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

OCTOBER 2018

AARP tax preparation
Are You OK? wake-up program
Art du Jure!
Berkshire Writers Room
Bingo
Breakfast Club
Brown Bag
Card Games, Bridge, Pitch
Ceramics
Chair Caning
Coffee Shop
Comedy Dungeon!
Community Outreach
Computer Workshop
Exercise Classes-Osteo
Foot Clinic
From Stage to Screen
Gift Shop
“Hand and Foot” card game
Health Education Workshops
Income Tax Preparation
Information/Referrals
Knitting and Crochet
“Legal Education”
Line Dancing
Lunch Served Daily
Mah Jongg
Meditation
Molari Blood Pressure Visits
Pinochle
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 Friends
TRIAD
Volunteer Opportunities
Woodcarving, Woodworking

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Froio
Activity & Socialization
Roulette!
Spending Time With Young People Has Its Benefits

Try to add some kid power to your life!

For the last three years, Max Mozell, 88, has sat down to play chess nearly every Monday during the school year, trying to win — but hoping he’ll lose.

That’s because Mozell, a retired college dean and former neuroscience professor, faces opponents nearly one-fifth his age through an intergenerational chess program run by a Manhattan-based nonprofit. “I sort of enjoy losing,” he says. “I try to win, because otherwise it isn’t a real game. But when I get beaten, it’s fun to see a kid being so nice about it. They take a certain pride in winning, and they learn that if they really play hard, they can win.”

As Mozell describes it, the benefits of his multiage chess program go to both sides of the board. “You get to my age, and you sort of forget that there are kids in the world,” Mozell says. “But then every Monday I find out that there are. Not only that, but they’re thinking kids — and it’s fun to be with them.”

Studies show that spending time with the younger set just might improve your health, too. “One recent study showed that, for seniors, spending time with kids had cognitive benefits, as well as emotional and physical health benefits,” says Jennifer Crittenden, assistant director of the University of Maine Center on Aging. Doing so also can provide older adults with a sense of purpose, Crittenden says, which can be an important factor in mitigating or minimizing depression. Another study on older people volunteering with youth found they had higher rates of life satisfaction compared with their peers who were not volunteering with kids.

While many programs focus on the benefits to children from interactions like having older volunteers read to them, “bringing two generations together gives older adults an opportunity to learn from children, as well. It isn’t just a one-way flow of information and experience,” Crittenden says.

Read on for a few expert tips on how to add more kid power to your own life.

Join naturally integrated social groups

Cornell University gerontologist Karl Pillmer surveyed 2,000 people over age 65 to ask their best advice for living. “One of their strongest recommendations for growing older is to stay socially integrated,” he says, noting that this can be challenging given our natural inclination to “gravitate toward others close to our own age.” His advice? Search out existing organizations, such as houses of worship or civic organizations, that blend a variety of ages for you. Local libraries are often rich sources of information about these; neighborhood listservs also can help you find multiage groups.

Call hospitals, daycare centers, school districts, or volunteer groups

Whether you’re interested in holding babies, reading to toddlers or tutoring teens, many local organizations are eager to welcome older volunteers. Ellen Cyrus, 74, of Tamarack, Minn., signed up with a volunteer organization in her community to do projects as varied as painting city hall with student groups and helping to run an annual, cross-age charity fashion show. “We have ‘models’ from babies on up to seniors, and everybody feels good about it,” says the retired administrative assistant. “I think it’s very important that youth and seniors somehow dovetail. It’s beneficial for everybody, because [we all] need a comfort for our soul at times.”

Reach out to your closest college

Many campuses have student groups in place — such as Project Generations — that are designed to foster interaction between students and older people. Contact your nearby college’s community outreach department for more information. Gret Atkin, 72, a retired Cornell University researcher, plays puzzles and games with younger opponents at Ithaca College through a program run by her college-affiliated retirement community. She also meets younger classmates while auditing several courses at the college. One illuminating moment: a recent discussion during a Sociology of Aging course about dating traditions. “The idea of whether you waited to kiss somebody on the second or third date was foreign to them,” Atkin laughs. The evolution of phones inevitably sparked another lively conversation. “Students were like, ‘You mean you actually had to share your phone with somebody else?’” Atkin recalls. “They just couldn’t believe that was the way it was at one time!”

