

Worthington Corners

December 2021 COA Newsletter



Worthington Council on Aging
2 Packard Common
Worthington, MA 01098

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Winter Solstice- First Day of Winter

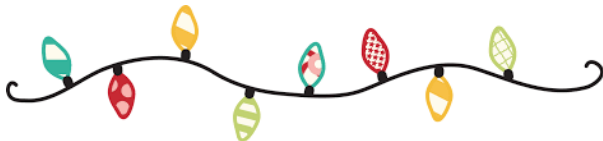
December 21- 10:58 a.m.

"Winter is the time of promise because there is so little to do or because you can now and then permit yourself the luxury of thinking so." ~ Keith Miller

"Snow provokes responses that reach right back to childhood". ~ Andy Goldsworthy

Holiday Curbside Luncheon

Mon. December 13th, 11am-12:30pm



The COA is once again hosting a Holiday curbside luncheon at the Worthington Congregational Church entrance on Monday, December 13th. Lunch pickup will be available 11am-12:30pm.

Please RSVP by December 6th. Call 413-238-1999, and leave your name, address, phone # and if you are in need of home delivery. Also, a nonperishable food donation will be accepted and given to the Goshen Food Pantry.

Menu: Pork Loin/Apple Cider Glaze, seasonal sides and dessert. Provided by the Chesterfield General Store & Café. Underwritten by the Roland Fund.

Calendar of Events

Healthy Bones & Balance Class

Monday and Friday 10:30-11:30
At the Town Hall

You may call Marcia Estelle at 238-5554 for more information.

Yoga Class

Sunday and Wednesday 9:30-10:30
At the Four Corners Farm/Inn

For inclement weather, the class will be held at the Town Hall, same day and times. Call Eileen Daneri at 238-4461 for more information.

Flu Clinic was a success!

The flu clinic in conjunction with the Worthington Health Center went very well. It was a convenient option for our senior residents to take advantage of, as well as an opportunity for good conversation.

Intergenerational Volunteer Opportunities

The COA and the school have joined together to connect students and our seniors. Some suggestions from the teaching staff are:

- ⇒ K- reading/craft class
- ⇒ Grades 1-2 pen pal
- ⇒ Grades 3-4 oral history
- ⇒ Grades 5-6 pen pal

If you are interested in taking part in this program, please contact Phyllis Dassatti at 238-5962 or coa@worthington-ma.us.

Easy Ride

"Need a ride to your medical appointment?" "Would you like a ride for grocery shopping?" Call for the Easy Ride Van and Services: 413-296-4232. Leave a message if necessary. The Easy Ride is managed by the Hilltown Community Development Cooperation and Franklin Regional Authority. Open to all residents of Worthington, Cummington, Chesterfield, Goshen, and Plainfield, with a supplementary program extended to Hinsdale and Peru.

Board Of Health News

With holiday season upon us and indoor activities increasing, be sure to get your seasonal flu shot as well as COVID booster. If you haven't been vaccinated at all, please reconsider. It is clear that for people who are vaccinated, getting the disease means a much milder case.

If you have a cold or any symptoms, stay home; and if you feel it might be something more, get tested and/or contact your health provider. The availability of in-home testing kits and the fact that many people are choosing not to be tested, means that the Board of Health no longer has clear information about the true level of infection in Worthington or in nearby communities. Recent cases in town make it clear that COVID-19 is still very much with us. If you are in a larger group indoors, especially people you haven't spent a lot of time with recently, please continue to wear a mask, avoid close physical contact, and practice distancing if possible.

Thanks and stay safe.

~ The Worthington Board of Health

Happy Hanukkah- November 28-December 6
Merry Christmas- December 25
New Year's Day- January 1

One Christmas, a mother decided she was no longer going to remind her kids to send thank you notes.

Consequently, the kids' grandmother never received any thanks for the Christmas checks she sent to the kids. That very Christmas, all the kids dropped by in person to thank their grandmother for their checks. When asked by a friend what caused the change in behavior, the grandmother replied, "Simple. This year I didn't sign the checks."

