



CITY OF PITTSFIELD, MA
You've Got ...
Senior Spirit

COUNCIL ON AGING, Inc.
 PITTSFIELD SENIOR CENTER
 330 NORTH STREET
 PITTSFIELD, MA 01201
 413-499-9346 Fax # 413-442-8531

JANUARY 2016

SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES

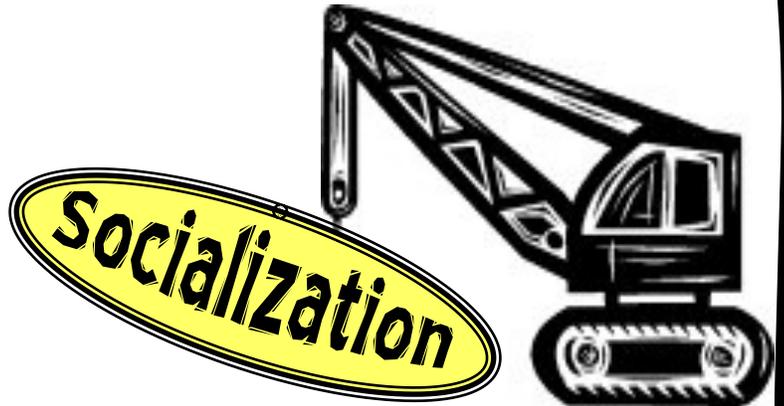
- AARP tax preparation
- Are You OK? wake-up program
- Bingo
- Birthday Celebration-Monthly
- Card Games, Bridge, Pitch
- Ceramics
- Chair Caning
- Coffee Shop
- Comedy Workshop!
- Community Outreach
- Computer Workshops
- Craft Group
- Exercise Classes-Osteo
- From Stage to Screen
- Gift Shop
- "Hand and Foot" card game
- Health Education Workshops
- Income Tax Preparation
- Information/Referrals
- Knitting and Crochet
- Legal Assistance Phone Number
- Line Dancing
- Lunch Served Daily
- Mah Jongg
- Molari Nurse Visits
- Outdoor Concerts
- Poetry
- Pool Tables
- Quality Time Club
- Quilting
- Seasonal Celebrations
- Scrapbooking & Card Making
- Scrabble
- Shake Your Soul dance-exercise
- SHINE Medicare Counseling
- Supportive Day Program
- Tai Chi, Tai Chi w/ weights
- Transportation
- Traveling Seniors
- TRIAD
- Volunteer Opportunities
- Weekly Movies
- Woodcarving
- Woodworking

PITTSFIELD

AN INSIDE LOOK AT.....

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Hurdles	Page 4
Emotional Rescue	Page 5

Froio



Weight Lifting!

Protecting Privacy

When you hop on a computer to visit pages on the Internet, how can you be sure no one else is watching you? Governments collect data to fight threats. Social media sites and online search engines gather data to personalize their services. And retailers collect information to analyze buying habits. As a healthy reminder for us to be ever-aware of how much we share on the Web, countries all over the world mark **January 28 as Data Privacy Day.**



Certainly, large institutions such as banks and insurance companies pay millions each year to secure their vast stores of our personal data. But how should individuals protect themselves? *Time* magazine offers some tips: Don't fill out personal profiles for social media sites like Facebook; your real friends already know your birthday and address. Turn on private browsing in your Web browser's tool bar to remain anonymous while surfing the Internet. Use a password generator like Norton's free *Identity Safe* to develop hard-to-crack passwords. Any of these measures can help thwart hackers from secretly stealing your data.

Activity Connection, January 2016

Day of the Dragon

Why wait every 12 years for the Chinese Year of the Dragon when you can enjoy **Appreciate a Dragon Day** every year on **January 16**? These massive flying, fire-breathing beasts are enough to appreciate in and of themselves, but perhaps even more fascinating is how the belief in dragons evolved independently among ancient peoples living in China, Europe, Australia, and the Americas. Anthropologist David E. Jones thinks the widespread belief in dragons grew from the discovery of dinosaur fossils or whalebones that seemed to back up superpredator myths. With real-life 18-foot Nile crocodiles in Africa and eight-foot Australian perentie lizards, it seems that humans already have plenty of reptiles—of the non-fire-breathing variety—to wrangle.