By Jessica Blatt Press, AARP, April 11, 2018
our SENIOR CENTER

A convenient source for local services

FIND AN ADVERTISER NEAR YOU
SEARCH SUPPORTERS OF OUR CENTER to find trusted services in our area!

PLUS Sign up to have our newsletter emailed to you!
25 Ways to Save on Shopping

Use these simple tips to save on everything from clothes to electronics.

1. Buy discounted gift cards. On websites such as Raise and Cardpool, people list unwanted gift cards at a discount — 16 percent is average, according to the site. Buy a $100 gift card for $84 and save $16.

2. Do a postseason stock-up shop. The best time to replace worn-out clothes, gear or supplies is when their season has just ended. For example, a gas grill at Home Depot was listed at $299 last summer, then marked down to $249 after the season. Savings: $50.

3. Check out Amazon Warehouse. Before you buy, see if the item is available at a discount. A Poulan self-propelled lawn mower selling for $300 on Amazon was available on Amazon Warehouse, slightly used, for $210, a savings of $90.

4. Check for promo codes. Online retailers offer discount codes. Google the retailer and “promo code” to see what pops up or check RetailMeNot.com before finalizing a purchase. Recent savings: $31.98 off a Land’s End dress priced at $79.95, and $47.96 off a pair of Gap men’s jeans and a sweater worth $119.90 — a total of almost $80.

5. Buy through Befrugal.com. This website offers coupons and cash back for purchases from 5,000 retailers. A Lenovo ThinkPad X1 Carbon laptop was $1,339 using a $70 coupon. That’s a savings of more than $100 over online retailers.

6. Rent a dress. Need a glamorous dress or evening gown that you plan to wear only once? Don’t buy it; rent it instead at sites like RentTheRunway.com. A gown that sells for $695 can be rented for $115. Savings: $580.

7. Get magazines cheap. Subscribe to lots of magazines? Consider the Texture app: For one monthly fee, you get access to digital versions of more than 200 popular magazines. Save $10 to $50 per subscription.

8. Buy a refurbished computer. Why pay big bucks for the latest model? Go to sites like DiscountComputerDepot.com and pick up a refurbished laptop with a one-year warranty for $100. That’ll save you at least $100 over a new computer.

9. Get retroactive refunds. Stores will refund the difference if the price drops soon after you buy an item. The Earny app finds and claims price drops. Savings: $220 when that laptop you ordered drops in price.

10. Wait on a mattress sale. Never buy a department store mattress at regular price. Those stores regularly have steep discounts. A recent sale at a national chain store saw the price of a queen-size mattress and box spring set marked down from $3,589 to $1,749. Savings: $1,780.

Are We Wired Not to Save?

How our brains keep us from making smart financial decisions

You’re a responsible adult, right? You have a household budget and track your expenses. Your will and insurance are all up to date. And since the beginning of your career, you’ve maxed out your 401(k) and have been carefully saving for retirement.

Yeah, right.

Many of us know what we ought to do to ensure our financial security in our later years, but few of us actually follow through. Business and behavior experts say there are good reasons for our negligence. In many ways, we’re hardwired to mismanage money.

“Finance is simple but not easy,” says Nick Holeman, a senior financial planner with Betterment.com, an online investment company. “It’s easy to understand at a higher level what you should be doing. But implementing it and sticking with it long-term is when it becomes very difficult.”

A few psychological traits that make the job tough:

Instant gratification

Experts say one of the biggest challenges is our urge for immediate pleasures. It’s fueled by the emotional parts of our brains, and can overwhelm the logical side that’s trying to point out we probably don’t need that new pair of shoes or a delicious (but pricey) dinner out right now. That’s why some people are more likely to use extra money to indulge in a shopping binge than to tuck it away in a retirement plan.

Kelley Long, a member of the American Institute of CPAs’ Consumer Financial Education Advocates, says the answer isn’t to scold yourself. She admits to bouts of retail therapy, but has found a solution that works for her. As soon as she gets home after shopping, she puts a date on her calendar to make returns. That allows her to rationally review her purchase at home, and decide whether it was necessary. “I also enjoy the feeling of returning something.”

For those with an online shopping habit, she suggests setting up a special email folder so that sales alerts from online retailers are automatically filed away before landing in your in-box, and tempting you to shop.