My mother once gave me two sweaters for Hanukkah. The next time we visited, I made sure to wear one.

We entered her home, and instead of the expected smile, she said "What's the matter? You didn't like the other one?"



New Year's Resolutions To Try

- ⇒ Focus on a passion, not the way you look
- ⇒ Work out to feel good, not be thinner
- ⇒ Go a whole day without checking your email
- ⇒ Go someplace you have never been
- ⇒ Clear out the clutter
- ⇒ Volunteer
- ⇒ Let go of grudges
- ⇒ Create a bucket list
- ⇒ Be kind

*In the New Year, we wish you
12 months of happiness, 52 weeks of fun,
365 days of success, 8760 hours of good
health, 52600 minutes of good luck.*

Happy 2022!

✂

***The Worthington Council on Aging counts on YOUR support to
help build important programming for local seniors!***

I would like to contribute to the Worthington Council on Aging. My contribution of \$_____ is attached.

*Please write your check to The Town of Worthington and send to Worthington COA, PO Box 7,
Worthington, MA 01098)*

Name _____

Address _____

Thank You for Helping to Support Your Neighbors!

Seniors Aware of Fire Education

The holiday season is almost here and everyone is busy getting ready to celebrate them with family and friends. It is time to get all those outside lights in place. Here are some tips on how to use them safely:

Senior 
SAFE

- Be sure to use only lights rated for outdoor use.
- Consider replacing older lights with new LED lights that are cooler and use less electricity.
- Anchor securely outdoor lights and decorations against storms and wind with insulated hooks or holders.
- Do NOT overload circuits.
 - 15 amp circuits support 1,800 watts.
 - 20 amp circuits support 2,400 watts.
- Do NOT drive nails, staples or tacks through wiring insulation.
- Use electrical connection protectors to keep water out.
- Outdoor electrical decorations should be plugged into a ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) -- either portable or permanently installed by an electrician.
- Store the electric displays inside after the holidays to prevent hazards and to extend their life.

Celebrate the holidays SAFELY!

--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!

ROBO CALLS!!! Note 2 and last for now

I really need to find topics that are easier to write about. Frustration – it is not clear that we can do much to stop these dratted calls without making more issues. I contacted the DA's office to see if there is a review of the many listed options, e.g., commercial programs or apps. Their advice, other than not answering the phone, is to contact your phone carrier and see what they might offer. I'm on AT&T, so I started there and looked at the top three in our area, which are AT&T, Verizon, and T-Mobile.

All three have gone to bat to combat text and phone spams. Each has a collection of tools, many free to subscribers but not all, that let you block callers. Reviews of those apps are mixed: mostly positive but the negatives include sometimes blocking calls you want. Some require you to report each individual unwanted call or text.

Commercial programs such as RoboKiller, Nomorobo, and Hiya, are available to anyone though there are often costs. These links are a good resource for comparing programs including those from the carriers: www.pcmag.com/how-to/how-to-block-robocalls-and-spam-calls and www.cnet.com/tech/mobile/how-to-stop-spam-calls/

Actions –

- ⇒ Check your Do Not Call status if you didn't after Note 1, or if you get a new number.
- ⇒ Make sure your password(s) – notice the plural there? – are strong.
- ⇒ Get used to checking for voicemail after you don't answer a call you don't recognize.
- ⇒ Do check out your carrier's offerings – go to their main website and search for "spam blockers" or call your carrier.
- ⇒ Tell me if you find the magic bullet somewhere.

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

December's Good News

By Deborah Hollingworth

A couple decades ago, my parents and I decided to sell our homes and buy a house big enough to live together. Dad had been diagnosed with Alzheimer's several years prior and Mom was having more difficulty taking care of him. Too many weepy long distance phone calls where she was having a bad day. It was an hour and a half drive to get to her and I was working full time. We had to have a better plan. Sometimes miracles happen. We found our new home and, despite a depressed housing market, both their condo in Vermont and my home in Chester sold in a matter of weeks. Mom and Pop moved into our new home while construction was underway, making it into a space that would work for both of us. The Chester house had sold, but I was clearing out 25 years worth of accumulated stuff. Three dumpsters later, I was able to joint them. The contractor was a saint. And with the exception of a wayward electrician who held up the sheet rocking, we kept to schedule on renovations.

