You've Got...

Senior Spirit

CITY OF PITTSFIELD, MA

AN INSIDE LOOK AT.....

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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

PITTSFIELD

JANUARY 2019

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

Once you hear that January 13 is International Skeptics Day, you might want to check the date for yourself, because some people claim that this holiday falls on October 13, while others insist that it always falls on the first Friday the 13th of the year. It turns out that a little skepticism is healthy, even when it comes to science. Skepticism, after all, urges us to corroborate what we learn by seeking supporting facts, whether in the field of science, politics, relationships, or just about anything. Too much skepticism, though, can lead to cynicism and denial, even in the face of overwhelming evidence. Similarly, a lack of skepticism can lead to naiveté and being taken advantage of. When psychologists talk about healthy skepticism, they are talking about that “Goldilocks” area—not too much, not too little, but just the right amount. If this sounds plausible to you, perhaps you should consider joining the Skeptics Society, a group emphasizing critical thinking as a means to resist pseudoscience, superstition, and irrational belief. Then again, you might want to do a background check on those folks first.

Activity Connection, January 2019

A Life In Words

Amazing. Stupendous. Astounding. Those are just a few ways to describe Thesaurus Day on January 18. This day commemorates the birth of Peter Mark Roget, who published the world’s first thesaurus in 1852. Roget enjoyed making lists as a young boy but then moved on to a life of medicine and science. However, he never forgot his passion for words. In 1840, Roget retired from medicine and spent the rest of his life on his dictionary of synonyms, which he called Roget’s Thesaurus of English Words and Phrases Classified and Arranged so as to Assist in Literary Composition. His thesaurus was originally organized not alphabetically, but by concepts like Space, Matter, Intellect, and Existence. His handy tome has never been out of print and has sold more than 40 million copies—a countless, innumerable, and multitudinous number.

Activity Connection, January 2019

A Message From the Executive Director

Many of us look at the start of a new year as a time to reflect on the year that has passed and to make plans for the year ahead. It is a time of promise and hope, an opportunity to work toward accomplishing our goals, some old and some new. At the Ralph J. Froio Center, the past year was very rewarding and I want to thank our staff and volunteers for all their hard work and effort in contributing to this amazing holiday season and in the year to come!

We Would Like To Wish You And Your Families a Happy & Healthy New Year!

James Clark
Executive Director of Council on Aging

Scrabble
Mon @ 12:00

Knitting
Fri @ 9:00

Bridge
Tue @ 1:00
Live Independently Without Fear!

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How to Fight Fraud the Cheap Way

Here are some no-cost or low-cost ways to stay ahead of growing scam threats

Consumers worldwide spent almost $7 billion last year on identity theft protection services, and that figure is expected to reach $24 billion by 2025. That’s a lot of fearful folks paying up to $360 a year to protect their personal data and privacy — some prompted by well-crafted, nerve-racking TV commercials, others by harsh realities: Following last year’s Equifax breach, one study found that nearly 20 percent of Americans froze their credit files, at a cost of $1.4 billion. Until then, only 2 to 3 percent had credit freezes.

Why pay? There are several free, easy and effective offerings that replicate the core services of some 60 different companies, minus the $5 to $30 monthly price tag. “Identity theft services offer some benefits but have limitations,” concludes a 2017 study by the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO).

Paid-for credit monitoring helps detect new fraudulent accounts in your name, but can’t prevent fraud of existing accounts, which happens after data breaches or when credit cards are stolen. Identity monitoring tracks misuse of personal data on illicit websites and public records, “but its effectiveness in mitigating identity theft is unclear,” says the GAO study. Offerings like identity restoration and insurance don’t always deliver anticipated outcomes. Whether you choose free or paid security services, this five-step approach will provide you with the best protection.

Credit and Identity Monitoring
Paid monitoring tracks your file at one or more credit reporting bureaus, but you can also do this for free. At AnnualCreditReport.com, review your Equifax, Experian and TransUnion files each year, ideally with a different bureau every four months. Websites such as CreditSesame.com and CreditKarma.com (which also provides free ID monitoring) track credit bureau data.

