

Cummington Council on Aging

October 2024 Newsletter



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

Coordinator: Chrisoula Roumeliotis
COA Office Phone: 413-634-2262
COA Email: croumeliotis@cummington-ma.gov

Flu* & Covid Vaccine Clinics

**regular and high dose*

Wednesday, October 9th, 10am-1pm

**Plainfield Safety Complex
38 North Central St.**

Pre-registration is recommended at
<https://northamptonma.gov/2219/vax> or
by calling 413-587-4903. Walk-ins are welcome.
Please bring your insurance card.

**Wednesday, October 23rd
10am to 12:30pm**

Cummington Community House

Additional details will be provided as soon as possible. For those receiving their newsletters via email, look for details in a forthcoming email. There will also be flyers placed around town, as well as a robo call. If you have any questions, please contact the COA.

**Wednesday, December 4th, 1-4 pm
Cummington Community House**

Look for more details in the next newsletter.

Homebound? Contact the Northampton Dept. of Public Health at **413-587-4903** to arrange an in-home vaccination or go to northamptonma.gov/2219/Vaccine-Programs

Preparing For Winter

Sand buckets: Once again, we are working with the fire department to have 5-gallon buckets of sand delivered to you. If you received a bucket of sand last year, we will be calling you soon to arrange for delivery of additional sand, if needed. If you did NOT take part in this program last year and would like to have sand delivered to you, please contact the COA with your name, phone number and address.

Snow removal: Have you made your plan for snow removal for this coming winter? We are interested in knowing how many of you have not yet found someone to plow your driveway. If you are in this situation, please let us know. While we can't arrange plowing for you, we can share the names of some snow removal businesses that you can contact.

Interested In Learning Tai Chi?

Richard Larson, a fellow senior and dancer from Goshen, will lead a class in the 8 Ways of Tai Chi at the Community House on **Tuesdays from 2-3 p.m. starting October 1st**. These are 8 simple repeating movements, involving the principles of Tai Chi, to develop strength, balance, relaxation and peace of mind as a moving meditation. Richard studied Tai Chi form and the 8 Ways at the NY School of Tai Chi Chuan. If you're interested, please contact the COA. This class is ongoing; you can begin the class at any time. Free, but donations are welcome.

Additional Healthy Bones & Balance Exercise Classes

Starting on November 12th, there will be two additional free Healthy Bones & Balance exercise classes offered at the Community House. Polly Ryan will be leading these classes on **Tuesdays from 3:00-4:00 and Fridays from 9:30-10:30**. These classes are in addition to the current clas-



ses, which run on Mondays and Thursdays from 9:30-10:30. If you have any questions, contact the COA.

Ongoing Programs, Activities & Resources

For more information on any of these programs, activities and resources, contact the COA at croumeliotis@cummington-ma.gov or 634-2262.

Weekly Grab and Go Hot Meal– every Tuesday
The next meals will be distributed on **October 1, 8, 15, 22 and 29** between noon and 12:30 at the Community House. Leave your name and phone number with the COA to reserve your meal. Suggested donation of \$4 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 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Needlework Group
Thursdays, 1-4pm.

Drop in Tech support
Stop by the Community House dining room for any type of tech help you need at our drop-in tech support on the second Wednesday of every month, from 10 a.m. to noon. For more information, contact TechConnect at **413-296-5080**.

Foot Clinic
The next foot clinic will be on **Tuesday, Nov. 5th** 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, Oct. 8th**. For more information on this program, contact directly Wynne or Lucy at **634-5576**

or wynlucy@gmail.com; or annieb@crocker.com.

Resource Cart: Look by the windows, too!
We have a new supply of covid test kits on the cart. Please take what you need. Located across from the Community House kitchen and to the left of the COA office – available to you anytime the building is open. Stocked with Covid test kits, medical/surgical masks, 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, pamphlets and info sheets on a variety of subjects, and much more.

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.

Easy Ride Van: The Hilltown Easy Ride van provides rides 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.

Happy Birthday in October!

