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

MARCH 2016

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PITTSFIELD SENIOR ACTIVITIES

AARP tax preparation
Are You OK? wake-up program
Berkshire Writers Room
Bingo
Card Games, Bridge, Pitch
Ceramics
Chair Caning
Coffee Shop
Comedy Workshop!
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
Molari Blood Pressure Visits
Monthly Movie
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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The 25 Worst Passwords: Is Yours on the List?

If you recently changed your password to “Starwars” in honor of the blockbuster movie, congratulations. Your new password is among the world’s worst — or rather, one of the most hackable.

That’s according to SplashData, a password management company, which studies millions of breaches to come up with an annual list of the most common and easily exploitable passwords.

No. 1 on the list for two years in a row is “123456.” Again in second place: “password.” Other perennials on the worst list: football, baseball, letmein and qwerty — the first six letters in a row of the keyboard. “Starwars” is a newcomer to the list and came in 25th. But the movie inspired other weak passwords: “princess” at No. 21 and “solo” at 23rd.

SplashData says someone’s password is breached every three seconds. And among those most vulnerable are people age 60 and older, women ages 30 to 45, busy CEOs and politicians, as well as sports fans using the name of their favorite sport or team as a password.

SplashData’s tips for secure passwords:

Create passwords that are at least 12 characters long and are a mix of letters, symbols and numbers.

Make them easier to remember by using short words interspersed with spaces or characters in between, such as “eat cake at 8” or “car_park_city.”

Don’t use the same combination of username and password for multiple sites. Avoid using a favorite sport, person’s name or birthday.

SplashData has announced the 2015 edition of its annual “Worst Passwords List” highlighting the insecure password habits of Internet users. “123456” and “password” once again reign supreme as the most commonly used passwords, as they have since SplashData’s first list in 2011, demonstrating how people’s choices for passwords remain consistently risky.

In SplashData’s fifth annual report, compiled from more than 2 million leaked passwords during the year, some new and longer passwords made their debut — perhaps showing an effort by both websites and web users to be more secure. However, the longer passwords are so simple as to make their extra length virtually worthless as a security measure.

2015 Worst Passwords List
The winners (or losers!) are:

123456, password, 12345678, qwerty, 12345, 123456789, football, 1234, 1234567890, welcome, 1234567890, abc123, 111111, 1qaz2wsx, dragon, master, monkey, letmein, login, princess, qwertyuiop, solo, passw0rd, starwars.

By Eileen Ambrose, AARP Real Possibilities, Jan. 26, 2016

Trips Ahoy!

Attention all Pittsfield Traveling Friends: the 2016 slate of adventurous destinations is in, and there’s something for everyone!

Wednesday, April 20th: Direct from Branson, “Country Royalty” tribute at the Garde Arts Theater, New London, CT

Tuesday, May 17th: “The Lucky Lobster” trip to Lenny & Joe’s Fish Tale and visit to Mohegan Sun Casino

Thursday, June 23rd: Prospecting at Herkimer Diamond Mine and Erie Canal Lock Cruise and luncheon

September 12–14: 3 day, 2 night journey entailing casino, wine & cheese reception, Amish visit, dinners, “Samson” musical theater, lecture, garden tour, shopping, the whole shebang!

Thursday, October 6: “Rock, Pop and Doo Wop.” Join Billy D & the Rock-its for a wonderful luncheon theater show at the Log Cabin in the beautiful Easthampton Valley

Get specific! Check the Trip Flyer Board. Call 499-9346 for info.

Support the FRIENDS!
The Underappreciated Family Caregiver
Strategies for handling resentment and getting few thanks

"Your brother calls me every day," my 85-year-old mother often gushes. He lives 340 miles away and can't visit often, so his phone calls mean a lot to her. But her comment has always puzzled me. As her primary caregiver, I also call her every day, except for the several times a week I actually visit her in person. Yet she never crows proudly about my calls or visits or handling of her medications, finances, home health aides and insurance forms. I am left wondering whether she takes my efforts for granted.

Yes, the knowledge that we are doing the right thing for our loved ones should be our biggest reward. But it's nice to receive acknowledgment from the people we care for: Pats on the back can go a long way toward boosting caregiver morale.

