's bucket to exchange, leave it out. Special thanks to the Highway Department for helping us stay on our feet.

Veterans' Corner



From Tom Geryk our Veteran's Agent ...

Our free veterans' luncheon for December will be on December 3rd at the Easthampton Congregational Church (ECC) at noon.

Veterans' coffee hours at ECC will be 9:00-11:00 every Wednesday following the luncheon.

Veterans are always welcome to bring a guest to the luncheons and coffee hours.

About Veterans Services

Westhampton is served by Tom Geryk who works out of Easthampton.

The Easthampton Veterans Services Department is a one-stop resource for those who have served in the armed forces and their dependents. We help connect current and former service members and their families to federal, state, and local benefits and services as applicable. As an advocate for the Easthampton veteran community, the Veterans' Agent is knowledgeable about resources specific to veterans and other benefits and services that don't have military service-related criteria. Services we provide include but aren't limited to:

- Benefits Counseling and Needs Assessments
- VA Compensation & Pension Claims
- Medical (VA & Private) – Care, Insurance, Planning
- M.G.L. CH 115 Veterans Benefits - Financial Assistance
- Food and Fuel Assistance
- Housing (Permanent and Transitional)
- Employment
- Transportation
- End of Life Planning (Funeral, Burial, and Grave markers)
- Military Records Retrieval
- Community Resources
- A helpful person to talk to
- Home visits as needed

Human services support through counseling, applications, and referrals account for a significant portion of the work done in Veterans Services. Another essential mission includes working with the Easthampton Veterans Council to organize veteran holiday parades,

ceremonies, and other events. Together, we address all matters related to the procurement and maintenance of veterans' monuments. Veterans Services addresses other veteran and veteran community-related matters through collaboration with the Veterans Council and local Veterans & Support organizations.

Recipe Corner

Latkes (Potato Pancakes)

Ingredients:

- 2 pounds russet (baking) potatoes
- 2 tablespoons potato starch (optional)
- 2 medium onions (my dad would say double the onions)
- 1 large egg, beaten
- Matzo meal for thickening (optional)
- Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
- Vegetable oil for frying
- Applesauce or sour cream

Instructions:

- Peel (or not) the potatoes. Using a grater or food processor, coarsely grate the potatoes and onions. Place in a colander and squeeze out as much water as possible into a bowl. Allow the potato starch to settle at the bottom; after pouring off the water, save the potato starch.
- Stir the reserved potato starch into the potato, onion, and scallion mixture or simply add prepared potato starch. Mix in the beaten egg and season with salt and pepper.
- Heat a griddle, nonstick, or cast-iron pan and coat with a hefty layer of vegetable oil. Place a few blobs of potato mix and flatten them with a spoon. Fry until golden brown—about a few minutes per side. Flip and brown the other side. Transfer pancakes to paper towels to drain. If you are cooking a lot of latkes, place each batch in a warm oven. Repeat with the remaining mixture, adding oil as needed and allowing it to reheat between batches. Serve immediately with applesauce and/or sour cream.

Note: some people line their entire stove (or kitchen) with aluminum foil to minimize the clean-up. Also, leftovers are easily re-crisped in an air fryer.

Whatever holiday traditions you follow in your family, latkes are not just for Hanukkah! You will quickly

forget the mess they make as you eat one after another.

Do you have a recipe you would like to share? Please send it by email to coa@westhampton.gov or by regular mail to COA at 3 South Road.

Julia Lennen

Library News

December Library Programs

Hours:

Mon & Thu 2pm - 8pm

Tue & Wed 9am - 12pm & 1pm - 5pm

Sat 10am - 1pm

Closed December 24, 25 and January 1.

Please check the town website or Facebook or Instagram @WesthamptonPublicLibrary for library updates. To place a request for curbside pickup, please email westhampton@cwmar.org or call 413-527-5386.

Recurring Programs (Holidays may impact schedule)

- Computer Help w/Bob Miller 2nd and 4th Mondays 10am-noon
- Knitting Group - Mondays at 6pm
- Yoga - Mondays at 6pm
*Yoga is drop-in, first-come/first-served, and registration is not required. Please check Facebook and the town calendar for updates on yoga at the library.
- Scrabble Group - Tuesdays at 2pm
- Book Group – Fourth Tuesday (9/30).
- Walk-in Wellness Clinics w/ Westhampton's Public Health Nurse - First and Third Wednesday 10 – 11:30
- Coffee & Chat - Wednesdays from 10am - 12pm

- Tech Connect drop-in tech help - Thursday, December 18 from 2pm - 4pm

Tech Connect Devices Available for Checkout!

