

# Cummington Council on Aging

## December 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, menu option 8  
COA Email: [croumeliotis@cummington-ma.gov](mailto:croumeliotis@cummington-ma.gov)

## Flu\* & Covid Vaccine Clinic

*\*regular and high dose*

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

There will be a Covid (for ages 18+) and flu (all ages) vaccine clinic on Wednesday, December 4th from 1-4 p.m. at the Cummington Community House. Pre-registration is highly recommended to guarantee enough available vaccines; however, walk-ins are welcome. Please bring your insurance card. You can pre-register and make an appointment here: [Vaccine Registration - Welcome!](#) OR call **413-587-4903**.

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](http://northamptonma.gov/2219/Vaccine-Programs)

## Trip To Magic Wings Butterfly Conservatory & Gardens

We are planning a trip to Magic Wings in South Deerfield on **Wednesday, January 15, 2025**. The van will leave the Community House at 9am. We will visit Magic Wings and then have lunch at Wolfie's, and will return around 2pm. The van and admission to Magic Wings is free, while you pay for your own lunch. Seating is limited; **please reserve your seat by December 31**.

## New Phone System at the Community House

The Community House has a new phone system. When you call the main number – 634-5354 – you will hear a menu of options for various departments. **The COA is menu option #8**. You can also continue to use the COA's phone number, 634-2262, which will lead you to the same menu of options, and then press 8 for the COA.

## Interested in serving on the COA Board?

We are looking for additional board members. Please consider joining us! This is a wonderful

way to help serve the needs and interests of our town's older residents. If you are interested or have any questions, call the COA or any of the board members who are listed on the last page of this newsletter.

## Looking for Volunteers

We are also looking for volunteers to help us with various programs. Enjoy cooking? Consider helping us with our luncheons. Enjoy organizing? Our supply of medical equipment needs sorting, cleaning and organizing. Please reach out if you have some extra time and would like to lend a hand.

## Tai Chi – New Day & Time Starting In December

Tai Chi continues at the Community House on Wednesdays from 2-3 p.m. The class will cover 8 simple repeating movements, involving the principles of Tai Chi, to develop strength, balance, relaxation and peace of mind as a moving meditation. If you're interested, please contact the COA. Free, but donations are welcome.



## 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. Unless otherwise indicated, these programs take place in the dining room area of the Community House.*

**Weekly Grab and Go Hot Meal– every Tuesday**  
Leave your name and phone number with the COA to reserve your meal. Suggested donation of \$4 per meal goes to HVES. **Interested in getting a meal, but can't pick it up? Let us know.**

**Healthy Bones and Balance– 4 TIMES A WEEK!** Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m.; Tuesdays from 3 to 4 pm.

**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, Jan. 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, Dec. 10th.** For more information on this program, contact directly Wynne or Lucy at **634-5576** or [wynlucy@gmail.com](mailto:wynlucy@gmail.com); or [annieb@crocker.com](mailto: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.

**Exercise Equipment**

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

**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 December!**

- Peter Lang, Lawrence Slezak, Steven Emerson,
- Michele Marcoux, Martin Dempsey,
- Donna Thackeray, Jill Abrahamsen,
- Nancy Gokey, Peter Tessier, Bona Kidston,
- Marc Hoehstetter, Louise Dynok,
- Madelaine Zadik, Brenda Arbib, JoDee Simard,
- Daniel Dashnaw, Holly Anderson, John Goehring,
- Loredana Holmes, Theodore Lynds,
- Kevin Boissonnault, Ann-Marie Baronas,
- Paul Gariepy, Lorin Delisle, Antoni Sakowicz,
- Dale Griffith, Doris Frazier, Robert Ely,
- Christine Flannery, Andrew Dickinson



***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

### Bad News, Good News

Do you want the Bad news first? Then we will end with the Good, being positive as we are.