Digital envy

Of course, we know that instead of spending, we should be saving. The traditional financial advice is to pay yourself first — put aside part of your paycheck before you even see it. By automating the process, and incrementally increasing your savings every year, you can accumulate a sizable nest egg over time.

Continued on insert page

Continued on insert page
New! New! New!
Atty. General's Community Engagement Office

Got Questions
Get Answers!

Fri, Oct. 5th
8:30 to 10:30

October Breakfast Club

Pamela Obert, MA, CCC-A, will ensure that our aural sensitivity is up to snuff!

Thur Oct 11th
8:00 a.m.

$3.00

Pittsfield Tree Watch

Nurture the roots of your tree interest!

Thur Oct 11th
4:00 P.M.

Coffee Shop

October TRIAD

Mayor Linda Tyer shares pertinent insights and overviews.

Mon Oct 15th
9:00

Refreshments

New Member Day

Find your way.

Wed Oct 17th
10:00 a.m.

Let us know you're coming.
499-9346

Legal Education

Have legal questions evaluated.

Thur Oct 18th
12:00 P.M.

By Appt
499-9346

Eureka!

Oct. Card Party

Four-somes are best.
$2.00

Thur Oct 18th
1:00 P.M.

Molari Blood Pressure Clinic

By Appt.
499-9346

Tue Oct 23rd

Brown Bag Day

Fri Oct 26th
10:30

Thur Oct 4th

Foot Clinic

By Appt.
499-9346

Halloween Party

@ Meal Site!

Wed Oct 31st
11:30 Reserve Ahead

$2.00
25 Ways to Save on Shopping

Continued from page 4

11. Digitize your coupons. The app SnipASnap helps you store a digital image of a coupon (that you might otherwise lose) on your smartphone. A salvaged CVS coupon saved us $10.


13. Shop unit prices. Focus on costs per ounce or other units of measure, not the total price. Recent example: A 1-liter bottle of seltzer cost 32 cents a pint, vs. 55 cents a pint for a 12-ounce can. Save $10 a week.

14. Get free e-books. You can download nearly 60,000 public domain e-books, including many classics, at Gutenberg.org. Save $3 to $10 per e-book.

15. Join a shave club. Pay about $2 for a razor cartridge at an online shave club like Harry’s or Dollar Shave Club. Save $2.50 or more per cartridge compared with brand-name choices bought in a store, or $60 a year.

16. Max out your library. Stream books, get first-run movies or grab free passes to museums. For example, at many New York state public libraries you can pick up free admission to the Museum of Modern Art in Manhattan, a $25 savings.


18. Swap books. List books you want to get rid of on BookMooch.com. Get points when you send them to people who request them. Use the points to order used books. Save up to $81 on three hardcovers.

19. Get Gimp for photo editing. Love to do sophisticated photo editing? Download Gimp for free and save $120 per year over paying $10 a month for Photoshop.

20. Stream free movies. Go to Kanopy.com. If you belong to one of the 4,000 participating public libraries and campuses, you can stream 30,000 movies for free. If you watch one movie a week, you’ll save about $156 a year over renting movies online.

21. Find free recyclables. Join your local chapter at Freecycle.org. Then see if someone wants to give away stuff you are about to buy. The New York City chapter recently listed a free “hardly used” portable crib that cost $60 new.

22. Swap clothes online. RehashClothes.com has photos of more than 10,000 items of clothing that its members want to swap. See something you like? Offer a piece of clothing in exchange, and if the offer is accepted, swap through the mail. No money involved except postage. You might save $100 on a nice dress or jacket.

23. Host morning parties. Brunch gatherings can be just as much fun as evening parties, and the foods you serve —eggs, breads —tend to be cheaper than what you serve for dinner. Plus, you likely won’t go through as much wine. Savings: at least $40 on the food and wine, depending on the menu.

24. Don’t pay fees for movie tickets. Some online sellers charge a $1.50 to $2 “convenience” fee per ticket. Bypass it by buying at the box office or from a no-fee online vendor.

25. Share season tickets. Arrange with your seat neighbors to trade tickets you can’t use. Save $200 on a pair of NFL tickets.

