

Cummington Council on Aging November 2020 Newsletter



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

Chrisoula Roumeliotis
413-634-2262
coa@cummington-ma.gov

Hello to all!



As we approach the holidays, I hope you can find ways to make them meaningful while staying mindful of the need to be safe and healthy.

We are not able to offer a flu clinic this year. Please make arrangements to get your flu vaccine through your health center, doctor's office or pharmacy.

We are still looking for a few more board members. We welcome all backgrounds and experiences. If you are interested, or would like additional information, please contact me at 413-320-0663.

As I have mentioned before, although we are not meeting for in-person activities, the COA is open for you. Please call me (413-320-0663) if we can assist you in any way.

Also, the next Zoom meeting for "Living Fully, Aging Gracefully" is Tuesday, November 10. Please reach out to me if you have not yet participated and would like to.

Thanksgiving during Covid

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says that staying home for Thanksgiving is the best way to protect yourself and others. According to the CDC, the following activities are considered lower risk:

- ⇒ having a small dinner with only the people who live in your household
- ⇒ preparing traditional family recipes for family and neighbors and delivering the meals to them in a no-contact manner
- ⇒ having a virtual dinner and sharing recipes with friends and family
- ⇒ watching sports events, parades, and movies at home

The CDC rates the following activities as moderate risk:

- ⇒ having a small outdoor dinner with family and

- friends who live in your community
- ⇒ visiting pumpkin patches or orchards where strict cleaning methods are followed, masks are worn, and social distancing is practiced
- ⇒ attending a small outdoor sports event with safety precautions in place

What have we been up to?

We are currently readying some equipment that we purchased through generous grants to lend to you. We have five portable, folding pedal exercisers and four chromebooks that we are working to have ready for you by the end of the year. Stay tuned for more information.

Virtual tours

Here are a few more places that you can visit from the comfort of your home:

- The Harvard Museum of Natural History has live virtual programming for all its science and culture museums. Visit HMNH.Harvard.edu
- The Bronx Zoo offers online exhibits as well as a "virtual zoo." Visit BronxZoo.com



★ **Important Contacts:** ★
★
★ • **Cummington Emergency Response Team** ★
★ CummingtonCERTCVHelp@gmail.com or ★
★ call Sarah Fournier-Scanlon and Lee Four- ★
★ nier-Lewis at 634-5452. ★
★
★ • **Non-emergency police matters:** 634-0056 ★
★
★ • **COA:** 413-320-0663 or ★
★ coa@cummington-ma.gov ★
★
★ • **Do you need a mask?** Call the COA office ★
★ at 634-2262 and leave a message. ★
★

Other Resources Available to You

Hilltown Food Pantry

The Goshen Food Pantry is open for curbside pickup on Wednesdays from 1-3 p.m. No reservation is needed. It is located at 40 Main St., in the lower level of Goshen's town offices. Home delivery is possible if you are home bound. You may also designate someone to pick up for you.

Groceries & Prescription pick-up/delivery

Call 634-5452 or email cummingtoncertcvhelp@gmail.com to arrange for prescription pick-up and delivery as needed, as well as grocery deliveries from the Creamery and Sawyer Farm on Tuesdays and Fridays. Orders must be in by Mondays and Thursdays at 2 p.m.

Emergency food

If you find yourself in need of food and cannot wait until your next grocery trip or next pick up from the food pantry, CERT can help you. Please call 634-5452.

Library curbside pickup

The Bryant Free Library is open on Saturday mornings from 8:30-12:30 for curbside pickup of books, magazines, and DVDs. Items can be ordered by calling the library and leaving a message at 634-0109.



Your COA board members are:

Elliot Ring, Chairman (634-5666)
Gail Roberge (512-0660),
Worth Noyes (634-8003)
Kathy Knox (634-8041)
Ann Eisenhour, Foot Care Coordinator (634-2243)
Anne Parsons, Recording Secretary (634-5707)

Happy Birthday in November!



