

# Cummington Council on Aging

## May 2025 Newsletter



**Cummington Council on Aging**  
**PO 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)**

### May Potluck Luncheon

**Wednesday, May 21st at Noon**  
**Community House Dining Room**

Join us on Wednesday, May 21st for a potluck lunch! We will be serving three kinds of homemade lasagna, garlic bread and salad. Please bring a dessert or side dish to share if you are able. Social hour starts at 11:30 and lunch is served at noon. Following lunch, there will be a fun food demonstration by HVES (see details below).



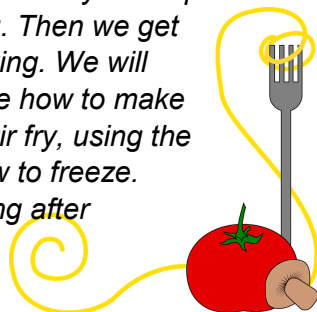
### Food Demonstration

**by Highland Valley Elder Services**  
**(to follow potluck)**

Following lunch on May 21st, Brandon Walton, HVES Registered Dietician, will be presenting "Freezer Friendly Stir Fry."

### Freezer Friendly Stir Fry Food Demo

*During this educational event, we will go over some vegetables that can easily go from chopped to freezer to help save time and space. We will take some time to go over the prep and show you how some adaptive equipment works. These tools can help people with limited ability to chop and prep foods for cooking. Then we get into the best part, the cooking. We will take time to show everyone how to make tofu and fresh vegetable stir fry, using the vegetables we learned how to freeze. There will be food for tasting after the event. We hope to see you there!*



### Save the Date!

- **Wednesday, June 25th**  
**COA Picnic at Pettingill Park**

### **Brown Bag: Food For Elders**

We are exploring whether there is interest in this program that is run by the Food Bank of Western Mass. The Brown Bag program provides a free bag of groceries to eligible seniors once a month. To be eligible, you must be over 55 and have a gross monthly income below \$2,608 for a household of one and below \$3,525 for a household of two. If you already receive SSI, SNAP, Medicaid, Fuel Assistance, or Veteran's Aid and are at least 55 years old, you likely qualify; if you receive SSDI for a documented disability and are under 55, you likely qualify.

There are currently distribution locations in Chesterfield and Williamsburg; if there is enough interest, we may be able to distribute the food in Cummington. Please call the COA at 634-2262, option 8, if you are interested.

### **A Few of the Many Helpful Services Available through the Hilltown CDC**

#### Housing Rehab

-designed to address building and sanitary code issues for single family homes via a deferred payment loan. Contact Sophia at **413-296-4536 x112** or [sophiad@hilltowncdc.org](mailto:sophiad@hilltowncdc.org) for eligibility information and an application.

#### EasyRide Van and Driver Pool

- provides rides for medical appointments, medical errands and shopping to Northampton and Pittsfield. Contact Ed Pelletier at **413-296-4232** for eligibility information and an application.

#### Hilltown Elder Network (HEN)

-provides in-home services, such as home chores or transportation assistance, to help ensure safe

conditions for independent living. Contact Sandy Powers: **413-634-5558** or **Ssndypwrs@gmail.com** for eligibility information and an application.

## **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.

### **Resource cart**

Everything on the cart is free; available whenever the Community House is open

### **Exercise Equipment**

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

### **Drop in Tech support**

**Second Wednesday of every month, 10 a.m. to noon.** For more information, contact TechConnect at **413-296-5080**. No appointment needed.

### **Shine counselor (Medicare related insurance issues)**

Caroline Solan can be reached at **413-586-2000** or **csolan@lifepathma.org**

### **MassHealth/Medicaid**

Buliah Mae Thomas at the Hilltown Community Health Center: **bthomas@hchcweb.org** or **413-238-5511**.

### **Connector program (services beyond health insurance)**

Jennifer O'Connell at **413-296-4536 ext. 110** or **communityconnectjo@gmail.com**

### **Foot Clinic**

The next foot clinic will be on **Tuesday, May 6th** 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, May 13th**. For more information on this program, contact **annieb@crocker.com** or **fandellaf@gmail.com** or call Lucy at **634-5576**.