AARP Bulletin, July/August 2018

Intuitive Magic

On October 31, Halloween, strange things may go bump in the night. Perhaps this is why this date is also Increase Your Psychic Powers Day.

Psychic powers derive from extrasensory perception (ESP), senses beyond our physical five senses. Although there is no scientific evidence to confirm the existence of psychic powers, clairvoyants believe in abilities such as reading minds, divining the future, and communicating without speaking. Perhaps another way of looking at psychic ability is by redefining it as intuition. Hindus believe in the third-eye chakra, an energy center located between the eyes that is the center of our power of intuition, or inner knowledge, guided by a sixth sense. So even if you do not believe in psychic ability, consider October 31 an opportune time to open yourself up to new and wondrous possibilities.

Activity Connection, October 2018

Line Dancing
Mon @ 9:30

Art du Jure!
Tue @ 1:00
Everyday! 11:30 a.m. Meal Site
Sixteenth century English poet Joshua Sylvester offered that, “Enough is as good as a feast.” It’s the great good fortune of Meal Site attendees that their mere presence enhances the event. The whole becomes more than the sum of the feast parts, making it more than enough! Enjoy! Reserve a day ahead, 1-800-981-5201.

Tuesdays! 12:00 p.m. SHINE (by appt.)
S.H.I.N.E. (Serving Health Insurance Needs of Everyone) counselors help you navigate the oft treacherous maze of health insurance programs. Call Froio at 499-9346, or Elder Services directly at 499-0524.

Thursday, October 4 9:00 a.m. Foot Clinic Rides Again!
The Foot Clinic rides again! In the capable hands of Lisa Christman, R.N., you’ll find that all of your foot care needs will be thoroughly managed. Her attentive ministrations are good for the sole and the soul! Please call for appointment, 499-9346.

Friday, October 5 9:00 to 3:00 p.m. Quilt Show!
The Froio Quilting Group is unfurling another dazzling display of their exquisite stitchery. The nearly all-day event will feature raffles, sale tables and, of course, astonishment!

Friday, October 5 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. Attorney General’s Community Engagement
Take advantage of this new outreach effort by the Attorney General’s Community Engagement Office. Have a consultation regarding your civic or legal concerns. For these inaugural rounds at least, no appointments are necessary.

Monday, October 8
Senior Center CLOSED Veterans’ Day

Thursday, October 11 8:00 a.m. October Breakfast Club
Audiologist Pam Obert is always a welcome Breakfast Club beacon. Her hearing awareness concerns ring loud and clear. Take heed of her regimens for maintain optimum ear health. Breakfast Club; always delectable, always informative!

Thursday, October 11 4:00 p.m. Pittsfield Tree Watch
Tree Watch explores your deep-rooted tree interests. Keep counsel with a cabal of committed tree enthusiasts. 4:00 p.m. in the Coffee Shop.

Monday, October 15 9:00 a.m. October TRIAD Meeting (Special Date!)
Mayor Linda Tyer shares pertinent insights and overviews of Pittsfield issues. TRIAD seeks to broaden community awareness, and there’s no better point person to that end than the mayor. Refreshments!

Wednesday, October 17 10:00 a.m. New Member Day Tour
Unearth the basic facts, and the nuances, of the Senior Center. There’s more than meets the eye and we relish the opportunity to convey the full essence de Froio. Let us know you’re coming, 499-9346.

Thursday, October 18 1:00 p.m. Legal Education (by apt.)
Attorneys from Pittsfield Family and Probate Court evaluate your legal issues. By appointment, 499-9346.

Thursday, October 18 1:00 p.m. Card Party
Brazilian novelist Paulo Coelho urges folks to “Be brave. Take risks. Nothing can substitute experience.” That’s positive life advice as well as heroic card-play vision! Monthly Card Party. Bottomless coffee, prizes and snacks! Unless otherwise arranged, foursomes are best.

Monday, October 22 10:00 a.m. The Councilman is In!
The Froio Center hosts councilman Kevin Morandi’s invaluable “open office” sessions. His informal Q & As take place a day before City Council meetings, maximizing the potential for a responsive “public-to-council” conduit.

Tuesday, October 23 8:45 a.m. Blood Pressure Clinic (by appt.)
Molari Health Care monitors your blood pressure. Call 49-9346 for an appointment.

