

Cummington Council on Aging

May 2020 Newsletter



Cummington Council on Aging
P.O. Box 95, 33 Main St.
Cummington, MA 01026

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413-634-2262
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Hello everyone!

How are you doing? I hope that spring is bringing you opportunities to go outdoors, sit on your porch, work in your yard, plant some seeds, go for a walk. These are the things that I am doing to pass those extra hours that used to be spent going places!

Although we are distancing ourselves physically, be sure to reach out to friends, neighbors and family members via phone or electronically. Check in with people, let people know how you are doing, ask for help if you need it.

Please reach out to the COA if you have any questions or need assistance. We are here to help you. Take care of yourselves and those around you.

As you are all aware, things are changing rapidly these days, so the information that is included in this newsletter (which is submitted to our editor on April 13th) may be a little out-of-date or not completely accurate when you receive the newsletter at the end of the month. At this point, I wanted to share with you some information which I hope you will find helpful.

How to reach me?

I am currently working remotely from home. You can still reach me via email at coa@cummington-ma.gov. If you would like to call, my cell is 413-320-0663.

Are any COA activities happening?

The monthly meeting of Living Fully, Aging Gracefully is currently happening via Zoom. The next one is on May 12. If you are not already participating and would like to, please let me know. Otherwise, all our activities remain on hold until it is safe to resume them. The trip that we had planned for May – to Arrowhead Farm – is cancelled for now. Look for updates on June's activities – including the trip to Berkshire Botanical and Jeanne's art class – in the next newsletter.



Where to shop?

Here are some options for no-contact grocery shopping:

- The Creamery – call 634-5560 to place an order and pick up curbside
- Williamsburg Market – call 268-3006 to order and pick up curbside
- Sawyer Farm in Worthington has numerous items in their farm store. You can find them at www.sawyerfarmshare.com and can pick up your order curbside
- Massfoodelivery.com – fresh farm produce delivered to your door. Order online.
- Market 32 in Pittsfield – shop online and pick up curbside
- Aldi's in Pittsfield – shop online and pick up curbside
- Target – shop online and pick up curbside

Wear a mask!

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health advises that we all wear a cloth mask or face covering in situations where it is difficult to maintain a social distance of 6 feet from others, such as at the grocery store or pharmacy.

The BagShare project is providing free cloth masks to anyone who needs them in any amount. Email Leni@titaniumarts.com if you need some, or if you want to help make some or donate funds for supplies. If you can't email Leni, call me and I will get in touch with her.

CERT – Community Emergency Response Team

If you or someone you know needs assistance in the form of check-in or companionship phone calls, shopping for essential items or are experiencing food shortages, please email CummingtonCERTCVHelp@gmail.com or call Sarah Fournier-Scanlon and Lee Fournier-Lewis at 634-5452.



Your COA board members are:

Elliot Ring, Chairman (634-5666)
Gail Roberge (634-0244),Worth Noyes (634-8003)
Kathy Knox (634-8041)
Ann Eisenhour, Foot Care Coordinator (634-2243)
JoDee Simard, Treasurer (634-5051)
Anne Parsons, Recording Secretary (634-5707)

Happy Birthday in May!



Chester Gorski, Wilnot Hastings,
Cynthia Joyner, Andrea Hoffnan, Lorena Thayer,
Charles Quinlan, Theresa Panzeri,
Peter Marcoux, Kathy Knox, Carol Stoddard,
Fredric Nudell, Ann McCollum, Martha Emerson,
Cory Heath, Carolyn Hooks, Laura Pierce,
Sandra Streeter, Julie Becker, Michelle Taylor

Keep our regular activities in mind – resuming when it is safe to do so

Exercise:

Mondays & Thursdays at 9:30-10:30 a.m.

Coffee Hour:

Mondays & Thursdays at 10:45-11:45 a.m.

Needlework: Mondays at 1-4 p.m.

COA Board meeting: first Thursday at 11 a.m.



Potluck: third Tuesday at noon

Living Fully, Aging Gracefully:

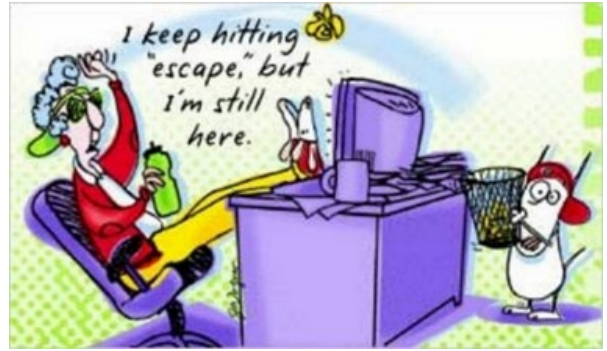
second Tuesday at 1-3 p.m.

