

Worthington Council on Aging

February 2020 Newsletter



Worthington Council on Aging
2 Packard Common
Worthington, MA 01098

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Dates to Remember:

Monday, February 10th, Noon
COA Potluck at the Town Hall
Bring your favorite dish!



Mondays & Fridays, 10-11am
Healthy Bones and Balance at the Maples

Wednesdays, February 5th & 19th, 9am
Coffee and Chat at the COA office
Come join us!

Sundays, 9am. Mondays, 4:30pm.
Wednesdays, 4pm (Gentle) and 5:30pm
Fridays, 8:30am (Gentle)
Yoga for You at the Town Hall
Eileen Daneri, Instructor (238-4461)
Yoga for health and well-being. Yoga for a happy and balanced life. Suggested Donation: \$5 - \$10 a class.

Reviewing the possibilities for a new Senior Center for Worthington

As Worthington is considering the options available for a future Senior Center, there are many reasons to examine and explore the possibilities. The recent Senior Center Study of Worthington residents funded through the annual Community Development Block Grant sent out surveys to 482 Seniors (over 60 years age) and received back 240 completed surveys. An overwhelming 80% of the respondents were in favor of a combined Senior/Community Center. This survey also revealed that the Worthington Community is very interested in having a multipurpose public facility that offers a variety of uses to include, but not limited to, newer kitchen and dining areas, recreational space and functional rooms for all types of activities.

Senior Centers are one of the best options for a community because it provides for physical, social, and emotional needs of our seniors in a healthy

and safe environment. Senior centers provide a network where people can connect, communicate and socialize with other people.

When people age, it is easy to become isolated for many reasons such as retirement, the death of friends and family, or lack of mobility. Senior centers provide extra attention to the overall needs of an individual whether it be the physical needs of exercise and physical activities or the educational aspects of classes and other lectures. And most importantly, the social gatherings are sharing lives with one another. It's not talked about much but consider that loneliness can be fatal for seniors. "A 2012 study that tracked over 6,500 elderly men and women over a seven-year period in the United Kingdom reported that the lack of social contact leads to an early death regardless of participants' underlying health issues." (Social isolation increases risk of early death, study finds, retrieved from www.latimes.com).

Dr. John Caijiopps, a neuroscientist and psychologist at the University of Chicago, has been studying social isolation for 30 years. One frightening finding is that feelings of loneliness are linked to poor cognitive performance and quicker cognitive decline. We evolve to be a social species, its hard-wired into our brains, and when we don't meet that need, it can have physical and neurological effects. Ultimately, Senior Centers serve as a gateway to the nation's aging network—connecting older adults to vital community services that can help them stay healthy and independent.

"The true measure of any society can be found in how it treats its most vulnerable members"
- Mahatma Gandhi



Is your bedroom too hot?

Your body undergoes several changes while you sleep. Your core and brain temperature decreases, both the blood sugar and heart rate drop. If you keep the bedroom hot it is essentially fighting this process. Sleep experts unanimously suggest keeping your bedroom cooler than normal daytime temperature of your home. The common recommendation cited by places like the Cleveland Clinic and the National Sleep Foundation, is 60 to 67 degrees Fahrenheit. Happy Dreams!

Cabin Fever Symptoms and Coping Skills

Cabin fever is a popular term for a relatively common reaction to being isolated in your home for a period of time. Some experts believe that cabin fever is a sort of syndrome while others feel that it is linked to seasonal affective disorder and claustrophobia. Cabin fever may often cause ongoing isolation over a period of time.



Symptoms

Not everyone suffering from cabin fever will experience exactly the same symptoms, but many people report feeling intensely irritable or restless. Other commonly experienced effects are: lethargy; sadness or depression; trouble concentrating; lack of patience; food cravings; decreased motivation; social isolation; difficulty waking; frequent napping; hopelessness; changes in weight; inability to cope with stress.

Note that these symptoms may also be indicative of other issues and talking to a therapist can be helpful. Please note that not everyone cooped up at home in the winter has cabin fever. Only when someone experiences several of the symptoms mentioned above is it likely cabin fever.

Coping With Cabin Fever

As mentioned above, cabin fever is often helped with the assistance of a therapist. However, if your symptoms are relatively mild, taking active steps to combat your feelings may be enough to help you feel better.

Get Out of the House: If you are housebound, this may not always be possible. But if you are able to go outside, even for a short time, take advantage of that opportunity. Exposure to daylight can help regulate the body's natural cycles, and exercise releases endorphins, creating a natural high. Even a quick stroll can help you feel better quickly. If you are not able to leave the house at all, get close to a window and start moving around.

Maintain Normal Eating Patterns: For many of us, a day stuck at home is an excuse to overindulge in junk food. Others skip meals altogether. However, eating right can increase our energy levels and motivation. You may feel less hungry if you are getting less exercise, so monitor your eating habits to ensure that you maintain the proper balance of nutrition. Limit high-sugar, high-fat snacks and drink plenty of water.

