

# Moving Forward

## Westhampton Council on Aging

Programs and Services for Active Living at 60+



December 2021

### ***In Memoriam***

Daniel Grant Webster  
April 4, 1940 - October 18, 2020



mation, please see the Regional Section. **Contact Amy Landau at [coa@westhamptonma.org](mailto:coa@westhamptonma.org) for the Zoom link.**

### **COA Events & Programs**

#### *Holiday Grab 'n' Go*



**December 9 at Noon  
Town Hall (lower) Parking Lot**

Drive through the Town Hall Parking lot to grab your bag of treats. Baked goods, lovingly made by the Life Skills students at Hampshire Regional, will be paired with other goodies brought to you by the COA & Friends of COA to bring you holiday cheer. If you can't make it that day or the weather is inclement, we will arrange a delivery (contact **Amy Landau** at [COA@westhamptonma.org](mailto:COA@westhamptonma.org) or call **413-203-9808**).

**Music and Merriment with the  
Hampshire Regional High School Chorus –  
Dec. 15th at 12:30**

Join the Hampshire Regional High School Chorus and their director Aidan Linden via Zoom for a special live performance ranging from holiday tunes, to pop music, oldies and more. For more infor-

**Computer Class with Bob Miller  
2nd and 4th Mondays - 10 AM to Noon**

Bob Miller will continue with classes at the Library. Classes are held on the second and fourth Monday of the month. Masks are required in the Library.

**Yoga Class with Renee Rix via Zoom**

Although Renee Rix will no longer be leading in-person Yoga classes in Westhampton (unfortunately, she is relocating), you can join her virtual classes via Zoom. **For more information, contact Renee at: [Reneerix63@gmail.com](mailto:Reneerix63@gmail.com).**

### **Library Events**

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

*Visitors to all town buildings, including the library, are required to wear face masks indoors. This is in order to protect our youngest readers and other vulnerable populations against COVID-19. Thank you for your help and cooperation.*

**Holiday Closings-Thursday 12/23, Saturday 12/25, Thursday 12/30 and Saturday 1/1 in observance of Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day. \*Please note that the library is always closed on Fridays.**

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

## Adult & YA Book Group Tuesday, December 7th at 7PM

Book Group will meet in person at the library weather permitting. Join us for a joint Adult/Teen book group discussion of *Between Perfect & Real* by Ray Stoeve. "After being cast as Romeo in the school play, Dean realizes he wants everyone to see him as he really is, a male, and not just play one on the stage, despite the risk of losing everything." Recommended for ages 12+ -from the publisher, Amulet Books. Email **Meaghan** at **mschwelm@cw mars.org** to request a copy of this month's book.



## Grounded Goodwife - Winter Herbal Survival Kit Monday, December 20th at 6PM on Zoom

Email **westhampton@cw mars.org** for a Zoom link. Be prepared for what comes your way this winter with an herbal apothecary! Ehris and Velya will teach you how to make three natural, effective DIY remedies to dropkick a winter bug before it even takes hold (or at least shorten its duration). You'll learn to make and receive a materials list for the following herbal remedies: Chemical-Free Hand Sanitizer, Plague-Be-Gone Roll-On & Nix-the-Vicks Herbal Vapor Rub.

*Special thanks to The Friends of Westhampton Library and The Lyn Keating Program Fund for sponsoring this event.*

## COA News

### Community Working Together: HRHS Life Skills Students and Older Adults in Westhampton

The COA is recruiting Westhampton residents for a new Pilot Program, pairing HRHS Life Skills students with people needing assistance.

The Life Skills students can perform a variety of chores and errands, such as:

- ⇒ raking or gathering branches/twigs (weather permitting)
- ⇒ grocery shopping (person provides list and money and students will procure and deliver)
- ⇒ laundry (students will pick up, do laundry at HRHS, and deliver back)
- ⇒ wash car
- ⇒ help clean out garage
- ⇒ stack wood
- ⇒ bake treats and deliver

- ⇒ cook a meal with resident-provided ingredients and deliver pick up and deliver take-out food (either collect money before or could be paid online when ordered by people using service)

Students are always accompanied by HRHS staff. The students and staff are fully-vaccinated and wear masks and can only work with residents who comply with HRHS Covid protocols.

If you are interested in any of these services, please contact **Julia Lennen (413-537-9880, jslennen@gmail.com)** or **Lorraine Galica (413-387-3960, lagfjord@comcast.net)**. Get help and support the Life Skills students!

**From Alison Lebreque at HRHS:** The Life Skills Program at Hampshire Regional is excited to partner with the Westhampton COA. The primary focus of the Life Skills Program at Hampshire Regional is to provide a functional curriculum along with daily living and vocational skills that will lead to a successful transition to adulthood for students with disabilities. Our students and staff are hardworking and caring individuals who are looking forward to helping out in our local community.

## Young@Heart Virtual Holiday Benefit Concert – Dec. 18th at 7:30 PM

Young@Heart is a chorus made up of older adults which has been going strong for 38 years. From their website: "What started out in 1982 at a Western Massachusetts elderly housing project to joyfully pass the time instead of passing before your time has developed into the stereotype-defying, generation-crossing musical extravaganza better known as the Young@Heart Chorus." Westhampton's very own Jim Armenti is among their ranks. Their virtual concert is free but donations are welcome. **Register for the performance at: <https://youngatheartchorus.com/>.**

## Pictures from the COA Ice Cream Social on a Warm Sunny Day in October:



Lorraine Galica (center) and Dave Goddard (center-left), our newest COA board members, hard at work on scooping the ice cream outside the Library.



