

Cummington Council on Aging

January 2025 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

Trip to Magic Wings Butterfly Conservatory & Gardens

There's still room on the van!

We are going to Magic Wings in South Deerfield on **Wednesday, January 15th**. The van will leave the Community House at 9 am. We will visit Magic Wings and then have lunch at Wolfie's, and will return to the Community House around 2pm. The van and admission to Magic Wings is free, while you pay for your own lunch. Sign up now!

Soup or Chili Cook-off

Do you have a soup or chili recipe that your friends and relatives rave about? Plan to bring it to our 2nd Annual Soup/Chili cook-off on **Wednesday, February 19th**. Look for more information in the February newsletter.



Sand Deliveries

Deliveries of sand will continue through the winter. Please let us know if you would like a 5-gallon bucket of sand brought to you or if you need your current bucket of sand replenished.

Town Notification System (i.e., robo calls)

You can receive messages with information about time-sensitive or local community matters via a landline, a cell phone, text or email. Your information is compiled by the town clerk and shared with emergency management personnel. To sign up, go to this webpage: [Notification System - Town of Cummington](#) If you have any questions, you can contact the town clerk: **413-200-5011** or bemersoncamp@cummington-ma.gov

Shine Counselor

Our new SHINE counselor is Caroline Solan. You can reach her at csolan@lifepathma.org or **413-586-2000**.

Seeking Additional Board Members

The COA Board is seeking additional board members. Please consider joining! This is a wonderful way to work with an engaging and fun group of people and 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.

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 – continues in January

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.

Offering: Depend and Attends brands incontinence tabbed briefs, size L. Please reach out if you need any.



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. 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
Second Wednesday of every month, 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, Jan. 14th**. For more information on this program, contact directly Wynne or Lucy at **634-5576** or wynlucy@gmail.com; or annieb@crocker.com.

Resource Cart: next to the COA office – everything on the cart is FREE and available whenever the Community House is open. **We have a new supply of covid test kits on the cart, as well as the 2025 Consumer Calendar. Please take what you need.** Stocked with covid test kits, the 2025 Consumer Calendar, medical/surgical masks, 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 informational 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 January!
Edith Morton, Stuart Carduner, Geoffrey Kenseth, George Brownfield, Donna Forgea, Elliot Ring, Eric Hardendorff, Keith Jenkins, Ana Busto, Alma Owen, John Walker, Corinne Sharkey, Mark Demaranville, Sheila Tower, Leni Fried, Cynthia Cutter, Christine Earls, Bradley Parsons, Nancy Bean, Peg Cowen, Patricia Wilcox, June Lynds, Karla Reinertson, Bobby Ann Higgins, Eamon Mohan



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

True Story – the Grandparent Scam

So we have an educated and intelligent friend, no one's fool, who is also a grandparent. He got a call from a man saying he was a public defender in California and the grandson is at fault in a really bad car accident.



He needs \$10,000 for an appearance bond or he will go to jail – please call back immediately. Our friend used to work in the correctional system and the thought of his grandson in jail was too awful. Our friend also knew that his grandson and son were on a camping trip, so it was possible that he had gotten into a scrape but couldn't be reached by phone to verify this; he tried anyway, no answer. When our friend called the man back and said that much money was a problem, the man said he could manage the situation with \$5,000. Bingo - lost money.

So what do we do to avoid this particular scam?

You know I'm going to say don't answer the call if you don't know the caller, but if you do answer, have a plan. The scammer says "This is your grandson" and you say "Billy?" They say, "Yes, it's Billy." (You don't have a grandson named Billy). You say "But where is his Mom Marian?" They will probably hang up at this point and you have verified that this is a scam.

Limit personal information on social media. For instance, telling others – you never know who is listening – that you are so proud of Carl for making the soccer team on his 15th birthday, which was just yesterday. That gives the scammer four pieces of solid information to make his story real to you.

Protect your contact information, e.g., don't include your phone number and mailing address and email in your signature line in emails. Again, more information for them.

Check their messages to you, their email addresses and web page addresses to see if they are plausible. If the caller says they are from the government and gives a web address, is the suffix a .com instead of .gov or .MA?

Hang up after the first call and contact someone, anyone, who might know if your grandson could possibly be wherever the scammer says.

Listen to the teller when you go to the bank to withdraw cash! If they say something like "Are you sure this is safe?" think about it for a minute. Tellers are now trained to spot the actions that lead to these calls and loss of money.

Be safe, y'all.

Jean O'Neil

TRIAD Committee member

jeanoneilmass@gmail.com, 413-268-2228

Seniors Aware of Fire Education

Winter is here and people and many people will be out there in the cold and on or near very cold water. They will be skating, ice fishing, and driving their snowmobiles on lakes, ponds and even rivers.

Accidents do happen and a lot of people experience cold water emergencies resulting in HYPOTHERMIA — the extreme loss of body heat. If your core body temperature gets below 95 degrees, it can be fatal if untreated. Hypothermia caused by cold water draws away body heat 20-30 times faster than cold air.



So here are a few things to consider about avoiding or dealing with cold water emergencies:

- Dress properly for cold weather activities. Wool insulates better when dry or wet than man-made fabrics do.
- Keep your feet warm and dry by wearing snow boots and heavy-duty socks.
- Keep your head covered, because you can lose your body heat 50% faster through your head.