Friday, October 26 10:30 a.m. Brown Bag
Be a part of this monthly nutritional grocery program. Inquire about Brown Bag and SNAP benefits.

Wednesday, October 4 11:30 a.m. Halloween Party!
Join the cast of seasonal goblins as they revel in Halloween foolery! You know the drill. Call a day ahead to reserve, 1-800-981-5201. Costumes encouraged!
Are We Wired Not to Save?

For people who have trouble budgeting, Holeman of Betterment.com takes it further. He suggests that once you identify your goals and set up a savings plan, try not to worry about other spending. “As long as you save what you need to save, it doesn’t matter what you do with whatever’s left over,” he says.

But many of us are willing to spend money we don’t have by pulling out credit cards or financing purchases. Often, this is fueled by an innate drive for social status and to keep up with our neighbors and friends. That challenge has only gotten worse in the age of social media. In the past, we might have just heard about friends’ great vacations, fabulous dinners and new cars. Now we’re bombarded with pictures and videos of them online.

Digital envy can be hard to resist, studies show.

“There’s a lot of peer pressure involved here,” says Long. Indeed, a 2016 Harris poll found that 1 in 4 people admitted to being jealous after seeing someone posting about a purchase or vacation on social media.

Long says that when she starts feeling overwhelmed by others’ posts, she’ll visit her own profile to be reminded that her life looks good online, too. And she also tries to limit her time on social media sites. Her husband even keeps the apps off his phone.

‘It can’t happen to me’

Another financial challenge stems from a powerful force called optimism bias. “We just don’t think bad things will happen to us,” says Scott Cole, a Birmingham, Ala., certified financial planner who also has a divinity degree. “We hear of bad things happening all the time to others but believe that we have the ability to navigate our way out of something. In short, we all think we are above average, that it couldn’t happen to us.”

Unfortunately, overcoming the instinct is hard. Optimism is what gets most people out of bed in the morning, and while it doesn’t make sense to adopt a pessimistic attitude, it helps to be aware of this bias. Cole suggests taking a step back to at least acknowledge the possibility that things may go wrong. That will help you see the need to plan for the worst by having proper insurance and an emergency savings fund.

Facing mortality

Even if we can’t predict what will happen to us, one thing (along with taxes) is certain: death. But because we don’t like to think about our own mortality, many people skip the important financial task of writing a will.

Long says she understands the reluctance to plan for our passing, but she urges clients to consider what will happen to their loved ones after they’re gone. Those with blended families or multiple heirs could end up with a fight over assets and property.

And surprisingly, a will doesn’t have to be expensive. A simple one can cost less than $500. Large companies, and even some small ones, often have employee-assistance programs, which can provide a will without charge or at a low cost, she says.

And that points to at least one psychological trait we can celebrate: Everybody loves a bargain.

By Larry Bleiberg, AARP, September 4, 2018

Using Tai Chi to Build Strength

Those doing tai chi for the 12 weeks reported that they were less depressed and had a better quality of life than those undergoing physical therapy.

Tai chi can also be an entry point for people who may have fallen off the exercise wagon but want to get back to doing more vigorous and often more enjoyable physical activities like swimming and hiking, or biking and walking to and from errands instead of relying on vehicles that pollute the air and clog the roads.

Guidelines from the American College of Sports Medicine and the American Heart Association recommend that sedentary older adults begin with balance, flexibility and strength training exercises before launching into moderate to vigorous physical activity. Tai chi is ideal for getting people ready for more demanding action.

And, in the process of getting your body in shape with tai chi, you’re likely to improve your mental state. In a New Zealand study of college students, tai chi was shown to counter depression, anxiety and stress. It also enhances an important quality called self-efficacy — confidence in one’s ability to perform various activities and overcome obstacles to doing so.

By Jane Brody, New York Times,

Osteo Exercise

Mon, Wed, Thur @ 9

From Stage to Screen

Tue @ 1:30
Froio Quilt Show!
Simply Exquisite Sticthery
Raffles!
Sale Tables!
Friday, October 5th
9:00 to 3:00 p.m.
Froio Senior Center 499-9346

Senior Center Day Trip!
Magic Wings
Butterfly Conservatory & Gardens
Enjoy the gardens, gifts, food court and, by the way, butterflies!
Admission to the Conservatory is $12.