To protect existing accounts, most banks and credit card providers offer free alerts of suspicious activity. Experian offers a no-cost dark-web scan — but expect an onslaught of pitches for financial products, including more extensive scans for a fee.

Credit freezes
Thanks to a law passed by Congress earlier this year, credit freezes are now free to everyone — not just those who are over 65 or are past victims of identity theft. A credit freeze restricts access to your credit report unless you expressly allow it to be shared. Without it, identity thieves can’t open new accounts in your name.

Re-Created 1950s City Helps to Ease Dementia’s Grasp

Glenner Town Square offers comfort for those with cognitive decline

Mary Patterson bounds through the entryway of Glenner Town Square with a giant smile. Since Mary’s shoulder surgery in 2014, she hasn’t been the same. She forgets anything five minutes after you tell her, says her husband, Ray. Normally sweet and even-keeled, Mary, 87, is now “like two people” — one the woman he’s loved for most of his life, and the other an angry, sad and lost soul who sometimes fails to recognize her husband. “It’s hard. Very hard,” says Ray, 81, who cares for Mary full time. But since Glenner Town Square, a state-of-the-art dementia day care facility, opened in August, Patterson says he’s been able to take care of the bills again, read books, breathe. And when Mary comes home from Glenner, she is in a better mood and easier to be with. “She doesn’t have her memory back,” he says. “But there’s a difference.”

Located in an industrial building along a nondescript boulevard in Chula Vista, Calif., just south of San Diego, Glenner Town Square is a 9,000-square-foot indoor rendition of small-town USA, where Eisenhower is still president, Buddy Holly sings over the PA system and old movies like Rear Window play in 15-minute clips in the movie theater. An American flag with 48 stars flies inside city hall, near the shiny black 1959 Ford Thunderbird and across from Rosie’s Diner, where pictures of Elvis, Audrey Hepburn and James Dean hang from walls the color of cotton candy.

A growing form of care
The creators of Glenner Town Square hope to revolutionize dementia care through the use of reminiscence therapy, a palliative treatment for patients who have cognitive decline but whose long-term memory remains at least somewhat intact. Glenner Town Square is designed to capture the years between 1953 and 1961, when the average dementia patient was between ages 10 and 30 — the time of life during which, research indicates, many of our strongest memories are formed. Senior Helpers, a national organization that provides Glenner’s trained caregivers, is working with George G. Glenner Alzheimer’s Family Centers to create another Town Square outside Baltimore. The goal is to build 100 more Town Squares nationwide by 2021.

Each of the 14 storefronts within the Town Square represents an iconic place that participants might have visited in their past — the library, the bar, the barbershop, even the opera house. Guests are guided
S.H.I.N.E. (Serving Health Insurance Needs of Everyone)
Call for appt. 499-9346
Tuesdays @ 12:00

Foot Clinic
By Appointment 499-9346
Thur Jan. 3rd

Got Questions? Get Answers
Fri Jan. 4th

Pittsfield Tree Watch
Nurture the roots of your tree interest!
Thur Jan. 10th

New Member Day
Find your way.
Let us know you’re coming.
Wed Jan. 16th 10:00 a.m. 499-9346

January Breakfast Club
Jen Glockner, from Pittsfield Cultural Development, will keep us abreast of what’s happening in 2019!
Thur Jan. 24th $3.00

Legal Education
Have legal questions evaluated.
Thur Jan. 17th 1:00 p.m.
By Appt 499-9346

January Card Party
Big Blow-Out!
Thur Jan. 17th 4:00 p.m.
Four-somes are best $2.00

Moiari Blood Pressure Clinic
Tue Jan. 22nd By Appt 499-9346

Brown Bag Day
Fri Jan. 25th 10:00 a.m.

from one nostalgic scene to another in groups of five, staying in each for about 45 minutes, not unlike a high school schedule. Aides play cards with them, help them paint, tell stories and, in one particularly poignant moment recently, had them copy inspiring messages on Halloween cards for sick children at a nearby hospital, and sign them with “I love you.”