**The Bad** – scams are on the rise in frequency, diversity and impact. Around 50% of people of all ages are likely to lose money to a scam, sometimes hundreds of dollars. The types of scams, e.g., grandparent, social media hack, QR codes, etc., make our exposure and danger so much more likely than before. As for impact, in addition to including how awful we feel about being scammed, the total monetary cost per year in the US might be 10 billion dollars or more. That's dollars with a B.

**The Good** – more agencies and organizations are paying attention and marshaling resources! I've compiled a list of sources for avoiding and reporting scams.

**AARP.** The Association of Retired Persons keeps up with types of scams and issues alerts along with other educational materials. There is a Watchdog Alerts newsletter. Go to their scam web page: [www.aarp.org/money/scams-fraud/](http://www.aarp.org/money/scams-fraud/)

**BBB.** Better Business Bureau prepares topical scam alerts, highlighting current and most active scams. Mind-boggling. To sign up for their newsletter, go to [www.bbb.org/us/news/scams](http://www.bbb.org/us/news/scams), then scroll to the bottom and click on "Sign up for scam alerts".

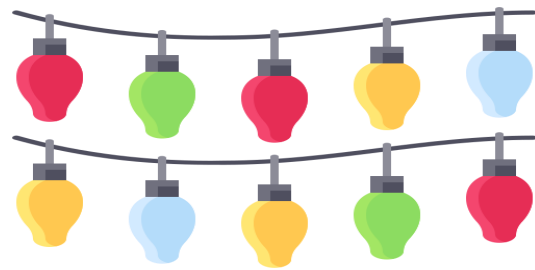
**BBC.** The British Broadcasting Corporation posts a page called Be Scam Safe with a really full set of scam videos and articles. Type into your browser "Be Scam Safe" to connect.

**CFPB.** The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau at [www.consumerfinance.gov/consumer-tools/fraud/](http://www.consumerfinance.gov/consumer-tools/fraud/) talks about understanding scams, knowing your rights, and how-to guides.

**DA.** The Northwestern District Attorney's office advocates for all residents, especially elders, focusing on education and prevention of consumer scams and elder exploitation. Go to [www.northwesternda.org/prevention](http://www.northwesternda.org/prevention) and click on Consumer Protection or call **413-586-9225**.

**VA.** The Veteran's Administration has a new service with information, reporting, and assistance on scams for veterans, service members, and their families. Visit [www.VSAFE.gov](http://www.VSAFE.gov), or call 1-833-388-7233.

Yours in safety,  
Jean O'Neil  
TRIAD Committee member  
[jeanoneilmass@gmail.com](mailto:jeanoneilmass@gmail.com), 413-268-2228



### Seniors Aware of Fire Education

The holiday season is upon us and most of these holiday observances involve electric lights and candles. Here are a few things you can do to keep your celebration bright and safe.

Senior   
**SAFE**

#### For indoor lights and decorations:

- Buy lights and electric decorations that are listed safe by an approved testing service.
- Check for and replace any lighting that has frayed wires, broken plugs, sockets or switches.
- Never overload outlets.
- Use no more than three (3) strings of lights on a single extension chord.
- Remember to turn off the tree lights and other electric decorations before going to bed.
- Consider using energy efficient LED lights that stay cool.
- Never use lit candles in the tree or near live or other flammable decorations.
- Keep lit candles at least a foot (12 inches) from flammable items.
- Never leave a lit candle unattended.

#### For outdoor lights and decorations:

- Only use electric decorations that are rated for outdoor use.
- Plug them into a ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI).
- Use electric connection protectors.
- Anchor outdoor lights and decorations with insulated holders or hooks.

Keep the holidays bright SAFElly!

--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 December



We have more people to help you with your tech needs and requests. Our long period of low staffing is at an end. With more hands on deck we are hoping our final three months will have much higher efficiency and shorter response times.

### More Tech Support Available by appointment

Receive technology help by email, phone, drop-in, or by appointment: [coaTechHelp@gmail.com](mailto:coaTechHelp@gmail.com), phone or text msg **413-296-5080**.