For my Dad, moving back to Williamsburg worked like a time machine. This had been his home for 50 years before moving to Vermont. His short term memory was sketchy at best, but his long term memory recognized all the landmarks. It was familiar. He felt at home.

Dad had been taking Aricept which was the only Rx on the market for Alzheimer's back then. It was remarkably effective. His conversation improved, he remembered his grandchildren's names again, and better still, he remembered the punch lines for a number of jokes. But Aricept had side effects which he couldn't tolerate. He had to discontinue it and the result was profound and discouraging. He said he felt his mind slipping away. I found a Rx trial program at Southern Vermont Medical Center in Bennington. He was accepted and once a month for a year and a half we went to Bennington where he got to work with a neurologist, Dr. William Pendlebury (who became Medical Director for the University of Vermont's Memory Center) and he got to take a new Rx, not yet FDA approved, called Galantamine. While the results were not as dramatic as Aricept, it did seem to help. He was not oriented to time, but he still knew where he was (because this was his home for many years) and the greatest gift....he remained oriented to person.

I need to emphasize that every Alzheimer's journey is unique to the individual. While there are common factors, each person's experience can be different.

The Good News this month is that we are plan-

ning a series of articles for upcoming newsletters that will give suggestions, information and resources for families dealing with dementia care issues.

My Dad died of end stage Alzheimer's in 2001. Until almost the end, we were able to keep him home with support services that included a Day Program with Hawthorne Services and some home care help through Highland Valley. We were lucky. My job as a social worker meant I was familiar with a lot of the resources available for Alzheimer's patients and their family caregivers. Still....if I knew then (25 years ago) what I've learned since then....it could have been a great deal less stressful. It's not an easy journey, but it can be made less difficult if you know what help is available. Next month we'll talk about where the journey starts: getting an accurate, thorough diagnosis.

Peg Whalen presents:

Free Android Smartphone Workshop

Mon. December 13th, 2:30-5:00

Want to catch up with your grandchildren who tell you using a smartphone is simple and easy? The fact is, figuring how to use all of the features of an Android smartphone is often not obvious at all. Join us at the workshop, hang out with friends and have fun "learning the ropes".



- Understand some basics of getting your phone to do what you want it to do.
- Do things you have been told it can do but you have not figured out how.
- Understand your phone enough to feel comfortable with using it for new tasks and activities
- Understand what you should be wary of.
- Identify ways to find out more about your phone.

Some of the issues to be covered include how to:

- Get your pictures off your phone and onto your computer
- Find and install apps
- Determine whether you can use it for banking, bill paying, accessing medical records and reaching your doctor's office or pharmacy.

Interested in coming? Please call the workshop facilitator, Peg Whalen, at **413-404-4566** or email **pegwhalenworkshops@gmail.com** to register by December 10, 2021. It would be helpful to know your cell/smartphone number and your email address. You will receive a short set of questions that help the organizer prepare to make the workshop most useful for your skills and interested. * Please note: this workshop will not cover how to troubleshoot an ongoing problem with your phone or how to fix broken parts of your phone.

On the Road Again..



2022 Trip Lineup

These are some of the bus trip destinations in different stages of planning with various travel groups. Most trips are limited to 36 passengers. Contact Francine Frenier if interested or want more information by calling 413-296-4291 or emailing francine.frenier@gmail.com. More information to come in future newsletters.

⇒ *Day Trip Jan/Feb. Ice Castles* is an award-winning frozen attraction in Lincoln, NH. The attractions are built using hundreds of thousands of icicles hand-placed by professional ice artists. The castles include breathtaking LED-lit sculptures, frozen thrones, ice-carved tunnels, fountains and much more. Warm clothing and good footwear recommended. We make a stop for a bite to eat along the way. Date and cost to be determined. Anticipated date is a Thursday in late January/early February when the weather conditions are cold enough. Approx. cost \$110, \$10 discount if paid early. Lunch is on your own. Taking interest list NOW.

