Moving Forward

Activities and Services for Residents 60+

wcoa
Westhampton Council on Aging



November 2026

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Do not miss:

Upcoming Programs including Thanksgiving and Holiday programs

Regional News/Trips

Colleen's Mashed Potatoes

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

Join the email reminder list!

Did you know that if you get your newsletter electronically, it will be in full color?

Westhampton COA
3 South Road
Westhampton, MA 01027

Dan Ingram
COA Coordinator

413-203-9808

coa@westhamptonma.gov

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
2 **Knitting Group** 6 pm Library **Yoga** 6pm, Library	3 **Fitness w/Friends** **Town Hall** 11:30 – 12:30 **Games** 1:45–3 pm, WW **Scrabble** 2 pm	4 **Coffee and Chat** 10-12, Library **Mahjong** WW, 1:30 – 3 pm	5 **Chair Yoga** WW 10-11 am ***Death Café** 6 – 7:30 Library	6
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30 **Knitting Group** 6 pm Library **Yoga** 6pm, Library	December 1 **Fitness w/Friends** Town Hall 11:30 – 12:30 **Games** 1:45–3 pm, WW **Scrabble** 2 pm, Library	2 **Coffee and Chat** 10-12, Library **Mahjong** WW, 1:30 – 3 pm	3 **Chair Yoga** WW 10-11 am ***Trip to Historic Northampton** 2:00 pm	4

* See more Information inside in the Newsletter.



November Luncheon

Dreaming of the perfect Thanksgiving meal with all the trimmings? Turkey, gravy, mashed potatoes, sweet potatoes and pie? Join your friends and neighbors for a delicious potluck lunch on **Thursday, November 12th at noon in the Church Dining Hall.**

News for Cooks and Bakers –

Have you been wanting to cook or bake for COA lunches, but high supermarket prices have made you think twice?

We are working on a plan to help out – please let us know your thoughts.

December Field Trip to Historic Northampton

Gallery Talks: ***Slavery and Freedom in Northampton, 1654-1783***

Thursday, December 3rd at 2:00 PM

Historic Northampton museum educator Emma Bresnan will offer a gallery talk about the current exhibit, ***Slavery and Freedom in Northampton, 1654 to 1783.*** The 45-minute talk will delve into the lives of the individuals represented in the exhibit and describe how the system of slavery operated in New England. She will also describe the research behind what we know about slavery in Northampton.

Limited to 20 participants. Please sign up by emailing or calling Daniel (see front cover for contact info). Carpooling from Town Hall can be arranged.

Save the Date – December Holiday Concert with Sarah the Fiddler

Sarah the Fiddler is coming to Westhampton! Join us for a holiday concert at the church on **Thursday, December 10, 2026, at 1:00 p.m.** Cookies and snacks will be served immediately after the performance.



Sarah began her musical journey at age four with classical violin lessons using the Suzuki Method. At six, she discovered fiddle music and began competing in contests across New England, quickly gaining recognition for her lively playing and engaging performances.

Sarah's high-energy performances blend Old-Time, Irish, World, Classical, Bluegrass, and Celtic music for audiences of all ages. Her fiddle, a gift from New England fiddler Willie "Uncle Willie" Lapman, carries more than 200 years of musical history.

This show is sponsored by the Westhampton Council on Aging and funded by the Friends of the Council on Aging.

Veterans Corner



Breakfast on Veteran's Day

The Friends of the Westhampton Council on Aging along with Outlook Farm will once again be sponsoring a free breakfast for our local veterans. This event will take place on **WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 11th at Outlook Farm between the hours of 7:00 – 10:00 a.m.**

All who have served or are currently serving in our Armed Forces are welcome. Our Veterans Agent, Tom Geryk, plans to join us.

From Tom Geryk our Veteran's Agent …

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.*

On Veterans' Day, the Easthampton Veterans' Day Ceremony will be held at 11:30 at the American Legion located at 190 Pleasant St. All are welcome to join.

Wanted: Scrabble Players

The Scrabble Group always welcomes new players – no experience needed!



We meet each Tuesday from 2:00 to 5:00 at the Library. Check us out.

Join us for easygoing games – we play for FUN … not for "wins."

Storrowton Trip Information

Information for the twenty people who are going on the Storrowton and Bright Lights trip on December 8:

- If you wish to carpool to Sheldon Field in Northampton, will meet at the Church parking lot by 10:00 AM to arrive at the bus in Northampton at 10:45.

- If you are going to Sheldon Field on your own, remember you need to be there by 10:45 to board the bus.
- The bus will leave at 11:00

Questions? Call Charlotte Wood at 413-527-1986.

