

Cummington Council on Aging

DECEMBER 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

COOKIES & COCOA

**Wednesday, December 17th, 1-3 p.m.,
Community House dining room**

We look forward to seeing you on Wednesday, December 17th from 1-3 p.m. for cookies (and other tasty treats) and cocoa (and other warm beverages – coffee, tea, warm cider). We will supply the goodies. Feel free to bring something to share.

SPRINGFIELD SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA'S MUSICAL PETTING ZOO IS COMING TO CUMMINGTON

**Friday, December 19th, 1:30 - 3 p.m.,
Community House dining room**

This traveling exhibit of musical instruments is a wonderful hands-on opportunity to try out instruments like violins, cellos and percussion in a welcoming and supportive space.

Please join us and the students and families from the Village Homeschool Co-op, along with members of the Springfield Symphony Orchestra's outreach program, on December 19th at 1:30 p.m. for this intergenerational event.

Funding for this event is provided by the Cummington Cultural Council

SAND BUCKETS

Those of you who requested a delivery of sand should have received the bucket of sand by now. If you haven't, please let us know. Also, deliveries will continue through the winter as needed; let us know if you need sand at any point. **ALSO: We are looking for more 5 gallon buckets, preferably with covers. If you have any, drop them off at the side entrance of the Community House or at the transfer station.**

LEARN TO MAKE: Lotion bars & Lip balm

**Wednesday, December 3rd, 1-3 p.m.,
Community House dining room
Open to all Hilltown residents, ages 12
and up**

Cost: \$15

**Registration is required – call 634-2262,
option 8 or email**

**croumeliotis@cummington-ma.gov
to register or with any questions**

There's still time to register for this workshop! Eliza Dragon will teach you how to make 2 shaped lotion bars (choosing from a variety of mold shapes and scent options) and 2 lip balms in tins or tubes (also with options for scent). You will have time to make labels and package your bars and balms for personal use or gift giving.

DROP-IN TECH SUPPORT HOURS IN CUMMINGTON CANCELLED

Drop-in tech support has been discontinued in Cummington due to low demand. In-home tech support continues by appointment. Call or text 413-296-5080 or email coaTechHelp@gmail.com to arrange a home visit. Additionally, you are welcome to go to the drop-in hours at the Chesterfield Community Center, every Tuesday from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

See additional information about technology help and support, including available devices and assistance connecting to the internet, in the regional section of this newsletter.

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, option 8. Unless otherwise indicated, programs take place in the dining room area of the Community House.

Weekly Grab and Go Hot Meal – every Tues

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.;
Tuesdays from 4-5 p.m.

Coffee Hour

Mondays and Thursdays from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Needlework Group

Thursdays from 1:00 - 4:00 pm.

Resource cart

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

NEW: Holiday cards – if you are sending cards to friends and family, stop by the resource cart and pick up what you need!

Exercise Equipment

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

Foot Clinic

The next foot clinic will be on **Tuesday, January 6th** with Piper Sagan at the Community House. The cost is \$40 for Cummington residents, \$50 for non-residents. Contact COA to make an appointment.

Shine counselor (Medicare related insurance issues)

Caroline Solan 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.

Community Connector Program (services beyond health insurance)

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

Services include assistance with obtaining benefits, such as Fuel Assistance, SNAP, Social Security; helping you live independently in your home; assistance with home repairs, transportation and more.

Living Fully, Aging Gracefully

The next Zoom meeting for this group is **Tuesday, December 9th**. 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. We also accept donations of clean equipment in good condition; please reach out if you have something to donate.

Easy Ride Van & Driver Pool

The Hilltown Easy Ride van and the Driver Pool program provide rides for medical appointments, medical errands and shopping to Northampton and Pittsfield. Contact Ed Pelletier of the Hilltown CDC Transportation program 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, Jill Abrahamsen, Nancy Gokey, Peter Tessier, Bona Kidston, Marc Hoechstetter, 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, Dale Griffith, Doris Frazier, Susan Makower, Robert Ely, Christine Flannery, Andrew Dickinson, Craig Garnett, Robert Sherwood

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 _____



Regional News

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.



For indoor lights and decorations:

- Buy lights and electric decorations that are listed safe by an approved testing service.
- Check for and replace lighting with frayed wires, broken sockets, switches, plugs.
- Never overload outlets.
- Use no more than three (3) strings of lights on a single extension cord.
- Remember to turn off the tree lights and all 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 SAFELY!

--Worth Noyes, SAFE Educator
Williamsburg & Cummington Fire Depts
The Senior SAFE program is sponsored by many area fire departments and the MA Dept of Fire Services

CREDIT - SCORE!

You probably know by now that your credit score can be a VIN (Very Important Number) (yes, I just made that up) to you. Our three credit reporting companies calculate a score to determine how good a risk you are for some entity who might loan you money. A low score of 300 probably means you won't get that housing or car loan you want or a lower rate on insurance, but a score of 700 or higher probably means you will.

