

WESTMORELAND COUNTY

AREA AGENCY ON AGING

INSIDE LINE

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2010

THE SENIOR FUND

Honor the memory of a loved one or celebrate a special occasion with a gift to the Seniors' Fund. You will support our mission by enriching lives of the most needy, and the honoree will be notified that a tribute gift has been received. All tribute gifts are tax-deductible and can be made payable to "Community Foundation of Westmoreland County – Seniors' Fund". Please send to the attention of Denise Kummick, Westmoreland County Area Agency on Aging, 200 South Main Street, Greensburg, PA 15601.

A LIBRARY FOR READERS WITH VISUAL OR PHYSICAL DISABILITIES

Do you find yourself needing larger print to read? Does a friend or relative have trouble holding a book or turning pages? Large-print books or recorded books may be the answer. Carnegie Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (LBPH) can help.

LBPH is for all ages, but many of the library's customers are seniors who are not blind but have low vision. Conditions such as diabetes or macular degeneration are two of the causes. Others who use the library's services have severe arthritis or Parkinson's disease that make holding a book difficult.

Residents of Westmoreland County (and all western Pennsylvanians) can order recorded or large-print books online or by phone and receive them promptly by mail in special mailing containers. They can be returned to the library postage-free in the same containers. LBPH also lends equipment to play the recorded books. Borrowing books by mail is completely free!

The library has an extensive collection of more than 12,000 large-print books and 60,000 recorded books and magazines. It includes best sellers, mysteries, history, sports, biographies, cookbooks and all the other types of books

and magazines you would find at your local library.

Registration for library service can be done by mail. All that's required is a signature by a professional, such as a family doctor, social worker, librarian or optometrist to certify your disability.

To order books, you can go online at www.carnegielibrary.org/lbp or call toll-free at 1-800-242-0856 and the staff will help you with your selections.

BEN FRANKLIN'S BIRTHDAY – JANUARY 17, 1706

Benjamin Franklin was one of the Founding Fathers of the United States of America. A noted polymath, Franklin was a leading author and printer, satirist, political theorist, politician, scientist, inventor, civic activist, statesman and diplomat. As a scientist, he was a major figure in Enlightenment and the history of physics for his discoveries and theories

regarding electricity. He invented the lightning rod, bifocals, the Franklin stove, a carriage odometer, and a musical instrument.

He formed both the first public lending library in America and first fire department in Pennsylvania. He was an early proponent of colonial unity and as a political writer and activist he, more than anyone, invented the idea of an American nation and as a diplomat during the American Revolution, he secured the French alliance that helped to make independence possible.

Franklin is credited as being foundational to the roots of American values of character, a marriage of the practical and democratic Puritan values of thrift, hard work, education, community spirit, self-governing institutions, and opposition to authoritarianism both political and religious, with the scientific and tolerant values of the Enlightenment.

ELDER ABUSE AFFECTING MORE SENIORS

As the elderly population grows, elder abuse is becoming more and more common. Pennsylvania has the third highest percentage of elderly residents in the United States, with nearly 2.5 million residents over the age 60. In fact, the fastest growing segment of Pennsylvania's population is 85 or older.

Elder abuse can take a number of forms. Physical abuse is the form most people think of when they hear the term elder abuse. It can include punching, slapping, kicking or shoving. Neglect, both intentional and unintentional, is another form of elder abuse, as is financial exploitation. Neglect can include withholding food or medication from an incapacitated senior, overmedicating the senior, or not properly caring for a bed-bound individual. Financial exploitation can include transferring a deed into someone else's name without the senior's consent and/or understanding and abusing the powers granted under a Power of Attorney. Some signs of elder abuse are:

- Weight loss
- Bruises or broken bones
- Dementia – although this is usually blamed on "old age," it could also be caused by malnutrition or prescription drug misuse.

Evidence of psychological abuse, such as threats, intimidation or humiliation, may include low self-esteem, withdrawal, extreme changes in mood, suicidal behavior, confusion or disorientation. If a senior never goes outside or sees visitors, physical or

emotional abuse may be occurring.

