

# Cummington Council on Aging

## November 2023 Newsletter



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

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### Thanksgiving Potluck

Wednesday, November 15th, Noon-1:30pm  
Cummington Community House



Please join us on Wednesday, November 15th from noon to 1:30 for a Thanksgiving potluck. The COA will be serving turkey with mashed potatoes, squash, green bean casserole, stuffing, cranberry sauce, rolls and dessert. Please bring a dish to share.

#### TRIAD presentation

Following the Thanksgiving potluck, representatives from the TRIAD program will be here to describe the helpful services that they offer – from house numbering to medical equipment lending to educational programs to file of life forms.

#### Art class continues

The COA continues to sponsor an acrylic art class, taught by Jeanne Johns, on **Tuesdays from 9:30 to noon** at the Community House. Materials are provided. You pay the instructor's reasonable fee of \$50 for 5 sessions. All skill levels are invited and welcomed. If you are interested, please contact the COA at **634-2262** or [croumeliotis@cummington-ma.gov](mailto:croumeliotis@cummington-ma.gov)

#### Fuel Assistance

If you are a recent fuel assistance customer, you should receive an application in the mail. If this is your first time applying or you haven't had fuel assistance in a few years, you will need to schedule an intake appointment. Call Community Action at

413-774-2310 (and choose option 1) to schedule an appointment. You can also apply online and find more information here:

[communityaction.us/program/fuel-assistance/](http://communityaction.us/program/fuel-assistance/)

#### Hilltown Driver Pool – hiring drivers

The Hilltown CDC is hiring drivers for the Driver Pool service. The pay is \$16/hour with \$0.585 per mile for gas reimbursement. This is a great opportunity to make your own hours, meet your Hilltown neighbors and make some extra money. If interested, contact Hunt Chase, Director of Community Programs, at [huntc@hilltowncdc.org](mailto:huntc@hilltowncdc.org) or call **413-296-4536 ext. 116**.

### Ongoing Programs, Activities & Resources

*For more information on any of these programs, activities and resources, contact the COA at [croumeliotis@cummington-ma.gov](mailto:croumeliotis@cummington-ma.gov) or 634-2262.*

#### Weekly Grab and Go Hot Meal– Every Tuesday

The next meals will be distributed on **November 7, 14, 21 and 28** between noon and 12:30 at the Community House. Leave your name and phone number with the COA by **Oct. 31** to reserve your meal. Suggested donation of \$3 per meal goes to HVES.

#### Healthy Bones and Balance

Mondays and Thursdays from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m.

#### Coffee Hour

Mondays and Thursdays from 10:45 to 11:45 a.m.

**Needlework Group**– Wednesdays, 1-4pm.

#### Tech Support- UPDATED INFO / SCHEDULE.

Peg Whalen offers **drop-in tech support** at the Chesterfield Community Center on the first and third Wednesdays of each month. In November, the drop-in center is open Wednesday, November 1 and 15 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. You can stop in (*cont. next page*)

or email [coaTechHelp@gmail.com](mailto:coaTechHelp@gmail.com) or leave a message at **413-296-5080** to save a time slot. Peg also offers individual tech support. Please call or email for assistance to schedule the best time and place to get you the help you need.

Peg is also running **laptop/computer classes** on the second and fourth Thursdays each month. Sessions are open to every skill level. Join any time. Upcoming classes are on November 9, December 14 and 28; there is no class on November 23. Email or call to register before coming to ensure enough available laptops -- [coaTechHelp@gmail.com](mailto:coaTechHelp@gmail.com); **413-296-5080**.

**Foot Clinic-** The next foot clinic will be on **Tuesday, Nov. 7th** with Piper Sagan at the Community House. The cost is \$40 for Cummington residents and \$50 for non-residents. Contact the COA to make an appointment.

#### **Living Fully, Aging Gracefully**

The next Zoom meeting for this group is **Tuesday, Nov. 14th**. For more information on this program, contact directly Wynne or Lucy at **634-5576** or [wynlucy@gmail.com](mailto:wynlucy@gmail.com); [annieb@crocker.com](mailto:annieb@crocker.com).

**Resource Cart-** Located across from the Community House kitchen and to the left of the COA office. Currently, it is stocked with Covid test kits, hand sanitizer, personal health care journals, file of life forms, walking maps, games & puzzles, greeting cards for various occasions, the current Elder Law education guide, and much more. Anytime the building is open, you can come by to take what you need from this cart.