Ladies Lunch Bunch: second Tuesday at noon

Veteran’s Agent:

first and third Monday at 9-11 a.m.

Humor: The Fifth Element of Survival



Just be careful because people are going crazy from being in lock down! Actually I've just been talking about this with the microwave and toaster while drinking coffee and we all agreed that things are getting bad. I didn't mention anything to the washing machine as she puts a different spin on everything. Certainly not to the fridge as he is acting cold and distant. In the end the iron straightened me out as she said everything will be fine, no situation is too pressing. The vacuum was very unsympathetic... told me to just suck it up, but the fan was more optimistic and hoped it would all soon blow over! The toilet looked a bit flushed when I asked its opinion and didn't say anything but the door knob told me to get a grip. The front door said I was unhinged and so the curtains told me to ...yes, you guessed itpull myself together.

I need to practice social-distancing from the refrigerator.

I used to spin that toilet paper like I was on Wheel of Fortune. Now I turn it like I'm cracking a safe.

PSA: every few days try your jeans on just to make sure they fit. Pajamas will have you believe all is well in the kingdom.

I'm so excited --- it's time to take out the garbage. What should I wear?

The Cummington Council on Aging counts on YOUR support to continue our important programs for local seniors!

I would like to contribute to the Cummington COA. My contribution of \$_____ is attached.

(Please write your check to the Cummington Council on Aging, and mail to Cummington COA, PO Box 95, Cummington, MA 01026)

Name _____

Address _____

Thank you for helping to Support Your Neighbors!

Seniors Aware of Fire Education



As the coronavirus spreads into our hilltowns, you have been given a lot of good advice on social distancing and what to do if you come down with it or are exposed to it.

Our topic this month is what to do if you or a loved one needs an ambulance.

It is easy; dial 911. Listen to the dispatcher and answer his/her questions. You may be very anxious, but don't be impatient. The dispatcher needs to ask the questions so that the appropriate response team will get to you.

Breath, keep your distance and be SAFE!

--Worth Noyes, SAFE Educator
Williamsburg & Cummington Fire Departments

The Senior SAFE program is sponsored by many of your fire departments and the Massachusetts Department of Fire Services.

Summer is still coming. Save this date! **Thursday August 20, 2020**

Let's go back to when Life was Simple:
Pickety Place Luncheon
Mason, New Hampshire

5-Course Luncheon,
Acres of gardens, greenhouse,
unique Herbs and Gift Shop



Chesterfield Adults 60
and older: \$25 p/p
All other residents and others: \$40

Motor Coach will depart from
Chesterfield Comm. Center 8:45am, return 5pm
Goshen Town Hall 9am, return 4:45pm

To register and to get more information,
call Maryanne Coleman: 296-4787

Full Payment due at time of registration

Would you like to receive your newsletter by email instead of snail mail?

If so, please email Kristen at
regionalcoanews@gmail.com to be put on
the email list. Include your address so I will know
which mailing list to take you off of. Thanks!

Spring Cleaning

No, not windows, though mine are a little dirty... let's talk about those annoying piles of paper. Can you imagine having just a few tidy, labeled, and filed stacks of paperwork? Can you imagine no risk of sliding on a loose piece of paper and falling? Can you imagine someone being able to come into your home and find the medical records you need right now because you went to the hospital? No? Well, we have some time, so let's see what can be done.

First, find a container such as file drawers or cardboard boxes of a size to hold folders. Find folders or dividers. Get a marking pen and/or labels. Find a box for shred and recycle.

Second, find a clear surface and lay out your piles and stacks, sorted into their relevant topics. Determine by topic if they are: keep forever, keep several years, keep a year or less, or shred and recycle. Those things to be kept can be sorted by date, and you may find that some older documents really don't have to be kept. What are the topics? Insurance, bank, automobile, mortgage, utilities, medical, purchases... you get the picture.

Make sure you have topics that relate to taxes. As you might expect, the IRS rules for what to keep and how long to keep it are lengthy and won't even fit this column. Here are the basics:

www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/how-long-should-i-keep-records

Other things such as automobile titles or house deeds, and on the other end, expired warranties for products you don't even still have are simpler to determine. I found several good lists of topics and their timetable for keeping. If you can't access these yourself, give a holler after you've started your process and can see what you have to deal with.

Cleanly,
Jean O'Neil, TRIAD committee member
413-268-2228, jeanoneilmass@gmail.com

Good News!