Activity Connection, January 2016

Know Your Social Security Rules

AARP survey shows not knowing details could cost you money

What you don't know about Social Security could cost you thousands of dollars. A recent AARP survey conducted in conjunction with the Financial Planning Association found that while many Americans approaching retirement have a broad understanding about Social Security benefits, there is a serious knowledge gap in some critical areas.



For example, while 88 percent of those surveyed knew that waiting past age 62 until their full retirement age would increase their benefit amount, only 5 percent knew by how much. The answer is 25 to 30 percent, depending on their birth year. And only 1 in 3 knew that waiting until age 70 would give them their highest monthly benefit, another 24 to 32 percent, depending on whether they were born before or after 1960.

"It's important for people nearing retirement age to get accurate information about what benefits they are eligible to receive," says AARP Chief Public Policy Officer Debra Whitman. "When it comes to Social Security, not understanding the details can lower your benefits for the rest of your life."

Details matter. While 97 percent of survey respondents knew that someone can collect survivor benefits after a spouse dies, only 7 percent of those who understood that the claiming age affects the amount of survivor benefits knew the survivor can maximize the benefit by claiming it at full retirement age.

About a fourth of those surveyed knew, correctly, that spousal benefits are available to unmarried ex-spouses if the couple had been married at least 10 years, but one-third mistakenly thought they could collect if they'd been married five years. Nearly as many didn't know they could collect at all based on their ex-spouse's work record.

AARP Bulletin, October, 2015

FRIENDS

of the

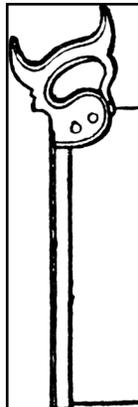
Ralph J. Froio Senior Center

Annual Memberships

Jean Kubica, Pat Mele, Noyal Moore,
Paula Rivers, Alan Shea, Sophie St. James

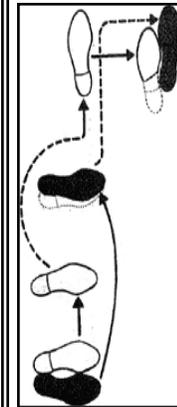
Lifetime Memberships

William Castro, Jr.



Woodworking

Tue
Wed
9:00



Line Dancing

Mon
@
9:00

"Well" Column

Writing Your Way to Happiness

The scientific research on the benefits of so-called expressive writing is surprisingly vast. Studies have shown that writing about oneself and personal experiences can improve mood disorders, help reduce symptoms among cancer patients, improve personal health after a heart attack, reduce doctor visits and even boost memory.



Now researchers are studying whether the power of writing, and then rewriting, your personal story can lead to behavioral changes and improve happiness.

The concept is based on the idea that we all have a personal narrative that shapes our view of the world and ourselves. But sometimes our inner voice doesn't get it completely right. Some researchers believe that by writing and then editing our own stories, we can change our perceptions of ourselves and identify obstacles that stand in the way of better health.

It may sound like self-help nonsense, but research suggests the effects are real.

In one of the earliest studies on personal story editing, researchers gathered 40 freshman at Duke University who were struggling academically. Not only were they worried about grades, but they questioned whether they were intellectual equals to other students at their school.

The students were divided into intervention groups and control groups. Students in the intervention group were given information showing that it is common for students to struggle in their freshman year. They watched videos of juniors and seniors who talked about how their own grades had improved as they adjusted to college.

The goal was to prompt these students to edit their own narratives about college. Rather than thinking they were not cut out for college, they were encouraged to think that they just needed more time to adjust.

The intervention results, published in *The Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, were startling. In the short term, the students who had undergone the story-changing intervention got better grades on a sample test. But the long-term results were the most impressive.

Students who had been prompted to change their personal stories improved their grade-point averages and were less likely to drop out over the next year than the students who received no information. In the control group, which had received no advice about grades, 20 percent of the students had dropped out within a year. But in the intervention group, only 1 student, or just 5 %, dropped out.

