

Harper Center Bulletin

Williamstown Council on Aging

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MARCH 2016 NEWSLETTER

On to the month of March, bringing in Spring, honoring St. Patrick who actually did not drive snakes out of Ireland-it's too cold for our crawly serpent neighbors to take up residence in Ireland. Oh, and don't forget the Leprechauns. Did you know that Leprechauns were originally depicted as being dressed in red and not green? We can guess where the green came from but the red likely came from the British who did wear red after all...what do you think? Green as a political statement after Irish independence?



I guess this newsletter is the final winter edition for awhile, or perhaps we should call it the last newsletter from the winter that wasn't....the lack of snow may have been wonderful for some people but for myself and other snow lovers it was a bummer. And by the way, a further indicator that global warming is a reality and not a game.

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COAT THANKS...!

OK, the winter that wasn't has passed and we mostly didn't have a need for those extra winter coats...or skis, sleds, snowshoes...Anyway, we collected over 100 coats and brought them to Village to be distributed across the county to people who will need them. This note is addressed to all of those peeps who donated their gently used spare coats to a higher purpose; Thank you! There are a lot of people out there who now will have added armor against the cold if and when it comes. It's always great when a community comes together to support a plan isn't it?



SUPPORT GROUPS



Support is partially defined as “to bear or hold up”. That seems to be a pretty fitting description of the work an actual support group will do. Everybody needs support now and then and some of us may need a bit more than others. We’re trying to add a new dimension here so here’s what we’re doing. If you’ve heard this before sorry. Pass this note on to someone you think could use it!

In December we were awarded Incentive Grant money from Massachusetts COA to initiate three programs; Jane’s new balance group as well as a Grief Support Group and a Caregiver Support group. Support groups are wonderful spots for folks to meet and share their lives in a respectful and caring environment.. The caregiver support group meets at 2:30 on the third Wednesday monthly with facilitator Judy Bombardier. The Grief Group is meeting twice monthly on the first and third Thursday at 9:30 with leader Corrine Case.

COOKING OUT



Ah, so it really wasn’t a winter season here and everything looks rather like this is going to be a premature spring. All those springiest juices are flowing and every time I pass the ballpark I think that we could be out there practicing soon. Provided that we aren’t suddenly deluged with rain or buried under a mountain of snow. And, really folks, I simply don’t believe that the Snow Gods will allow us to skate away without one monster blowout snow, even if it melts in a week...

Anyway, spring is in the air and this just makes some of us want to be outside playing with our grills and rehearsing for the summer season. Baseball teams practice, so should we. Keeping this in mind, we’ve decided to have a pre-summer practice barbeque at noon on March first, burgers, dogs, sides, just to get into shape for the impending season. Spring training. Good idea right?

WTF



Laura Savia and her playwright Lucy Thurber will be in the house at 1:00 on Thursday afternoon, March 24th to work with folks who are interested in acting or helping to write a play to be performed at the WTF Festival this coming July. The WTF is looking to establish partnerships with their North Berkshire neighbors and your COA has formed a relationship with them. So c’mon people, let’s have some fun with this! The session we’ll have on this particular day will be an easy, non threatening workshop designed to teach a little bit about acting, maybe start work on a play featuring local stories and characters to be acted out on the big stage with professional actors. It will be fun! Join us!

ST. PAT'S; THE DAY AFTER

No, I wasn't thinking THAT...

St Patrick's Day has always been a day-in America anyway-to celebrate and have fun! Not so true in the homeland where it's actually a religious holiday where they do not actually eat the boiled dinner. Those are American traditions born from immigrants here.

And I don't know why anyone would want to eat boiled meat anyway. Yuk!

We have a really good group of musicians coming in on Friday afternoon, March 18 to entertain us. They have been here before and the drummer himself has come to Harper off and on for over a decade now. Richard Meyer is a pretty cool cat, a great musician and has always brought a strong show where ever he has played. The Richard Meyer trio comes to us courtesy of our friend Robin at Berkshire Housing. We'll start the party at 1:00. Oh. Bingo people, I hear you, we'll host a special Tuesday bingo on the 15th to get the game in. That work for you?