Number Please …

Town Phone Directory Updates

The time has come for us to update our Town Phone book - so many changes and some errors! This process does take a few months, so please check your current entry and update it. Feel free to include cell phones and/or landlines numbers and emails.

There will be hard copy forms at the Library if you prefer or you could simply send an email to:

Susan Bronstein at susanbronstein47@gmail.com or

Sue O'Rourke at suejjorourke50@yahoo.com with your preferred changes.

Once we have updated the list, we will ask you to check your entry one final time as we will check entries too. Then it will go to the printers and with luck sometime in early 2027 we will have a new and up-to-date phone book.

Thank you - The Friends of Westhampton Library

Meeting Notices

In order to offer residents access to posted meeting agendas, there is now an outdoor noticeboard on the right outdoor wall of Town Hall.

Newsletters Mailed to Your House …

Want to make sure your newsletter is mailed to your home? Starting with this issue – Newsletters will no longer be mailed to your home unless you were born in 1943 or earlier or you contact the COA Coordinator to get on the new (smaller) mailing list.

Contact the COA Coordinator by email at coa@wasthamponma.gov or call 413-203-9808 to discuss your options.

Senior Sand

While we are hoping we never see a repeat of the October snowstorm of 2011, it is not unheard of to get snow early. 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.

Home Energy Assistance

Recently, the Daily Hampshire Gazette featured an article about Home Heating Assistance through Community Action Pioneer Valley. In that article, they state:

> "[Josette Bartley, fuel assistance program director] … said residents of Franklin and Hampshire counties have a variety of ways to request home heating assistance through Community Action, including through a phone call, an online application, in person at a Community Action office or by submitting a paper application. Community Action is automatically mailing paper applications to those who have been part of the Home Energy Assistance Program for the past two years."

To check your status, apply for the first time or reapply if it has been a while, here is the contact info:

https://toapply.org/CA or call (413) 774-2310.

Library News

November Library Programs

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

Library closed Wednesday, November 11th Veterans Day

Closing at 12pm Wednesday, November 25th and closed on Thursday, November 26th Thanksgiving

Please check the town website or Facebook or Instagram @WesthamptonPublicLibrary for library updates.

To place a request for curbside pickup, please email: **westhampton@cwmars.org** or call 413-527-5386.

Recurring Programs (Holidays may impact schedule)

Computer Help – with Bob Miller - 2nd and 4th Mondays from 10am to 12pm

Knitting and Crocheting Group - Mondays at 6pm

Slow Yoga - Mondays at 6pm

Scrabble Group - Tuesdays at 2pm

Book Group - 4th Tuesdays at 7pm. Please contact Meaghan at mschwelm@cwmars.org to be added to the Book Group email list.

Walk-in Wellness Clinics w/ Westhampton's Public Health Nurse - 1st and 3rd Wednesdays at 10am - 11:30am

Coffee & Chat - Wednesdays from 10am - 12pm

Tech Connect drop-in tech help - from 2pm to 4pm *Please call ahead to ensure that Tech Connect is meeting.

October/November Artist - Steve Allen

Steve Allen is a local visual artist who draws inspiration from nature. The majority of his work is small and depicts local landscapes. His work has helped him develop a deeper appreciation for natural beauty and the artwork of others. He is interested in how technical information related to human visual perception and color theory can be used to better understand/evoke a sense of time and place.

*Please be aware that library programs meet in the community room where our gallery is located. It is often best to call ahead to plan a time to view the exhibit. Please call 413-527-5386

Death Cafes with Chris Lafond

Session 1: Thursday, November 5th from 6pm - 7:30pm
Session 2: Thursday, November 12th from 6pm - 7:30pm

A Death Café is an opportunity to talk about death. With cake! There is no agenda, and no presentation when using this model. It's simply a time to come together, share refreshments, and talk about death, with the topics arising from the group gathered. While it is not a question-and-answer session, there will be some takeaway information and follow up available.

Recommended for adults of all ages. 15+ welcome with accompanying adult. Registration is requested. Please email ***westhampton@cwmars.org*** or call ***413-527-5386*** to register.

Facilitator:

Chris LaFond is a certified Death Midwife who loves talking about death and getting others to talk about it, too. He is available for consultations about advance planning, spiritual counseling, home services, clergy services, and more.

Celebrate & Learn about the New Westhampton Hills Conservation Forest

Thursday, November 19 6:30 – 8 pm

Come celebrate the acquisition of 806 acres of forest within walking distance of Westhampton's town center.

These permanently conserved lands, now collectively named **Westhampton Hills Conservation Forest,** are accessible to the public from the west end of Burt Rd, the north end of Tob Hill Rd, or a short, but steep walk up Tob Hill from the Westhampton Town Hall. This block of forest offers a range of recreational opportunities and also preserves important wildlife habitat and water resources.