A respite for caregivers

The concept of reminiscence-therapy villages grew outside Amsterdam with a small “town” that’s actually an assisted living facility called Hogeway. A report in the Journal of Dementia Care noted that residents of Hogeway settle easily and, as a result, may need less medication than those living in traditional homes.

Glenner is different in that its participants (don’t call them patients) go home at the end of the day. “We’re creating an extra step between being at home and being in assisted living,” says Scott Tarde, CEO of George G. Glenner Alzheimer’s Family Centers, which operates two traditional dementia care centers in the San Diego area in addition to Glenner Town Square.

And research indicates that reminiscence therapy helps those with Alzheimer’s and other forms of cognitive disease feel better in the moment, often calming their agitation, a painful hallmark of the condition. It can also, according to some research, bolster cognitive ability and reduce depression.

“When I first heard about reminiscence therapy about 10 years ago, I was skeptical,” says neurologist Richard Isaacson, director of the Alzheimer’s Prevention Clinic at Weill Cornell Medicine and NewYork-Presbyterian in Manhattan. “But my mind has changed. Being in this kind of comfortable and safe environment where you are offered a structured way to remember the past may boost chemicals in the brain without side effects, and that boost could have a ripple effect. It means you could sleep better, and if you sleep better, you’re more well-rested, and memories are consolidated during sleep so you might have better cognition. This doesn’t reverse Alzheimer’s, but it does have a symptomatic benefit that extends long beyond the hours a patient spends inside a place like this.”

Caregivers — husbands, wives and children — benefit as much from Glenner Town Square’s setup as the participants. Take, for instance, Joey Tennison, a 37-year-old San Diego deputy sheriff whose mother, Susie, moved into the home he shares with his wife early last year. “It strains every aspect of your life, but it’s brought our family closer,” Joey says, recalling the days when he would be at work and his mother would call 20 times in one hour, asking the same questions.

He enrolled Susie, 70, in Glenner when it opened in August, happily paying the $85 a day ($425 a week) for care from 8:45 a.m. to 5:15 p.m. While that’s some 20 percent higher than the average cost of adult day care, Joey — who has visited several nursing homes and assisted living facilities — says it’s well worth it. Private care averages around $20 an hour nationwide, so he sees Glenner as providing a savings.

Plus, Joey says, “This is not just a bunch of old people sitting around a table,” like he’s seen in many other homes.

Susie had a tough time during her first days at Glenner: She was agitated and uncomfortable and called home constantly, Joey remembers. And yet, he says, she seemed comforted by the portraits of Eisenhower and Roosevelt on the wall, and the music. “I don’t think she thinks she’s in the 50’s,” he says. “But it all feels familiar to her — and safe.” To ease Susie’s agitation, Glenner caregivers tapped into what they knew about her — she used to be an accountant, so they printed spreadsheets for her to fill out and gave her a desk to work at.

“I’m not saying my mother is getting better,” Joey says. “But she has a purpose now. She even asked us to buy her new dresses because she wants to look good. She got her dignity back.”

By Jennifer Wolff, AARP Bulletin, December 2018
JANUARY SENIOR CENTER EVENTS

Everyday! 11:30 a.m. Meal Site
In her 1930s novel The Yearling, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings has a character state, “I’m eating it quick... but I’ll remember it a long time.” At daily Meal Site, Froio strives to optimize that same quality of sated bonding! 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.

TRIAD Meetings 9:00 a.m. (To Be Determined)
In our effort to provide TRIAD speakers of the highest relevance quotient, we often bump against the rocky shores of scheduling availability. We’re committed to connecting vibrant presenters to our focused audiences, so please bear with us and keep a keen eye on flyers posted around the Senior Center to know when these often irregular meetings will crop up.

Thursday, January 3 9:00 a.m. Foot Clinic ...kickin’ it!
The Foot Clinic is alive and kickin’! 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, January 4 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.

Thursday, January 10 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, January 14 & 28 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.

Wednesday, January 16 10:00 a.m. New Member Day Tour (Tour du Jour!)
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, January 17 1:00 p.m. Legal Education (by apt.)
Attorneys from Pittsfield Family and Probate Court evaluate your legal issues. By appointment, 499-9346.