If someone falls through the ice or into cold water:

- Call 911 immediately. Many of our fire departments are trained for and have special equipment for cold water rescues. Our ambulances are staffed and equipped to care for a hypothermic patient. So, do not hesitate to call 911.
- Do NOT go out on the ice. You do not want to chance being a victim.
- REACH...THROW...or ROW.
Try to REACH the person with a stick.
Try to THROW something like a rope, life jacket or any thing that can float to the person.
If a boat is available, ROW to the victim to the shore.
- Send someone out to the nearest access point to guide the emergency responders to the cold water victim.

We do have a multitude of lakes, ponds and rivers in our hilltowns. Moving water can change the thickness of ice without you seeing it. The only really safe place to skate is at a skating rink. Be SAFE out on the cold water!

--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 January



We Are Still Alive!

Tech Connect continues providing services through January and February. We have trainings this month and tech support will continue through February. Please take advantage of continuing service while we remain active. And we haven't given up looking for ways to extend services. We will know more by February.

PLEASE READ! Delivering 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. Hotspots work in most areas in the hilltowns. If you are interested in learning more, please contact us by phone or email. If you requested affordable internet and were not contacted, please reach out to us again. Calls to **413-296-5080** are now returned and email to coatechhelp@gmail.com is also a great way to reach us.

Tech Support Available by appointment

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

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

There is still time to join the Digital World. 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, leave message at **413-296-5080**, or use online request form on our website, 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 (1/10 and 1/24)
- Cumington Community House, 33 Main St. Drop-In tech support, 2nd Weds. 10-12 (1/8)

- Goshen Free Public Library, 42 Main St. Drop-in tech support, 3rd Thurs. 12pm-2pm (1/16)
- Plainfield Shaw Memorial Library, 312 Main St. Drop-In tech support, 3rd Thurs. 5:30-7:30pm (1/16)
- Westhampton Library, 1 North Rd. Drop-in tech support, 4th Thurs. 2-4pm (1/23)
- Williamsburg
Meekins Library Drop-In tech support
2nd Tuesday 1/14 from 10 to Noon
Nash Hill Place Resident Drop-In tech support
2nd Tuesday 1/14 from 10 to Noon
- Worthington: drop-in 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, call or text **413-296-5080**, or sign up through the website www.northernhilltownscoas.org

Computer Classes:

Beginner's Windows Laptop Class will continue on Thursdays on January 9 and 16 from 1:00 - 2:30.

Intermediate Windows Laptop Class continues over three more Wednesdays: January 8, 15, and 22, 10:30-Noon.

Tech Workshops:

- 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 or overnight April TBD. One dat at **Encore Casino** or an overnight at **Turning Stone Casino in Verona, NY**. Please email me which casino you'd like.

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. Price TBD.

Day Trip June 8. **Winnepesaukee Railroad.** Enjoy a complete turkey dinner, prepared by Hart's Turkey Farm Restaurant, aboard the train while touring the shores of Lake Winnepesaukee. Price \$137. Make check payable to Landmark Tours and mail to the address above.

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. Only a few seats left.

Day Trip July TBD. **FDR Homestead & Library and Hudson River Cruise.** Take 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** **Lehigh Valley IronPigs** 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 Oct. 9. **A Chorus Line.** Center orchestra seating for the 50th Anniversary Production on stage at the Goodspeed Opera House in East Haddam, CT. Lunch at The Gelston House. Price \$177. Make a check payable to Landmark Tours and mail to the address above. Note date change.

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 January 2025, 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 January

By Deborah Hollingworth

Let's talk about buyer's remorse: when you've made a decision, or done something and now you're having second thoughts. Wished you hadn't done that... If it's a health insurance decision that you regret, because you've made a change in your coverage and now you wish you hadn't, then there's good news because even though the deadline for Open Enrollment has passed and now it's January 2025, **YOU CAN MAKE CHANGES IN YOUR HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE** if you want to regardless that the deadline's past, regardless if you've enrolled in a new Rx plan, regardless if you've chosen a Medicare Advantage plan. You can change your mind.

Why would you change your mind?

Well, you could have been swayed by advertising you saw on tv saying you could get additional benefits so you enrolled in a Medicare Advantage plan and found out that your doctor, or hospital isn't in network. Or you could have missed the Open enrollment deadline of December 7th to sign up for different Rx coverage- you "meant" to, but you didn't. Where does the time go? Or you could have gotten a new medical diagnosis and you wonder if you should change your insurance coverage as a result because you have all these co-pays whenever you see a medical provider. Or you went to the pharmacy to pick up your Rx and were unpleasantly surprised at the co-pay cost. I still remember the pharmacist looking at me and asking: "Do you know how much this is going to cost you?" before letting me know that my blood thinner had a \$600 co-pay (and that was last year...it's gone up for 2025)

But regardless the reason or the worry, regardless of how confusing or complex our health insurance coverage seems, the good news is that there is usually a way to change your coverage. Our SHINE counselor, Caroline Solan, can take a look at your coverage, determine if it's the best option and help you change it if you need to. You can contact Caroline by calling Highland Valley at **586-2000** and asking for a SHINE appointment.

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P.O. Box 95
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SCAM ALERT!



*You get a call or message saying that **your Social Security number has been linked to a crime** and you need to **act now**.*

- They may tell you to move your money to protect it.
- They may tell you to take out cash and drop it off.
- They may tell you to buy gold and give it to a courier.

What should you do?

- Hang up!** It's a scam.
- Do not give out or confirm your Social Security number to anyone who calls you.
- Do not make payments or move money.

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.**