Enjoy the 2nd most popular attraction in the state. It's a huge draw for candle, gift and housewares shoppers!
Far more than just a candle store!

Wednesday, October 24th
Sign up at office.
Cost is $10 for the ride.
Leave Froio @ 9:15
Return @ 4:00
or call 413-499-9346
Cost is $10 for the ride.
What Happens to Your Debt When You Die?

Know What You Owe and What You Don’t

Almost everyone dies owing at least some debt. Sometimes it’s only last month’s ordinary bills plus final medical expenses. But there can be shocking surprises for survivors — debts unknown to the children and even to the spouse of the deceased. Heirs might discover large credit card balances, undisclosed home equity loans or gambling debts.

Creditors are entitled to payment, from the money and property (the “estate”) that your loved one left behind. But what if he or she didn’t leave enough to get everyone repaid? Can the creditors come after you?

Sometimes yes, sometimes no. With loans secured by property, such as mortgages, an heir has to keep up the monthly payments or else sell the property to cover the debt. Unsecured loans, such as credit card debt and student loans, are another matter. Your liability depends very much on the nature of the bill, the type of property and your state’s laws. But here’s what I can say, generally.

Some money is protected. At death, unsecured creditors cannot collect from life insurance payments, pay-on-death bank or brokerage accounts, jointly held property that passes directly to the surviving owner, or retirement plans such as 401(k)s and IRAs that have named beneficiaries, says IRA expert Ed Slott of IRAhelp.com. They’re safe — but only if they were handled right. By “right,” I mean that the deceased filled out a beneficiary form for each account, naming the people who were to inherit. If this step was skipped, the funds will be paid into the estate, where they can be used to satisfy the creditors.

Your signature matters. If you signed a joint application for a credit card, you owe the balance even if you didn’t know how high it had grown. If you were merely an “authorized user,” however, most states don’t require you to pay. (Note that authorized users shouldn’t use the card after the owner dies if the estate is broke. Such spending could be considered fraud.) Spouses are generally not liable for any separate debts their mate incurred before the wedding or, in most cases, after. Rules in community property states, such as Texas and California, are different. Your community property can generally be tapped to pay a spouse’s debts. But creditors can’t take your separate property, says Cathy Moran, an attorney in Mountain View, Calif. In any state, you’ll still owe any private debt you cosigned with the deceased, such as a student loan.

Some private student lenders will forgive the loan, but most won’t.

You have to pay the doctor. Final medical bills are usually considered a spouse’s responsibility. If your mate entered a hospital, the admission papers you signed probably included a payment agreement. When there’s no money, however, and the survivor has very little income, health providers might write off the account.

Get tough. Don’t be talked into making a few payments on bills you do not owe. Creditors might claim that you willingly assumed the debt. Tell them, “No, no, never.” You know your rights.

By Jane Bryant Quinn, AARP Bulletin, September 2018

The Wonders of Yosemite

The natural wonders of Yosemite Valley, located within California’s Sierra Nevada mountain range, are easy to observe: the famous Half Dome, the granite cliffs of El Capitan, the giant sequoia trees, the delicate waterfalls. While the valley’s scenic natural beauty brings peace to its visitors, its journey to becoming a national park in October of 1890 was anything but peaceful.

The Yosemite Valley had been inhabited for 3,000 years by Native American tribes, most recently the Ahwahneechee, a band that did not hesitate to fight off other tribes and invaders to their territory. A neighboring tribe, the Miwok, called the Ahwahneechee Yos s e’meti, a word meaning “those who kill.” It is from this word that Yosemite valley got its name. This word, it seems, could also refer to the white European settlers in the region. Once gold was struck in California in the mid-19th century, white Europeans overran the valley. A California State militia, led by Army Major Jim Savage, was eventually tasked with clearing Yosemite of the Ahwahneechee. As news of California’s gold spread, more settlers arrived, and in 1864, President Abraham Lincoln moved to preserve seven square miles of the valley and the Mariposa Grove of sequoia trees as a public trust of California, marking the first time the U.S. government set aside land for public enjoyment.