⇒ *Multi Day Oct 14-23. Nashville, Memphis & Rock & Roll Hall of Fame—10 days.* \$1,205, \$25 discount if paid early. Flyer available. Taking interest list NOW.

Day Trip Feb/Mar. Everett, MA. Encore Boston Harbor Casino.

Multi Day April 24-30. Myrtle Beach Show Trip.

Day Trip May. Country Shopping in Southern Vermont Trip.

Day Trip May 18: Dancing Dream Abba Tribute Band at Aqua Turf in Plantsville, CT.

Multi Day May 23-27. Lancaster, PA. Sight & Sound Theater presents David.

The Road to Evaluating Dementia: What does having an evaluation involve?

By Jan Gibeau

When I wrote about my journey in living with MCI (mild cognitive impairment) in October, I mentioned that once I was worried about the changes in my memory, I arranged to have a complete evaluation to find out "What's going on". It's the first step to take to avoid living with fear and anxiety about the unknown. I thought it might be helpful to share more information about what a

thorough evaluation entails.

To begin the evaluation, your PCP (primary care provider) will take your complete medical history. It's important to bring someone with you, preferably someone who knows you well, so that all of the information is as detailed as possible and you have someone to take notes for you. It also makes it easier to focus solely on your interactions and asking questions without trying to write things down at the same time. Lastly, having a family member or someone close to you there helps to fill in the gaps and ask questions they may have, especially if they will be the ones helping you as you cope with changes as they come up. This is not the time to "go it alone" or "tough it out". It's been said that accepting help is harder than helping others but it's important to remember that the person(s) helping you needs a lot of information and support.

Tests that follow a physical exam usually include neurological tests that evaluate your balance, sensory responses, reflexes, memory and thinking skills. Based on those findings, the PCP may order brain scans, blood tests, genetic tests, and a mental health evaluation to help determine a diagnosis. There are a number of different types of dementia but it isn't easy to determine which type you have because the symptoms are often similar across the spectrum of cognitive impairments. To learn more, you may be referred to other specialists such as a neurologist, or to someone who can evaluate and treat symptoms of depression, which can also present itself at the same time. The symptoms can be very similar which makes the identification of which type of dementia is present difficult. Depression is not uncommon but often overlooked. It's important that it be considered.



Successful treatment of depression can help a great deal in reducing symptoms and improving daily life. Once treated, there is a clearer picture of who are and what other steps need to be considered. Completing all of the tests can take a few weeks depending on the results that emerge. However, it also gives you time to think about questions you may have during this period. A thorough report should be shared with you and other family or friends you want to include.

Personally, I found that the results of the evaluation answered most of my questions and it was helpful to review the probabilities of what I would face in the future. It's been over 22 years and I'm slower... but still headed in the right direction. Next month we'll provide more information about options in our region for getting an evaluation, the impact of having cognitive deficits, how it progresses and what resources are available for managing the changes that begin to unfold.

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Music and Merriment

**An Afternoon of Songs and Connection
with the Hampshire Regional
High School Chorus**

Weds. December 15th at 12:30pm



Join the Hampshire Regional High School Chorus and their director Aidan Linden via Zoom for an afternoon performance of songs ranging from holiday songs, to pop music, oldies and more! Solo and small group songs will be mixed with full group chorus songs. There will be an opportunity for Q&A with the students after the performance as well. Participants are encouraged to join the Zoom session early (by 12:25pm). **For the Zoom link, please contact your COA Director or Coordinator.**

The Cummington Fair 150 year History Book
is now for sale!

It can be purchased online
at www.cummingtonfair.com
under online merchandise on the homepage.



The cost is \$20 plus \$5 shipping and handling.

Any questions? Email April Judd at
it.cummingtonfair@gmail.com

Need a haircut? Manicure? Facial?

Smith Voc. Cosmetology Program returns
December 10th Reserve your spot today!

Cosmetology Training Center
80 Locust St. Northampton, MA
01060-2094

Offering facials, lip waxing, make up
applications, and beard trims at this
time. Call (413)-587-1414 ext. 3531.