Mildred Stevens, Ronald Wolf, Judith Suriner, Harriette Laurent, Jeffrey Matuewezski, Audrey Marcoux, David Wilcox, John Earls, Howard Meister, Marguerite Yamilkoski, Stephen Yoshen, Mark Malinak, Patricia Keith, James Messineo, Jerome Dwight, Jane Crosby, Ilene Diamond, Robert Taylor, Bryan Morin, Ilse Godfrey, Tracy Ribken, Michael Frazier, David Cuddahy, Ben Bederson, Daniel Fitzgerald

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

A WILLIAMSBURG FORUM ON OUR CLIMATE AND ENERGY FUTURE

Sunday, October 6, 2 pm

How to Save Money with Energy Upgrades

Learn about Federal and state incentives and programs to help residents and businesses save money.

Sunday, October 20, 2 pm

Your Electricity Bill 101

Understanding your bill, why rates change, energy sources for electricity in our area, "community choice" aggregation. Bring a copy of your bill to follow along!

Sunday, November 3, 2 pm

Our Electricity Future

Learn about interconnectivity, Community Choice 2.0, micro-grids, and power sharing.

Events are at Anne T. Dunphy School,
1 Petticoat Hill Rd, Williamsburg
Childcare & light refreshments provided.

Position Available: Community Connector

The Northern Hilltowns Consortium of Councils on Aging seeks outreach worker to serve as the "Connector" to help older adults and their family caregivers find and connect with the best resources to:

- Find and join programs that will support independent living in their own homes
- Answer questions about eligibility for benefits: health insurance, pharmacy subsidies, fuel assistance, SNAP benefits, property tax rebates
- Identify services or programs that are the best fit to individual or family needs
- Help manage changes in medical conditions, or finances, or housing
- Guide people through the required processes to successfully obtain and/or enroll in services they require

Flexible hours: 18/month. Work from home. Some home visits when necessary.

Looking for a person with experience working with older adults, knowledge of aging resources, excellent communication skills, experience using computer and internet services.

Driver's license required

Seniors Aware of Fire Education

October is **FIRE SAFETY MONTH** and the topic is how to make and practice a home escape plan when your smoke alarm wakes you up.

Senior 
SAFE

First, make a HOME ESCAPE PLAN:

- Make a plan that includes TWO WAYS out of every room.
- Draw a floor plan of your house. Include doors, windows, halls, stairs and fire escapes. Use arrows to show escape routes — two ways out of every room.
- Make sure the windows in your plan open easily and are not painted shut.
- Keep pathways free of obstacles.
- Choose a MEETING PLACE safely outdoors.

Second, PRACTICE your home escape plan. Plans only work if practiced.

- Hold a FIRE DRILL at least twice a year; one day drill and one night drill.
- Plan on how to help anyone who may need to be assisted after the drill, make any necessary adjustments to your plan.

Third, WHEN THE ALARM SOUNDS:

- Get out of bed and go to your bedroom door.
- Feel the door with the BACK OF YOUR HAND.
- If it feels cool, open the door slowly. If the way out is clear of fire, get low and go.
- Do not open the door if it is hot. Go to your window, open it. If you can not get out safely, shout and signal for help. One of the first firefighters there will walk around the whole building, checking to see if someone is trapped.
- Once you are out, STAY OUT! Do not go back in.
- Call 911 from your cell phone.
- Go to your family MEETING PLACE.
- Let the firefighters know if everyone is safely out of the house.

Hope you never need your HOME ESCAPE PLAN. But having one which every one in your home knows, will make all the difference.

Have a great fire SAFE month,

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

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



Tech. Help and Training for October



THANK YOU TO EVERYONE THAT PARTICIPATED IN THE TECH CONNECT FAIR ON 9/21! The event was a success, with many new demonstrations, exhibitors, and a silent tech auction.

Tech Support Available by Appointment

Receive technology help by email, phone, drop-in or appointment: coaTechHelp@gmail.com, phone or text msg **413-296-5080**. Response within a day.