### **Medical Equipment**

Walkers, crutches, shower seats and tub transfer seats, toilet seat risers, and more are available for your use.

## **Happy Birthday in May!**

Cynthia Joyner, Lorena Thayer, James Brunton, Charles Quinlan, Theresa Panzeri, Peter Marcoux, Kathleen Knox, Carol Stoddard, Alexandra Cherau, Fredric Nudell, Ann McCullom, Martha Emerson, Cory Heath, Carolyn Hooks, Laura Pierce, Sandra Streeter, Michelle Taylor, Donald Stupplebeen, Antoinette Reed, Nancy Cole, Judy Messer, Harry Box, Thomas Farrington, Kathleen Sheridan, Kara Falcone, Karen Mohan, Nancy Howes, Raymond Vandoloski



## ***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 make out your check to Cummington Council of Aging and mail to Cummington COA, PO Box 95 Cummington, MA 01026.)*

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_



### Seniors Aware of Fire Education

Hoping that May will warm things up enough for barbecuing, here are some things to consider for barbecue safety:



- ~NEVER grill indoors.
- ~ Keep grills at least 10 feet away from the side of any building.
- ~ Keep children away from a burning grill.
- ~ NEVER leave a burning grill unattended.
- ~ Grills may be used on first floor decks, balconies or patios if there is an outdoor stairway to the ground or if it is on the ground level.
- ~ Grills are prohibited to be used on any porch, balcony or deck that has a roof or overhang.

#### Gas Grill Safety

- ~ Propane is heavier than air and will sink to the lowest level. A leaky grill is a hazard to anyone below.
- ~ Keep propane 10 feet away from any building openings (doors, windows, dryer vents).
- ~ Keep propane 20 feet away from air intake vents and any ignition sources.

#### **Before lighting a gas grill:**

- ~ Make sure all connections are secure and tight, and open the lid.
- ~If the flame goes out, turn off the gas and wait 10 minutes for the gas to dissipate before relighting the grill.
- ~Make sure the grease trap is clean.

#### Charcoal Grill Safety

- ~ Use only charcoal lighter fluid, not gasoline.
- ~ After the coals are lit, be patient and NEVER add more lighter fluid to the fire. Flames can travel up the light fluid stream and cause very serious burns.
- ~ Dispose of the ashes in a covered metal container.

Have a S.A.F.E and delicious barbecuing season!

--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.*

### Social Security Safety, part 2

Oh the hubris. I WILL make this work, I said last month. Well, yes and no.

I did finally find the location online in my account where I could block access, it is called "Deactivate Access". I found it under My Profile, then Security. But the directions / warning scared me off. This is not a simple block like we do for our credit bureau files. To get my account unblocked, I will have to verify my account again by calling the Social Security office. Not my favorite thing to do...

I would have to unblock my account to make any future changes to direct deposit (I change my bank, for example), or need to report a change of address. But as more news has surfaced about private individuals accessing our data, I worry about the data getting compromised by them misusing it or just messing up the software so it doesn't work.

If you do decide to move forward with the block, you can call the Social Security Administration and request the block. You can apply a Self Lock on E-Verify.

In the meantime, remember the old safety warnings which I will repeat, then stop nagging. Don't carry your card with you. Don't share your number over the phone, EVER, or in public. Don't give out your number unless it really is necessary. Keep sharp watch on your bank statement to find any discrepancies and report them right away and to make sure your monthly SS payments come in and are correct. Do the credit report freeze if you haven't already done so.

Again, I now do not recommend this. Too risky for my blood. My parents didn't raise a gambler!

As always, stay safe.

Jean O'Neil

TRIAD Committee member

jeanoneilmass@gmail.com

413-268-2228



## Tech. Help and Training for May



### GREAT NEWS!

TechConnect will continue providing services through a partnership with Northampton Open Media. Although we have fewer trainings going forward, drop-ins and tech support will continue. Please take advantage of ongoing service.

