

Worthington Corners

March 2021 COA Newsletter



Worthington Council on Aging
2 Packard Common
Worthington, MA 01098

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Covid-19 Updates

Many thanks to the members of the Worthington Board of Health, Diane Brenner; Chair, Camille Smith and Katrin Kaminsky, who have worked tirelessly to be available for questions and concerns, and have made sure our seniors have up to date information, which changes daily, on how to access updates. Anyone may call the Board of Health at 413-238-5577 x106 or visit the town website, Worthington-ma.us, with any questions. Hopefully by the time you have received this newsletter, anyone aged 75 and older has had their vaccinations and Phase II has started for people over 65.

Volunteers for the Council of Aging have spent their time making wellness check phone calls—providing vaccine information and giving a friendly hello to those ages 75 and up.

With the very generous assistance of the Fiddlehead Inn and the Rabbit Hole Restaurant, Penny Molyneux and a group of donors, the Town of Worthington is providing meals for anyone who may have a need based on finance or access during the COVID-19 pandemic. Meals are available for pick-up at the Rabbit Hole on Sundays from 1-1:30pm. Please reserve your meals before 11:30 am on Friday through one of the following means; call 238-1625 and leave a message.; text 413-238-1625 with number of meals; email relief@worthington-ma.us

Worthington Library: The new updated hours are: Tues 3-7, Thurs 3-7 and Sat 11:30-3. Same Covid precautions: one patron at a time inside; and when the green light at back door is on, it's safe to come in.

Stay Standing

Chances are, you know someone who has fallen recently. More than 1/3 of people older than 65 have at least one fall each year according to the American Geriatrics Society. Changes in your eyesight or hearing, along with medical conditions

that affect your strength and balance, can make you more likely to fall. Some medications can also upset your balance. About 74% of the falls occur in the home, so your house is a great place to start working on fall prevention. Try these balance exercises to help avoid a fall:

1. Stand up straight, holding onto a table or chair for balance.
2. Slowly stand on your tiptoe and then hold.
3. Slowly lower your heels back to the floor.
4. Rest and then repeat 8-15 times more.
5. When you feel steady, try the exercise with your eyes closed.

Relax Your Stress Away

Seven days without laughter makes one "weak"

"Stress is caused by worrying. Worrying takes place in our imagination because we are worrying about things that haven't happened yet, or we're worrying about things from the past", according to David Bresler, professor at the University of California, Los Angeles. He feels guided imagery reduces stress, giving people great control over their imaginations. We all unwind in different ways. Some read a book or go for a walk. When we can't rid of the causes of our stress, changing how we react can lessen the way we feel. Experiencing too much stress may lead to increased blood pressure and not so great food choices. Not getting enough sleep each night puts you in a high risk for blood pressure, heart disease.



Maybe one of these will work for you:

- ⇒ Known as guided imagery, you're the director of your dream. Think of a peaceful, beautiful setting. Once you pictured yourself there, stay with your vision for several minutes until you feel your mind and body relax.
- ⇒ Take yourself lightly. Learn to laugh at yourself and your mistakes.
- ⇒ Practice deep breathing. Breathing deeply and slowly helps you calm down and feel

- more relaxed.
- ⇒ Hunt for funny cartoons, pictures, articles and jokes in the daily newspaper, magazines or online. Create a fun box of good-hearted humor and share with others.
- ⇒ Read the corny St Patrick's Day jokes:

Drink green beer on St. Patrick's Day!
It counts as a vegetable.

How can you tell if an Irishman is having a good time? He's Dublin over with laughter!

I married an Irishman on St. Patrick's Day.
"Oh, Really?"
"No, O'Reilly!"

How did the leprechaun beat the Irishman to the pot of gold?
He took a shortcut!

St. Patrick's Day toast

Here's to a long life and a merry one.
A quick death and an easy one.
A pretty girl and an honest one.
A cold beer and another one.



May your wishes come true and your truth be wise.

Leprechauns, castles, good luck and laughter.
Lullabies, dreams, and love ever after.
A thousand welcomes when anyone comes...



March 14th: Daylight savings time begins 2am.
It's also National Write Your Own Story Day!