### Being delivered now: Internet Hotspots

Need affordable internet access? Have you already requested affordable internet? We have a solution that may work for you. Hotspots are small cellular devices you can use to access internet. They work like WIFI without cable or fiber service. Hotspots work in most areas in the hilltowns. If you are interested in learning more about how these devices could benefit you, please contact us by phone or email. If you requested affordable internet and were not contacted in November, please reach out to us again. Calls to **413-296-5080** are now returned and email to [coatechhelp@gmail.com](mailto:coatechhelp@gmail.com) is also a great way to reach us.

### Devices for you: PC laptops, refurbished Chromebooks and iPad and Android tablets

Ky Martus continues 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](mailto:coatechconnect@gmail.com), leave message at **413-296-5080**, or use online request form on our website, [www.northernhilltownscoas.org](http://www.northernhilltownscoas.org)

### 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  
Three Fridays, 11:30-1:30 (12/6, 12/13 & 12/27)
- Cummington Community House, 33 Main St.  
Drop-In tech support, 2nd Weds. 10-12 (12/11)
- Goshen Free Public Library, 42 Main St.  
Drop-in tech support, 3rd Thurs. 12-2 (12/19)

- Plainfield Shaw Memorial Library, 312 Main St.  
Drop-In tech support, 3rd Thurs. 5:30-7:30pm (12/19)
- Westhampton: to be scheduled. Please contact us for details, [coatechhelp@gmail.com](mailto:coatechhelp@gmail.com) or call **413-296-5080** for day/time.
- Williamsburg  
Meekins Library Drop-In tech support  
2nd Tuesday 12/10 from 10 to Noon  
Nash Hill Place Resident Drop-In tech support  
2nd Tuesday 12/10 from 10 to Noon
- Worthington: tech support at COA office.  
Call COA for date & time: 413-238-5962.

### Tech Training:

Must pre-register for training 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 [coaTechTrainer@gmail.com](mailto:coaTechTrainer@gmail.com), call or text **413-296-5080**, or sign up through the website [www.northernhilltownscoas.org](http://www.northernhilltownscoas.org)

### Computer Classes:

Beginner's Windows Laptop Class will restart on Thursdays on December 12, 19 and January 9, 16 from 1:00 - 2:30.

Intermediate Windows Laptop Class starts, over six Wednesdays, 10:30-Noon. December 4, 11, 18 and Jan 8, 15, 22, 10:30-Noon.

### Tech Workshops:

- 12/6, 10:30-11:30 Computer Maintenance
- 12/9, 1 - 2:30 Organizing, Storing, & Moving Digital Photos (ONLINE CLASS)
- 12/13, 10:30-11:30 Windows Accessibility
- 12/17, 1- 2:30 Android phones
- 1/10, 10:30 - 11:30 Misinformation
- 1/15, 12- 1:00 Self Learning
- 1/24, 10:30 -11:30 Google Suite
- 1/29, 10- 11:30 iPhones
- 1/29, 6 - 7:00 pm Learn & Watch:  
YouTube, Libby, Kanopy



## On the Road Again...

### 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 late April TBD. **Encore Casino.*** Boston Harbor casino trip. Lunch on your own, options available on site.

*Day Trip May TBD. **Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum & Maggiano's Little Italy.*** Enjoy a delicious family-style lunch at Maggiano's. Tour three floors of galleries at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum on your own or with a guide. Price TBD.

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

*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 July TBD. **FDR Homestead & Library and Hudson River Cruise.*** Start your day with a scenic cruise on the Hudson River. Enjoy lunch at Mahoney's Irish Pub & Steakhouse (TBD.) Tour the home of Franklin D. Roosevelt and the first Presidential Library. Price TBD.

*Day Trip August 3. Triple A affiliates, **Boston Red Sox vs Philadelphia Phillies** at Polar Park, Worcester, MA. A pre-game tour of Polar Park and a ball-park-fare buffet for our group are included. Cost \$90.00. Make check payable to Francine Frenier and mail to address above.*

*Day Trip Sept. TBD. **The BIG E,*** an annual favorite, with free entertainment at The Court of Honor Stage.