### DELIVERING NOW AND ACCEPTING NEW REQUESTS: Internet Hotspots

It's not too late if you need affordable internet access! We have a solution that may work for you. Hotspots are small cellular devices you can use to access the internet, and they work in most areas in the hilltowns. If you are interested in learning more, please contact us by phone or email. Call **413-296-5080** or email [coatechdevices@gmail.com](mailto:coatechdevices@gmail.com).

### 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** or check the website, [www.northernhilltownscoas.org](http://www.northernhilltownscoas.org), for locations and time. You can attend drop-in at all locations, except Nash Hill.

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

There is still time to join the Digital World while supplies last. We have ordered more PC laptops/ computers, refurbished Chromebooks, iPads 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 [coatechdevices@gmail.com](mailto:coatechdevices@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  
Two Fridays, 11:30-1:30 (5/2 and 5/16)
- Cummington Community House, 33 Main St.  
Drop-In tech support, 2nd Weds. 10-12 (5/14)
- Goshen Free Public Library, 42 Main St.  
Drop-in tech support, 3rd Thurs. 12pm-2pm (5/15)

- Plainfield Shaw Memorial Library, 312 Main St.  
Drop-In tech support, 3rd Thurs. 5:30-7:30pm (5/15)
- Westhampton Library, 1 North Rd.  
Drop-in tech support, 4th Thurs. 2-4pm (5/22)
- Williamsburg  
Meekins Library Drop-In tech support  
2nd Tuesday 5/13 from 10:30-12:30  
Nash Hill Place Resident Drop-In tech support  
2nd Tuesday 5/13 from 10 to Noon

### 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)

### Tech Workshops, May into August:

#### **\*Note Change To June Workshops**

*On Fridays twice a month from 10:30–11:30 at  
Chesterfield Community Center*

- 5/2 - Intro to Google Suite
- 5/16- Microsoft Word
- 6/13 - Microsoft Excel
- 6/27 - Canva
- 7/18 - Windows Basics
- 8/1 - Google Drive

### Computer Classes:

No ongoing computer classes are scheduled. An alternate online resource for basic training can be accessed, with help from us, at [www.digitalliteracyassessment.org/login/?location=17640-MG8N-techconnect](http://www.digitalliteracyassessment.org/login/?location=17640-MG8N-techconnect)

We can set up your access to this website and help you begin to train yourself for very basic to more advanced beginner digital literacy.





## 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 June 17* **Isles of Shoals Cruise in Portsmouth, NH.** Lunch at Foster's Clambake in York, Maine. Cost \$154 DUE NOW. Make check payable to Landmark Tours and call 413-529-2105.

*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. Payment of \$1,052 due **NOW**. Make the check payable to Diamond Tours and mail to the address above. **Waitlist only.**

*Day Trip July 16.* **FDR Homestead & Library and Hudson River Cruise.** Take a scenic cruise on the Hudson River. Enjoy a boxed lunch on board. Tour the home of Franklin D. Roosevelt and the first Presidential Library. Price \$140. Make check payable to Landmark Tours and mail to the address above by May 28. **Waitlist only.**

*Day Trip August 3.* Triple A affiliates, **Boston Red Sox Woo Sox vs Philadelphia Phillies Lehigh Valley IronPigs** at Polar Park, Worcester, MA. A pre-game tour of Polar Park and a ballpark-fare buffet are included. Cost \$90.00. Make check payable to Francine Frenier and mail to address above by June 1. **Waitlist only.**

*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. Center Orchestra seating. Lunch at The Gelston House. Price \$177. Make a check payable to Landmark Tours and mail to the address above by August 1.

*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. Make the check payable to Diamond Tours and mail to the address above. **A 2nd bus has a few open seats.**

*Day Trip Sunday, December 7.* **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 \$160 (approx.) Make a check payable to Landmark Tours and mail to the address above by October 13.

