

NAN NOTES -- March 26, 2020

[AARP Community Connections](#), a new online platform launched by AARP Innovation Labs today, allows users to organize and find local volunteer groups to help pick up groceries, provide financial assistance or lend emotional support to neighbors, friends and loved ones. Across the country, these informal online groups—also called “mutual aid” groups—help communities stay connected at a time when people must practice social distancing to stay safe.

“We may need be physically isolated, but we don’t have to feel alone,” said Andy Miller, Senior Vice President of AARP Innovation Labs. “Through this innovative platform, people in need of help from—or who want to offer help to—their communities are empowered to engage. In this unprecedented time, AARP remains committed to helping the 50-plus population, and AARP Community Connections is one more way we’re innovating to improve our communities.”

AARP Community Connections includes multiple resources to help those who are feeling isolated, depressed, overwhelmed or anxious. Users are able to:

- Request a call from an AARP volunteer, or a trained counselor;
- Easily create an account with [Savo](#) to make connecting with their families easier;
- Join “The Mighty,” a safe, supportive online community for people facing health challenges and their caregivers.

Social isolation was a common problem, even before the coronavirus pandemic: A 2020 study, published by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine and supported by AARP Foundation, [reported](#) 43 percent of adults age 60 or older said they had felt lonely. And, while social isolation and loneliness are serious health issues by themselves, they can also exacerbate existing health problems, such as lung disease, heart disease and diabetes. AARP Community Connections helps people reach out to volunteers in their community who are willing to help their neighbors with their unique needs.

AARP Community Connections is live and completely free to use, and AARP membership is not required. For more information, visit www.aarpcommunityconnections.org.

COVID-19 Information. (From last week and still very good sources of information):

<https://montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS/RightNav/Coronavirus.html>

www.health.maryland.gov/coronavirus

<https://medium.com/@ariadnelabs/social-distancing-this-is-not-a-snow-day-ac21d7fa78b4>

<https://www.flattenthecurve.com/>

<https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/coronavirus/index.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

(New this week)

<https://governor.maryland.gov/marylandunites>

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/volunteercenter/volunteers/covid19.html>

Consumer Reports has created an online Coronavirus Resource Hub so you and your family can access the latest safety and health information about COVID-19. This resource is free and available to everyone, so together we can combat the misinformation and confusion as this health crisis unfolds: <https://www.consumerreports.org/coronavirus/coronavirus-covid-19-updates/> Affordable health insurance available to Marylanders. In response to the coronavirus emergency, now through April 15, Marylanders can enroll in quality, affordable health plans through Maryland Health Connection. Coverage selected during this time will have a start date of April 1, 2020:

<https://www.marylandhealthconnection.gov/>

TED Talk on the background and context for what we are dealing with:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fqw-9yMV0sI&feature=share>

Grocery Shopping and Food Delivery Information. Certain grocery stores are offering “seniors-only” shopping hours, see:

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS/Resources/Files/COVID19GroceryStores.pdf>

Grocery Delivery Options: Hours and availability may be limited right now due to high demand.

- Peapod: The grocery delivery service run through Giant: <https://www.peapod.com/>
- Instacart: A grocery delivery service working with Aldi, Costco, BJ’s, Target, Safeway, Costco, and other local stores: <https://www.instacart.com/>
- Amazon Fresh: A grocery delivery service for Amazon Prime members: <https://www.amazon.com/alm/storefront?almBrandId=QW1hem9uIEZyZXNo>
- Walmart Online Grocery Delivery: <https://grocery.walmart.com/>
- Target Grocery Delivery: <https://www.target.com/c/shipt/-/N-t4bob?Nao=0>
- Purple Carrot: www.purplecarrot.com or 1-857-703-8188.
- Freshdirect: <https://www.freshdirect.com/>

Kenwood Cherry Blossoms. Police are restricting vehicular access to Kenwood because of the crowds coming to see the cherry blossoms. It is better to go during the week (on foot) than during the weekend.

Neighborliness in a Time of Social Distancing. As many of us of all ages actively try to protect public and personal health by pulling back from participating in public events in various ways, it is more important than ever that we continue to be supportive of one another as neighbors. Please be especially mindful of those who live alone by checking in by phone or e-mail. Isolation can be challenging under the constantly changing conditions we are facing. Thanks to all the neighbors who are reaching out to others. One very helpful call goes like this: "I'm on the way to the grocery store. Is there anything I can get for you?"

Pedestrian Safety. Now that more of us are out walking in the neighborhood, please do two things for your own safety: 1) walk/run on the left side of the road, so you are facing traffic; 2) when visibility is limited, especially in the early evening hours, wear light-colored clothing or carry a flashlight.

Scams Related to COVID-19. Scammers are taking advantage of fears surrounding the coronavirus. A recent one has to do with water filters. For details, see: <https://www.wsscwater.com/coronavirus> Here are some tips to keep you and your money safe: Be suspicious of emails claiming to be from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the World Health Organization (WHO), or other experts saying they have information on the virus. Ignore online offers or advertisements for vaccinations and cures for the coronavirus. Don't answer unknown or blocked numbers. If you receive robocalls, hang up right away. Don't give any personal information or press any numbers. The recording may promise that pressing a number will stop the calls; however, it will likely just lead to more. Do your homework before making any donations. Scammers will use this time to take advantage of your generosity. Don't let anyone rush you into donating. If someone is asking for donations through gift cards or wired money, don't do it. Beware of online sellers claiming to have in-demand products, like cleaning, household, and health supplies. They may take your payment and never ship your order. They may also be selling items for a price far above their value. Do research on the item before ordering anything. If everything checks out, make sure to pay by credit card and keep a record of your transaction. For more details, see: <https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/features/coronavirus-scams-what-ftc-doing>

Senior Call Check Program (1-866-50-CHECK) is a free, opt-in, telephonic service to check on Maryland's older residents. The program is also currently providing messages and updates regarding the COVID-19 outbreak and where to find support if needed: <https://aging.maryland.gov/Pages/senior-call-check.aspx>

Suburban Hospital Guidelines for Visitors and Patients:
<https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/coronavirus/visitor-guidelines.html>

Useful Resource List. County Councilmember Craig Rice has a useful list of resources for the community during the COVID-19 emergency. Here's a sampling:
how to get help (food, utilities, housing, mental health, domestic violence)
how to help others (volunteer, food donations, blood donations)
health and safety
business resources
education and children
staying informed
<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/Rice/Resources/Files/COVID-resources.pdf>

Environmental Film Festival Recommendation. The D.C. Environmental Film Festival (DCEFF) is offering free online streaming of many of the 60+ select films now officially available for viewing March 17 to 31: <https://dceff.org/2020online/>

Opera for Free Recommendation. Any opera lover stuck at home may like this:
<https://www.broadwayworld.com/article/Met-Opes-To-Launch-Free-Nightly-Streams-During-Coronavirus-Closure-20200313?fbclid=IwAR0yTUPx92u8JPqOz72-SBFq6KBWo5Pgs5TFiZ-5Xp7Qs1swX1YSZj2StTw>

Thanks to Jane Meleney Coe for sharing information with us.