While the report itself is free, you can find out your score by going to the web pages of the credit reporting agencies and paying a small fee.. OR, your bank or credit card company may give you that score periodically.

This is private information! How can they do this!? What right do they have?!? A money lender, such as a credit card company, wants to know how your credit life is going, what kind of risk they are taking in loaning you money. Therefore they have a right to periodically check you out, a soft inquiry that does not affect your score. Then it is just a service for them to share that score with you.

Is there any risk in this? No, if you make sure you are on the actual credit card site, and if you follow another link from that website, make sure it is a legitimate site. Call the card's customer service if you have any doubts. Also, the score may not be exactly what you would get from going to the credit bureau yourself, as the score may come from a slightly different calculation method. Visit AnnualCreditReport.com

The November newsletter had a good article by the District Attorney's office on freezing your credit reports. Because we say to do this all the time, it was good to save that article.

Cheers,
Jean O'Neil
TRIAD Committee member
jeanoneilmass@gmail.com; 413-268-2228

On the Road Again...

TRIPS IN 2025/2026



**Contact Francine Frenier to reserve your seat
BEFORE mailing payments.**

For more info call 413-296-4291

Email: francine.frenier@gmail.com

Mail: 11 Stage Rd. Williamsburg, MA 01096

**Hamilton at the Bushnell on Wednesday,
November 12 with the Holyoke Senior Center.
Call 413-322-5625 for more information. Tickets
are going fast.**

**There are day trips to Radio City Rockettes and
NYC on your own-- all leaving from Chicopee.
If interested, call 413-593-3939 for more
information.**

*****2026 Multi Day trips to Washington DC
and Mackinac Island *****

**Multi Day Trip April 17-21, Washington DC 5
days, 4 nights** Admission to the George
Washington Mount Vernon Estate, Garden &
Memorial, Arlington National Cemetery,
Smithsonian Institution, Capitol Building, World
War II Memorial and more. Price \$790. Take a \$25
discount if paid in full by January 26, 2026. Make
the check payable to Diamond Tours and mail to
the address above.

**Day Trip May 3, 2026, Sunday A Grand Night for
Singing** at the Seven Angels Theater in
Waterbury, CT. Pre-show lunch at San Marino's
Restaurant. Price \$132. Make check payable to
Landmark Tours and mail to the address above
by March 6, 2026

**Day Trip June 17, 2026 Isle of Shoals Cruise
and Lobster Lunch** Enjoy at 2.5-hour cruise
from Portsmouth, NH to the Isles of Shoals. Pre-
show lunch at Fosters in York Maine. Price \$TBD.
Make a check payable to Landmark Tours and
mail to the address above by April 6, 2026.

**Day Trip July TBD 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 6, 2026. Those
on the cancelled trip from July 2025 will be
given first chance to sign up.

**Multi Day Trip September 27- October 3,
Mackinac Island,** the quaint Michigan island
where no vehicles are allowed. Trip is for 7 days,
6 nights. Tour the island by horse & carriage,
cruise the Soo Locks, visit Bronner's Christmas
Wonderland, Frankenmuth Bavarian Village and
much more, not to mention the plentiful fudge
shops. Price \$959. Take a \$25 discount if paid in
full by June 27, 2026. Make the check payable to
Diamond Tours and mail to the address above.
**No money is due until next year. This trip
quickly filled up. Please email to be added to
the wait list.**



**Photo from October 16, 2025 event
enjoyed by a large group of
attendees.**

The Lumberjack Feud Supper Show had
40 participants. The event was exciting
and won rave reviews. It truly was

The WILDEST Show In Town.

GOOD NEWS FOR DECEMBER 2025

By Deb Hollingworth

As you read this.... Open Enrollment is over for another year.....unless you are one of the BlueCross PPO Advantage members who got a “termination” letter saying your Plan was ending December 31st. If that’s the case, you actually have more time to make a decision about your coverage.

If you do nothing.... and December 31st comes and goes.... and your PPO plan ends.... you will automatically revert to “original Medicare A&B without Rx coverage.” But you will have until February 28th to pick a Medicare D plan for Rx coverage.

And with luck, there should be SHINE appointments available in January and February for help if you need it. Remember if you wanted to pick up a Medicare Supplement plan (that we used to call Medex), you can do that anytime during the year!

For folks who have a United Health/AARP Medicare Advantage plan, there’s another problem.

You may have received a letter saying that Brigham and Woman’s medical providers (including hospitals) will not be in network for United Health next year.

For more information call the number on the back of your UHC card to ask if you can use your doctor and/or hospital and be billed at the out of network co-pay?

It might be time to dump UHC and either revert to original Medicare A&B and pick up a D plan for Rx.....or switch to a different Medicare Advantage plan. Not all Advantage plans work well in our hill towns. Health New England and BlueCross usually are best. You should have until March 31st to do this.

Your Community Connector

Jennifer O’Connell is working for the Hilltown COAs as the Community Connector. She is available to help Hilltown residents that are experiencing challenges, hardship and/or need assistance. Jennifer can help you meet a variety of your needs to make life easier.