#### **Medical Equipment**

Walkers, crutches, shower seats and tub transfer seats, toilet seat risers, and more are available for your use. We also accept donations of clean equipment in good condition.

#### **Exercise Equipment**

Pedal exercisers and sets of hand weights (1, 3 and 5 pounds) are available for you to borrow.

#### **Chromebooks**

We have a few available for you to borrow.

#### **Easy Ride Van**

The Hilltown Easy Ride van provides trips for shopping to Northampton on Tuesday and Thursday mornings and to Pittsfield once a month. Medical and other rides can be scheduled for Mondays, Tuesday afternoons, Wednesdays and Fridays from 8:30 to 4:30. The Driver Pool program is available for medical rides and medical errands (such as picking up prescriptions) when the van is not available. Contact Ed Pelletier at **296-4232** for more information and to arrange a ride.

**We honor all veterans  
this month and  
every month.**



#### **Happy Birthday in November!**

Patricia Stout, Patricia Brundage, Donna Douglas, John Eisenhower, Dennis Forgea, Bob Arbib, Daniel Loux, Charles Marinus, Margaret Urbanowski, Lawrence Tower, Mary Dygert, William Millington, Peg Daniels, Dann Emerson, David Gokey, Barbara Badner, Timothy Gibson, Allan Kidston, Barbara Konieczny, Gloria Robbins, Peter Watson, Beth Lang, Kathleen Watson, Joseph Gomes, Georgann Matuewezski, Gail Roberge, Rich Roberge, Shevaun Keogh-Walker, Amy Pulley, Herbert Kellogg, Paula Pedersen, Alice Cozzolino, Robert Godfrey, Cynthia Lynds, Laura Sheppard, Kevin Higgins, Philip Morin, Robert McNamara, John Warriner



***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 big cool down of fall has already started and folks are firing up their wood stoves and fireplaces. Most chimney fires are started by a build up of CREOSOTE in the chimney which can ignite in and through the chimney into the house.

Here are a few tips on how to begin the wood heating season safely:

- Have your chimney inspected and/or cleaned at the beginning of the heating season.
- Burn only dry, well seasoned hardwood to reduce creosote accumulation.
- Do not use flammable liquid to start the fire.
- Make sure the damper is open before starting the fire.
- Always use a fireplace screen to keep flying sparks and embers from falling onto the floor.
- Shovel ashes into a metal bucket with a metal lid, and place it on the ground well outside the building. Ashes and embers can stay hot for days and still ignite combustibles.

Have a SAFE wood heating season!

--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.*

**Would you like to receive your newsletter, in color, by email instead of snail mail?**

If so, please email Kristen at [regionalcoanews@gmail.com](mailto: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!

### Your State Representatives

#### **State Senator Paul Mark**

Email: [paul.mark@masenate.gov](mailto:paul.mark@masenate.gov)

Phone: 413-464-5635

Mail: 773 Tyler Street  
Pittsfield, MA 01201

Nearby local office hours:  
Williamsburg Town Hall  
2nd and 4th Tuesdays from 1-3pm

#### **State Representative Lindsay Sabadosa**

Email: [Lindsay.Sabadosa@mahouse.gov](mailto:Lindsay.Sabadosa@mahouse.gov)

Phone: 413-270-1166.

Mail: 76 Gothic Street  
Northampton, MA 01060

### **My Forgetter's getting better but my Remember-er is Broke**

Often times I walk into a room, say  
"What am I here for?"  
I wrack my brain, but all in vain  
a zero is my score.  
At times I put something away where it is safe,  
but, Gee!  
The person it is safest from generally is me!

When shopping I may see someone, say "Hi"  
and have a chat,  
Then, when the person walks away I ask myself,  
"Who the heck was that?"

Yes, my forgetter's getting better while my  
remember-er is broke,  
And it's driving me plumb crazy and that isn't  
any joke.

My forgetter's getting better but my  
remember-er is broke, to you that may seem  
funny but to me that is no joke.  
For when I'm "here" I'm wondering if I really  
should be "there," and, when I try to think it  
through, I haven't got a prayer!

