

# Age 60 and over WORTHINGTON

## October newsletter

### COUNCIL ON AGING

**ALL COA FUNCTIONS ARE FRAGRANCE FREE**

***The mission of the Worthington Council on Aging is to identify needs of those in our community age 60 and over and endeavor to develop programs, services and activities to meet those needs. The COA also has a commitment to educate the community at large to the needs of an aging population.***

**MEALS ON WHEELS** - HIGHLAND VALLEY ELDER SERVICES -  
Donation requested 800-322-0551 OR 413-586-2000

\***ELDER ABUSE** - 800-922-2275 OR 413-586-2000 (ELDER ABUSE refers to any knowing, intentional, or negligent act by a caregiver or any other person that causes harm or a serious risk of harm to a vulnerable adult 60 OR OVER)

**OSTEOPOROSIS EXERCISE CLASS** - Maples I Common Room  
Monday & Friday 10:30-11:30

**TOWN ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT**, Peggy O'Neal  
Mon, Tues, Weds: 12-7, Thurs 9-4, Fri 9-12:30

**KNITTING GROUP** -  
Tuesdays 3-5 - COA Office  
Questions call Helen Pelletier 238-4418

**COFFEE AND CARING** -  
1st Thursday of each month - 10:30 - COA Office  
Questions call Sandy Epperly - 238-5584

This newsletter is partially funded by the Executive Office of Elder Affairs through funding under the Federal Older American Acts, the Town of Worthington, the Rolland Fund and private donations.

**Worthington COA Coordinator** - Sandy Epperly  
413-238-5584 - Office 238-5532  
[coa@worthington-ma.us](mailto:coa@worthington-ma.us)

**FOOT NURSE** -  
Kip Moeller - Last Wednesday- Goshen Town Hall -  
Appt. necessary - \$30 fee Call Liz 413-268-7122

Diane Roeder - Wednesdays - Chesterfield  
Community Center Appt. necessary - \$30 fee -  
413-374-0457  
toesandssolesrn@gmail.com

**SHINE COUNSELOR** -  
Lorraine York-Edberg [lyork@edberg@fchcc.org](mailto:lyork@edberg@fchcc.org)

**HILLTOWN VAN** - CALL 413-268-7582 NIGHT  
BEFORE - Small fee ~ **Must have completed**  
"Demand Response Application" from FRTA.

**CHAIR YOGA** - Chesterfield Community Center -  
Tuesdays 10AM \$3.00 Donation requested

**HILLTOWN SOCIAL SERVICES** - 413-667-  
2203.

**GOSHEN FOOD PANTRY** - Wednesday  
1-3 open for Worthington (3rd Wednesday 1-6)  
413-268-7578.

**VETERAN'S AGENT - TOM GERYK** -  
Town Hall – 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Monday 9-11am – **NOTE**  
**CHANGE OF PLACE, DATES/ AND TIME!**

1-877-821-0128 [tgeryk@northamptonma.gov](mailto:tgeryk@northamptonma.gov)

IF YOU WOULD LIKE THIS NEWSLETTER VIA E-MAIL,  
PLEASE SEND YOUR REQUEST TO [coa@worthington-ma.us](mailto:coa@worthington-ma.us) WITH "NEWSLETTER" IN THE SUBJECT LINE.  
PLEASE NOTE YOUR PHYSICAL ADDRESS FOR  
RECORD KEEPING. THE ADDRESS WILL NOT BE  
SHARED

**Russell H. Conwell School Bus Monitor Needed:** They are looking to hire a morning and afternoon bus monitor to ride the bus to and from school with a special needs student. The hours are 7:45-8:45 a.m. and 3:30-4:30 p.m. If you are interested, or know someone who might be, please contact Gretchen Morse-Dobosz at 413-238-5856 or email gmorsedobosz@hr-k12.org for more information. The hourly rate is \$14.