Set Goals: When you are stuck in the house, you may be more likely to while away the time doing nothing of importance. Set daily and weekly goals, and track your progress toward completion. Make sure that your goals are reasonable, and reward yourself for meeting each milestone. Use Your Brain: Although TV is a distraction, it is also relatively mindless. Work crossword puzzles, read books or play board games. Stimulating your mind can help keep you moving forward and reduce feelings of isolation and helplessness.

Taken from: www.verywellmind.com/cabin-fever-fear-of-isolation-2671734?print

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!

Worthington Council on Aging



Seniors Aware of Fire Education



As our homes are buttoned up against February's cold, one big concern can be the build up of Carbon Monoxide inside. Carbon Monoxide (CO) is a gas that you cannot see, taste, or smell. It is called "the silent killer". CO poisoning can result from faulty furnaces or other heating appliances, portable generators, water heaters, clothes dryers, or cars left running in garages. Headache, nausea, and drowsiness are symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning.

Here are some things you can do to avoid CO poisoning:

- Install and maintain CO detectors that are labeled by a recognized testing laboratory.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for placement and mounting height.
- Know the difference between the sound of smoke alarms and the sound of CO alarms.
- When a CO alarm is strident, get to a fresh air location and call 9-1-1.

Have a S.A.F.E. February!

~ 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 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!

If the groundhog sees MY shadow, that means I've got six weeks of groundhog stew.



All the numbers...

We used to have our area code and a plain ol' 1-800 toll-free number. But numbers have proliferated! Here is the current listing of valid numbers and what they do. If a phone call comes in and (uh oh) you answer it, and are asked to make a toll-free call to a number not on the approved number list (uh oh) to win your cruise tickets, don't do it!!

From the Federal Communication Commission, and they should know, here are the current valid toll-free numbers, meaning the caller does not pay: 800, 888, 877, 866, 855, 844, and 833. Note - a cell phone caller may have a charge, depending on their calling plan.

911 – no change – this still connects you to emergency personnel.

411 gives you directory services but there likely will be charges. Instead, dial 1-800-FREE-411, which is 1-800-373-3411. There is a short ad and the service may or may not work.

900 – this prefix is a "pay-per-call" number that a business may use. This means of course that you will pay, if you dial, and may pay more than normal long-distance rates.

In the future – the prefix 988 may become a short-cut code for people considering suicide. It would be the short version of the existing 1-800-273-TALK, or 1-800-273-8255.

Prefixes ending in 11 (211, 311, 411, 511, 611, 711, 811 and 911) are not used for our phones because they are service codes. For instance, MA has a 211 organization that helps with referrals for social services, such as food banks and heating assistance. More on those:

www.networkworld.com/article/3134324/beyond-911-other-n-1-1-codes-you-should-know.html

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

Good news!

The **MassHealth Senior Buy-In** program's income and asset eligibility limits have changed allowing applicants to have up to \$1738/ month in income (if you are single) and up to \$2346/ month (if married).

Asset limits have increased too. Now you are eligible if your countable assets are \$15,720 or less (single) or \$23,600 or less (married).

If you are eligible.....*MassHealth will pay your Medicare B premium* which has gone up to \$144/ month this year.

With these increases in what is allowed for income and assets, the Governor's office expects another 40,000 Massachusetts residents will become eligible for the Buy-in programs.

More good news: they made the application shorter and simpler. It gets better— now the application no longer requires verifications for income and assets. MassHealth will do the checking. You don't have to send in copies of bank statements, or pension and social security benefits.

If you think you qualify, or know someone who might, you can get an application by contacting your SHINE volunteer, or your COA.

Article submitted by Deb Hollingworth,

What's in your wallet?

Measuring economic stress on older Americans

One of the biggest challenges people face as they consider retirement isn't just how long they will live but how financially secure they will be. There are good reasons to be concerned. Because of rising rents, the costs of health care and other costs of living, many older adults enter their retirement years facing the difficulty of making a balanced household budget, especially people who live alone. A large portion of every state's independent older adults lack incomes that would allow them to escape the threat of poverty, to remain independent and to age in their own homes.

A recent report prepared by the Gerontology Institute at UMASS "Insecurity in the States 2019" includes the following facts:

- National averages suggest 50 percent of older adults living alone and 23 percent of elder couples have annual incomes below the Elder Index.
- Nationwide, 32 percent of single elders and 18 percent of elder couples fall into the gap between the Federal Poverty Level and the income required for realistic economic security.
- At least 40 percent of adults age 65 or older in every state are at risk of being unable to afford basic needs and age in their own homes.

More than half of older adults living below the Elder Index rely on Social Security for at least 90 percent of their incomes.