By Deborah Hollingworth



Seems like there is a scarcity of "good news" these days as we learn to deal with this Covid-19 pandemic, developing new habits of social distancing, scrupulous hand washing, and disinfecting surfaces. Hopefully it's not too early to say we might be seeing some "flattening of the curve" because of our new habits?

Meanwhile neighbors check on neighbors, families and friends keep in touch with social media, new groups of volunteers spring up and our leaders are thinking of ways to work collectively. Who could have imagined Governor Baker putting together a deal with China for over a million face masks and having the New England Patriots jet go pick them up and deliver to Massachusetts hospitals, and our National Guard escorting some of these masks to New York hospitals? It sounds like a movie script, but difficult times call for creative solutions.

More good news:

We have until July to file both our State and Federal income taxes. The Food Stamp program has not been reduced as expected and pop-up Food Pantries are happening in our communities.

Along the same lines, Governor Baker has "frozen" MassHealth benefits. This means those MassHealth consumers who have to file their re-application paperwork won't lose benefits. Those individuals in the process of filing new applications for MassHealth benefits have more time to get their applications completed. Your time won't run out if you miss a deadline. This decision keeps MassHealth benefits in place and suspends deadlines for getting paperwork completed.

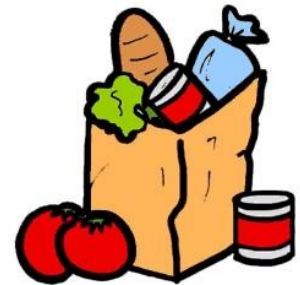
Here's hoping next month will see more progress defeating this pandemic. Until then, stay well, and help a friend or neighbor when you can.

The Hilltown Food Pantry, with its permanent location in Goshen, is open every Wednesday from 1-3pm [extended hours to 6pm are temporarily suspended] and will serve the remaining towns of its service area: Chesterfield, Goshen, Huntington, Middlefield, Plainfield, Westhampton, and Williamsburg. Food distribution for this site has moved across the parking lot to the Goshen Town Hall assembly room. Again for space considerations to help clients, volunteers and staff maintain a safe distance from one another as bags are packed and distributed.

Both sites offer drive by pick up of prepacked bags of groceries for people who are struggling to have food on hand during this national pandemic emergency. The supplies include shelf stable items, fresh produce and other food items as available.

Hilltowners may also choose to access emergency food from Northampton Survival Center at the Jackson Street Elementary School, 120 Jackson St, Northampton on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 12-3pm during the national Covid-19 crisis.

For more information go to the website: www.northamptonssurvival.org or call 413-268-7578.



Hilltown Food Pantry Reopens

Hilltown Food Pantry, a program of Northampton Survival Center, is open for food distribution to residents of the hilltowns of western Hampshire County.

In order to better adhere to the physical distancing guidelines our state is prescribing, and to help people stay closer to their homes, a temporary sister pantry has been opened at the R.H. Conwell Elementary School on Route 112 in Worthington to serve residents of Worthington and Cummington who are in need of grocery supplies. Please call 413-238-1999 to reserve bags for pick up on Thursdays from 1 – 1:30pm at the school.

The **Hilltown Mobile Market** is coming back this summer with more farms, new locations, a longer season, and double the number of farm shares!

Your support during our pilot season last year resulted in increased grant funding to purchase a market vehicle and broaden our reach to more communities. Starting in July, we will bring "pop-up" markets to Blandford, Cummington, Huntington, and Worthington each week for twelve weeks, stocked with the freshest Hilltown-grown produce. Stop by and shop with cash, credit, debit, SNAP, WIC, or Senior FMNP Coupons, or sign-up in advance for a **Hilltown Mobile Market Farm Share** to support our farms and guarantee your pick of that week's harvest. The

Farm Share is an affordable option with a sliding scale between \$5-20 per week and is also eligible for HIP (Healthy Incentives Program) reimbursements!

The market is supported by *Healthy Hampshire*, *Hilltown Community Development* and the *Hilltown Community Health Center*.

For more information or to sign up for a farm share, visit **hilltownmobilemarket.info** or contact Caitlin Marquis: 413-588-5562, cmarquis@collaborative.org.

Joan Griswold stays in touch and keeps us moving

During our time of keeping our distance while staying close, Joan has made it so much easier for those in her exercise classes to get through it all. Her daily email messages bring encouraging thoughts, important insights and images of her strategies for "working it out" outside. Her emails are refreshing in more ways than one. Here is one of them:

When times get tough, we have to do our best to keep moving!

It seems like it all changed, in just a mere few days. Life as we knew it came to a screeching halt while fear and anxiety began to escalate. Our day to day routines became disrupted, and it took some time for some to realize just how serious things had become. The reality has now sunk in; it's a different world out there right now.