*Eating delicious ice cream provided for free by Herrell's in Northampton. Thank you, Judy Herrell!*

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### **Zoomed Out Taking a Break from Breakfast Zooms**

Due to very low participation in the Breakfast Zooms, we are pushing the pause button. If interest resurfaces, we will add them back into the schedule. We are hoping to start back up when we can meet outside in the Spring.

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### **A Message from the Westhampton COA Hikers**



*The Westhampton COA Hikers at the Roberts Brook Meadow Hike on October 28.*

The Westhampton COA Hikers had a couple of great hikes in October; the Northampton-New Haven Canal Hike at the Szczypta Conservation Farm on the 7th, and the Roberts Brook Meadow Hike on the 28th. The Roberts Brook Meadow hike was at the new Hilltown Land Trust conservation area in the north-east section of Westhampton. Both days were perfect fall days for these hikes, due in part to our policy of scheduling hikes according to the seven-day forecast – as well as a large portion of dumb luck (this is New England after all!). There were large groups for both hikes and all the hikers seemed to be enjoying themselves as well as the beautiful scenery.

The Westhampton COA Hikers plan to continue hiking in November and into December – and maybe beyond, weather permitting. With some luck, maybe we'll be able to even schedule a snowshoe hike. The hikes will be over different

types of terrain from relatively flat and easy to more challenging and hillier. For anyone interested in joining the Westhampton COA Hikers, email us at [westhamptoncoahikers@comcast.net](mailto: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!

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### **New Memory Café Program at Southampton Senior Center**

**Open To Westhampton Residents:  
Thursday 10 Am To Noon**

Join the free monthly Memory Café at the Southampton Senior Center for a fun, engaging, supportive environment where attendees can share and receive caregiver support, education, respite and reduce isolation. Memory Cafés encourage people to socialize and enjoy each other's company while reminding them that they are not alone. This monthly program welcomes individuals experiencing all different stages of memory loss, as well as caregivers, family and friends. Programs include artists, musicians, crafts and educational events, as well as activities that promote physical fitness and sensory stimulation. The relaxed, casual atmosphere promotes information sharing & support. Hosted by Southampton Council on Aging and funded by Highland Valley Elder Service Title III Grant.

⇒ December 16, 2021, January 20, 2022  
February 17, 2022, March 24, 2022  
April 21, 2022

For more information call **413-529-2105**. NOTE: Transportation by van is possible if booked 1 week in advance.

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### **A Community of Readers - Deb Smith**

Chet and Bernie? Piglet? Olive and Mabel? Tara Carpenter? Do any of these names sound familiar? Of course! They are the main characters in some of the most humorous and witty canine stories, both fiction and nonfiction, that I have ever read. You don't need to be a dog lover to appreciate them. "A Fistful of Collars", "Of Mutts and Men", "Unleashed", "Dog Eat Dog"...and the list of titles goes on!

What is also notable - No dog dies in these books. (Well, except for a brief section of Piglet's books, which is very well handled by the author, Melissa Shapiro, DVM.) Spoiler alert! It is NOT Piglet! There are many, many more books that Meaghan and Emily could and would find for you by authors such as David Rosenfelt and Spencer Quinn as well as Melissa Shapiro and Andrew Cotter. They'll grab you by the paw! (audible groan here) Try one...or two or three!



### Can We Take It Back?

If your first thought was can a Christmas gift be returned, it's understandable. It reflects how heartfelt traditions have been slowly undermined over the years. Demonstrating thoughtful kind acts at Christmas continues bowing to society's vacuous tradition of employing commercial gifts to voice how much one cares – no matter what age, everyone must be given their “toys” or worse, impersonal gift cards.

**“The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched, but must be felt with the heart.” - Helen Keller**

As I write this, seven days past Halloween and 18 days before Thanksgiving, stores are aglow; competitive holiday gift-buying ads have begun their annual commercial assaults. By December, readers will be experiencing predictable yearly stress and financial pressure from this tradition of expected behavior. Many have allowed this manipulating genie to escape from its bottle. To now defy or attempt to break away would take more endurance and courage than society cares to muster. Can we do anything to take it back to partially restore this season with wrapped gifts of sincerity, helpful deeds, meaningful conversations, laughter, and time free from electronics spent with family and friends?

**“Each day our actions make deposits in the memory banks of our children.”**

For a complex problem, first steps and solutions can most often be fostered by starting at home. A daring 64 year old grandma in Texas shared that she began a holiday tradition a few years ago. A basket was placed at her entry door, all phones were placed in it while visiting. After the first awkward hour of electronic withdrawals, kids and adults actually found themselves having conversations, singing, even playing “Jacks”, cards, and games she unearthed from an attic trunk. Corny, perhaps, but it had a liberating result.

Surprising her, the kids requested a return date for this year's Thanksgiving Day meal. She added a tradition, a Caring Basket. After the Thanksgiving meal, names will go into a basket and everyone will pull out one name. At Christmas, each person will give one handmade gift or a written helpful Caring Deed to their select person, redefining for their family the meaning of this Season.

**“For each individual to even begin to incorporate into their daily lives the beliefs they have formulated is perhaps their greatest accomplishment. I, for one, cannot believe we can ever defend our most sacred tenets by abandoning our dreams.” - LyaLya Herold**



**Wishing you safe and stress-free holidays!**



***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 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](mailto: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](http://www.pcmag.com/how-to/how-to-block-robocalls-and-spam-calls) and [www.cnet.com/tech/mobile/how-to-stop-spam-calls/](http://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](mailto: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.

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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.

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*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.

**Westhampton Council on Aging**  
**3 South Road**  
**Westhampton, MA 01027**

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

*Music and Merriment*

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

**Weds. December 15<sup>th</sup> 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](http://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](mailto: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.