*Day Trip Sept 5-Oct 26 TBD. **A Chorus Line.*** 50th Anniversary Production on stage at the Goodspeed Opera House in East Haddam, CT. Lunch at The Gelston House. More details to come. Price TBD. Wed.Thurs.Sun

*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. **As of December 2024, Diamond Tours is expecting this trip to go, despite the hurricane damage. Please stay tuned.**

*Day Trip Nov-Dec. **A Holiday Event in Waltham, MA.*** Reagle Music Theater Players beloved Christmas extravaganza--100 performers, live orchestra, dancers, living nativity, and yuletide tunes. Pre-show lunch at The Chateau Restaurant. Price TBD. Sundays.

## Good News for December

### By Deborah Hollingworth

The Good News this month is a reminder that we have a resource called The Connector which can work for you if you have questions about benefits, resources, and services. When your circumstances change, and you could use some help, but don't know what's available or where to start, the Connector can help you "connect" with the resources you need.

This help is available to the seven hilltowns of Plainfield, Cummington, Worthington, Goshen, Chesterfield, Williamsburg and Westhampton through a grant from Highland Valley. We have helped people figure out housing options, determine if folks are eligible for benefits like fuel assistance, SNAP, Circuit Breaker property tax rebates, and if folks qualify for subsidies on their health insurance.

Often it's brainstorming on how to survive a change in medical conditions, or shrinking finances and increasing household overhead/bills. What to do when life throws us a curve ball, or when we might be worried about outliving our savings/investments.

The Connector can help you understand what's available when you're being discharged from a nursing home, or whether you might be eligible for MassHealth and whether MassHealth might pay family caregivers for the help they provide.

There's help out there, but unless you know the eligibility requirements... unless you know how the 'system' works... unless you know what's available... you can't get it, if you don't know about it.

The Connector is here to help you get those resources, over a phone call or a home visit to help with an application. Whatever works for your situation. It's a no cost resource, funded through Highland Valley.

To get help, call your COA and they will get you Connected!

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

**Cummington  
Council on Aging**

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June Lynds, 695-4893

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Kristen Estelle,  
Newsletter Designer  
regionalcoanews@gmail.com

**The Goshen Council on Aging** invites you to a three part discussion group based on the book *Let's Talk About Death Over Dinner* by Michael Hebb.

\* **January 7, 2025, 4-5pm**

Introduction and receive a copy of the book.

\* **February 18, 2025, 4-6:30pm**

Catered dinner and a prompted discussion facilitated by Stacey Mackowiak, End of Life Doula.

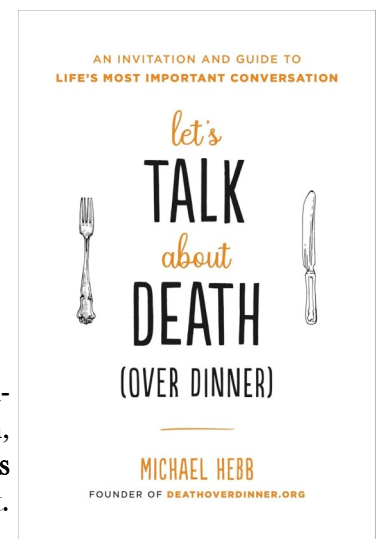
\* **February 25, 2025, 4-5pm**

Follow up conversation (optional).

This important and engaging program is free and limited to 15 participants; older adults from all Hilltowns are welcome. Please contact Kerry Normandin, Goshen COA Director, by 1/3 to sign up: 413-268-9354 or [coa@goshen-ma.us](mailto:coa@goshen-ma.us) All three parts will take place in the John James Memorial Hall, 42 Main St. Goshen, MA. Funded by a grant from the MCOA.

*"...encourages people to pull up a chair, break bread, and really talk about the one thing we all have in common. "*

*"...transform your difficult conversations into an opportunity of celebration and meaning, changing not only the way we die, but also the way we live."*



Massachusetts  
Councils On Aging