Continued on insert page

10 Facts You Need to Know About Hospice

Is hospice care the right option for you or a loved one?

An interesting thing happens when Dawn Gross brings up hospice to patients or their families: "Oh, no, we don't want that!" they often say.

"OK," says Gross, a hospice and palliative care physician in San Francisco. "Tell me exactly what you don't want, so we're sure not to give you that."



Going off to some facility, they tell her. Losing control of care. Being knocked out by morphine. Or, the clincher, giving up. When Gross assures them that hospice isn't at all like that, that two-thirds of hospice care takes place in the person's home or a long-term care facility, that the patient can still receive medical care, and that Medicare and most private health insurers pay for it in full, they often change their minds.

In 2011, about a million people died in hospice, about 42 percent of all those who died, according to the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization in Alexandria, Va., and its use is growing.

Still, misconceptions about this end-of-life service abound. As a result, many who might benefit from hospice don't sign up until the very end: About a third of hospice users enroll for less than a week, and the median time is 18 days.

So how can you tell whether hospice is the right choice for you or your loved one? The answer depends on what you believe hospice is, your current goals, and what you think it can, or can't, do for you.

Here's what you need to know.

Hospice is a philosophy of care, not a brick-and-mortar location. Most people say they want to die at home, but only about 1 in 4 end up doing so. One big reason: It's often just too hard. "Trying to care for someone with a serious illness, especially at home, without hospice is like trying to have surgery without anesthesia," says Ira Byock, the executive director of the Providence Institute for Human Caring.

Hospices bring everything you might need to the home — hospital bed, bedside commode, medications, bandages, expert consults — tailored to your needs.

But if you're daunted by home care, or simply don't want a loved one to die in your home, hospice care also is available in facilities and hospitals.

Continued on insert page

Senior Spirit Editor: Joseph Major

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Thoughts To Resolve

By Pauline T. Asher
Senior Center Poetry Group

**Before the darkness of a year fades
resolutions that arise from the heart are made.**

**A birth of goodness beams;
best intentions are gleaned,
wishes for a plethora of change,
tall in aspirations, wide in range.**

But...

**Resolutions wished like seeds improperly sown
sometimes become wind-blown.
Even though intentions are honest and true
their fulfillment becomes long overdue.**

**Resolutions carelessly made
may never live to see their day;
they may become the mightiest of feats,
destined to end in defeat.**

**A wish for change cannot be won
without knowledge of what must be done.**

**Soon the present will be a shadow;
some resolutions will curdle
then solidify into giant hurdles
and be vanquished, as an old beau.**

**Promises made beneath the sun
will fly away as slips of the tongue;
when responsibility is shunned
effort is never begun.**

**Some resolutions made in passion
will fade with distractions;
other resolutions, meaningless things,
will take flight on wings.**

**Therefore,
a meaningful resolution, in simplicity,
would be, to follow
the Golden Rule, tenaciously.**

The Councilman is In...



**City Councilman
Kevin Morandi
is available for
informal Q & A.**

Monday, Jan. 11th 10:00 Monday, Jan. 25th

State Representative



Tricia Farley-Bouvier

**Monthly Public
Meeting!**

**Senior-centric
issues du jour!**

Friday, Jan. 29th 10:00

Froio Surf Club

Tue & Wed

10 & 11

Take a byte!



OPINION**Feel-Good School of Philanthropy**

THIS year, “Giving Tuesday,” Black Friday’s philanthropic cousin, kicked off our nation’s most generous calendar month. Americans punch up their charitable donations in December, to over an estimated \$1 billion a day.

Why do we give? Many motives drive kind actions. We might donate to impress our friends or curry favor. To at least some extent, we also give to help make the world a better place.

A movement known as effective altruism (E.A.) seeks to make us better do-gooders. Often called “generosity for nerds,” effective altruism uses data science to calculate how people can ensure that each dollar they give has the greatest impact on the lives of those in need.

In doing so, effective altruism often directs our good will in counterintuitive ways. For example, someone might donate to the Susan G. Komen Foundation in memory of a relative lost to breast cancer, but E.A. givers reject such personal concerns. Instead, they consult think tanks like GiveWell to find the most efficient ways to reduce suffering — for instance, by combating the spread of parasitic infection in sub-Saharan Africa.