March 17th: St. Patrick's Day-
also National Corned and Beef Cabbage Day

March 20th: Spring arrives 5:37am-
National Quilting Day

16 Little Things to Look Forward to in Spring



1. The hope of bright sunshine for a few days in a row.
2. The first pretty little spring flowers poking out of the dirt.
3. Waking up to tweeting birds outside the Window.
4. Seeing the rain through the rays of sunshine.
5. Sweeping away the dead winter leaves from the front porch.
6. Cleaning out the planting beds & pots.
7. Replacing the crunchy plants by the front door with happy spring flowers.
8. Walking out the door with just a sweater on instead of a down parka.
9. Putting away the layers of cozy winter decor and lightening up for spring.
10. Opening a window for fresh air to clear out the stale air of winter.
11. Feeling energized for spring cleaning.
12. The happy moment you first notice pink blossoms in the trees.
13. Decorating with nests, eggs, bunnies, and other springy things.
14. Easter.
15. Inhaling the fresh smell of spring.
16. Taking a walk without shivering.



(Compiled from theinspiredroom.net)



Seniors Aware of Fire Education



The State Fire Marshall tells us that electrical fires are the second leading cause of fire deaths in the Commonwealth. Here are some ways to avoid an electrical fire:

- Plug major appliances like space heaters and air conditioners directly into wall outlets. Do not use extension cords or power strips.
- Charge laptops and cell phones on hard surfaces, not on soft surfaces like beds or upholstered furniture.
- Unplug any device powered by lithium-ion batteries when charged. Do not over charge them or leave them charging unattended or over night.
- Turn heating pads, electric blankets and space heaters off before sleeping.
- Learn how to deal with a fire in your microwave oven -- hint: keep the microwave door closed, turn off and unplug it if you can do so safely.
- Store batteries the way they come -- not loosely in a baggie.

Have a sweet Sugar Season and stay SAFE!

--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.

Regional News



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!

Big Five plus Relevant Information

Assuming you have done a Letter of Instruction following last month's suggestion, you have quite a jump on this month's item. Good on you!

I can think of three categories of Relevant Information to keep and file. One is related to taxes, you know, "keep tax records for 3 years unless something else pops up to bite you in the ahem." We go to the horse's mouth for that guidance and type in a search question, e.g., at IRS.gov, "how long do I keep tax records". I find the major tax preparing firms such as TurboTax and H & R Block have still accurate but even more useful information.

The second category of information comes from making a good bet that files related to the contents of that Letter of Instruction will be needed. This means current insurance policies, real estate deeds, bank statements, vehicle titles, tax files, warranties, contracts, and, I'm afraid, more and more. There are lots of suggestions online for organizing these, such as files for employment, financial, health, identity, insurance, real estate, and vehicle. Let me know if you want some suggestions.

The third category is personal. Family marriage, birth, and death certificates will be useful in genealogy. Some medical records could be very helpful. Records of a significant achievement may get passed on in the family. Embarrassing photos of babies will want to be available for embarrassing those adults. Well, I did say personal. You have to figure out what this means to you.

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

Good News!

By Deborah Hollingworth



Spring officially starts, March 22nd! And the operative word, as the vaccine roll-out continues, is **patience**.

The online sign up for appointments continues to improve. There are a number of ways you can get assistance to sign up online at the state website, www.Mass.gov. Volunteers are being recruited to help, there are promises of making the website easier to navigate, and more vaccination sites continue to be opened in our area. Best way to get current information is to call your senior center where we are attempting to stay on top of developments as they happen.

The Massachusetts Scheduling Resource Line 877-211-6277 opened last month and is able to book an appointment for you. You can call and speak to a person. They are aware of availability for all sites statewide. Patience and perseverance are recommended in order to get through. All calls are free and confidential. The TTY number is 508-370-4890. Thanks to all those who helped get this much needed resource in place for those of us with limited, or no internet access.

NOTE: if you receive a phone call about the Covid-19 vaccine, know that the Board of Health, Council on Aging and others who might be volunteering to assist you **will never ask for your social security number, your credit card or bank information**. We will ask only for your name, date of birth, address, and Medicare insurance card number. There are some scammers who are using vaccine registration to get your information. **The Covid-19 vaccine is free**. If you have any concerns about the legitimacy of a phone call you receive, please hang up and call your local Board of Health or Council on Aging.

In other good news, the freeze on MassHealth benefits continues through April 24th, when the Governor will review it again. MassHealth benefits have been "frozen" since March last year. This means if you have had MassHealth, you haven't lost it, even though you may no longer be eligible. Coverage has not ended, and will remain in place until the Governor makes the decision to resume normal MassHealth processing.