Drop in Centers: All are Welcome at Any Location! *(no appointment needed)*

- Chesterfield Community Center, 400 Main Rd.
Weekly on all Tuesdays from 11:00 to 2:00
Bi-Weekly on Fridays, 11:30-1:30 (10/4 and 10/18)
- Cummington Community House, 33 Main St.
Drop-In tech support, 2nd Weds. 10-12 (10/9)
- Goshen Free Public Library, 42 Main St.
Drop-in tech support, 3rd Thurs. 12-2 (10/17)
- Plainfield Shaw Memorial Library, 312 Main St.
Drop-In tech support, 3rd Thurs. 5:30-7:30pm (10/17)
- Westhampton Public Library, 1 North Rd.
Drop-In tech support, 4th Thurs. 2-4pm (10/24)
- Williamsburg
Meekins Library Drop-In tech support
2nd Tuesday 10/8 from 10 to Noon
Nash Hill Place Resident Drop-In tech support
2nd Tuesday 10/8 from 10 to Noon
- Worthington Library, 1 Huntington Rd.
Call COA for date & time: 413-238-5962.

Tech Training:

Must pre-register for classes no later than one week before the scheduled training date. All classes held at the Chesterfield Community Center, 400 Main Rd, lower level. To register, email coaTechConnect@gmail.com; call or text **413-296-5080**, or sign up through the website www.northernhilltownscoas.org

Computer Classes:

Beginner's Windows Laptop Class will restart on Thursdays 1-2:30pm, on 10/3 for 4 weeks

Intermediate Windows Laptop Class starts Wednesdays 10:30 – Noon, on 10/23 for 6 weeks

Tech Workshops:

- Facebook – Fri, 10/4, 10:30 – 11:30
- What does THAT mean: tech terms – Wed, 10/9, 11:00 - 12:00pm
- MS Excel – Fri, 10/18, 10:30 – 11:30
- Streaming – Sat, 10/26, 10:30 - 12:00pm
- Internet Basics– Fri. 11/1, 10:30-11:30am
- Using Medical Portals & Telehealth– Thurs. 11/14, 10:00-12:00pm
- Microsoft Word– Fri. 11/15, 10:30-11:30

Internet Hotspots, PC laptops, refurbished Chromebooks and iPad and Android tablets available: Our staff member Ky Martus, is distributing devices. Please remind us if you requested one and are still waiting. We have more PC laptops, refurbished Chromebooks and iPad and Android tablets. If you need or are waiting for a device to connect to the internet, have something so old it is not working effectively, or need a different type of device please contact us.

Email coatechconnect@gmail.com, leave message at **413-296-5080**, or use online request form on our website, www.northernhilltownscoas.org

Need affordable internet access?

We now have a way for you to affordably connect to the internet using an internet "Hotspot" device. They work like WIFI without cable or fiber service. If you are interested in learning more about how these devices work and how they could benefit you, please contact us by phone or email.

All Those Papers! Part 2

By Jean O'Neill

It is a myth that piles of paper will procreate. I think... I could be wrong. This note was hard to write – lots of individual situations. If I have missed something you are particularly interested in, let me know. A basic rule of thumb is to keep paper for a year unless you have a reason for longer. I know – a mealy-mouth answer. Another rule of thumb is anything that you deem important that would be hard to replace should be kept. This might include correspondence with the Social Security office on a specific matter.

Really Important Stuff. You could write this paragraph. Keep these indefinitely - birth and death certificates, marriage licenses, divorce decrees, adoption papers, Social Security card, property deeds, estate documents, and military discharge papers.

Banking. Keep either paper or electronic bank statements for a year. You might want some of them longer for convenience on reminders about an expenditure, but the bank keeps these electronically
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On the Road Again... 2024 & 2025 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.