More advanced proponents of E.A. go further. If you want to devote your life to helping others, volunteering to build homes or ladle out soup might not be your best bet. Instead, effective altruists suggest “earning to give”: taking a high-paying job even if it does not reflect your values, because the disposable income you can donate will help more people than you could by volunteering in the field.

Effective altruism replaces old-fashioned philanthropy with sleek, Silicon Valley-style kindness. Accordingly, it has attracted support from high-profile fans like Elon Musk and Peter Thiel, and produced at least three books this year, including “The Most Good You Can Do,” by Peter Singer, an E.A. advocate and professor of bioethics at Princeton.

Last week’s announcement of a major charitable initiative funded by the fortune of the Facebook co-founder Mark Zuckerberg and his wife, Dr. Priscilla Chan, is in keeping with the E.A. trend and has been lauded as a marquee example of earning to give. Even before the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, effective altruism’s bottom line was impressive. It has secured hundreds of millions of dollars in pledges to its top-rated charities, helping millions of people.

The argument that we should maximize the good we do is logically bulletproof. But this is not effective altruism’s only message. The movement also urges givers to divorce their generosity from emotion. For instance, Professor Singer criticizes organizations like Make-a-Wish, which spends an average of \$9,425 on feel-good missions to fulfill children’s dreams, when the same amount could make a bigger difference elsewhere. Sentimentality, the argument

goes, produces giving that is more self-indulgent than helpful.



Optimized philanthropy requires letting go of empathy for any one victim, and abstracting people’s suffering into calculable units that can be affected en masse and at a distance. To many, this sounds admirable but unnatural, a tension the writer Larissa MacFarquhar captured when she described E.A. as the charitable equivalent of a drone strike program.

Effective altruism’s dismissal of sentiment echoes the philosopher Immanuel Kant, who centuries ago argued that passion was incompatible with moral action. This view also characterizes economic models that say emotional acts don’t “count” as real altruism.

These arguments are misguided. Crucially, they fail to account for psychological evidence that emotion — and especially empathy — adds a powerful, positive spark to philanthropy.

First, emotions reinforce kindness. Over a century of behavioral research demonstrates that people repeat actions that have rewarded them in the past. E.A. proponents deprecate the warm fuzzies people get from making donations, but those positive feelings can encourage more persistent giving.

Consider a study by the social psychologist Lara Aknin and colleagues: Participants recalled a previous purchase made for themselves or someone else, and reported on how good that had made them feel. The researchers then gave participants a cash windfall, and the subjects were invited to choose whether to donate it or spend the money on themselves. The participants who felt a “warm glow” from past altruism were more likely to donate their new winnings, suggesting that the emotional punch of personally meaningful giving — suboptimal from an E.A. perspective — can turn a one-time giver into a habitual philanthropist.

Emotion may also make altruism healthier. Generosity not only makes givers feel good, but reduces their stress level and even extends their lives.

This effect was apparent when my colleagues Sylvia Morrelli, Ihno Lee, Molly Arnn and I surveyed Stanford students about their generous behaviors and the emotions they felt. We found that students who acted kindly experienced lower levels of stress and anxiety than their less generous peers. But this was true only to the extent that people felt empathy while helping others.

In other words, if you give without emotion, out of, say, a sense of duty, you may miss out on the benefits. Along similar lines, the social psychologist Sara H. Konrath and her colleagues recently found that volunteering reduced

Continued on insert page

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Senior Center
CLOSED
New Year's Day

Meal Site
Daily At 11:30
Reserve Day Ahead!
(by 11:30 a.m.)
445-6550

JANUARY

4
9:00 Line Dancing
9:00 Advanced Osteo 9:30 Bowling
10:00 Poetry
10:15 "Shake Your Soul"
11:00 Ladies Pool
12:00 Scrabble 12:15 Pinochle
1:00 Mah Jong, Hand & Foot!