A senior experiencing abuse may be able to obtain a Protection From Abuse Order (PFA). This court order protects the senior from being abused by a family or household member. It can direct the abuser not to harm, harass, threaten, or stalk the victim again, and it can provide other protections to the senior.

If you suspect a senior is being abused, you can call the Attorney General's toll-free Elder Abuse Hotline at 1-866-623-2137. Mistreatment can also be reported to Westmoreland County Area Agency on Aging at 1-800-442-8000, which can point you to other valuable resources in our area.

THE PROMISE OF SPRING

The Westmoreland County Area Agency on Aging is pleased to announce that tickets are available for the Westmoreland Symphony Orchestra's "The Promise of Spring" concert on Saturday, March 13, 2010 at 8:00 p.m. at the Palace Theatre in Greensburg.

This performance features pianist, Gleb Ivanov. Musical selections include J. Strauss' "Voices of Spring", Glazunov's "Spring", Mozart's "Piano Concerto No. 21", Copeland's "Appalachian Spring" and von Suppé's "Morning, Noon & Night in Vienna".

Tickets will be distributed by a random drawing. Please send your request with the following information:

- Name
- Address
- Telephone number
- Number of tickets (1 or 2)
- self-addressed, stamped envelope to:

Jean Healey

Westmoreland County Area
Agency on Aging
200 S. Main Street
Greensburg, PA 15601-3110

Your request **must** be postmarked no later than February 12, 2010. You must be a Westmoreland County resident age 60 or older to receive these tickets.

TOO HOT TO HANDLE

by The National Institutes of Health

You know the feeling. You're achy and run down. Something's not quite right. When you finally get home and reach for the thermometer, you soon find that your temperature's above normal. You have a fever, a sign that something is out of balance in your body.

Fevers aren't necessarily bad. In fact, by turning up the heat, a fever can help you fight off disease-causing bacteria and viruses, which tend to grow and flourish at the body's normal temperature. Fever also activates your body's immune system, which

protects you against infection.

Normal body temperature is considered to be 98.6 degrees Fahrenheit, but there are a lot of individual variations. Body temperatures often fluctuate throughout the day. It tends to be higher in the afternoon and early evening and is typically lower in the middle of the night. A slight rise in temperature without other symptoms does not necessarily mean you have a fever.

In general, doctors don't consider you to have a fever until your temperature reaches 100.4 degrees. Fever can make you feel uncomfortable and have trouble sleeping, but it's rarely dangerous in adults. It's different for infants under 3 months old. They should be evaluated by a doctor for any fever that reaches 100.4 degrees.

Fever often brings on the shivers. You feel chilled because blood vessels in your skin tighten and shrink; keeping warm blood deeper within your body and making your skin feel cold. As a result, your muscles contract and you shiver. Fevers often start to subside when you begin to sweat. Sweating is good because it helps your body cool down and return your temperature to normal.

Infections are the most common cause of fever, but there are many other triggers. Toxins, certain medications, cancer and diseases that weaken

the immune system are a few of the things that can cause your temperature to rise.

Fever in children between 6 months and 5 years of age can sometimes cause febrile (fever-induced) seizures. During a febrile seizure, a child often loses consciousness and shakes. Most seizures last just a minute or two. Although they can be frightening to parents, febrile seizures are usually harmless.

In general, if a fever is mild and you have no other major symptoms, simply drink fluids and get plenty of rest. If a child with a fever is comfortable, drinking liquids and sleeping well, no treatment is needed.

Over-the-counter medicines like ibuprofen or acetaminophen can help to control discomfort. Adults can generally take aspirin, but children and teens with fever should avoid it because aspirin increases the risk of a rare and sometimes deadly disease called Reye's syndrome.

When giving children medication, follow your pediatrician's recommendation. Check the label as well to make sure you're giving the right dose for your child's weight.

COLD FINGERS AND TOES

by The National Institutes of Health

When the temperature drops this winter, it's normal to feel it

most in your fingers, toes, ears and nose. But if your fingers and toes regularly turn bluish or white when the temperature dips even slightly, or if they often feel numb or painful or turn red and tingle when you're stressed or cold, it may be a sign you have something called Raynaud's disease.