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**October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month**  
**Something we ALL need to be aware and**  
**supportive of. Numerous articles – take**  
**the time to read them – or at least some of**  
**them. You never know when this will be a**  
**real issue for you, a family member or a**  
**friend to deal with first hand.**

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***The COA has a variety of medical equipment available to loan anyone who needs it. Some of the items are rollator, wheel chairs, waffle bed mattresses, waffle chair cushions, air boots, bed rails, tub transfer seat, gait belt – just to name a few. These items change so if you are in need, call and perhaps we will have what you are looking for! Call Sandy Epperly at 238-5584 – leave a message.***

**Peg Whalen, Regional Outreach Coordinator - Northern Hilltowns**  
(Chesterfield, Cummington, Goshen, Plainfield, Westhampton,  
Williamsburg, Worthington)

Peg Whalen, is the new COA Outreach Coordinator - for the Northern Hilltowns Consortium of COAs. She is working on connecting with every town Northern Hilltown COA, COA Board Members, and town residents with concerns about aging neighbors, friends, or family members.

You can take the girl out of hilltowns but you can't take the hilltowns out of the girl. She is happy to be back in the northern hilltowns of Western Mass. She lived in Western Mass in the 1980's and early 1990's; moved away for education, but vowed to return as soon as she could. It took 20 years but she is back and has a social work degree and a PhD. But, she is looking forward to many more years of education from hilltown resident's age 60 or better, and those Boomers, like me, soon to follow.

**To date:**

So far, events have been very welcoming and calorie rich. I have been to Goshen for several luncheons and the summer picnic, attended the annual Worthington picnic at the Rod and Gun club, eaten with others at Williamsburg's regional meal site, and regularly been to Plainfield's twice a month luncheons. She has met all COA directors or coordinators and counts them among my new colleagues. She hears some wonderful quips at these meals full of laughter and is planning to share some quotable quotes with readers in future newsletters. This month the one to share: overheard at one town event, "You know... you have to LEARN to be an Old Lady!" Do you agree? How did you learn to be "Old"? Please share your thoughts and humor with me.

**So what's outreach all about? From Peg's viewpoint.....**

Listening! I am here to listen to your ideas, opinions, experiences, concerns, and questions. I hope you will seek me out or talk with me when I cross your path. I will have a local phone number to share in a future newsletter. In the meantime, feel free to call my cell number, at 517-285-9242, visit me or write to me at the Chesterfield Community Center in the old Grange building at 400 Main St., Chesterfield, MA 01012. You can reach me by postal mail at that same address, or by email to [pwhalen@hchcweb.org](mailto:pwhalen@hchcweb.org). Thanks to all for the warm welcome! I look forward to meeting more of you in the next two years.

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For e-mail recipients – there is a second attachment which is the regional insert – please let board members know if you feel this information is helpful to you – we are constantly striving to Improve outreach and fill the needs of our community – in keeping with the Worthington COA mission statement – found on the front page of the local newsletter.

Sandy Epperly/Coordinator

Board Members –

- Camille Smith, Chair
- Laurie McAnulty, Co-chair
- Helen Pelletier, Secretary
- Pat Kennedy
- Larry Mason
- Helyn Myrick
- Barb Pease



## Now Where Did I Put My Keys?

(Jacquie Eubanks, RN, BSN)

Forgetfulness happens to all of us. We walk into a room and can't remember what we were looking for, or we're late getting out the door in the morning and have no idea where we put the car keys. We forget names, where we left our glasses, an appointment, an item at the grocery store or some of the seemingly millions of other little details we are tasked to remember every day. As we age, these incidents may occur more frequently and most of the time is simply a part of normal aging and not a cause for concern. It can be frustrating, worrying or annoying, but small memory lapses or forgetfulness do not necessarily indicate more serious cognitive impairment. The majority of the time, when we stop to think for just a moment longer, we find what we were looking for, remember the name of the person we recently met or realize that, yes, we did turn off the coffee pot or lock the door before we left the house.

Increasing memory loss or memory lapses that interfere with normal life are indeed a cause for concern and a good reason to check in with your doctor. However, worrying and fretting about occasional memory slips can actually make matters worse. Stress, anxiety, depression and sleep deprivation are the major causes of forgetfulness in aging brains. Distraction, inattentiveness, fatigue, medications and trying to juggle our overly busy lives can also affect how well we remember. The ability to immediately recall names or faces may actually begin to slow years before we notice, as the ability to recall information ebbs and flows over a lifespan. And while reaction times and certain memory abilities may slow with age, other skills such as increased vocabulary, the ability to use both sides of our brains simultaneously and a heightened ability to reconcile our thoughts with our feelings may not peak until our mid-sixties.