5
9:00 Woodworking
9:45 Beginner Meditation
10:00 Chess 10:30 Core, Flexible Feet!
10:30 Meditation
12:00 Tai Chi w/Weights
12:15 SHINE 1:00 Bridge, Canasta!
1:30 From Stage to Screen

6
8:30 Foot Clinic (by appt)
9:00 Woodworking, Beginner Osteo
10:00 Oh Hell!
10:30 Tai Chi 12:30 Tai Chi
1:00 Bingo, Scrapbooking & Cardmaking
1:35 Yoga

7
9:00 Beginner Osteo, Ceramics
10:30 Core, Flexible Feet
12:30 Chair Caning
1:15 Tai Chi w/Weights

8
9:00 Pitch, Knitting
12:30 Quilting, Woodcarving
1:00 Bingo
1:45 Beginner Tai Chi

11
9:00 Line Dancing
9:00 Advanced Osteo 9:30 Bowling
10:00 The Councilman is In!
10:00 Poetry
10:15 "Shake Your Soul"
11:00 Ladies Pool
12:00 Scrabble 12:15 Pinochle
1:00 Mah Jong, Hand & Foot!

12
9:00 Woodworking
9:45 Beginner Meditation
10:00 Chess, 10:30 Core, Flexible Feet!
10:30 Meditation
12:00 Tai Chi w/Weights
12:15 SHINE 1:00 Bridge, Canasta!
1:30 From Stage to Screen

13
9:00 Woodworking, Beginner Osteo
10:00 Oh Hell!
10:30 Tai Chi 12:30 Tai Chi
1:00 Scrapbooking & Cardmaking
1:00 Bingo
1:35 Yoga

14
8:00 Breakfast Club
9:00 Beginner Osteo, Ceramics
10:30 Core, Flexible Feet!
12:30 Chair Caning
1:15 Tai Chi w/Weights
4:00 Pittsfield Tree Watch

15
9:00 Pitch, Knitting
12:30 Quilting, Woodcarving
1:00 Bingo
1:45 Beginner Tai Chi

18
Senior Center
CLOSED
Martin Luther King day

19
9:00 Woodworking
9:45 Beginner Meditation
10:00 Chess, 10:30 Core, Flexible Feet!
10:30 Meditation
12:00 Tai Chi w/Weights
12:15 SHINE 1:00 Bridge, Canasta!
1:30 From Stage to Screen

20
COA Board Meeting
9:00 Woodworking, Beginner Osteo
10:00 New Member Day
10:00 Oh Hell! 10:30 & 12:30 Tai Chi
1:00 Bingo, Scrapbooking & Cardmaking
1:35 Yoga

21
9:00 Beginner Osteo, Ceramics
10:30 Core, Flexible Feet!
12:30 Chair Caning
1:00 Card Party
1:00 Legal Education (by appt.)
1:15 Tai Chi w/wts

22
9:00 Pitch, Knitting
10:30 Brown Bag Day
12:30 Quilting, Woodcarving
1:00 Bingo
1:45 Beginner Tai Chi

25
9:00 Line Dancing
9:00 Advanced Osteo 9:30 Bowling
10:00 The Councilman is In!
10:00 Poetry 10:15 "Shake Your Soul"
11:00 Ladies Pool
12:00 Scrabble 12:15 Pinochle
1:00 Mah Jong, Hand & Foot!

26
8:45 Blood Pressure Clinic (by appt.)
9:00 Woodworking
9:45 Beginner Meditation
10:00 Chess, 10:30 Core, Flexible Feet!
10:30 Meditation 12:00 Tai Chi weights
12:15 SHINE 1:00 Bridge, Canasta!
1:30 From Stage to Screen

27
9:00 Woodworking, Beginner Osteo
10:00 Oh Hell!
10:30 Tai Chi 12:30 Tai Chi
1:00 Connie Silver's Selected Cinema
1:00 Scrapbooking & Cardmaking
1:00 Bingo
1:35 Yoga

28
9:00 Beginner Osteo, Ceramics
10:30 Core, Flexible Feet
12:30 Chair Caning
1:15 Tai Chi w/Weights

29
9:00 Pitch, Knitting
10:00 State Representative
Tricia Farley-Bouvier
12:30 Quilting, Woodcarving
1:00 Bingo
1:45 Beginner Tai Chi