Because of the gender differences in earned income, women fare poorly:

- Women usually live longer than men but tend to save less for retirement.
- Women make 82 cents to every dollar a man earns.
- Women are more likely to work part-time jobs without access to workplace savings plans.
- Women are still the primary caregivers, often leaving jobs to care for family members.
- Older women rely on Social Security; for many it is their only source of income.
(source: WISER)

The Elder Index was developed by the Gerontology Institute at the University of Mass. Boston with Wider Opportunities for Women (WOW), and is currently maintained through a partnership between the Gerontology Institute and NCOA. The Elder Index is a measure of the income that older adults need to meet their basic needs and age in place. It's a free online tool that allows users to calculate the realistic cost of living for older adults in every county and state in the U.S. The report matches that information with income data to calculate the percentage of older adults whose incomes fall short of their costs and ranks the states on that basis. Another report focused on Massachusetts provides detailed elder economic insecurity data on the county level. The elder index calculated a realistic national average annual cost of living of \$25,416 for renting elder singles and \$36,204 for older couples who rent. The 2019 federal poverty guidelines for the 48 contiguous states are \$12,490 per year for singles and \$16,910 annually for couples.

Massachusetts comes up as the state where the level of economic insecurity is the highest. "The elder index provides an important reality check – a realistic measure of the actual cost of a no-frills lifestyle for elders living independently."

Why are these facts important to everyone? As we face threats to the benefits available to older people, such as the recent reductions for those relying on Food Stamps and suggested cuts to Medicare, it's crucial to actively engage with local, state and congressional officials to advocate for keeping supports in place for everyone. It's especially urgent that women become more proactive in protecting their financial resources and also advocate for increasing the incomes of women across all age groups.

To learn more you can visit:

www.elderindex.org.



On the Go!



The Northampton Senior Center has arranged the following outings, and you are welcome to join!

Please make your reservations early as these trips fill up fast! **Call Francine Frenier at the Northampton Senior Center: 413-587-1228.**

Feb 24: Day trip to the MGM Casino in Springfield. Cost per person \$25, includes transportation to the casino, \$20 slot play, and \$20 lunch voucher. Payment due NOW. Limited seats.

May 1-10: Memphis/Nashville 10-day bus trip. See the Grand Ole Opry, Country Music Hall of Fame, Memphis Rock N' Soul Museum, Graceland and other sites. Cost per person in a double room is \$1095. Receive a \$25 discount if paid in full by February 3, 2020. There are a few remaining seats.

June 16: Hildene-Lincoln Family Mansion Tour & Gardens, Manchester, VT. Lunch included at Wilburton Inn overlooking the Green Mountains. Cost is \$117. Receive a \$10 discount if paid in full by May 4, 2020.

Sept. 7-13: Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island & New Brunswick. Passport required. Cost is \$960 per person dbl. occupancy. Receive a \$25 discount if paid in full by June 8, 2020. A few seats are available. This 7 Day trip includes:

- 6 nights lodging in Canada --12 meals including: 6 breakfasts and 6 dinners
- Guided Tour of Halifax, Peggy's Cove, & Lunenburg
- Admission to King's Landing Historical Settlement
- Guided Tour of Prince Edward Island, includes Anne of Green Gables' home.
- Admission to the Natural Wonder: "Hopewell Rocks"
- Visit to the Waterside Town of Saint John



MAYBE NEXT TIME YOU'LL TRY A LITTLE SUNSCREEN...



Drawing Classes

Alexandra (Boo) Cherau, a well known artist from Chesterfield, is teaching an ongoing class on Thursdays from 10-12 at the Chesterfield Community Center on 400 Main Road in Chesterfield. This is a class for everyone who has any interest in learning how to draw, even if you've never given it a shot before. There is still time to sign up. There is no fee involved, but as usual, donations are welcome. The materials you will need include sketch pads, drawing pencils, and an artist quality eraser. Call Chesterfield COA (296-4007) for details.



[i carry your heart with me (i carry it in)]

By E.E. Cummings

i carry your heart with me (i carry it in
my heart) i am never without it (anywhere
i go you go, my dear; and whatever is done
by only me is your doing, my darling)

i fear
no fate (for you are my fate, my sweet) i want
no world (for beautiful you are my world, my true)
and it's you are whatever a moon has always meant
and whatever a sun will always sing is you

here is the deepest secret nobody knows
(here is the root of the root and the bud of the bud
and the sky of the sky of a tree called life; which grows
higher than soul can hope or mind can hide)
and this is the wonder that's keeping the stars apart

i carry your heart (i carry it in my heart)

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Out and About in February

Weds. Feb 12th, 12:15pm
The Duane Carlson Show!
Williamsburg Senior Center
141 Main St. Haydenville

Come and hear Duane Carlson sing! He puts on a great show that will transport you to a simpler time, when music was meaningful. He was here a couple of years ago and very popular! Join us!

Fri. February 14th, 9am & 10am
Spa Day at Smith Vocational
80 Locust St. Northampton

Smith Vocational collaborates with the Chesterfield COA by offering a "spa day" once a month to seniors in the surrounding area. Cosmetology students are offering: Haircuts \$6.00; Manicures \$5.00; Facials \$9.00. Please call 413-587-1414 x3531 to make an appointment. Each appointment takes about an hour and are scheduled for 9am and 10am in Room 124 of Building A at the school.

Coming in April...
Spring/Summer clothing Exchange at the Goshen Congregational Church. More information to follow.