Please join the Westhampton Conservation Commission to learn more about the project and meet representatives from the partners who made it possible: Kestrel Land Trust, The Trustees, Hilltown Land Trust, and Mass Audubon. The event will include a short presentation about the land's history, its habitats, trails, and special features, and how it will be managed by the Town and its partners. Refreshments and desserts will be provided.

This program is free and open to the public.

Etienne Perley - Andean Concert

Saturday, November 21st at 11am

Sikus (pan-pipes) player and vocalist Etienne Perley of Amherst Massachusetts focuses on bringing traditional music from the Andes and his original compositions to life with a passionate, energetic, and virtuosic performance.



Etienne has performed across the Pioneer Valley and at venues and events across the East Coast. He is a graduate of BHMA in South Hadley and has performed with the school's professional touring ensemble for many years.

Etienne's current program incorporates traditional Andean material as well as well-known standards which he performs in the style and sound of the Andean musical heritage. Special thanks to the Friends of Westhampton Public Library for sponsoring this event.

Out and About in the Hilltowns

Losing Hilltown Landlines

by Peg Whalen

Early in September, current Verizon phone and DSL customers received a six-page letter. Many hill town customers found it confusing and, understandably, feel concerned. I want to explain why Verizon is making this change, clarify what the letter actually says, and answer some common questions.

WHY IS THIS CHANGE HAPPENING? What drives this change? Increasing costs and decreasing profits. Verizon has to make costly repairs and replace copper wires because their coverings age, stretch, crack, and break. Copper theft is increasing. Maintaining outdated wires for less households doesn't make financial sense.

WHAT DOES THE LETTER REALLY SAY? Customers first see the words "What's Changing and When" and the date "November 30, 2026." **What will actually happen to you on November 30, 2026? Nothing!** That date simply marks the day Verizon told the FCC it wants to discontinue service. It is simply Verizon's request, not a final decision. Verizon cannot disconnect your service without required approval. The FCC has not decided the matter as of October 15th. A September 29th document indicates the FCC needs more time to review their request and won't automatically approve it. I believe you can count on the change happening eventually. **Will it happen on November 30, 2026? NO!**

The letter's 3rd page contains a notice because the FCC required Verizon to include it. The notice explains how you can share your opinion. The FCC will post its public notice on its website, www.fcc.gov. As of mid-October, that notice has not appeared. If you or your town officials submit comments (https://www.fcc.gov/ecfs/filings/express) to the FCC, identify the proceeding using WC Docket No. 26-252.

My summary of the rest of the letter? "You should know there are plenty of options for getting phone service, and each comes with its own pitfalls."

Technical jargon may also confuse you. Here is what some of it means:

- "Legacy" are older "obsolete" equipment, including some landline-connected home alarms and personal emergency buttons,
- "Fiber" means fiber-optic wires. These wires have hair-thin strands of glass that transmit sound/info using light, hence the term optic.
- "FiOS™" is Verizon's trademarked name for its fiber-optic service.
- "Mobile wireless voice options" are wireless calling services, either cell phones, satellite phones, WIFI calling or VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol). If you own a flip phone, a flat phone that doesn't fold, cell phone, smartphone, iPhone, Android or Pixel, you already have a mobile wireless voice option.

COMMON QUESTIONS

How do I get help? Contact your Council on Aging (COA), TechConnect, 296-5080, MA Department of Telecommunications, 800-392-6066, Whip City Fiber, 413-485-1251, Wired West, 833-991-9378 or other service.

What happens to medical devices? Some older medical monitors connect to landlines. Newer medical devices can use the same technology as cell phones. Tell your doctor about the upcoming change. Your doctor can help you find a replacement that communicates through cellular networks.

Do I have to get internet service? Or a cell phone? Maybe. If you already have broadband, Wi-Fi, a funny-looking box with flashing lights, a hotspot, or an internet bill from Whip City Fiber or Wired West, you are already paying for internet service. Adding phone service may be simple. If you don't have internet service, you could get it and use it only for your phone, or you could choose a basic cell phone instead.

Are there any options exactly like a landline during a power outage? Nope! Today's alternatives all require electricity, either from an outlet or a battery. However, you can buy battery backups that provide temporary power when the electricity goes out. Think of them as tiny generators. Options include an uninterruptible power supply (UPS), a device with a built-in battery, or a portable power station. You can also charge phones and laptops from a car battery using an inexpensive adapter that plugs into the vehicle's cigarette-lighter-style outlet. And during extended power outages, town emergency plans include places where residents can charge their devices.

