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# Harper Center Bulletin

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Williamstown  
Council on Aging

## February 2011 Newsletter

Ah, yes, the month where sudden love is sometimes represented by a winged dude shooting arrows at you. The precursor of the modern diplomat, here's love, take it! Or else!

Anyway, last month saw a couple of situations where the weather caused us to cancel programs for safety reasons. Enough said, right? What you do need to know is that just because we have cancelled programs-and that includes the van folks, transportation is a program- it does not mean that we are not here at Harper. We actually have had really important and urgent telephone calls from community members during storms and are glad to have been able to help. So call if you need us-chances are that we'll be here!

A business note in the month of Love; the leaders of the Friendship Club have asked me to remind everyone that the charity for February is the local food pantry. Everyone attending the meeting on February 8th is asked to bring something suitable for donation to the pantry.

Finally, we're in the process of starting a "beginner" Tai Chi group. Some folks have asked about it, so, we'll try!



Harper Center Bulletin #195

February 1st, 2011

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The Williamstown Council on Aging can be found out and about in the Town of Williamstown, everywhere there are seniors in need of something... We actually live within the friendly confines of the Harper Center at 118 Church Street. You can call us at 458-8250, fax to 458-5156 and be reasonably certain that someone will answer the telephone between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday thru Friday and at 11 on Sundays while we serve lunch.

You can email us at [bogrady@williamstown.net](mailto:bogrady@williamstown.net) too.

We've been here providing quality programs and services to Williamstown elders since 1966!

## AARP Safe Driver course

OK, we've talked about it quite a bit-here's the skinny. The AARP safe driver course is meant to assist mature drivers evaluate their [and others] driving abilities and to develop mechanisms to cope with driving skills which may have declined with age. [Yeah, yeah, I said MAY have declined...] We all know that we're not as quick as we used to be and this course can serve as an excellent little reminder and refresher. It's being offered here at the Harper Center on Friday February 11, 10:30 to 3:30 with a one hour break for lunch-pizza at the half way mark. The cost is \$12 for AARP members, \$14 for non members and pre-registration is required as class size is limited. Call us at 458-8250 for information and registration paperwork!

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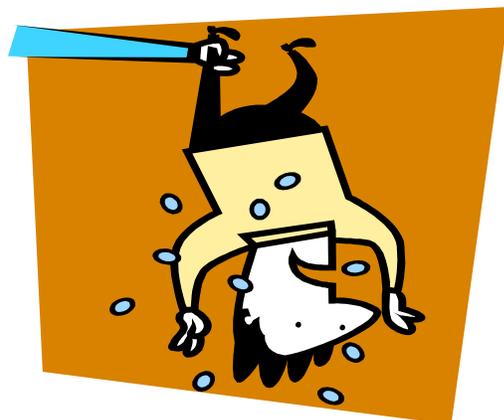
## What's happening at the Hospital?

For many of us, the North Adams Regional Hospital has been a fact of life. It's always been there, we went there for illnesses, for surgery, to have our children- I bet each of you know at least ten people who were born up there "on the hill". True, right? And for more of us, our doctors practiced medicine at the hospital, whether they were employed there directly-a surgeon, for example, or in private practice, the string was strong from the community to the hospital. As the years passed, Northern Berkshire Healthcare, as the hospital and its subsidiaries-like the VNA and Hospice of northern Berkshire, grew stronger and more vital to we who live here in the Berkshire woods. Now there's a shadow across the landscape and there are rumors of merger, red ink and medical shortages in the newspapers on a weekly basis. Many of us have lost our physicians to other places and even they seem hard to come by. What is happening here? In a world of uncertainty, this seemed to be one sure thing, but now...who knows?

On February 22, Paul Hopkins, the community relations person from the Hospital will come here to the Harper Center to tell us what is going on with our hospital and health care in North Berkshire as well. Many of you have heard Paul talking about this issue on the radio, others will remember him as a host on WNAW radio. He'll talk with us at 12:30, lunch will be pizza, it is Tuesday right-so sign up now for this important conversation!

## Taxes

Here we go again! It's time to anti up and pay Caesar what he's got coming to him. And, holy cow, we only have until April 15 to get it all figured out before the tax mans starts getting anxious. Who wants that? Anyway, the annual free AARP Tax Aide program starts February 1st and runs thru Mid April. We're currently accepting appointment reservations-available times for the program are Tuesday evenings from 6:00-9:00 and Saturday morning, 9:00- Noon. Each session will be one hour long and participants should bring their 2009 tax returns as well as any pertinent 2010 documentation. Remember that while special attention is paid to senior tax returns, individuals of any age and moderate income who need assistance completing and filing their 2010 state and federal tax returns are welcome.



## Memories and Dreams

I wish I had a dollar for every time someone asked me why we "don't do that" anymore. So many people have memories of the things we used to do, but don't do any longer. What are those things anyway? Is there a particular program, now gone, which you'd like to see revived? Or on the other hand, are there things in the world that you would like to see offered here? What are your dreams for the place?

As you've noticed thru the years, a lot of the programs we have offered here have come because you asked for it. We have always tried to accommodate the wishes of our friends and it's been awhile since we had a good old fashioned bull session like this so lets do it! Tuesday February 1st is as likely a day as any so we'll meet here at, say, noon for lunch-how about soup and sandwiches? How about a good home made winter soup like minestrone? What do you think? There's a sign up out there, get on it and make your voices heard!

