

Cummington Council on Aging

March 2021 Newsletter



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

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

Vaccine appointments

As of the writing of this newsletter, those who are 75 and over are eligible to receive a Covid vaccine. If you are having difficulty making an appointment or figuring out transportation to your appointment, please call Chrisoula at 413-320-0663.

Masks

We have been sending masks to everyone in town that is served by the COA. If you are 60 and over and did not receive one (and would like one), let me know.

Coffee and Chat A virtual coffee hour

We are starting a new program which is, in essence, a virtual coffee hour. Let's gather on Zoom, with our coffee, tea and snack and visit with one another! Our goal is to make this a weekly event – on **Mondays, from 10 to 11 a.m.** We will start on **March 8.**

Like all Zoom events, you will need to contact Chrisoula by phone at 413-320-0663 or email croumeliotis@cummington-ma.gov to request the link. If you would like to participate, but are feeling overwhelmed or intimidated by Zoom, call me – I will explain the process to you.



zoom

Hilltown Food Bucks

Food buck coupons are still available through the Hilltown CDC. These coupons can be used at local participating grocery stores and farms. The coupons match your spending in \$5 increments. So, for example, if you spend \$20 in groceries, you can use \$10 in food buck coupons and you pay \$10. There are income limitations. If you

would like more information, or an application, please contact Kate Bavelock at the Hilltown CDC. Her number is 413-296-4536 x116 and her email is kateb@hilltowncdc.org

Cummington Fair photos

April Judd is working on a Cummington Fair history book and is looking for photos. If you have any that you would like to include in the book, contact April: 413-268-7109, cummingtonfair@gmail.com. You can email the photos to April or she can borrow them, scan them and return them to you.

Postponed

We had planned to share a short play with you called "Mabel and Jerry" by Steve Henderson on March 16. That is being rescheduled to April. Look for details in the next newsletter.

Pedal Exerciser

If you are interested in borrowing a pedal exerciser, contact Chrisoula at 413-320-0663 or croumeliotis@cummington-ma.gov

Living Fully, Aging Gracefully

The next Zoom meeting for this group is **Tuesday, March 9.** For more information, please contact Wynne or Lucy at 634-5576 or wynlucy@gmail.com; or Annie at annieb@crocker.com.

Foot Care Clinic

The foot care clinic with Piper Sagan at the Hadley Senior Center remains available to non-Hadley residents if appointments are available. Priority is given to residents of Hadley. The fee is \$45. For more information and to make an appointment, call the Hadley Senior Center at 413-586-4023, ext. 6.



Easy Ride Van

The Hilltown Easy Ride van continues to provide trips for shopping to Northampton on Tuesdays and to Pittsfield on Thursdays. Rides to medical appointments are available on Mondays and Wednesdays. Contact Ed Pelletier at 296-4232 for more information and to arrange a ride.

Hilltown 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 homebound. 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.



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)

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.

Important Contacts:

- **Cummington Emergency Response Team**
CummingtonCERTCVHelp@gmail.com or 634-5452.
- **Non-emergency police matters:** 634-0056
- **COA:** 413-320-0663 or croumeliotis@cummington-ma.gov

Happy Birthday in March!



June Ferrin, Julia Aldrich, Edward McColgan,
Charles Stickney, Bruce Larkin, Jim Martin,
Jeanne Johns, Judith Bogart, Joyce Morin,
Janet Martin, Marty Schotz, Joyce Wiernasz,
Alan Weisman, Thomas Dyer, Paul Sonerson,
Jane Dyer, Cynthia Fournier, Charlene Madison,
Lawrence Remby, David Owen,
Murray Solomon, Linda Edwards, Scott Keith,
John Bye, Donna Gibson, Leslie Ferrin,
Susan Mikula, Christine Knox, Carla Ness,
Rebecca Kravetz, Jane Harris-Toomey,
Russell Mader, Valerie Talbot, Peter Feitner,
Marie Wolf, Lonelle Stevens

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 State Fire Marshall tells us that electrical fires are the second leading cause of fire deaths in the Commonwealth. Here are some ways to avoid an electrical fire:

- Plug major appliances like space heaters and air conditioners directly into wall outlets. Do not use extension cords or power strips.
- Charge laptops and cell phones on hard surfaces, not on soft surfaces like beds or upholstered furniture.
- Unplug any device powered by lithium-ion batteries when charged. Do not over charge them or leave them charging unattended or over night.
- Turn heating pads, electric blankets and space heaters off before sleeping.
- Learn how to deal with a fire in your microwave oven -- hint: keep the microwave door closed, turn off and unplug it if you can do so safely.
- Store batteries the way they come -- not loosely in a baggie.

Have a sweet Sugar Season and stay 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.

Regional News



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!

Big Five plus Relevant Information

Assuming you have done a Letter of Instruction following last month's suggestion, you have quite a jump on this month's item. Good on you!

I can think of three categories of Relevant Information to keep and file. One is related to taxes, you know, "keep tax records for 3 years unless something else pops up to bite you in the ahem." We go to the horse's mouth for that guidance and type in a search question, e.g., at IRS.gov, "how long do I keep tax records". I find the major tax preparing firms such as TurboTax and H & R Block have still accurate but even more useful information.

The second category of information comes from making a good bet that files related to the contents of that Letter of Instruction will be needed. This means current insurance policies, real estate deeds, bank statements, vehicle titles, tax files, warranties, contracts, and, I'm afraid, more and more. There are lots of suggestions online for organizing these, such as files for employment, financial, health, identity, insurance, real estate, and vehicle. Let me know if you want some suggestions.