## Good News for May 2025

By Deb Hollingworth

Besides it is finally beginning to feel like Spring, the Good News this month is more about the Medicare Savings Program.

Those of you who submitted a MSP application last year are beginning to get a notice from MassHealth asking you to "recertify". This happens every year for anyone enrolled in MassHealth and although the Medicare Savings Program is technically a Federal benefit, not a MassHealth benefit, it is administered by MassHealth, which is why you are getting the recertify letter.

The good news is that the recertification application is the same as your original application. Only two pages. And does not require verification of identity or income. You once again, self declare your income, give your Medicare number and mail back to the address on the application.

Some of you may have received a MassHealth card during the year? Perhaps you are confused since you can't remember applying for MassHealth. The card came automatically because your income was low enough to qualify you for the highest level of Medicare Savings Program subsidy which is called QMB. Those folks with income less than \$2,478/ month single, or \$3,349/ month married get an additional benefit because MSP will pay any co-pays or deductibles that Medicare doesn't cover.

*If you received a MassHealth ID card in the mail, be sure to show it to your medical providers so it will be added to your record and you will not be charged any co-pays or deductibles.*

QMB is not MassHealth, and is not subject to Estate Recovery. It's a great benefit that acts like a Medex supplement.

Which brings me to the next question. If you have QMB through the Medicare Savings Program, do you need to keep your Medex? The short answer is No. QMB does the same thing as your Medex. The longer answer is if you give up your Medex, you won't be allowed to get it back at some later date, as long as you have QMB. So for folks who spend time out of state, like winters in Florida, you might not want to give up your Medex. QMB works in Massachusetts, but out of State medical providers may not be willing to bill it.

If you have any questions, or a problem with your medical provider not billing QMB for deductibles or co-pays, you can speak with Caroline Solan, your SHINE counselor at Highland Valley, 413-586-2000, or call your senior center for more information.

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**P.O. Box 95**  
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**Cummington  
Council on Aging**

Chrisoula Roumeliotis,  
Coordinator  
634-2262

Worth Noyes, Chairperson  
634-8003

Ann Eisenhour,  
Recording Secretary,  
634-2243

JoDee Simard, Treasurer

June Lynds, 695-4893

Brenda Emerson-Camp

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Kristen Estelle,  
Newsletter Designer  
regionalcoanews@gmail.com

**Let's Keep Talking About Death-  
Part 2**

**May 20, May 27 and June 3rd**  
**4:00-5:30pm**

**John James Memorial Hall**  
**42 Main St. Goshen**

We are continuing our series of conversations based on *Let's Talk About Death Over Dinner* by Michael Hebb. Sessions will be led by End of Life Doula Stacey Mackowiak and take place over three sessions-May 20, May 27, and June 3 from 4:00-5:30pm.

Sessions will involve guided practices, journaling, and small group discussions on topics including vigil planning, life review, writing an epitaph, legacy planning, being present with the dying, and how to say goodbye.

*All are welcome, even if this is your first session.*

**Please email or call Kerry Normandin at 268-9354 by May 12 if you would like to attend.**

**The COAs in collaboration with the  
HRHS Drama Company!**

**Hampshire Regional High School Auditorium**  
**Thursday May 15th at 3pm**  
**(doors open at 2:30pm)**

**The Picture Of Dorian Gray**

*Let's go see a show! Together!*

The High School Drama Company is teaming up with the local Councils on Aging to bring a special theatrical experience to the community. In a unique collaboration, students will perform a production for you (those who are 60+), providing you with the opportunity to enjoy a show at little to no cost. This partnership offers the students a chance to showcase their work in a relaxed and supportive environment, serving as a dress rehearsal before the official debut. For the seniors, it's a wonderful opportunity to connect with the younger generation and enjoy an afternoon of live theater in an accessible and welcoming setting. It's a win-win—students gain invaluable performance experience, while the community is treated to a memorable cultural experience.

**Entry is free to all COA Seniors.** There will be a donation bucket at the entrance if people wish to make a cash donation to help with the Drama Company's expenses. For more info, please contact your COA.