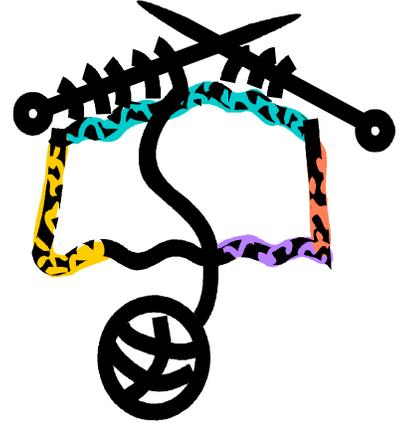


## Knitting for cause

Maggie Guiden asked me to include some words from the knit group as a way of communicating the “What’s up” with them and to let everyone know that this isn’t a bunch of people sitting around gossiping-there is a purpose or two behind it all.

A number of the knitters are currently involved in charitable causes. They’re knitting helmet liners for the armed forces, lap robes for nursing home residents, baby hats for newborns at NARH and warm knit caps for cancer patients. There is plenty of yarn available for these projects, we’re happy to give it to you for free-all you need to do is bring yourself and your knitting needles.

The knit group meets Thursday afternoons, here at the Harper Center, from about 1:00 to about 3:00 in the afternoon. Usually there are beverages and snacks provided along the way too. While some people prefer to sit at home and knit - and that’s OK - the group would really like to see you and share some time and, yeah, socialize with you...OK, gossip, whatever! Just join us, there are important causes out there and we’re doing our small part to help! We’re also looking to talk with individuals about creating “other” craft items to sell the Friendship Club Bazaar in the coming Spring. It’s your club, we need help with this so PLEASE give us a hand will ya? Thanks!



## A new Tai Chi class...

Are you one of those people who always wanted to learn Tai Chi but were afraid to join an experienced and more established class? Want to reap the plentiful benefits from practicing Tai Chi but don’t want to be with a group who already know what they’re doing? Cool. We have a new class for you.

Yes, I said new. In addition to our regular Thursday morning class, we’ll be adding a class for those who always wanted to learn but haven’t. Youlin Shi, our Tai Chi instructor will be here at the Harper Center on Monday afternoons, from 1:00 to teach new students the ancient art of Tai Chi. The introductory class will begin February 7th, will meet most weeks and continue at least thru June. We’re hopeful that participants will be able to begin practicing with the larger group on Thursday by then...Tai Chi was originally developed as a fighting form for ancient Chinese monks-today it’s noted as an exercise form with tremendous potential benefits maybe including increased balance and coordination...interested? Stop by and try it!



## Coats

Last month we asked the community to come out and bring us all the spare coats you had in your attics and closets for a collection drive we held here at Harper on January 10th. Shawn Godfrey, our friend at the Williamstown Ambulance Service guessed that, between those left here at Harper and at the Ambulance building on Water Street, that we had something approaching 200 coats for the drive by the time they left to deliver them. I collected an additional 17 before the day had ended. What a response! I guess I would just like to offer a few very inadequate words of thanks to all who donated to the cause. There are a bunch of people out there in the world today who are warm and safe against the winter cold because of you all. Your collective generosity is most appreciated by everyone!



**Williamstown Council on  
Aging**

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Everyone knows that the Williamstown Council on Aging is a small agency with a big heart. We're able to do wonderful things for lots of people in the community on many different occasions because we have a dedicated and hard working staff and quite a few volunteers with big hearts who make this all possible. In fact, without the folks who volunteer here and fill many different roles, we would be greatly diminished. This past week, as this rag was being finished, two of the biggest hearts associated with our volunteer corps stopped beating. I refer, of course, to Kay James, who was been recognized for longer that I know as the person in charge of our handcrafting activities and bazaars, both for the Friendship Club and the COA, and John Los, a friend and helper to all, everyone's everyman, who was always there with a smile to lend a hand anywhere it was needed. Many a package he carried, and many an errand he ran on behalf of his many friends. We're sad to see you go friends, and rest assured that we will miss you both forever.

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## **Back Page Story Headline**

Well, as we all now know, our friend Kip Moeller has left us and will still be clipping toenails-but miles away and closer to her home. We wish her the best, right? Kip, you were great, been fun working with you!

The good news is that we've made a new friend-Serena Merrill, an equally talented Foot Care Nurse whom some of you met last month will be here starting in February to pick up where Kip left us. There will be two clinics next month, first on February 15 and the second a week later on the 22nd. There are a couple spaces available for the clinic on the 22nd but hurry-they fill fast!

Peg Jenks, our SHINE Counselor will be here at Harper on Wednesday February 16 at 10:30 to speak with anyone who has issues or concerns with their health care coverage. Peg is also available for private consultations with individuals in need-call the COA office here at Harper at 458-8250 and we'll be happy to connect you!

The monthly Blood Pressure Clinic with our friend Janet Richardson from Premier Health Care, sponsors of this clinic, will be here on Tuesday afternoon, February 8th to check those vital, need to know numbers. Mark that date down!

Finally, the monthly Brown Bag delivery-literally a brown paper sack filled with fruits and veggies in season and an assortment of shelf stable foods will be ready on Friday February 25th. The Brown Bag program is a service of the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts and is available to folks who meet very generous guidelines for participation. Contact the office here at the COA-458-8250-and we'll help you with the process.

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