

Harper Center Bulletin

WILLIAMSTOWN COUNCIL ON AGING

MARCH 1ST, 2013

Williamstown
Council on Aging

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March 2013 Newsletter

So here we are in a transition month, coming in at the end of Winter and switching to Spring on the 20th. We think anyway. I actually got to ski several times in February and sorry folks, I'm still hoping for more snow. Hey, look at the bright side; it will help the water table!

Anyway, March is one of those months in transition, halfway thru seasons, it can be different than other months, flowers peek up above the ground and get snowed upon, suddenly spring like warmth gets crushed beneath winters last blast. Fun times to be a weather forecaster...

So, a couple of housekeeping notes for March; The monthly Brown Bag delivery will be on Friday March 22. Brown Bag is a monthly offering of shelf stable foods and assorted seasonal fruits and veggies literally delivered in a brown paper bag. Brown Bag is sponsored by your COA but is a program of the Foodbank of Western Massachusetts. Interested? Contact us here at Harper, 458.8250 and we'll get you pertinent details.

Now, while we staff members will be working, there will be no programs on Tuesday March 26th-it's our annual floor strip and wax day. The floors will be nice and shiny on Wednesday and we'll be careful not to scratch them, right?

In March, the Friendship Club supports

There is an old maxim which goes something like this" the job is not finished until the paperwork is done". Of course, this is true, but then again, what if you don't have the paper to finish the job...?

In March, the Friendship Club will support the local food pantry, but with a different twist; this time, we're not looking for food at all. We're looking for paper products. It makes sense right? You see an organization which deals with hungry people and provides food resources so what do you do? You give them food. Except that people also need napkins, paper towels, toilet paper, tissue and so on. The pantry people tell us that they are very short of these items. Let's help them out, shall we?





Emerald Isle

As the world begins the process of turning green every March, many of us get ready to celebrate St. Patrick's Day, the final holiday of the winter. Know why we celebrate St. Pat's on March 17? Because it's the day he died. In Ireland it's a religious holiday, the rest of us just party. And about those snakes he supposedly banished? Nope. Post glacier Ireland has never had snakes. The climate is un-hospitable and they don't like it cold. The only snakes in Ireland are pets.

I digress. A tad before St. Pat's official holiday we'll be celebrating a little...Emerald Isle is an Irish Band and they will be in the house on March 5th to entertain and get yer toes tappin.. Kate O'Connor and other band members will perform some Irish tunes, a little Blarney, a little history and lots of charm. They come to us courtesy of our friend Ida Patella at Berkshire Housing and they'll commence playing at 12:30. First it will be chicken, smashed potatoes and veggies for lunch at noon. Sign up, you know where.

Taxes...



As we roll into March, the days get longer and the number of days left until our taxes for 2013 are due shrink. The additional reality is, that the number of open dates we have remaining for you to take advantage of our FREE AARP tax assistance program are shrinking too...for those not in the know, this program is designed to provide assistance to anyone of any age with the completion and filing of their state and federal income taxes. Our wonderful volunteer, Pim Goodbody and his band of AARP trained and certified volunteers are ready to help. Appointments are required, each session should take about an hour and participants should bring their 2012 tax returns and any pertinent paperwork for 2013 with them. Any questions? Call us at 458-8250. There is still time to take advantage of this great program but don't wait too long time is marching on!

Sing a-long



Steve Damon has been here once before. He came in on a rainy afternoon while everyone was having lunch, set up and played some great old jazz melodies for us. Remember?

Anyway, he'll be returning to the Harper Center on Thursday afternoon, March 14th to play for us once more. Steve is a teacher, he's actually the founder of the "Natural Music School" and his love of music and teaching it has brought him into communities all over New England. He'll lead us in songs from Broadway musicals, Americana, Jazz, some multicultural music- this will be a blast! Join us!

Steve comes to us courtesy of a grant from the Northern Berkshire Cultural Council who provided funding for this event.

Shingles

Not the slate squares some of us have attached to our roofs. We're talking here about those nasty and painful eruptions some of us have literally suffered through along the way...

Yup, shingles. People who have had chicken pox are at risk long after the illness has passed because the virus remains inactive in certain nerve cells only to suddenly become reanimated like some horror show beastie later in life. It's not known for certain why some people are cursed with shingles, some hypotheses exist to explain why and these include being weakened from illness and being stressed out. We're all familiar with those blisters afflicted folks get, those appear after a host of other symptoms-well, usually anyway-. There is no cure for the shingles though pain meds do seem to help.

On Thursday afternoon March 28 at 1:00, Lee Rudin from Molari Health Care Services will lead us in a discussion about shingles, the disease, risks, treatments and coping with them. We've not had this conversation in a long time so join us! Snacks to follow.

KIRA

Our good friend Kira Breard from Interim Health Care will be in the house on Thursday afternoon March 21st at 1:00-her first stop at Harper after spring has sprung...

This time we'll be talking about strategies to help out when one lives with chronic diseases. These are afflictions of long duration and generally progress very slowly. We know folks who have heart disease, cancer, have had a stroke, COPD, diabetes and more, right? The Center for Disease Control, the famous CDC says that chronic diseases account for 70% of all US deaths annually and that they contribute to major functional limitations in about 25 million Americans. Like people we all know right? She'll be here to offer a few suggestions to help get by with a chronic issue, and maybe some of us can share our coping strategies too.

Java with Judy

As health care advances we move into a world where electronic medical records are used. Health care providers can now gather your information via email and it would make sense that Advanced Directives are changing too. Massachusetts has begun to use a new Advanced Directive form, called the MOLST, an acronym for Medical Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment. The MOLST tool will improve understanding and accuracy for everyone. The tool will also allow for enhanced discussion regarding the wishes of you, the patient, and all the "things" you want or don't want to have for treatments in the days to come.

So on Wednesday March 27 our friends from Williamstown Commons will be here to visit -join us for breakfast and conversation about this new tool. Food at 8:30, conversation to follow!



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A couple of items of interest to think about...

Elaine Keyes, our computer guru, will offer free computer lessons to individuals interested in learning the mysterious function of those confounding machines. Whether a novice without knowledge or needing just a little help-Elaine is willing to help and all you have to do call us and ask! It's FREE, and that is a great deal. Really, computer lessons for free? 458-8250. Give us a call and we'll make arrangements. No computer yet? No worries, we have a computer lab...

Jeff Watson, remember him? He was here at the Harper Center a couple months ago to present a program about Reiki and demonstrated the art for a selection of volunteers. He recently told me that he would be willing to return to Harper and offer 15-20 minute complimentary seated Reiki Energy Work for interested individuals. Interested? Contact us here and we'll see what kind of arrangements we can make...

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Our foot caretaker, Serena Merrill, will be in the house on Thursday March 7th-not her usual Tuesday slot- to work her magic with peoples feet. You will remember that she had to move days around this one time so please note-she's here on Thursday and not the customary Tuesday!

For those of you who have found yourselves to be challenged by the very technical stuff which comprises our health care insurance paperwork, our health care insurance guru, SHINE Counselor Peg Jenks, will be in the house on Wednesday March 20th 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, sponsored by our friends from Sweetbrook, will take place on Tuesday March 12th at noon immediately preceding the Friendship Club meeting. We had a new nurse last month but she brought those sweet cookies as a reward for a BP check too!

The monthly Brown Bag, sponsored by the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts will be at Harper for pick up or delivery on Friday March 22nd. 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 application process. If you cannot be here on delivery day, make arrangements for someone else to hold them! We have limited space in our refrigerators and just can't accommodate a lot of extra food!