Otherwise, it's hard not to feel miffed. At my grumpiest moments, I resent that my brother does far less than me and yet wins kudos I never hear. That doesn't inspire me to work harder on my mother's behalf and sometimes makes me irritable with him.

There are many reasons why hard-working caregivers may be underappreciated. The aging parent may resent needing assistance and therefore begrudge thanks to her primary helper out of spite. Or the monotony of regular care routines may lull them into simply expecting a caregiver's sacrifices as part of daily life.

How can you get a little well-deserved respect without acting like an attention-seeking complainer? I have some ideas:

Toot your own horn. In the business world, employers often ask their employees for a year-end list of their accomplishments. As an executive-level family caregiver, you don't need so formal a process but ought to keep other family members informed of the myriad tasks you manage. For example, you could send out a group email describing the recent medical appointment to which you took the care receiver. Or you could convey recent financial transactions you conducted. When family members understand the scope of your duties, they may be more likely to show appreciation or even willingness to help.

Use humor. When my kids were very young and a little too demanding, I often responded half-humorously, "Please' and...

The New Face of Hunger
Millions of older Americans struggle to get the right foods

We live in a country that throws out between 30 and 40 percent of its food supply, a bounty worth an estimated $162 billion. Yet millions of Americans aren't always sure they'll get enough full and nutritious meals.

Experts describe these people as "food insecure," and their ranks include about 10 million people age 50 and older—a number that has almost doubled since 2001.

It's a staggering, complex problem that has spurred a search for new approaches that address the root causes of hunger. "The natural, human response is, 'Well, if someone's hungry, you have to feed them,' " says Jim Lutzweiler, the head of hunger impact programs for AARP Foundation. "But that doesn't really do anything to build food security for people in the long term. We need a new formula."

Long-standing efforts to combat hunger have focused on giving people food—straightforward charity. Feeding America, for example, provided 3.7 billion meals last year through its network of food banks and soup kitchens across the country. And AARP Foundation just wrapped up the fifth year of Drive to End Hunger, a campaign that has provided 34 million meals to low-income older Americans.

New efforts go beyond that by looking at hunger as a health issue. "Nothing is more critical to people's health than food," says AARP Foundation President Lisa Marsh Ryerson. "The consequences of poor nutrition are devastating." Food-insecure older Americans are 60 percent more likely to experience depression and more than 50 percent more likely to suffer a heart attack.

New allies in the fight against hunger come from the health care industry, government agencies and nonprofits like AARP and AARP Foundation. And they're joined by members of the agricultural food chain, from farmers to major supermarket chains. Atif Bostic, executive director of the nonprofit Uplift Solutions, which helps grocery stores open in low-income areas, says such collaborations are win-win. "The customers have access to healthy, affordable food and the store becomes an essential, profitable part of the community."

Ryerson adds: "Let's widen the circle of collaboration to identify and carry out real solutions. This is a land of plenty — no one should have to go hungry."

Continued on insert page
Senior Spirit Editor: Joseph Major

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Paul Callahan, Treasurer

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Senior Spirit Summa Cum Laude,
Supernova, All-Star Coordinating Collators
Barbara Kornn & Robert Kornn
Rico Spagnuolo

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

10:00
Mon. March 7th & 21st

Berkshire on Ice
By Victoria Passier
Senior Center Poetry Group

Blue Berkshire Mountains sway into a backdrop presenting us this twilight winter scene on icy Pontoosuc Lake.

Fishing groups gather near tent shanties, sharing a hot chocolate, a coffee, a rare laugh at common lives, reaching backwards to touch old childhood memories in purple shadows of dusk.

Hockey skaters whiz gracefully, chasing the unseen puck through crystalline showers of snow-ice stirred up by speedy corner turns.

Fearless drivers of the auto brave the ice and spin out in dizzying seizures of pure joy.

Bike riders do cold wheelies and ice flips.

Snowmobiles slide their lights in moving gleams that sweep across the lake.
Snow-roofed houses rim the shore like festive decorations on holiday cards.
Pine trees hold their ground, like disapproving parents, tight lipped, arms crossed.