Raynaud's (pronounced Ray-NOSE) disease is a disorder that affects blood vessels. Estimates vary, but most studies suggest that it affects about 3-5% of the population, especially women. It can arise at any age, although it typically appears during teenage years or later.

In people with Raynaud's disease, blood vessels have an extreme response to cold temperatures and stress. The body's normal response to prolonged cold temperatures is to tighten blood vessels and reduce blood flow to the fingers, toes, and other extremities. This helps to slow heat loss and keep warm blood flowing to your brain and other vital organs. Likewise, stressful situations normally trigger the release of hormones that can also cause blood vessels to narrow in your extremities.

But in people with Raynaud's, the response to cold and stress is far more rapid and severe. Just taking something out of the freezer or sitting in an air-conditioned room can trigger

an attack, which may last for less than a minute or as long as a few hours.

During a Raynaud's attack, the blood vessels quickly narrow and reduce the flow of blood, causing the skin to temporarily turn white, then bluish. When blood flow later returns, the skin turns red. Your fingers and toes may throb or feel numb and tingly. With severe Raynaud's, which is uncommon, prolonged or repeated episodes can cause skin sores or tissue death (gangrene).

Most cases of Raynaud's have no known cause, a condition called primary Raynaud's disease. Primary Raynaud's is typically more of a bother than a serious illness. It can often be managed with minor lifestyle changes, like wearing warm socks around the house or wearing gloves when removing things from the freezer.

When Raynaud's disease can be linked to an underlying medical condition, it's called secondary Raynaud's or Raynaud's phenomenon. Secondary Raynaud's is a more complex and typically more serious condition. It is most caused by connective tissue disease, like scleroderma or lupus. Some of these diseases reduce blood flow to the fingers and toes. Secondary Raynaud's can also be caused by some medications that reduce blood flow, including certain blood pressure and migraine

headache drugs. Treating the underlying condition or changing medications, if possible, is often the best way to reduce Raynaud's symptoms.

Physicians usually recommend non-drug treatments for patients with primary Raynaud's because they're not at risk for tissue damage. Secondary Raynaud's may require prescription medications that help to improve blood flow and heal skin sores on fingers and toes. Be sure to talk with your doctor if you think you may have Raynaud's disease.

MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY IS JANUARY 18TH

Martin Luther King Jr. day is a United States holiday marking the birthdate of the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., observed on the third Monday of January each year, around the time of King's birthday, January 15. It is one of four United States federal holidays to commemorate an individual person.

King was the chief spokesman of the nonviolent civil rights movement, which successfully protested racial discrimination in federal and state law. He was assassinated in 1968.

The campaign for a federal holiday in King's honor began soon after his assassination. Ronald Reagan signed the holiday into law in 1983, and it was first observed in 1986. At

first, some states resisted observing the holiday as such, giving it alternative names or combining it with other holidays. It was officially observed in all 50 states for the first time in 2006.

THE HISTORY OF VALENTINE'S DAY

Valentine's Day has two legends regarding its history. Valentine's Day is considered to be a day when true love is expressed.

Around 270 A.D., a bishop named Valentine helped young soldiers to see their wives and girlfriends. Claudius II, ruler of the Roman Empire, forbade the soldiers to see them. Claudius II had Bishop Valentine jailed, and he was sentenced to be executed but was rumored to have fallen in love with the jailer's daughter. Just before Valentine was executed in February he sent a note to the jailer's daughter signed "From Your Valentine".

Valentine's Day has also been associated with Greek and Roman mythology. Eros (Greek), son of Aphrodite (Greek goddess of love) and Cupid (Roman), son of Venus (Roman goddess of love) was to use arrows to "pierce hearts of humans and gods" to make them fall in love.

The legend of Cupid regards his love for Psyche (a mortal). Venus (Cupid's mother), was jealous of Psyche's beauty. Cupid

married Psyche but Venus forbade Psyche to look at him. Eventually Psyche did look and was punished by Venus with dangerous tasks. Psyche was killed while doing these tasks but Cupid's love saved her, and she was rewarded with becoming a goddess and being able to stay with Cupid.

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