Thursday, January 17 1:00 p.m. Card Party
Victor Hugo, French literary lion, once suggested “Concision in style, precision in thought, decision in life.” Not only is that astute creative mapping, it’s also pretty sharp card table advice! At monthly Card Party you can follow your muse. Bottomless coffee, prizes and snacks! Unless otherwise arranged, foursome are best.

Monday January 21 Senior Center CLOSED Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Tuesday, January 22 8:45 a.m. Blood Pressure Clinic (by appt.)
Molar Health Care monitors your blood pressure. Call 49-9346 for an appointment.

Thursday, January 24 8:00 a.m. January Breakfast Club
Jen Glockner, of Pittsfield Cultural Development, is going to keep us abreast of all the exciting “who’s,” “whats,” “wheres” and “whens” of 2019. Breakfast Club, Breakfast Club; always delectable, always informative!

Friday, January 25 10:30 a.m. Brown Bag Be a part of this monthly nutritional grocery program. Inquire about Brown Bag and SNAP benefits.
How to Fight Fraud the Cheap Way  
Continued from page 4

You need to contact each of the three major credit bureaus (Equifax, 800-349-9960; Experian, 888-397-3742; and TransUnion, 888-909-8872) to enact, lift or temporarily “thaw” freezes when applying for credit, seeking a new job, or switching utility providers or insurance companies.

Password managers
A password manager will store all your hard-to-remember codes in one place, simplifying your life. You can pay up to $50 per year for premium services, or use freebies like LastPass, Dashlane, KeePass and RoboForm. They will generate and remember, in an encrypted vault, all those complex and site-specific passwords you should have.

All you need is one master password to log in to the manager, and it fills your log-in credentials at each website with less-hackable password combinations of letters, numbers and symbols.

Call-blocking apps
There are apps that will identify and block calls from robocallers, telemarketers and suspected scammers. Enhanced versions are about $3 a month, but Truecaller, Hiya and Call Control offer free apps for smartphones. AT&T and T-Mobile customers can get free “basic” protection, while Nomorobo is available at no charge for VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) landlines.

Tax transcripts
To keep tabs on possible tax-refund fraud, request IRS transcripts each year after you get a refund, or the IRS cashes your check for underpaid taxes. To view and print your transcripts online, go to IRS.gov and use the Get Transcript tool. You can see the past three returns. Or ask for them by phone at 800-908-9946.

This free service summarizes the agency’s records of your tax returns and post-filing adjustments. Unrecognized filings may indicate your personal info was used for tax-related ID theft.

By Sid Kirchheimer, AARP Bulletin, November 2018

Nurturing Empathy  
Continued from page 5

Equally important is for parents to demonstrate empathy with their own children by acknowledging their concerns and feelings and recognizing their need for security. For example, she said, “When a child is fearful of a dog, instead of saying ‘Don’t be afraid, he won’t bite you,’ say ‘Are you scared of the dog? What scares you?’ This validates the child’s fears rather than negating them.”

At the same time, Dr. Riess said, parents should not overreact by being intolerant of “a single second of unhappiness in their child’s life” lest such misguided empathy deprive the child of developing the grit, perseverance and resilience that is essential to a successful life.

Parents can talk to their children about other people’s feelings. If a child breaks another child’s toy, Dr. Riess suggests that instead of saying “‘Why did you do that? That was bad,’” say “Sara is sad because you broke her toy. What can we do to make up for that?” which leaves the door open for an apology.”

Also helpful is to “validate your child’s difficult emotions instead of being judgmental,” she said. “If the child says ‘I hate Tommy,’ rather than say it’s wrong to hate, ask what makes the child feel that way. Explore what’s behind the feelings, the back story.”

For very young children, stuffed animals or puppets can be used to help them act out different stories, Dr. Riess suggested.

By Jane Brody, New York Times, December 11, 2018

Burst Your Bubble

We wrap up the last Monday in January with Bubble Wrap Day, a day to pop to your heart’s content. Why do we get such satisfaction from popping bubble wrap? The answer may lie in the healing power of touch.