Thanks to a grant from the Northern Hilltown COAs and Tech Connect: Success for Older Adults, the following devices are now available for a 3-week loan: Android Galaxy Tablet, Casio Keyboard, Kindle Paperwhite EReader, HP Chromebook Laptops. For more information, please visit: <https://tinyurl.com/439y6p3d>

Recycled Greeting Card Ornaments (Ages 12 - Adult)

Thursday, December 4th from 6PM - 7:30PM

Join Meaghan to craft handmade ornaments using your old greeting cards! Please bring your own greeting cards from home to recycle. All other materials will be provided by the library. This program is recommended for ages 12 to Adult.

Please register by calling 413-527-5386 or emailing westhampton@cwmar.org.

Energy Advocate Office Hours

Third Wednesday from 1-2 pm (December 17th)

Drop in on the third Wednesday of the month and meet with Hannah, our regional Energy Advocate, for one-on-one support to learn about and take full advantage of energy efficiency programs available to residents!

Out and about in the Hilltowns

Last Minute Medicare Coverage

By Adam Frank

Councils on Aging and Grants Program Coordinator
Executive Office of Aging & Independence
Your Partners in Aging.

With so many residents seeking help to review their Medicare coverage options, SHINE appointments are filling quickly—and we want to make sure everyone still has access to reliable information and support.

To help meet this growing demand, the state **SHINE team partnered with AARP** to create an educational video that offers an overview of Medicare and the Open Enrollment process. The video explains coverage options and demonstrates how to use the Medicare Plan Finder to compare Medicare Advantage and Medicare Part D plans available in your area.

You can watch the video here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RFgEI3-SZO>

Living Fully, Aging Gracefully, Befriending Death

The Living Fully group welcomes new participants. We meet monthly, on the second Tuesday at 1pm, on zoom, to share conversation and support. The emphasis is on staying fully alive as we navigate the aging process. We talk about everything from the practical to the spiritual and just about everything in between. If you'd like a place to explore with others what you're living through, to share companionship grounded in compassion and authenticity, to laugh, cry, and wonder, this might be the supportive community you're hoping for. Email annieb@crocker.com or fandellaf@gmail.com to find out more and to be added to our list to receive the zoom link.

TechConnect Technology Help for December



Tech Support home visit is available by appointment

Call or message 413-296-5080 to arrange a home visit or email coaTechHelp@gmail.com for help.

Devices for you: Refurbished PC laptops, desktops, Chromebooks, and iPads

if you need a device to connect to the internet or have something so old it is not working effectively, please contact us. Leave a message at 413-296-5080, or use the online request form on our website, www.northernhilltownscoas.org

Drop-in Centers

(no appointment needed)

- Chesterfield Community Center 400 Main Rd. Chesterfield - Weekly on all Tuesdays from 11:00 to 2:00
- Goshen Library, Drop-In tech support from 12:00 to 2:00, 3rd Thursday, 12/18
- Westhampton Library Drop-In tech support, from 2:00 to 4:00, 3rd Thursday 12/18 SESSION MOVED ONE WEEK DUE TO CHRISTMAS
- Williamsburg
 - Meekins Library Drop-In tech support from 10:30 to 12:30 2nd Tuesday, 12/9
 - Nash Hill Place Resident Drop-In tech support from 10:00 to Noon, 2nd Tuesday, 12/9

- Worthington tech support - contact Eileen Daneri at eadaneri@gmail.com.

NOTE: Drop-in Centers in Plainfield and Cummington have been discontinued due to low demand. Residents of these towns should call 413-296-5080 for an appointment or use the Chesterfield site.

Internet Hotspots

If you need affordable internet access, we have a solution that may work for you. Hotspots are small cellular devices you can use to access internet and work in most areas in the Hilltowns. If you are interested, please contact us by phone 413-296-5080. Unlimited data plans are available through February. At this point, funding for hotspots will end and residents can purchase their own SIM card for \$30/month from Mint Mobile or the carrier of their choice.