Some examples are:

- Obtaining benefits such as Fuel Assistance, SNAP, Social Security, etc.
- Getting help so you can continue living independently at home
- Arranging for repairs
- Connecting to local groups / activities to prevent isolation and have fun with other community members
- Transportation assistance
- Being unsure of what you need or where to turn

Any and all inquiries are welcome. Call Jennifer at 413-296-4536 ext.110 or email communityconnectjo@gmail.com

LAST MINUTE MEDICARE COVERAGE RESOURCE

By Adam Frank, Councils on Aging and Grants Program Coordinator, Executive Office of Aging & Independence

With so many residents seeking help to review their Medicare coverage options, SHINE appointments are filling quickly—and we want to make sure everyone still has access to reliable information and support.

To help meet this growing demand, the state SHINE team partnered with AARP to create an educational video that offers an overview of Medicare and the Open Enrollment process. The video explains coverage options and demonstrates how to use the Medicare Plan Finder to compare Medicare Advantage and Medicare Part D plans available in your area.

You can watch the video here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RFgjEI3-SZ0>

TECHNOLOGY HELP FOR DECEMBER



Tech Support home visit available by appointment

Call or message 413-296-5080 to arrange a home visit or email coaTechHelp@gmail.com for appt.

Devices for you: **Refurbished PC laptops, Desktops, Chromebooks, and iPads**

If you need a device to connect to the internet or have something so old it is not working effectively, please contact us. Leave a message at 413-296-5080, or use the online request form on our website, www.northernhilltownscoas.org.

Drop in Centers *(no appointment needed)*

Chesterfield Community Center 400 Main Rd.

Chesterfield, **every Tuesday** from 11:00 to 2:00

Goshen Library, Drop-In tech support from 12:00 to 2:00, 3rd Thursday, 12/18

Westhampton Library Drop-In tech support, from 2:00 to 4:00, usually 3rd Thursday, 12/18

ONE WEEK EARLY DUE TO CHRISTMAS

Williamsburg Meekins Library Drop-In tech support from 10 :30 to 12:30, 2nd Tuesday, 12/9

Nash Hill Place Resident Drop-In tech support from 10:00 to Noon, 2nd Tuesday, 12/9

Worthington tech support - contact Eileen Daneri eadaneri@gmail.com.

NOTE: Drop-in Centers in Cummington and Plainfield have been discontinued due to low demand. Town residents should call 413-296-5080 for an appointment or use the Chesterfield site.

Internet Hotspots

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 internet and work in most areas in the Hilltowns. If you are interested, please contact us by phone 413-296-5080. Unlimited data plans are available through February. At this point, funding for hotspots will end and residents can purchase their own SIM card for \$30/month from Mint Mobile or the carrier of their choice.



Men's and women's haircuts, manicures, colors, facials, and other hair care options are being offered at Smith Vocational High School. Appointment times have changed to Tuesday and Thursday from 9- 11 am. Appointments are available now through mid-May.

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

Simply call 413-587-1414 ext. 3531 for an appointment.

The Salon is located Smith Vocational High School in Room 124 of Building A at 80 Locust St., Northampton.

ALL ARE WELCOME



CUMMINGTON COUNCIL ON AGING

P.O. BOX 95

CUMMINGTON, MA 01026

Cummington COA

Chrisoula Roumeliotis,
Coordinator (634-2262)

Your COA board members are:

Worth Noyes, Chairperson
(634-8003)

Ann Eisenhour, Recording
Secretary (634-2243)

JoDee Simard, Treasurer
Gail Roberge

Brenda Emerson-Camp
Fionnghuala Reagan

Associate member:
June Lynds

HOW TO RECEIVE THE COA'S MONTHLY NEWSLETTER:

1. Via email. If you have not already done so, provide us with your email address so that we can send you the newsletter as a PDF. If you have asked for the newsletter to be emailed to you, and you are NOT receiving it, let us know.
2. Look for a PDF on the website for the Northern Hilltowns Consortium of COAs:
<https://northernhilltownscoas.org> or the website for the Town of Cummington: <https://www.cummington-ma.gov>
3. Look for paper copies at the post office, library, Hillside Terrace and Community House.
4. If you are 80 and over, we will mail the newsletter to you. If you are receiving the newsletter by mail and would prefer to receive it via email, let us know.

Newsletter supported by the Cummington Council on Aging

Scam Alert!

Medicare Imposter Schemes



WHAT THEY SAY

- They need your Medicare number to send you a new card.
- They threaten to take away your benefits if you don't sign up for their plan.
- They offer "free" medical equipment or supplies.
- They say your doctor asked them to call.

WHAT TO DO

- Just hang up!
- Medicare will not call you asking for your Medicare, Social Security number or personal information.
- Report suspicious calls & messages.

Medicare
1-800-633-4227

**Senior Medicare
Patrol**
1-800-892-0890

*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.**

