Happy New Year!

Did you all make resolutions? I didn’t. No reason to create that kind of stress. I mean, if you don’t like what you’re doing then why wait for the first day of the new year to change anything right? Across the years I have met people who made resolutions and managed to keep them. About half of those revolved around quitting smoking. The rest of us make resolutions for the new year and then we just sort of let them slide as we go about our lives. Works for me usually.

It’s ice and snow season. That means that everything has a chance to be slippery. Especially at night when everything is dark, can’t tell the difference between pavement and black ice. I guess we just want you to be aware of your surroundings when you go out there. We really don’t want anyone to fall and get hurt. That would be a bummer. Falls can be devastating, lead to all sorts of injuries, un-necessary medical issues and even death. Speaking of falls, this PSA just sort of fit in here nicely, our twice weekly Balance Class will resume on January 18th, a Thursday, at 11:15. We focus on exercises designed to strengthen core muscles needed to stay balanced and on your feet. Check it out if you can. The class also meets Mondays at 2:30

AARP Tax appointments

Lots of folks have been calling and asking about the tax program and when we’ll be accepting reservations. Why so much concern? This is the same drill we’ve used for the last 10 years; this year, we start taking reservations on Monday January 8th. The tax season runs from Tuesday February 6th until Tuesday April 17th in Williamstown anyway. Don’t worry. Plenty of time.

If you came last year and had your taxes done your appointment will likely be just an hour as the system should remember you—it should take less time to do. If you’re new to us, welcome! Your appointment will likely be an hour and a half while the system processes your data. Appointments are required and we’ll be happy to accommodate you, call us at 458.8250 to schedule.
Purple tables

This story really doesn’t have anything to do with a purple table...it would be appropriate in this town but it’s just the name of an innovative program meant to help people with dementia. It's geared primarily toward folks who like to eat out. Restaurants can be a confusing and frustrating place for people with Alzheimer's Disease, menu choices, lots of distracting activity and so on.

On January 12, Karen Gold, one of the spirits behind the Berkshire Alzheimer's Partnership, will join us for lunch and a discussion about purple tables and other related issues. A request for a “Purple Table” reservation triggers trained staff at participating restaurants to create a dining experience with out stress for individuals who might find public dining to be a stressful experience. That’s the thumbnail description. My suggestion is that you come and hear Karen speak. Pasta and meat balls at noon, conversation with Karen to follow at 1:00.

Spinning

Nope, no need to worry about bicycles...

Members of the Green Mountain Guild of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers meet in small groups to study various aspects of fiber arts. Here, at the Harper Center, they explore the art and craft of turning animal fibers from sheep, llama, alpaca, yak and plants such as silk, flax and cotton into yarn for knitting and weaving. These folks use drop spindles or a spinning wheel to achieve their results.

Their meeting is open to anyone regardless of skill level, master or no experience at all. They’ll provide materials to use if you’d like to try it.

The next meeting here will be at 1:30 on January 9th. Stop in and check it out!

Community meeting Affordable Housing Trust Habitat

I would imagine that you all have seen the renderings of the proposed Habitat for Humanity homes to be built on the corner of Cole Ave and Maple Street. They were in The Berkshires a couple weeks ago with an accompanying article about the project. Well, the Williamstown Affordable Housing Trust will be having a neighborhood forum to address the subject here at the Harper Center on Friday January 19th at 5:30. Northern Berkshire Habitat has been chosen by the trust to develop the property and build those brand new houses. The Trust and Habitat are anxious to present their plans to the neighborhood and solicit input and commentary on the plan.
What should my plate look like?

There’s been an awful lot of talk about colors on your plate and what foods should be on it...and really eat the rainbow does not mean Skittles here.

Instead we’ll be talking red, dark green, yellow, blue, purple, white and orange. You know, carrots, tomatoes and all those delicious foods...While you’re eating all those good for you items, you also need to be thinking portion size, balance between fruits and veggies and meat. Essentially this will be a mini course in healthy eating. With food of course!

On Friday January 19th our friends from Williamstown Commons will be here to talk to us about healthy eating. A timely topic folks, we’ll be heading out of the holiday season and all that it entails, chocolate, chocolate, more chocolate and eggnog and into a new year, A good time to have a conversation about healthy eating to get back on track going forward. We’ll start at noon with some delicious and healthy food– they’re preparing it folks, so you know it will be good. The sign up will be out soon!

Pet food and other resources

Like humans, animals can sometimes benefit from a little support from friends and neighbors. Sometimes life is difficult for a pets human family and pet food can become secondary to everything else. Fortunately there are food banks of sorts for our animal family members too.

Locally, the Berkshire Humane Society has a free Pet Food Bank entirely stocked by community donations. The idea is that pet parents in temporary financial difficulty can access food for their furry family members and keep them at home where they belong. Locally, the Friendship Food Pantry in North Adams hosts a pet food bank and you can reach them at 664.0123. Animal food donations are gladly accepted at the Humane Society on Barker Road in Pittsfield. Their phone number is 413.447.7878

Facebook site re-launched!

OK! We’re back on Facebook! After a brief hiatus and redesign we’re back! It will be a typical Facebook page with pictures of our friends and program announcements, all the usual stuff with one exception; you can’t write on our wall, it’s for observe and inform purposes only.

While we are absolutely certain that the overwhelmingly large numbers of people who will look at our site would comment appropriately, there will be a few who will not and why risk it! If you want to comment to us on anything, feel free to call us at 458.8250 and we’ll be glad to answer any questions. We’ll be at www.facebook.com/williamstowncouncilonaging
There will not be an exercise class on Wednesday and Friday from January 5th through the 15th as Jane is away taking classes. She'll return and so will her portion of the class on Wednesday January 17th, Karyn's Monday class will meet as scheduled.

The MOB returns in February! Matter of Balance begins another class on Monday February 5th, if you're interested you can sign up now as participation will be limited to 15. The class will be at a different time-4:00-6:00 and it is specifically geared to folks who cannot make it here during the day. Yes, there are folks who meet that description...

There is an interesting meeting slated to happen across the street at the Williamstown Elementary School on Wednesday evening, January 16. The Marijuana Business public forum will happen in the WES auditorium starting at 7:00 that evening and slated to end at 8:30. Whether you favor medical marijuana or recreational use, or not, this promises to be an interesting conversation. There will be more on the topic in the coming weeks so watch for it!

Our friend Ann Shartrand from Sugar Hill will be here on January 9th to do a painting craft with us, 1:00 and yes there will be refreshments.

Serena Merrill will pause here at Harper during her monthly tour of the county on Tuesday January 16. In case you don’t know, Serena is our foot care nurse... The great news is that she is here to help out and appointments with her can be had by calling the office here at Harper and asking about it. The bad thing is that there are only so many options in each day and her slots fill fast. There are three opening for Serena as this is written (in late December) Think about it.

The monthly Blood Pressure Clinic with our friends from Williamstown Commons will happen at the Bingo break on Tuesday January 23rd.

SHINE Counselor Hedy Lipez Burbank is available to help with all sorts of health insurance questions. Should you need to speak with the SHINE counselor about health insurance issues, feel free to call us here at 458.8250 and we'll make arrangements for you.

The Brown Bag food delivery for the month of January will be here at the Harper center on Friday January 26th at 1:30 ish. It's a monthly offering of fruits and veggies in season and shelf stable food goods all the time. Interested? Call us for details; 458.8250