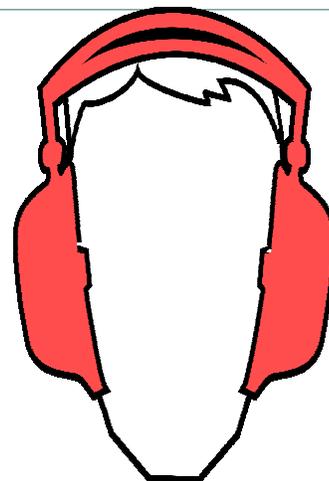
AARP TAX AIDE

Yes, we are reaching the midpoint of the tax season with this article and time just seems to be cruising along doesn't it? Tax season is in full swing and THE MAN knows it too, April is creeping toward us daily so better to think about it now if you haven't. The AARP Tax Aide program is a FREE program designed to complete and file state and federal income taxes for filers of any age and moderate income. There are a couple things you must do-one is to bring any documentation pertinent to your 2015 filing and a copy of your 2014 return. Two is make an appointment. Tax aide slots are going quickly and in order to access these you must reserve a time slot to get it done. Appointments are available on Tuesday evening at 6:00, 7:00 and 8:00. you should be prepared for your session to last one hour. One and done. Until next year.



MUSIC AND MEMORY

Yes, we have begun. Science aside, there is proof that music activates the pleasure receptors in the human brain. When an individual with cognitive issues listens to music from his favorite era-jazz, big band, the Stones- it frequently results in an increased attention to memories of the past which can lead to increased awareness in the present for awhile. Music has been shown to sooth the nerves of folks resistant to care in nursing homes. We're hoping that a community based model will be helpful to individuals remaining at home and not in an institutional setting. So-call us here at Harper-458.8250-and we'll work with you to create personalized play lists on iPod devices we'll let you use here at Harper.



**Williamstown Council
on Aging**

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Aging Mastery will be returning to us later this spring! This 12 week cutting edge series was debuted here in Williamstown in 2015 and was well received in the North Berkshire community. The premise behind AMP, our abbreviation, is that by making a very few but decidedly impactful changes in your life will result in a healthier life over all. There are sessions on all sorts of helpful sessions to be scheduled ranging from nutrition, financial management, simple exercise and more. Nope, we don't have an exact schedule yet but we certainly will in the next newsletter. Watch for it!

We'll be closed on March 22 for the annual Strip and Wax effort.

Lee Jaggi, we know him, RN and insurance guy with HNE will be coming to talk about their Medicare advantage and supplemental plans on the 28th. He brings great snacks!

There will actually be an event on Tuesday the 29th but we don't know what yet. Several people have indicated an interest in visiting with us but not a one has confirmed the date. The worse thing to happen is that we'll eat and go home early. That won't be too bad!

One more thing-Youlin will be away from March 10th to the 21st so no Tai Chi classes till the 21st!

PAGE FOUR NEWS AND NOTES

Serena Merrill, is back from her California adventure and will be in the house on Tuesday March 15th to work wonders on your feet, clipping nails, reducing calluses and massaging the soreness out. Unfortunately, the March dates are filled and she's currently accepting appointments for April mornings -afternoon is mostly filled- and May.

For those of you who have found yourselves to be challenged by the very technical stuff which comprises our health care insurance paperwork system, our health care insurance guru, SHINE Counselor Peg Jenks, will be in the house on Wednesday March 16 at 10:30 to help. Appointments are not necessary but appreciated; Peg is also available for individual consultation outside of normal hours by contacting us in the COA office at 458-8250.

The monthly Blood Pressure Clinic, now officially sponsored by our friends from Sweetbrook, will take place on Tuesday March 8th, at noon. Perhaps our friend Kira will bring the magic cookies herself! We haven't done any programs with her for a little while so maybe she'll have an idea to share with us. We'd welcome her with open arms!

Finally, the monthly Brown Bag, sponsored by the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts will be at Harper for pick up or delivery on Friday March 25th. Brown Bag is literally a brown paper sack filled with shelf stable foods and fresh fruits and veggies in season. Interested? Contact us here at Harper at 458-8250, and we'll help you thru the minimal applications process!