Psychology professor Kathleen Dillon turned to the ancient Greeks for an answer, and she came up with a “fingering piece” or “worry stone,” often a smooth stone carried in a pocket. Rubbing the stone with one’s fingers brought about a soothing sense of calm. The same sense of relaxation has been attributed to Catholic rosary beads and the practice of doing needlework. Keeping our fingers busy, it seems, has an intensely calming effect. So, too, does popping bubble wrap.

When we are stressed, our muscles tense. Tiny actions such as rubbing stones, tapping fingers, wiggling feet, or popping bubble wrap release nervous energy, and with each burst bubble, more tension is released and the happier we get.

Activity Connection, January 2018
calling it, lack a moral compass. They can’t distinguish between right and wrong, Dr. Riess said. Research by Dr. Riess and her collaborators has shown that we are each born with a given number of neurons that participate in an empathetic response. But whether this potential to care appropriately for one’s fellow beings is realized or undermined is largely molded by early life experiences, starting at birth and continuing throughout childhood.

How, then, can a healthy degree of empathy be instilled in a child? “Empathy is a mutable trait, it can be taught,” Dr. Riess told me. “We’re all born with a certain endowment, but it can be dramatically up-regulated or down-regulated depending upon environmental factors,” especially, she said, by the examples set by a child’s caregivers.

Dr. Riess urges parents to be role models who show respect and caring for others: “Billy scraped his knee. Let’s go get a Band-Aid for him,” or “Mrs. Jones just came home from the hospital. Let’s take her some soup.” Teachers and caregivers in child care and pre-K settings can foster empathy by acknowledging rather than dismissing a child’s distress or by bringing a toy or doll to comfort a child who is upset or injured. Libraries and bookstores are replete with stories in print and video that demonstrate the giving and receiving of empathy for children at different age levels. Among the many choices: “I Am Human,” “What’s Wrong With Timmy?” and a personal favorite, “Wonder,” which was also made into a popular movie last year.

Dr. Riess has vivid memories of how her parents demonstrated empathy, by bringing turkeys before Thanksgiving to the homes of people who had almost nothing. “Kids tend to focus on what they don’t have — this exposes them to people who have so much less and gives them the gift of being a giver.”

She told me of a program called Cradles to Crayons, in which volunteers package up donated items for children in need. The program, currently operating in Boston, Philadelphia and Chicago, provides essential items for needy children from birth through age 12.

Last August in Boston, for example, Cradles to Crayons volunteers filled 40,000 backpacks for children across Massachusetts from low-income or homeless families. Parents and children can participate together in such programs, perhaps using this program’s model to establish similar projects in cities elsewhere in the country.

With older children, parents might take them to help out in a soup kitchen or visit a nursing home, Dr. Riess suggested. “It’s never too late to guide a child toward greater appreciation of others’ feelings,” she wrote.

Continued on insert page
By Victoria Passier
Senior Center Poetry Group

The Fall

Life was a lodestone on his back as he biked Cliff Hill.

He traveled in slow motion, the fall of a lifetime seconds away, black holes seemingly everywhere, and he didn’t care.

He did want to speak but had no voice.

He did want to salvage life from loss but his hands were numb.

Once he wrote.

Once pain could be transferred from soul to page and be gone.

But that was past.

Still, a voice inside pleaded, “This will pass.”

The remnants of instinctual survival rose up and gathered bits and pieces of memory from gray matter, offered them as sacraments of resurrection, replayed their sweetness upon the sensory strings of nerve endings.

From the corners of his mind emerged, like a flock of birds against a sunlit sky, the memory of a warm embrace from someone who loved pure and true.

And he took his fall, but was caught by matted clumps of dirt and grass, ripped corn shocks among dry sheaves.

There was an opening in his mind of a familiar door into the light of grace and second sight.

The world became a lullaby that kissed his brow.

Mercifully and finally, he could sleep and then wake again.
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<td>12:00 Mah Jong, Hand &amp; Foot!</td>
<td>12:00 SHINE</td>
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<td>1:30 From Stage to Screen</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Location:**
- **Senior Center**
- **Martin Luther King Jr. Day**

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