**THE OLDER I GET, THE MORE I HAVE  
IN COMMON WITH COMPUTERS.  
WE BOTH START OUT WITH LOTS OF  
MEMORY AND DRIVE, THEN WE BECOME  
OUTDATED, CRASH  
UNEXPECTEDLY,  
AND EVENTUALLY  
HAVE TO  
HAVE OUR  
PARTS  
REPLACED!**



## The Book- Part 3. Personal Information

By Jean O' Neil and Deb Hollingworth

Thanksgiving is coming - we should talk stuffing! Well, not the turkey, but your wallet. Part of the process of organizing our paperwork is knowing where to best keep it.

So on to Part 3. We all have a batch of personal documents, some need to be with us at all times, others are needed now and again, others maybe once every several years, if that. Where should these items be kept?

**Wallet.** An appropriately skinny wallet has your driver's license, vaccination records, library card, grocery or gas cards, one or two credit cards, and roadside assistance card. If you have under-age children, you should carry some of their records as well.

**Home.** Safe but available, you might keep your Medicare card, and vehicle title and registration in your home. We also recommend keeping a copy of your will, durable power of attorney, health care proxy, living will, and letter of instruction at home.

**Safety deposit box.** A very secure and protected way to store information is a metal box in your bank's vault. Here can go things that you don't need immediate access to, likely a birth certificate, marriage or divorce papers, social security card, military discharge papers, real estate deed, and passport.

Our local banks have safety deposit boxes that may cost \$40 or more a year, more for a larger box. They give you two keys and keep one; your key plus their key is needed to access the box. If you lose your key, they will have to drill the box open and charge you.

If you don't have a safety deposit box, there are alternatives. You can buy a safe to keep at home in a secure place. Safes come in different qualities and prices based on their size, level of protection from burglary, and resistance to fire.

Another alternative, simplicity itself, is to make a copy of the documents and ask a friend or family member (perhaps the person who has your Power of Attorney?) to store them so they are in a second location. If that location is in a different state, even better, to reduce chances of an emergency hitting you both. This approach at least gives you a start on replacements if needed.

Back to stuffing. Why do we ask you to un-stuff your wallet? Identify theft! If you carry your social security card and your Medicare or health insurance cards and your wallet is stolen or lost, the

information on those cards can help an unscrupulous person highjack your identity. We can hear some of you protesting now – I can't remember those numbers! OK. You can make a copy of the card, cut it to shape, block out the last four characters, and memorize them. Or maybe not bother. Deb says the Medicare card is easily replaced with a phone call, and we note that you shouldn't need the full Medicare number until you go to a new medical provider.

One more thing – if anyone would like a large three-ring notebook, I have two and will be happy to give them a new home. Give me a call. Jean, 268-2228.

Until next time – part four will be on home matters, such as history of home improvements and overall house management. You'll really want to learn about a family heirloom clock...

We DO NOT throw away  
perfectly good food in this  
house.

We put the left overs in  
Tupperware, put the  
Tupperware in the fridge, let it  
go bad, THEN throw it out.

## Haircuts and More at Smith Vocational High School

*Tuesdays & Thursdays*

Manicures, colors, facials, and other hair care options are being offered at Smith Vocational High School on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

The cost is \$5.00 for a haircut. Please call for other prices. The Smith Vocational Cosmetology students provide the services with their teacher alongside.



Simply call 413-587-1414 ext. 3531 for an appointment. The Salon is located in Room 124 of Building A at Smith Vocational High School, 80 Locust St., Northampton. **All are welcome!**

## On the Road Again...

### 2024 Trips



Contact Francine Frenier to reserve your seat **before** mailing any payments to determine availability: 413-296-4291, francine.frenier@gmail.com. Mailing address: 11 Stage Rd., Williamsburg, MA 01096.

~~COMING IN 2024~~

*Multi Day Trip May 29– June 6, 2024.*

**Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island & New Brunswick. Passport required. Check your expiration date.**

Cost \$1,644 per person dbl. occupancy, \$25 discount if paid in full by **February 20th**. Make payment to Diamond Tours and mail next year to the address above. Wait List Only.