How do I pick an option? This doesn't have to be expensive. Help is available if you want to find the lowest-cost option. TechConnect staff can help you understand the choices and decide which one best meets your needs.

Do I have a choice? No. Is it fair? Maybe not. Is there help? Yes! Plenty of help is available with choosing, obtaining, and learning to use your new service.

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

Trips in 2027

Multi Day Trip April 25 - May 1 Savannah, Jekyll Island and Beaufort, SC. Seven days, six nights. Visit Savannah, "The Belle of Georgia," Magnificent Beaufort, SC "The queen of the Carolina Sea Islands," and Port Royal Sound Maritime Museum and more. Includes hotels, breakfasts and 4 dinners. Price $987 per person, double occupancy. A $25 discount is given if paid in full by January 25, 2027. Sign up NOW and pay later. Make the check payable to Diamond Tours and mail to the address above *after the first of the year.*

Multi Day Trip October 17- 23 Chicago, 7 days, 6 nights. The partial itinerary includes a tour of Chicago, a skyline cruise on Lake Michigan, a visit to a historic Navy Pier and museums. Includes hotels, breakfasts and 4 dinners. Price $946 per person, double occupancy. A $25 discount is given if paid in full by July 17, 2027. Sign up NOW and pay

later. Make the check payable to Diamond Tours and mail to the address above.

Multi Day Trip July 22-25 ** (exact dates to be determined) 3-days/2 nights trip to Baltimore to see the Red Sox play two games against the Baltimore Orioles along with some sightseeing.

Day Trip December TBD Christmastime at the Reagle Theater in Waltham, Ma. In the planning stages.

Tech Talk

By Peg Whalen

Remember Disney's "It's a Small World After All"? I've always loved that song and its message of connection. Today, our world is connected in ways we could hardly have imagined when that song first captured our hearts. Taking a little creative license, I've given the familiar tune a new digital twist

It's a Digital World For All
It's a world of tech, and a world of skills
It's a world of change, and a world with thrills
There's so much to be shared
That it's time we're aware
It's a digital world for all.

I'd love it if all of us were singing this song. Many of you already do, and I encourage more of you to join them and add your voice.

You've lived through party-line phone service, rotary dialing, and wireless phones. Today, we have handheld computers that make calls, take pictures, send text messages, write emails, and connect us through video. Telehealth appointments let us meet with our primary care providers from home. Mobile banking saves trips to the bank, prescription refills are easier, and online shopping means fewer trips to stores. We can explore subjects that interest us, learn almost anything for free, and even work or volunteer from home. We can watch young family members who live elsewhere grow up, share holidays with loved ones through video calls, and stay connected through social media like Facebook and Instagram. Online games offer stimulating interactions and a way to relieve boredom. Digital connections also help us maintain friendships with people we might otherwise lose touch with, whether we've moved closer to adult children or retired from jobs where we enjoyed the company of coworkers.

There really is so much to share, explore, and learn. I encourage you to build your digital skills in whatever way you find helpful. The possibilities are waiting for you.

Fitness with Joan!

Move Strong. Move Well. Live Well.

Five opportunities each week to move, strengthen, stretch and feel your best!

Join me for welcoming fitness classes focused on **strength, balance, mobility, flexibility and cardiovascular fitness**. Whether you're looking for a challenging total-body workout or gentle movement to support everyday activities, there's a class for you.



- **Monday 9:30 AM** — Cardio Sprints & Total Body Strength — Zoom
  Wednesday 10:15 AM — Total Body Strength — Goshen Town Hall + Zoom
  Thursday 10:15 AM — Kind & Gentle Movement — Zoom
  Friday 9:00 AM — Smooth Moves — Goshen Town Hall + Zoom
  Friday 10:15 AM — Super Total Body Strength — Goshen Town Hall + Zoom

All fitness levels welcome. Modifications encouraged. Work at your own pace!

Monday & Friday classes are sponsored by Joan; **donations are appreciated.** Wednesday is sponsored by Goshen COA and Thursday by Williamsburg COA.
413-537-8337 | Joan@bybhealth.com
Nurturing health, one mindful moment at a time,
Joan E. Griswold
Be Your Best Health Promotion Services
www.bybhealth.com

Seniors Aware of Fire Education

Most of the rechargeable batteries we use everyday are lithium-ion batteries. They power cell phones, laptops, power tools, e-bikes, scooters, and many other devices. When used incorrectly or damaged, they can overheat, start a fire, or even explode.

Here are a few ways to stay safe:

- Look for products tested and listed by UL, ETL, or CSA. You can find these safety insignias on the product label or packaging.