It wasn’t until 1889 that naturalist John Muir ventured into Yosemite. He was awed by its beauty and also worried that the vast meadows surrounding Yosemite valley were unprotected. Sheep, which Muir called “hoofed locusts,” were grazing the land into destruction. Muir solicited the help of Washington, D.C., magazine editor Robert Underwood Johnson to lobby Congress to protect Yosemite as a national park. On October 1, 1890, Congress set aside over 1,500 square miles of land, almost the size of Rhode Island, as Yosemite National Park, America’s third such federally protected land after Yellowstone and Sequoia. Today, more than 4 million people visit Yosemite each year.

Activity Connection, October 2018
Using Tai Chi to Build Strength

Tai chi moves can be easily learned and executed by people of all ages and states of health, even elderly people in wheelchairs.

Watching a group of people doing tai chi, an exercise often called “meditation in motion,” it may be hard to imagine that its slow, gentle, choreographed movements could actually make people stronger. Not only stronger mentally but stronger physically and healthier as well.

I certainly was surprised by its effects on strength, but good research — and there’s been a fair amount of it by now — doesn’t lie. If you’re not ready or not able to tackle strength-training with weights, resistance bands or machines, tai chi may just be the activity that can help to increase your stamina and diminish your risk of injury that accompanies weak muscles and bones.

Don’t get scared by its frequent description as an “ancient martial art.” Tai chi (and a related exercise called Qigong) does not resemble the strenuous, gravity-defying karate moves you may have seen in Jackie Chan films. Tai chi moves can be easily learned and executed by people of all ages and states of health, even those in their 90s, in wheelchairs or bedridden.

It’s been eight years since I last summarized the known benefits of this time-honored form of exercise, and it has since grown in popularity in venues like Y’s, health clubs and community and senior centers. By now it is likely that millions more people have become good candidates for the help tai chi can provide to their well-being.

First, a reprise of what I previously wrote as to why most of us should consider including tai chi into our routines for stronger bodies and healthier lives.

It is a low-impact activity suitable for people of all ages and most states of health, including those who have long been sedentary or “hate” exercise.

It is a gentle, relaxing activity that involves deep breathing but does not work up a sweat or leave you out of breath.

It does not place undue stress on joints and muscles and therefore is unlikely to cause pain or injury.

It requires no special equipment or outfits, only lightweight, comfortable clothing.

Once proper technique is learned from a qualified instructor, it is a low-cost activity that can be practiced anywhere, anytime.

One more fact: Beneficial results from tai chi are often quickly realized. Significant improvements involving a host of different conditions can be achieved within 12 weeks of tai chi exercises done for an hour at a time twice a week.

Much of the research, which was reviewed in 2015 by researchers at Beijing University and Harvard Medical School, has focused on how tai chi has helped people with a variety of medical problems. It is summarized in a new book from Harvard Health Publications, “An Introduction to Tai Chi,” which includes the latest studies of healthy people

whose mission was health preservation as well as people with conditions like high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, arthritis and osteoporosis.

Of the 507 studies included in the 2015 review, 94.1 percent found positive effects of tai chi. These included 192 studies involving only healthy participants, 142 with the goal of health promotion or preservation and 50 seeking better balance or prevention of falls.

This last benefit may be the most important of all, given that every 11 seconds an older adult is treated in the emergency room following a fall, and one in five falls results in a fracture, concussion or other serious injury.

For example, in an analysis of high-quality studies published last year in the Journal of the American Geriatrics Society, researchers at the University of Jaen in Spain reported that older adults who did one-hour tai chi sessions one to three times a week for 12 to 26 weeks were 43 percent less likely to fall and half as likely to incur a fall-related injury.

Tai chi provided superior benefits to other fall-reduction approaches like physical therapy, balance exercises, stretching, yoga or resistance training. Tai chi, in effect, combines the benefits of most of these: It strengthens the lower body, improves posture, promotes flexibility, increases a person’s awareness of where the body is in space and improves one’s ability to navigate obstacles while walking.

Furthermore, if you should trip, tai chi can enhance your ability to catch yourself before you fall. It has also been shown to counter the fear of falling, which discourages people from being physically active and further increases their likelihood of falling and being injured.

Even if you do fall, tai chi, as a weight-bearing but low-stress exercise, can reduce your chances of breaking a bone. Four well-designed clinical trials showed that tai chi has positive effects on bone health. For example, in a yearlong study in Hong Kong of 132 women past menopause, those practicing tai chi experienced significantly less bone loss and fewer fractures than those who remained sedentary.