The third category is personal. Family marriage, birth, and death certificates will be useful in genealogy. Some medical records could be very helpful. Records of a significant achievement may get passed on in the family. Embarrassing photos of babies will want to be available for embarrassing those adults. Well, I did say personal. You have to figure out what this means to you.

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

Good News!

By Deborah Hollingworth



Spring officially starts, March 22nd! And the operative word, as the vaccine roll-out continues, is **patience**.

The online sign up for appointments continues to improve. There are a number of ways you can get assistance to sign up online at the state website, www.Mass.gov. Volunteers are being recruited to help, there are promises of making the website easier to navigate, and more vaccination sites continue to be opened in our area. Best way to get current information is to call your senior center where we are attempting to stay on top of developments as they happen.

The Massachusetts Scheduling Resource Line 877-211-6277 opened last month and is able to book an appointment for you. You can call and speak to a person. They are aware of availability for all sites statewide. Patience and perseverance are recommended in order to get through. All calls are free and confidential. The TTY number is 508-370-4890. Thanks to all those who helped get this much needed resource in place for those of us with limited, or no internet access.

NOTE: if you receive a phone call about the Covid-19 vaccine, know that the Board of Health, Council on Aging and others who might be volunteering to assist you **will never ask for your social security number, your credit card or bank information**. We will ask only for your name, date of birth, address, and Medicare insurance card number. There are some scammers who are using vaccine registration to get your information. **The Covid-19 vaccine is free**. If you have any concerns about the legitimacy of a phone call you receive, please hang up and call your local Board of Health or Council on Aging.

In other good news, the freeze on MassHealth benefits continues through April 24th, when the Governor will review it again. MassHealth benefits have been "frozen" since March last year. This means if you have had MassHealth, you haven't lost it, even though you may no longer be eligible. Coverage has not ended, and will remain in place until the Governor makes the decision to resume normal MassHealth processing.

Other not so good news...some of you may have received letters from MassHealth saying they will no longer be paying your Medicare B premium. You are not alone, 1800 Massachusetts residents received this (Federal) subsidy which will end February 28th. If this has happened to you, or someone you know, you can contact your SHINE counselor for details. You will not lose your other MassHealth benefits, just the Part B subsidy. If you have questions about medical insurance, you can always contact your senior center for a SHINE appointment anytime.



Tax Assistance

Hilltown Community Development unfortunately will not be offering community tax prep assistance this year due to ongoing safety concerns for our volunteers, staff and clients.

However, Community Action Pioneer Valley is providing FREE tax assistance to clients who live in Hampshire or Franklin counties with incomes of \$31,900 or less (for a single filer). Clients will need to be able to scan and email their documents to participate this year. Those who do not have that ability are encouraged to wait until after March 1st, since Community Action is working on a possibility of a "drive through" scanning of documents. For additional information and to schedule an appointment please visit Community Action at www.communityaction.us/freetaxassistance or call 413-376-1136.

An additional resource is AARP's free online tax assistance website. There is no income limits or other restrictions for people to utilize the AARP self-prepared service.

Please note that the IRS is not accepting 2020 tax returns until February 12th this year.

AARP recently put out the following article "**Ten things to know about your 2020 tax returns**" that discusses some tax changes for 2020, what to do if you haven't received the stimulus checks, and other relevant topics:

www.aarp.org/money/taxes/info-2021/getting-ready-to-file-2020-taxes.html

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On the Go!

A hearty hello from your trip leaders, Lorraine, Barbara, Betty, Karen and Francine.



With the vaccine in view, the Friends of Northampton Seniors travel group would like to give you a brief outline of future bus trips that are being contemplated for late summer and fall of 2021. Please know nothing is written in stone and things can change.

If you'd like to share your email address with Francine so we can keep in touch, please send a short message to:

francine.frenier@gmail.com

Watch for more details in upcoming newsletters.

- ⇒ August MGM Casino
- ⇒ September Big E
- ⇒ Late September Niagara Falls, if border is open, 5 days
- ⇒ October 8-18 Colorado, 11 Days
- ⇒ Late Oct/Nov Plymouth, 400th Anniver. Program
- ⇒ December Bright Nights & Red Rose



The time is approaching and we couldn't be more excited!



Smith Vocational Culinary students and the chefs are firing it up in the kitchen.

Check out the school website for the menu:

www.smithtec.org/culinary-arts

and look for them on Facebook and Instagram. Each post will have more details. This will be a safe, fun and delicious experience for everyone!

The Oliver Smith Restaurant drive-thru!

FIRST LETS GO OVER A FEW DETAILS TO START:

1. VERY IMPORTANT, CALL FIRST to make sure the restaurant is open that day. Our menu & schedule may vary week to week.
2. The daily menu can be found on our school website, and I will post it on Facebook & Insta, SO FOLLOW US!
3. All orders MUST be in by 10a.m!



OPENING DAY: 2 / 8 / 21
TO PLACE ORDERS CALL:
413-587-1414 x3522
KEEP AN EYE out for the rest of the IMPORTANT DETAILS!
THANK YOU FOR YOUR PATRONAGE!

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

PRSR STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT 183
Greenfield MA

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Money Wiring



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

Working in cooperation with the Office of the MA Attorney General



Money wiring scams come in many variations. Scammers like to get paid using wire transfer services because it's fast, the money is often available within minutes, not leaving the consumer time to cancel the transaction once they realize it is a scam. The money is usually picked up in cash and in person making it hard to recover.

Remember...

- **Never wire money to claim a prize**
- **Never wire money to someone you don't know**

Watch out for these MONEY WIRING SCAMS

- Lottery & sweepstakes scams
- Overpayment scams
- Relationship scams
- Mystery shopper scams
- Online purchase scams
- Apartment rental scams
- Advance fee loan scams
- Family emergency or friend-in-need scams
- IRS scams