- Always use the charging cord that came with your product. If you lose a charger, purchase a replacement from the manufacturer.
- Charge batteries on a hard, flat surface, away from anything that can burn. Never charge batteries on a bed, couch, or other soft surface.
- Charge larger devices, such as e-bikes and scooters, outside when possible. Keep charging devices away from exits and doorways so a fire does not block your way out.

A few simple precautions can help prevent a lithium-ion battery fire. Have a S.A.F.E. charge!

Capt. Steve Estelle, SAFE Educator
Goshen Fire Department

CORRECTION:

The October Newsletter incorrectly listed the Plainfield Fire Chief. The current Chief is Robert Shearer. Our apologies for the error.

FIRE DEPARTMENT **Chief** Contact Number

- Chesterfield **David Hewes** 413-296-4049
- Cummington **Adam Dragon** 413-634-0333
- Goshen **Cameron Lacey** 413-268-7161
- **Plainfield Robert Shearer 413-634-5566**
- Westhampton **Dave Antosz** 413-529-7181
- Williamsburg **Jason Connell** 413-268-7233
- Worthington **Michael Dondiego** 413-238-4445

Good News

Good News November 2026

Here we are in November, the middle of Open Enrollment for Medicare plans. At the risk of beating a dead horse….because you've probably heard enough about Open Enrollment … here's a review of your options, and reasons you might want to check them out.

My first question is:

"What coverage do you have now?"

…My next question,

"How is that working for you?"

If you're happy with your current coverage, and you haven't received any letters from your insurance provider saying there would be changes….. you can sit tight this year.

If you want to check to see if there will be changes to your RX co-pays next year, you can go online at Medicare.gov or speak with a SHINE counselor. Use the online Plan Finder to check out prices for 2027. The Plan Finder looks at RX co-pays for both Advantage plans well as standalone Medicare D plans. You can also see Plan details for Advantage Plan co-pays for medical services.

There are a number of reasons why this might be important…. could be a change in medical conditions, a new diagnosis, or a new Rx that you need to take. And this year, those of you who received a letter from BlueCross about changes in their HMO and PPO plans should look at options to change coverage.

Options during Open Enrollment:
1. You can dis-enroll in your Advantage plan by enrolling in a Medicare D plan. (This will automatically end your Advantage plan as of January 1st when your D plan becomes effective)
2. You can enroll in a different Advantage plan
3. You can go back to original Medicare when you enroll in a D plan.
4. If you go back to original Medicare with a standalone D plan… you can pick up a Supplement plan (like Medex) anytime during the year.

Remember that these changes we make now during Open Enrollment, take effect January 1st, 2027.

Questions?

- You can call Highland Valley 586-2000 to make an in-person appointment with Caroline Solan, our SHINE counselor for the hilltowns,
- Phone Lifepath, in Greenfield 413-773-5555…Lifepath is our Regional SHINE office
- Call the Medicare help line 800-633-4227….please excuse the typo in last month's Newsletter!
- For help with BlueCross changes, you might start with the customer service number on the back of your card.

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

Westhampton COA

Dan Ingram,
Coordinator

Julia Lennen, Chair

Colleen Basile, Secretary

Ray Fontaine

Lorraine Galica

Dave Goddard

Chuck Horn

Lillian Baxter,
HEN Representative

Need a ride?
Contact 413-203-9808

Make Ahead Mashed Potatoes

- 5 lbs Idaho Russet potatoes, peeled and cut into 1 inch pieces
- 1 tbsp kosher salt
- 8 oz cream cheese, softened
- 1 stick (8 tbsp) unsalted butter, softened
- 1 cup half-and-half, warmed
- ½ tbsp cracked black pepper
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ½ stick (4 tbsp) butter, melted

Instructions

1. Boil potatoes – Place potatoes and 1 tbsp salt in a large saucepan, cover with water, and bring to a boil over medium high heat. Cook until forktender (about 15 min). Drain and set aside to dry.

2. Whip cream cheese and butter – In a large bowl, beat cream cheese and softened butter on medium until smooth (about 2 min).

3. Combine – Add still-warm potatoes, alternating with warmed half-and-half, beating until blended. Stir in pepper, garlic, and salt to taste.

4. Bake – Grease a 9×14 inch glass baking dish with butter. Pour in potato mixture. ***Bake immediately, or cover and refrigerate up to 2 days.***

5. Top and finish – Preheat oven to 350°F. Pour melted butter over the casserole and bake until bubbly and slightly golden (about 45 min). (If made and refrigerated before, bake for 60 mins.)

6. Keep warm – Hold in a 200°F oven or under foil until serving (up to 2 hours).