Day Trip Friday, December 13. Festival of Trees and Red Rose Lunch. Enjoy the uniquely decorated Christmas Trees at the Mass Mutual Center in Springfield. Enter a chance to win a tree and associated gifts. Some are worth hundreds of dollars. Then walk over to the Red Rose Italian Restaurant for lunch: pizza, salad and bread. The \$30 Payment to Francine Frenier is due by October 25. Please mail a check to the address above. NO REFUNDS due to bargain price. Waitlist available.

~~~~~2025~~~~~

*Multi Day Trip June 22-26. Montreal & Ottawa.* Passports required. Visit the Biodome, Notre Dame Basilica, Montreal's Underground City, Parliament Hill, Cruise on the St. Lawrence River. Price \$1,052. Discount of \$25 if paid in full by March 26, 2025. Make the check payable to Diamond Tours and mail to the address above.

*Day Trip TBD. Winnepesaukee Railroad.* Enjoy a delicious turkey dinner, prepared by Hart's Turkey Farm Restaurant, aboard the train. Tour the shores of Lake Winnepesaukee. Price TBD.

*Multi Day Trip October 12-18. Biltmore Estate & Smoky Mountains, Asheville, NC.* Seven days, six nights. Visit the Biltmore Estate, the St. Lawrence Basilica, historic Gatlinburg, TN & Asheville, NC. Guided tour of the Smoky Mountains National Park. Price \$1,099. Discount of \$25 if paid in full by July 18, 2025. Make the check payable to Diamond Tours and mail to the address above.

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More to come! Any new ideas or special events are always welcome. Please email Francine at **francine.frenier@gmail.com**. Any interest in a Woosox game? Please email me.

THANK YOU to all the passengers who joined the trips. I hope you enjoy travelling to various places and meeting new friends as much as I do.

~ Francine



October's Good News By Deb Hollingworth

The Good News this month is about changing of the guard. We have a **new SHINE counselor** for Highland Valley which includes our 7 hill towns! Her name is **Caroline Solan** and you can make an appointment to see her in person at Highland Valley (320 Riverside Drive in Florence). She will be working Wednesdays every week. Or you can call her there at **413-586-2000** and leave a message, or book an appointment for a phone call, or visit. Email works too. She can be reached at **csolan@lifepathma.org**.

The best way to reach Caroline depends on why you need to speak with her. If you have a "time sensitive" question, like an impending nursing home discharge, or a termination of coverage from your health plan, or questions about enrolling in a Medicare supplement because you have a new medical condition that you think might require hospitalization, the best strategy might be to email her. Because then she can get back to you as soon as she's able.

If you have questions about Open Enrollment and whether or not you should keep your current Medicare supplement plan or switch, then the best strategy might be to call Highland Valley and schedule a Wednesday appointment. Ask for the Intake department for a SHINE appointment.

When you call you will be asked for: your name, date of birth, zip code and reason you are calling. If you have MassHealth, then they should also ask for your MassHealth ID number which is on your blue MassHealth card. You may have to wait a while for an in person appointment. Asking for a phone call might be a shorter wait and sending an email might be the most expedient way to get in touch.

For folks who have issues with their MassHealth coverage and have home care services through Highland Valley: you can call and ask the Intake department if it's possible to leave a message for Scott or Oognah.

If you have MassHealth issues, but don't get homecare services from Highland Valley, you can contact Buliah Mae Thomas at the Hilltown Health Center: call 413-238-5511, or email **bthomas@hchcweb.org**

Remember you can always call your local senior center who will have all this information.

We are so lucky to have Caroline joining the SHINE team!

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P.O. Box 95
Cummington, MA 01026

**Cummington
Council on Aging**

Chrisoula Roumeliotis,
Coordinator
634-2262

Worth Noyes, Chairperson
634-8003

Ann Eisenhour,
Recording Secretary,
634-2243

Gail Roberge, Treasurer
512-0660

June Lynds, 695-4893

JoDee Simard

Kristen Estelle,
Newsletter Designer
regionalcoanews@gmail.com

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and you can retrieve them. Canceled checks can go after a year.

Bills. Our utility bills, phone bills and the like can be discarded after you verify they are paid.

Credit card receipts. After a purchase shows up and you verify it, you can usually discard the receipt. Keep it if needed for proof of purchase such as a warranty claim.

Insurance. Keep your active policy documents, and a year's worth of billings. Older billings can go away.

Investments. Inquire with your broker or whomever holds your investments. They may keep all the paperwork, or it may be your responsibility. If it is up to you, keep transaction items until the investment item is sold and the taxes settled.

Loans including Co-Signs. Paperwork for a loan should be kept until the loan is settled and any tax paperwork dealt with.

Property. You should hold records that relate to property until the period of limitations expires for the year in which you dispose of the property. In general, keep property papers for three years to allow some dust to settle.

Purchases. Keep receipts as long as the warranty period, and manuals as long as you have the item and it still works. Hope it's a long time...

Again, Whew!
Jean O'Neil
TRIAD Committee member
jeanoneilmass@gmail.com
413-268-2228