For people with painful joints and muscles, tai chi enhances their ability to exercise within a pain-free range of motion. Pain discourages people from moving, which makes matters worse, as muscles get weaker and joints stiffer. The movements involved in tai chi minimize stress on painful areas and, by improving circulation, can foster relief and healing.

A 2016 study of 204 people with knee pain from osteoarthritis found that tai chi done twice a week was just as effective as physical therapy in relieving their discomfort. But that was not all:

Continued on insert page
Senior Spirit Editor: Joseph Major

Board Members of the Pittsfield Council on Aging:
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Jim Clark, Senior Center Director

By Victoria Passier
Senior Center Poetry Group

Morning Lament

In the morning she prays
sitting in her rocking chair
beside the bay window
while the sun rises
and the cat cleans.

She prays our country
might become what
it was meant to be,
what it almost was
after World War II,
that the burden of
endless revenge
can be lifted,
that the sick
can be healed,
that we can be raised
from the all of nothing,
that children be safe,
the world offer grace
and keep spinning.

In the morning she prays
that when she dies it won't hurt,
that she'll stop dying from fear
a hundred times a day,
that her feet will keep her upright.

She prays that her grandchildren
will have time and space to grow,
that mornings will
follow upon mornings
and not swallow them up.

In the morning she prays
that people will learn
to love one another
before it's too late.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
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<td>Advanced Osteo</td>
<td>Woodworking 10:00 Beginner Chess</td>
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<td>FOOT CLINIC (by apt.)</td>
<td>Attorney General’s Community Engagement Office</td>
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<td>Brand New Line Dancing</td>
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<td>Beginner Osteo</td>
<td>Pitch, Knitting</td>
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<td>Poetry</td>
<td>Meditation</td>
<td>Tai Chi w/Weights</td>
<td>Flexible Feet &amp; Core Stability</td>
<td>9:00 Ceramic Day</td>
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<td>&quot;Shake Your Soul&quot;</td>
<td>SHINE 1:00 Bridge, Canasta!</td>
<td>Tai Chi</td>
<td>Tai Chi w/weights</td>
<td>Pitch, Knitting</td>
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<td>Ladies Pool</td>
<td>Art du Jure!</td>
<td>Scrapbooking &amp; Cardmaking</td>
<td>Chair Caning</td>
<td>Comedy Dungeon</td>
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<td>Ladies Pool</td>
<td>From Stage to Screen</td>
<td>Bingo</td>
<td>Tai Chi w/weights</td>
<td>Woodcarving 1:00 Bingo</td>
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<td>Scrabble 12:00 Pinochle</td>
<td>Bridge, Canasta!</td>
<td>Yoga</td>
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<td>Mah Jong, Hand &amp; Foot!</td>
<td>Art du Jure!</td>
<td>Yoga</td>
<td>Beginner Tai Chi</td>
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**Senior Center CLOSED Columbus Day**

**Triad Meeting!! Feat. Mayor Linda Tyer**

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

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

8:45 Blood Pressure Clinic (by apt.)
9:00 Woodworking 10:00 Beginner Chess
10:15 Flexible Feet & Core Stability
10:30 Meditation 12:00 Tai Chi w/weights
12:00 SHINE 1:00 Bridge
1:00 Canasta 1:00 Art du Jure!
1:30 From Stage to Screen

9:00 Woodworking
9:00 Beginner Osteo
10:00 New Member Day
10:30 Tai Chi
12:30 Tai Chi
1:00 Scrapbooking & Cardmaking
1:00 Bingo 1:35 Yoga

9:00 Beginner Osteo
9:00 Beginner Osteo
10:00 New Member Day
10:30 Tai Chi
12:30 Tai Chi
1:00 Scrapbooking & Cardmaking
1:00 Bingo 1:35 Yoga

9:00 Beginner Osteo
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10:30 Tai Chi
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9:00 Beginner Osteo
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10:00 New Member Day
10:30 Tai Chi
12:30 Tai Chi
1:00 Scrapbooking & Cardmaking
1:00 Bingo 1:35 Yoga

**Meal Site Daily @ 11:30**
**Call a Day Ahead! 1-800-981-5201**

**OCT.**