### **Let's consider some of the more likely causes of memory slips:**

***Chronic stress*** – While some stress is unavoidable, chronic stress can cause damage to both bodily and brain functions. Constant exposure to the stress hormone cortisol can cause our brain to lose synapses and can reduce neurotransmitter receptors. Basically, overexposure to cortisol temporarily interferes with normal brain cell communication, making it more difficult to learn new concepts and retrieve information.

***Sleep deprivation*** – While we sleep, our brains are busy sorting and storing memories. Those with impaired sleep and sleep disorders can experience symptoms of impaired memory and concentration, reduced reaction time, anxiety and fatigue.

***Thyroid dysfunction*** – The thyroid is critical to many metabolic functions, including energy metabolism. An underactive thyroid, not uncommon in older adults, can cause difficulty with memory and attention span and leave you unable to think clearly. Although not generally considered to be the root cause of memory lapses, if you are experiencing cognitive problems along with sensitivity to cold, fatigue or depression and these symptoms persist, a simple blood test can confirm if the thyroid hormone level is inadequate for normal function.

***Anxiety and depression*** – There's strong evidence indicating mood disorders can disrupt our

brain's neural circuitry involved in storing and retrieving memories. Severe depression may also bring about equally severe memory loss. Often times, when depression lifts, memory loss improves along with mood.

**Menopausal symptoms** – Women who experience hot flashes know that feeling of “brain fog,” which actually may worsen the ability to remember names and experiences. Although the symptoms are temporary, other menopausal symptoms, such as sleep disturbances, can also contribute to memory issues.

**Certain medications** – Some commonly prescribed medications, including antidepressants, anxiety meds, painkillers and sleep aids, can cause forgetfulness or confusion by interfering with the brain processes that move short-term memories to long-term storage.

**Vitamin B12 deficiency** – Commonly found in older adults, an unrecognized vitamin B12 deficiency can not only negatively affect memory; it can cause severe neurological problems. Fortunately, a severe deficiency can be corrected with weekly vitamin B12 injections or daily high dose vitamin B12 supplements. A mild deficiency can be corrected with a daily high quality B complex or multivitamin.

As we age, it can become more difficult to maintain a high level of concentration when attempting to multitask, leading us to believe we are having memory problems when we simply need to divide our tasks into more manageable portions. This doesn't mean that we should just accept or ignore any memory impairment. Fortunately, our brains are malleable and we can boost our brain power with simple but powerful interventions. Begin by getting better sleep, cleaning up your diet and getting some all important daily exercise. Everything that is good for heart and overall health is also good for boosting brain health. To help maintain a mental edge, give your brain a daily workout by consciously acquiring new skills and challenging your brain to learn something new.

Remember, unless memory lapses become extreme or persistent, forgetfulness is within the scope of normal aging. Abnormal forgetfulness is more complex than just failing to remember. Loss of abilities, deteriorating functions and negative changes in behavior patterns all indicate a need to seek a medical diagnosis. Generally speaking, if you are aware of your memory lapses and those close to you are not worried, it's likely annoying but not necessarily an indication of a more serious condition. However, if family members are concerned or the forgetfulness is interfering with normal everyday tasks or your ability to care for yourself and is happening whether you are stressed or not, sleeping well or poorly, it may be a sign of early cognitive impairment that should be addressed sooner rather than later.

**NOVEMBER IS  
CAREGIVER'S MONTH**

***Save the date!***

***Monday, November 9, 2015***

***Annual Veteran's Appreciation Day***

*Know a vet? Let the COA Board know so they can receive a special invitation to our celebration.....e-mail or call*

*Secretary Helen Pelletier [helenpelletierquilts@gmail.com](mailto:helenpelletierquilts@gmail.com)*

*Or call 238-4418 and leave a message*

***Important!!!***

***Medicare annual enrollment period  
starts Thursday, October 15***

***AND don't forget – Monday, December 14  
– our annual Christmas Party underwritten  
by the Rolland Fund.....(reservations required)***

*Great trip on Monday, October 12 for Worthington Seniors and their caregiver's on the Dutch Apple Cruise ~ sorry if you were not able to "get on the bus" – there were many stand-by's and several from out the area who sent a reservation in due to the incomplete article in the Country Journal, Be an early bird next year!*