**This 9 day trip includes:** 8 nights lodging including 5 nights in Canada, two night stay in Maine. 15 meals including: 8 breakfasts, 6 dinners, 1 lunch. Guided Tour of Acadia National Park, Halifax, Peggy's Cove & Prince Edward Island

~If you have called in the past and are on the list for this trip, please call or email Francine again to confirm you are still interested.~

~~Since Lake George and Lake Sunapee were so popular and sold out in 2023, I will run these two trips in 2024.~~

~~A trip to Sight and Sound Theater in Pennsylvania Dutch country to see *Daniel is in the works*.~~

*Looking for day trip ideas for 2024. Please email Francine at address above.*

The answer is “YES” if.....

1. You have none of the above
2. You have Medicare and are interested in a Medicare supplement
3. Your medical conditions have changed and you expect to need more medical care
4. Your Rx costs are significant
5. You expect to travel, or spend significant time out of State
6. Your doctor is “not in network”
7. You have gotten denials for services
8. You just don't like your current health insurance coverage
9. You're just curious

### RESOURCES

- The SHINE program (also called SHIP program in other States)
- The Pharmacy Outreach Program
- Prescription Advantage (for Massachusetts residents only)
- The MassHealth Buy-in program
- X-tra Help through Social Security
- Health Safety Net

For information on any of the above resources, give your senior center a call to get an appointment with your SHINE counselor.



November Tech Talk; It's a Small World  
by Peg Whalen

Remember Disney's "It's a Small World After All". I always loved that song. Well, the world is now singing a new tune, "It's a Digital World After All". I took some liberties and rewrote the lyrics.

It's a world of tech  
A world of skills  
It's a world to explore  
And a world with thrills  
There's so much to be shared  
That it's time we're aware  
It's digital world after all.

I'd love it if all of us were singing this song. Many of you already do. I encourage more of you to join

## What is Open Enrollment?

Open Enrollment happens each year from October 15th through December 7th. It's the time when we can shop for health insurance.

### Do You Need to Shop?

The answer is “NO” if....

1. You have health insurance through your pension retirement benefit
2. You use the VA for medical care
3. You have MassHealth
4. You are still working and have employer's insurance coverage or your spouse is still working and you are covered under your spouse's insurance

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PRSR STD  
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PERMIT 183  
Greenfield MA

**Cummington  
Council on Aging**

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Kristen Estelle,  
Newsletter Designer  
regionalcoanews@gmail.com

**This Newsletter is sponsored in part by a grant from The Executive Office of Elder Affairs.**

*(continued from previous page)* them. We can all benefit from living in this new world. You've lived through party line phone service, rotary dialing, and wireless phones. Now we have handheld computers that make calls, take pictures, send text messages, do email, and offer video calling.

The internet saves us money, time, gas, energy. Telehealth appointments with our health providers, safe online banking to spare us trips to the bank, ordering prescription refills easily, and shopping that saves us driving to stores. We can watch tv for much less than costly cable and satellite services. Working on puzzles is free and easy. The internet opens a world to us where we can read about topics we are interested in, learn just about anything, even work from home.

Using digital technologies lets us reach people we may be unable to see regularly. We can watch young family members living elsewhere grow up. Social media, like Facebook, gives many people a way to lessen loneliness or isolation. Video calls make it possible to share holidays with those we love. We can relieve boredom and enjoy the stimulating competitive exchanges we love by playing games online, like Mah Jong. Visiting people we otherwise would lose contact with is easier when friends move away or when we retire and don't see coworkers we enjoyed working with.

There really is so much to be shared, explored, learned. I encourage you to build your skills in ways you find helpful. Our new Digital Literacy funding provides you with many ways to explore this digital world. You can participate in ways you find interesting and accessible. And we can help, with learning, equipment, broadband, and support. Because, It's a Digital World After All!

**Ongoing Tech Support & Computer Classes with  
Peg Whalen**

We're offering Drop-In Center Tech Support at the Chesterfield Community Center on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of each month. In November, Drop-In is on 11/1 and 11/15 from 10am-3pm. You can stop in or schedule: **coaTechHelp@gmail.com** or **413-296-5080**. Please call or email for assistance outside Drop-In hours. Free equipment and broadband installation will be available soon, along with training.

Computer classes you can attend at any point are on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month. Register before coming: **coaTechHelp@gmail.com** or **413-296-5080**. Classes are scheduled for 11/9, 12/14, 12/28, 1/11, 1/25, from 1:00 to 3:00. Laptops are provided. You are encouraged to bring your own to learn on. We start with turning a computer on OR you can learn just what you are interested in. Give it a try!