Patricia Stout, Patricia Brundage,
Donna Douglas, John Eisenhour, Dennis Forgea,
Robert Arbib, Daniel Loux, Charles Marinus,
Margaret Urbanowski, Lawrence Tower,
Linda Streeter, Mary Dygert, Frances Henry,
Margaret Daniels, Dann Emerson, David Gokey,
Barbara Badner, Timothy Gibson, Allan Kidston,
Barbara Konieczny, Gloria Robbins,
Peter Watson, Jonathan Ginzberg,
Victoria Valenza, Beth Lang, Kathleen Watson,
Mary Sullivan, Joseph Gomes,
Georgann Matuewezski, Gail Roberge,
Richard Roberge, Shevaun Keogh-Walker,
Amy Pulley, Herbert Kellogg, Charles Porter,
Lisa Gladu, Paula Pederson, Alice Cozzolino,
Robert Godfrey, Cynthia Lynds, Laura Sheppard,
Kevin Higgins, Tina Crotty-Vandoloski

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!

The Cummington Council on Aging

Seniors Aware of Fire Education



The focus of Fire Safety Month was how to prevent cooking fires. The theme was chosen with a few facts in mind.

1. The leading cause of house fires has been kitchen fires.
2. The leading cause of kitchen fires is unattended cooking.
3. Most cooking fires in the home involve the kitchen stove. Here are a few ways by which you can prevent fires in your kitchen:
 - ⇒ If you are sleepy or have consumed a bit too much alcohol, do not use the stove.
 - ⇒ Stay in the kitchen when you are frying, boiling, broiling or grilling food.
 - ⇒ Stay in your home when food is cooking.
 - ⇒ Use a timer to remind you that you are cooking.
 - ⇒ Keep anything that can catch fire away from your stove top.
 - ⇒ One extra idea -- don't let pan and pot handles overhang the stove top edge where they can be bumped into and pour scalding liquid on you.

Have a safe Thanksgiving!

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

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



Would you like to receive your newsletter, in color, 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!

Phone scams, Medicare style

So my latest irritation is those calls telling me I am eligible for Medicare supplies and they will be HAPPY to send me a back brace, knee brace, or Medical Item of the Day. The source of the calls will be some town in Massachusetts, or most recently a Williamsburg number. So far they haven't sent me anything... what if they do?

From the FTC: "Don't accept medical equipment you get in the mail — unless you or your doctor ordered it. If it comes to your door and you didn't order it, you can keep it as a gift. You don't have to pay for things you didn't order... if you give them your information, they'll use it to fraudulently bill Medicare. This uses up your medical benefits, which means you might not be able to get the right brace later, if your doctor prescribes one."

How do you tell if the scammers have been successful? Every now and again you will get a letter from Medicare in the mail, a Medicare Summary Notice, that says "This is not a bill" and it will show charges that Medicare paid. If you do not recognize a charge, or know it is one of those braces, call the phone number on the letter and report the blinking buggers.

The same rule holds if the mail brings you other merchandise with a bill, but you didn't order it. You can keep it, try to send it back at their expense, give it away, or use it to line a trash can.

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

Good News!

By Deborah Hollingworth

As I sit down to write, we are about three weeks away from the Presidential election, so it's difficult to think about anything else these days. But we are also in the midst of Open Enrollment for Medicare beneficiaries who might like to look over their coverage and compare plans for this coming year, especially if you've received a letter from your Medicare Rx plan saying coverage is changing and cost is increasing. And if that's not good news...our mailboxes are filled with advertising from other insurance plans saying they can do a better job for us. Can all that go straight to the recycling bin? Or do we need to do something?

There are 1,326,207 Medicare beneficiaries in Massachusetts. Many of us can ignore all this advertising, and ignore the fact that it's Open Enrollment season, because we get our health insurance coverage through our retirement/pension plans, or through the VA. And those who have MassHealth or X-tra help (also called the Low Income Subsidy), do not have to make any changes to their coverage. They can ignore and recycle all the advertising in their mailbox.

For the rest of us, we might do well to check out our coverage. Typically the letter from our insurance plan says they have changed their Formulary, switching some of the generics we take into "another tier", which is another way to say they are going to charge us more for our generic Rx than they did last year. You may have received a letter from your Rx Plan that said they were increasing your monthly premium? We expect shrinking coverage and increasing costs as a way of life. But here's a new wrinkle. It has become more important to know where to shop, and which pharmacy to use. Pharmacy chains, pharmaceutical companies and health insurance plans are connected in ways that are not apparent to us, meaning they often own, or are in business with each other. So picking up your medications at Stop and Shop might be a different price than shopping at CVS.

We are in luck because the **Medicare.gov** website can sort this all out for us. By typing in your list of Rx, and the zip code where you live, the website program can sort through the details of all 27 Medicare Rx plans in our area and rank them in order of least cost for best coverage! You can try using the website yourself, or call your senior center for a SHINE appointment.