Hit the Road - Roadtrips

Contact Francine Frenier to reserve your seat **BEFORE** mailing payments. For more information

- call 413-296-4291 or
- email: francine.frenier@gmail.com
- mail: 11 Stage Rd. Williamsburg, MA 01096

Day Trips

Day Trip May 3, 2026, Sunday A Grand Night for Singing at the Seven Angels Theater in Waterbury, CT. Pre-show lunch at San Marino's Restaurant. Price \$TBD. Make a payable to Landmark Tours and mail to the address above by March TBD.

Day Trip June TBD Isle of Shoals Cruise and Lobster Lunch Enjoy at 2.5-hour cruise from Portsmouth, NH to the Isles of Shoals. Pre-show lunch at Fosters in York Maine. Price \$TBD. Make a check payable to Landmark Tours and mail to the address above by April TBD.

Day Trip July TBD FDR Homestead & Library and Hudson River Cruise. Take a scenic cruise on the Hudson River. Enjoy a boxed lunch on board. Tour the home of Franklin D. Roosevelt and the first Presidential Library. Price \$TBD. Make check payable to Landmark Tours and mail to the address above by May TBD. Those on the cancelled trip from July 2025 will be given first chance to sign up.

Multi Day Trips

April 17-2, 2026 Washington DC 5 days, 4 nights. Visit or tour George Washington Mount Vernon Estate, Garden & Memorial, Arlington National Cemetery, Smithsonian Institution, Capitol



Building, World War II Memorial and more. Price \$790. Take a \$25 discount if paid in full by January 26, 2026. Make the check payable to Diamond Tours and mail to the address above. No money is due until early January.

Multi Day Trip September 27- October 3, 2026 Mackinac Island, the quaint Michigan island where no vehicles are allowed. Trip is for 7 days, 6 nights. Tour the island by horse & carriage, cruise the Soo Locks, visit Bronner's Christmas Wonderland, Frankenmuth Bavarian Village and much more, not to mention the plentiful fudge shops. Price \$959. Take a \$25 discount if paid in full by June 27, 2026. Make the check payable to Diamond Tours and mail to the address above. No money is due until next year. This trip quickly filled up. Please email to be added to the wait list.

Good News December 2025

By Deb Hollingworth

As you read this.... Open Enrollment is over for another year.....unless you are one of the BlueCross PPO Advantage members who got a "termination" letter saying your Plan was ending December 31st. If that's the case, you actually have more time to make a decision about your coverage.

If you do nothing.... and December 31st comes and goes.... and your PPO plan ends.... you will automatically revert to "original Medicare A&B, without Rx coverage. But you will have until February 28th to pick a Medicare D plan for Rx coverage.

And with luck, there should be SHINE appointments available in January and February for help if you need it. Remember if you wanted to pick up a Medicare Supplement plan (that we used to call Medex), you can do that anytime during the year! For folks who have a United Health/AARP Medicare Advantage plan, there's another problem. You may have received a letter saying that Brigham and Woman's medical providers (including hospitals) will not be in network for United Health next year.

For more information call the number on the back of your UHC card to ask if you can use your doctor and/or hospital and be billed at the out of network co-pay? It might be time to dump UHC and either revert to original Medicare A&B and pick up a D plan for

Rx.....or switch to a different Medicare Advantage plan. Not all Advantage plans work well in our hill towns. Health New England and BlueCross usually are best. You should have until March 31st to do this.

Credit - SCORE!

You probably know by now that your credit score can be a VIN (Very Important Number) (yes, I just made that up) to you. Our three credit reporting companies calculate a score to determine how good a risk you are for some entity who might loan you money. A low score of 300 probably means you won't get that housing or car loan you want or a lower rate on insurance, but a score of 700 or higher probably means you will.

You can find out your score by going to the web pages of the credit reporting agencies and paying a small fee. OR, your bank or credit card company may give you that score periodically.

This is private information! How can they do this!? What right do they have?!? A money lender, such as a credit card company, wants to know how your credit life is going, what kind of risk they are taking in loaning you money. Therefore they have a right to periodically check you out, a soft inquiry that does not affect your score. Then it is just a service for them to share that score with you.

Is there any risk in this? No, if you make sure you are on the actual credit card site, and if you follow another link from that website, make sure it is a legitimate site. Call the card's customer service if you have any doubts. Also, the score may not be exactly what you would get from going to the credit bureau yourself, as the score provided may come from a slightly different mode of calculation.

The November newsletter had a good article by the District Attorney's office on freezing your credit reports. Because we say to do this all the time, it was good to have that article. Visit AnnualCreditReport.com.