Other not so good news...some of you may have received letters from MassHealth saying they will no longer be paying your Medicare B premium. You are not



alone, 1800 Massachusetts residents received this (Federal) subsidy which will end February 28th. If this has happened to you, or someone you know, you can contact your SHINE counselor for details. You will not lose your other MassHealth benefits, just the Part B subsidy. If you have questions about medical insurance, you can always contact your senior center for a SHINE appointment anytime.

Tax Assistance

Hilltown Community Development unfortunately will not be offering community tax prep assistance this year due to ongoing safety concerns for our volunteers, staff and clients.

However, Community Action Pioneer Valley is providing FREE tax assistance to clients who live in Hampshire or Franklin counties with incomes of \$31,900 or less (for a single filer). Clients will need to be able to scan and email their documents to participate this year. Those who do not have that ability are encouraged to wait until after March 1st, since Community Action is working on a possibility of a "drive through" scanning of documents. For additional information and to schedule an appointment please visit Community Action at www.communityaction.us/freetaxassistance or call 413-376-1136.

An additional resource is AARP's free online tax assistance website. There is no income limits or other restrictions for people to utilize the AARP self-prepared service.

Please note that the IRS is not accepting 2020 tax returns until February 12th this year.

AARP recently put out the following article "**Ten things to know about your 2020 tax returns**" that discusses some tax changes for 2020, what to do if you haven't received the stimulus checks, and other relevant topics:

www.aarp.org/money/taxes/info-2021/getting-ready-to-file-2020-taxes.html

Cummington Fair photos



April Judd is working on a Cummington Fair history book and is looking for photos. If you have any that you would like to include in the book, contact April: 413-268-7109, cummingtonfair@gmail.com. You can email the photos to April or she can borrow them, scan them and return them to you.



On the Go!

A hearty hello from your trip leaders, Lorraine, Barbara, Betty, Karen and Francine.



With the vaccine in view, the Friends of Northampton Seniors travel group would like to give you a brief outline of future bus trips that are being contemplated for late summer and fall of 2021. Please know nothing is written in stone and things can change.

If you'd like to share your email address with Francine so we can keep in touch, please send a short message to:

francine.frenier@gmail.com

Watch for more details in upcoming newsletters.

- ⇒ August MGM Casino
- ⇒ September Big E
- ⇒ Late September Niagara Falls, if border is open, 5 days
- ⇒ October 8-18 Colorado, 11 Days
- ⇒ Late Oct/Nov Plymouth, 400th Anniver. Program
- ⇒ December Bright Nights & Red Rose



The time is approaching and we couldn't be more excited!



Smith Vocational Culinary students and the chefs are firing it up in the kitchen. Check out the school website for the menu:

www.smithtec.org/culinary-arts

and look for them on Facebook and Instagram. Each post will have more details. This will be a safe, fun and delicious experience for everyone!

The Oliver Smith Restaurant drive-thru!

FIRST LETS GO OVER A FEW DETAILS TO START:

1. VERY IMPORTANT, CALL FIRST to make sure the restaurant is open that day. Our menu & schedule may vary week to week.
2. The daily menu can be found on our school website, and I will post it on Facebook & Insta, SO FOLLOW US!
3. All orders MUST be in by 10a.m!



OPENING DAY: 2 / 8 / 21
TO PLACE ORDERS CALL:
413-587-1414 x3522
KEEP AN EYE out for the rest of the IMPORTANT DETAILS!
THANK YOU FOR YOUR PATRONAGE!

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This Newsletter is sponsored in part by a grant from The Executive Office of Elder Affairs.

Money Wiring



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



Money wiring scams come in many variations. Scammers like to get paid using wire transfer services because it's fast, the money is often available within minutes, not leaving the consumer time to cancel the transaction once they realize it is a scam. The money is usually picked up in cash and in person making it hard to recover.

Remember...

- **Never wire money to claim a prize**
- **Never wire money to someone you don't know**

Watch out for these MONEY WIRING SCAMS

- Lottery & sweepstakes scams
- Overpayment scams
- Relationship scams
- Mystery shopper scams
- Online purchase scams
- Apartment rental scams
- Advance fee loan scams
- Family emergency or friend-in-need scams
- IRS scams