One more piece of good news is the **Massachusetts Pharmacy Outreach Program**. This is especially helpful for situations where your Rx is expensive, or is not something you've taken before

and you'd like to know more about the drug. The Pharmacy Outreach Program is a free service provided by the University of Massachusetts and Executive Office of Elder Affairs. It's your reference librarian, available by phone, Monday through Friday from 8:30am - 5pm: **1-866-633-1617**. They look for affordable solutions for you, and can help submit Patient Assistance applications if you qualify to get your Rx free or greatly reduced from the pharmaceutical manufacturer. One of my favorite stories is about my Mom calling them to find out if it might be safe to double the dose of her particular Rx and cut the pill in half. That way she'd save almost \$300 for the year. They said it should be OK, and to ask her doctor. She did. And saved enough money to get her chair reupholstered.

Open Enrollment runs from October 15th-December 7th each year. Call your senior center for a SHINE appointment if you need help sorting it all out.



"You get a call from this number about a busted oven, you're busy. Understand?"

Joan Griswold's Zoom Exercise Classes

Thank you to all who join Joan Griswold's zoom exercise classes! We are very thankful that she does such a great job keeping our muscle strengthening class going and that she is interested in continuing this through the winter months.



Most of our COAs receive grants from Highland Valley Elder Services that partially fund many of our classes. We also use donations to keep paying teachers like Joan. Your donations make her classes possible.

In order to continue, we need donations from each of the seven Hilltowns.

Joan works for each town in six-week sessions. When we were meeting in person, we had a donation jar in which we asked everyone to put in a donation that they could afford. We are very thankful for the donations that have been sent in, but we still need your support. Otherwise, we will not have the funds to keep Joan's classes on Zoom.

When sending in a donation, please send it to the town you would like to support. Joan lists them on her email that she sends out every week. If you would like to join Joan's classes, send her an email: joan@bybhealth.com

careconsultationmanh@alz.org to schedule a Care Consultation today.

We know this is an unprecedented time, and no one should be doing this alone. The Alzheimer's Association staff are still operational and continue to help families each day living with dementia. Our 24/7 Helpline is available at 1-800-272-3900 to anyone who needs to talk about the challenges of dementia during this time. Our Helpline staff are available around the clock for any questions or concerns you might have. They can help address feelings of isolation, and link you to other resources.

Additionally, we are now offering all of our educational programs and support groups via video conference or over the phone. We also offer Meet Ups for those living with dementia. Virtual Alz Meet Ups are a fun, social hour that provide an opportunity to connect with others living through a similar experience.



Free Resources from the Alzheimer's Association

Did you or someone in your family recently receive a diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease or another form of dementia? Would you like some help navigating decisions after a diagnosis? Are you worried about how to provide the best care for a loved one? Are you concerned about your own memory?



The Alzheimer's Association provides free Care Consultations that are confidential and personalized to the needs of individuals and families. Consultations can be provided by phone or video conference and can include family members in separate locations. Call 617-393-2100 or email

Diane Meehan retires from the Hilltown Food Pantry after 30 Years

A familiar face to many, Diane Meehan recently retired from her position as Director of the Hilltown Food Pantry in Goshen. She started as a volunteer coordinator of the Pantry which has been in numerous locations (Cummington, Chesterfield, Haydenville and finally, in Goshen).

Thank you, Diane, for your many years of dedication and hard work. As the Goshen select board wrote in their letter to you, "You truly embody the popular phrase, 'Think Globally, Act Locally'. The many volunteers and people whom you have touched have enjoyed working with you and wish you all the best as you retire."

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P.O. Box 95
Cummington, MA 01026

PRSR STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT 183
Greenfield MA

**Cummington
Council on Aging**

Chrisoula Roumeliotis,
Coordinator
634-2262

Elliot Ring, Chairman
634-5666

Gail Roberge, 512-0660

Worth Noyes, 634-8003

Kathy Knox, 634-8041

Ann Eisenhour, 634-2243


Ann Parsons, 634-5707

Kristen Estelle,
Newsletter Designer
regionalcoanews@gmail.com

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**This is going to be the
first year our family
won't be going to Hawaii
because of the virus.**



**Usually it's because
we can't afford it.**

COFFEE AND JELLY BEANS