Cheers,

Jean O'Neil
TRIAD Committee member
jeanoneilmass@gmail.com; 413-268-2228

Scam Alert!

Medicare Imposter Schemes



If you have a consumer problem or question, contact the

Northwestern District Attorney's Consumer Protection Unit

Greenfield
(413) 774-3186
Northampton
(413) 586-9225

Working in cooperation with the Office of the MA Attorney General.



WHAT THEY SAY

- They need your Medicare number to send you a new card.
- They threaten to take away your benefits if you don't sign up for their plan.
- They offer "free" medical equipment or supplies.
- They say your doctor asked them to call.

WHAT TO DO

- Just hang up!
- Medicare will not call you asking for your Medicare, Social Security number or personal information.
- Report suspicious calls & messages.

Medicare
1-800-633-4227

Senior Medicare Patrol
1-800-892-0890

LEARN TO MAKE

LOTION BARS AND LIP BALM

Wed., December 3rd
1-3 p.m.

Cummington
Community House,
33 Main St.

Open to all Hilltown
residents, ages 12
and up

Cost: \$15

Sponsored by the
Cummington
Council on Aging

Learn to make lotion bars
and lip balm for your
personal use or to give as
gifts at this workshop led
by Eliza Dragon. You will
be making 2 shaped lotion
bars (choosing from a
variety of mold shapes and
scent options) and 2 lip
balms in tins or tubes (also
with options for scent).
There will be time to make
labels and package your
bars and balms for
personal use or gift giving.
You will receive detailed
instructions to take home,
as well as a list of
ingredients and where to
buy them.

Registration is required
Call 634-2262, option 8
or
Email
croumeliotis@cummington-
ma.gov
Please register by
November 25

- Buy lights and electric decorations that are listed safe by an approved testing service.
- Check for and replace any lighting that has frayed wires, broken plugs, sockets or switches.
- Never overload outlets.
- Use no more than three (3) strings of lights on a single extension cord.
- Remember to turn off the tree lights and other electric decorations before going to bed.
- Consider using energy efficient LED lights that stay cool.
- Never use lit candles in the tree or near live or other flammable decorations.
- Keep lit candles at least a foot (12 inches) from flammable items.
- Never leave a lit candle unattended. For outdoor lights and decorations:
- Only use electric decorations that are rated for outdoor use.
- Plug them into a ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI).
- Use electric connection protectors.
- Anchor outdoor lights and decorations with insulated holders or hooks.

Seniors Aware of Fire Education (SAFE)

The holiday season is upon us and most of these holiday observances involve electric lights and candles. Here are a few things you can do to keep your celebration bright and safe. For indoor lights and decorations:

Keep the holidays bright SAFElly!

--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

The Westhampton Council on Aging benefits from your support for our programs for local seniors!

I would like to contribute to the Westhampton COA. My contribution of \$_____ is attached.

(Please make out your check to The Friends of the Westhampton COA and write "Program Support Fund" in the memo line; mail to Charlotte Wood, 14 Perry Hill Rd., Westhampton, MA 01027).

Name _____ Telephone _____

Address _____

Email _____

Westhampton Council on Aging
3 South Road
Westhampton, MA 01027



PRSR STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT 183
Greenfield MA

Westhampton COA

Christine Blakesley,
Coordinator

Julia Lennen, Chair

Colleen Basile, Secretary

Ray Fontaine,

Lorraine Galica

Dave Goddard

Lillian Baxter,
HEN Representative

Need a ride?

Contact Danielle Buzzee at:
(413) 246-0278 or by email:
danielle.buzzee@icloud.com

Need Help?

Need Help with Household Chores?

If you are age 60 or over and need help with cleaning, laundry etc., we can help. The Hilltown Elder Network (HEN), of which Westhampton is a member, matches low-income elders with caregivers at no cost to the elder. HEN provides eligible seniors with up to two hours per week of housework, shopping, etc. HEN is run by the Hilltown Community Development Corp. (HCDC). If you could use a little help around the house, call the Westhampton Coordinator, Lilly Baxter at 413-527-1532.

Need Medical Equipment?

The COA has a variety of medical equipment available to loan to anyone who needs it. In addition to walkers, there are shower stools, crutches, canes, equipment to use in the bathroom, bed pads and assorted other equipment. Please call Ray Fontaine at 413-527-5674 if you would like to borrow any of these items which are stored in the Town Hall. You can also contact us if you have items you no longer need.