This scene of winter magic wraps us in a half remembered dream of icicles and snowmen and brisk winter air, that once inhaled, cuts into the soul and reaches clear to the bottom of our hearts.
Exercise to Avoid Back Pain

Lower back pain is an almost universal if unwelcome experience. About 80 percent of those of us in the Western world can expect to suffer from disruptive lower back pain at some point in our lives. But if we begin and stick with the right type of exercise program, we might avoid a recurrence, according to a comprehensive new scientific review of back pain prevention.

Lower back pain develops for many reasons: lifestyle, genetics, ergonomics, sports injuries, snow shoveling or just bad luck. Often, in fact, the underlying cause is unknown.

For most people, a first episode of back pain will go away within a week or so. However, back pain recurs with distressing frequency. By most estimates about 75 percent of people who have had one debilitating episode of lower back pain will have another within a year.

These repeated bouts can set off what doctors and researchers call a “spiral of decline,” in which someone takes to his or her couch because of the pain; this inactivity weakens muscles and joints; the person’s now-feeble back and core become less able to sustain the same level of activity as before and succumb when he or she tries to return to normal life, leading to more pain and more inactivity; and the spiral accelerates.

This scenario obviously makes preventing back pain, especially in someone who already has undergone at least one episode, extremely desirable. But until now, few studies have systematically examined what really works against repeated back pain and what doesn’t.

So for the new review, which was published in JAMA Internal Medicine, researchers affiliated with the George Institute for Global Health at the University of Sydney in Australia and other institutions set out to gather and analyze as many relevant studies as possible.

There were surprising few high-quality studies, meaning those that had randomized participants to be treated or not. But after scouring through more than 6,000 studies about back-pain prevention, the researchers settled on 23 that they felt to be methodologically robust. These studies had examined, in total, more than 30,000 participants with back pain.

The prevention techniques under review included education about lifestyle changes, shoe orthotics, back belts, various types of exercise programs and exercise programs that included some type of education about back-pain prevention.

For the purposes of the review, a successful prevention program was one that had kept someone from reporting another bout of back pain within a year or longer or that had staved off lost work time due to back problems. Such success, as it turned out, was discouragingly limited. Educational efforts by themselves showed essentially zero ability to prevent a recurrence of back pain, the researchers found. Back belts and orthotics likewise were almost completely ineffective, leaving people who employed either of those methods very prone to experiencing more back pain within a year.

But exercise programs, either with or without additional educational elements, proved to be potent preventatives, the researchers found.

In fact, “the size of the protective effect” from exercise “was quite large,” said Chris Maher, a professor at the George Institute, who oversaw the new review. “Exercise combined with education reduced the risk of an episode of low back pain in the next year by 45 percent. In other words, it almost halved the risk.”

Interestingly, the type of exercise program didn’t matter. In some of the experiments that Dr. Maher and his colleagues reviewed, the regimens focused solely on strengthening the core and back muscles. In others, the training was more general, combining aerobic conditioning with strength and balance training. Most asked participants to complete two or three supervised sessions every week, typically for about two months, although some lasted longer. A few included education programs as well.

Resulting in: if someone with a history of back pain exercised in a regular way, he or she was considerably less likely to be felled by more back pain within a year.

However, the protective effects typically wore off after that, with recurrences rising after 12 months, probably because many of the people who’d been involved in the studies stopped exercising, Dr. Maher said, and their back problems returned.

So based on the currently available evidence, he said, it’s still impossible to know whether exercise improves back health in the long-term, or if one type of exercise program is measurably better than others. He and his colleagues hope to mount studies comparing different routines head-to-head and follow people for several years.

But for now, he says, “of all the options currently available to prevent back pain, exercise is really the only one with any evidence that it works.”

If you are curious about the particulars of an effective back-exercise program, Dr. Maher points to one example, a full regimen of exercises from a 1991 study in the journal Physical Therapy, one of the studies included in the new analysis. Its suggested workout soundtrack of 1990s Swedish pop tunes is, however, optional.

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<td>Bowling</td>
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<td>The Councilman is In!</td>
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**31**

**Meals Site**

**Daily At 11:30**

**Reserve Day Ahead!**

(by 11:30 a.m.)

**445-6550**