In those final days, I recall the experience of being told I could not teach my exercise classes I so adore, I could not teach valuable CPR skills to folks looking to be helpful in a time of need. If someone had told me a month ago that life as we knew it would be changing like never before, I am not so sure I could have believed them yet here it is, right outside our doors.

Here we are in the midst of the corona storm. We all know someone who knows someone impacted by this storm. We are told to stay great distances apart, and while being outdoors is a great idea, you have to avoid all the mobs. As I continue to navigate my way through each day, I know in my heart the most important thing I can do is to "continue to support". A giver by nature, this comes easily to me. What is harder is relaying it via a media means.

There are some important points that I try to relay. **The most important is to be sure you move your body, each and every day, in some way.** Maintaining some physical movement is good, for both the mind and body. I created a YouTube channel for all to resource. There are exercise, nutrition and relaxation videos available for all. Check out my channel at:

www.youtube.com/channel/UCtInbx8RBhb_GC4fvN3icJw/featured

Subscribe to be informed when I update and add more! I have now begun to also provide Zoom exercise sessions for the Monday, Wednesday and Friday groups. Contact me for additional information.

Routine in your day is an absolute must. Have a plan or a list of what needs to be done! Try to have things that you can incorporate into your day, and make you feel good! Maybe it is reading, calling a friend to talk or writing a poem, tending to your plants, or simply sitting quietly and appreciating being alone. If alone is something you are feeling too strongly, there is an email list that allows participants to write and share with others. If this sounds like something you need in your day, just let me know and on the email distribution list your name will go!

Eating wholesome and healthy foods supports healthy brain function. This is also an important consideration for keeping your immunity at its optimal function. Hand washing and good hygiene along with distance from others is important, but how about being mindful of what you decide to fuel your body with each and every time you reach for something? Carbs are so easy to consume in a pinch, but do not forget to have something with protein content each and every time you eat.

I personally believe the best way to start the best day is to get up and get your exercise out of the way. Morning is a wonderful to wake up your heart and challenge your muscles, or to be outside enjoying fresh air and the beauty that surrounds us here in the hills. I have never been more appreciative of the little trails, low traffic roadways and local little streams. They provide such beautiful and tranquil scenes. Be in these wonderful moments as much as you can; stop and cherish them as the gift that they are. Breathe deeply and expand those lungs, feel your belly extend then engage core to spine. Do not forget your muscles need attention too! Pick up those free weights and crank out a simple strength exercise or two!

Stay plenty hydrated, for this, too, is important as it keeps your joints lubricated and your body functions regulated. It's great for your skin while it flushes your body of all the crazy toxins!

Maintain a positive attitude the best that you can. It is really easy to be down when you watch the news and engage with others who cannot see the positive things that surround them every day. I am so incredibly thankful for the elders who I am fortunate to know; they have taught me that sometimes you have to admit things are out of your control. Once you acknowledge that this is the case, you can move about your day with greater dignity and grace.

We will gather in person again sometime soon! Until then, be sure to make the effort to take care of YOU. The corona storm will indeed pass. Until then, please stay healthy and safe.

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Cummington Council on Aging

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TIPS TO AVOID CORONAVIRUS SCAMS



If you have a consumer problem or question, contact the Northwestern District Attorney's Consumer Protection Unit:

Greenfield (413) 774-3186
Northampton (413) 586-9225



- **Hang up on robocalls.** Don't press any numbers. Scammers are using illegal robocalls to pitch everything from scam Coronavirus treatments to work-at-home schemes. The recording might say that pressing a number will let you speak to a live operator or remove you from their call list, but it might lead to more robocalls.

- **Ignore online offers for vaccinations and home test kits.** Scammers are trying to get you to buy products that aren't proven to treat or prevent the Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) — online or in stores. At this time, there also are no FDA-authorized home test kits for the Coronavirus.

- **Fact-check information.** Scammers, and sometimes well-meaning people, share information that hasn't been verified. Before you pass on any messages, contact trusted sources.

- **Know who you're buying from.** Online sellers may claim to have in-demand products, like cleaning, household, and health and medical supplies when, in fact, they don't.

- **Don't respond to texts and emails about checks from the government.** Anyone who tells you they can get you the money now is a scammer.

- **Don't click on links from sources you don't know.** They could download viruses onto your computer or device.

- **Watch for emails claiming to be from the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) or experts saying they have information about the virus.** Visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

- **Do your homework when it comes to donations, whether through charities or crowdfunding sites.** If someone wants donations in cash, by gift card, or by wiring money, don't do it.