Cummington Council on Aging



What is happening at the COA in November? In addition to the regular, recurring events and activities, we will be offering:

Lunch & Learn Program on Tuesday, November 3, 11:30-1; Topic: Medical Alert Devices/Systems (registration required) - see page 2

Coffee Hour Health Talk on Monday, November 16, 10:30-11:30; Topic: Healthy Minds, Healthy Aging: Mental Health for Older Adults - see page 2

Thanksgiving potluck lunch on Wednesday, November 18, 11:30 - see below

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Thanksgiving potluck lunch

Wednesday, November 18

11:30 – social time

noon – lunch

Community House dining room

Join us on **Wednesday, November 18th** for a Thanksgiving potluck. Come at **11:30** to socialize. Lunch will be served at **noon**. We will be serving turkey with mashed potatoes, squash, stuffing, cranberry sauce, rolls and cornbread. If you are able, please bring a dessert to share.

33 Main Street
P.O. Box 95
Cummington,MA 01026
413-634-2262, option 8
croumeliotis@cummington-ma.gov

https://www.cummington-ma.gov
https://northernhilltownscoas.org

Coordinator
Chrisoula Roumeliotis

Board of Directors
Worth Noyes, Chair
JoDee Simard, Treasurer
Gail Roberge
Brenda Emerson-Camp
Fionnghuala Reagan
Associate member: June Lynds

Make sure you are receiving this newsletter every month!

- by email
- by picking it up at the post office, Hillside Terrace, Community House, transfer station or the library
- by mail (if you are 80 and over)
- on the town or consortium website

If you would like it emailed or mailed to you, please let us know!

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SAVE THE DATE IN DECEMBER*

Cookies & Cocoa – December 9, 1-3

***look for more information on this event in the December newsletter**
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SIGN UP NOW! – LUNCH & LEARN

LEARN ABOUT MEDICAL ALERT DEVICES/SYSTEMS

PRESENTATION BY CHARLIE HAYES, SOCIAL SERVICES PROGRAM MANAGER AT THE HILLTOWN CDC

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 11:30-1, Community House dining room

LUNCH PROVIDED BY ALICE'S KITCHEN

REGISTRATION REQUIRED

PLEASE CONTACT THE COA BY OCTOBER 30 TO REGISTER

Call 634-2262, option 8; or email croumeliotis@cummington-ma.gov

Learn about medical alert devices/systems. Charlie Hayes, Social Services Program Manager at the Hilltown CDC, will share information about medical alert devices and systems. We will learn how they work, how to get one, and why they are important to have. Bring your questions to this timely and critical conversation.

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COFFEE HOUR HEALTH TALK

COMMUNITY HOUSE DINING ROOM

Monday, November 16, 10:30-11:30

Healthy Minds, Healthy Aging: Mental Health for Older Adults

Public Health Nurses from the Northampton Dept. of Health and Human Services will be joining us on **Monday, November 16 from 10:30-11:30** for a disussion on **Healthy Minds, Healthy Aging: Mental Health for Older Adults**. There will time for questions and optional blood pressure readings. Light refreshments will be served. No registration needed.

**NOTE: Monday morning coffee hour follows exercise class; you do not need to attend exercise class to attend coffee hour*

NOTE: LUNCH & LEARNS AND COFFEE HOUR HEALTH TALKS WILL RESUME IN THE SPRING

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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 on Aging and mail to
Cummington COA, PO Box 95 Cummington, MA 01026.)

Name_____Telephone_____

Address _____

Email_____

SAND BUCKETS

If would you like a 5-gallon bucket of sand delivered to your house, contact the COA at 634-2262, ext. 8, as soon as possible.

If you received a delivery of sand in previous years, you still need to call for this year's delivery.

A member of the Fire Department will deliver the sand to you. Deliveries will continue throughout the winter.

Also, let us know if you have an empty bucket to return.

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IMPORTANT INFORMATION FROM THE NORTHWESTERN DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S CONSUMER PROTECTION UNIT



PARKING AT THE COMMUNITY HOUSE

Please be mindful of the handicap parking spaces to the right of the side entrance door of the Community House. When parking, be sure to leave space for those with handicap parking plates/placards.

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RESOURCE CART

If you haven't yet checked out the Resource Cart, we invite you to take a peek. We recently received a beautiful selection of handmade crocheted Lapghans (lap blankets).

What will you find on the Resource Cart?

-lapghans
-books
-surgical masks
-incontinence briefs
-puzzles
-walking maps
-file of life forms
-pamphlets/brochures on various topics
-personal health care journals
-greeting cards for various occasions
-holiday cards
-and much much more!

PLEASE REACH OUT WITH ANY QUESTIONS

~the resource cart is located to the left of the COA office ~

~everything on the cart is FREE and available whenever the Community House is open~

NOVEMBER 2026

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Sat/Sun
					1
2 9:30 Healthy Bones & Balance 10:30 coffee hour	3 9 Art class 11:30 **Lunch & Learn** 12 Grab & Go 3:50 Healthy Bones & Balance	4 9:30 **Mahjong**	5 9:30 Healthy Bones & Balance 10:30 coffee hour 1 Needlework	6 9 Foot care clinic	7/8
9 9:30 Healthy Bones & Balance 10:30 coffee hour	10 9 Art class 1 Living Fully 12 Grab & Go 3:50 Healthy Bones & Balance	11 9:30 **Mahjong**	12 9:30 Healthy Bones & Balance 10:30 coffee hour 1 Needlework	13	14/15
16 9:30 Healthy Bones & Balance 10:30 **Coffee Hour Health Talk**	17 9 Art class 12 Grab & Go 3:50 Healthy Bones & Balance	18 11:30 **Thanksgiving Potluck Lunch**	19 9:30 Healthy Bones & Balance 10:30 coffee hour 1 Needlework	20	21/22
23/30 9:30 Healthy Bones & Balance 10:30 coffee hour	24 9 Art class 12 Grab & Go 3:50 Healthy Bones & Balance	25 9:30 **Mahjong**	26 **Happy Thanksgiving!**	27	28/29

More information on these events or activities can be found throughout the newsletter.

ONGOING PROGRAMS, ACTIVITIES AND 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, these programs take place in the dining room of the Community House.

Grab and Go 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.

Healthy Bones and Balance
Mondays and Thursdays from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m.; Tuesdays 3:50-4:50

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

Needlework group
Thursdays from 1 to 3 p.m.

Mahjong
Wednesdays from 9:30-11:30. **Beginners are welcome!**

Foot care clinic
The next foot care clinic will be on **Friday, November 6** with Piper Sagan at the Community House. The cost is $50 for Cummington residents and $60 for non-residents. Contact the COA to make an appointment.

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 413-296-4232 for more information and to arrange a ride.

Living Fully, Aging Gracefully
The next Zoom meeting for this group is Tuesday, November 10 . For more information, contact annieb@crocker.com or fandellaf@gmail.com or call Lucy at 413-634-5576.

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

Drop in Tech support (no appointment needed)
Chesterfield Community Center, every Tuesday, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. For more information, contact TechConnect at 413-296-5080. **See information on other drop-in centers in the Regional section of this newsletter.**

In-home Tech Support (by appointment)
Call or text 413-296-5080 or email coaTechHelp@gmail.com to arrange a home visit.

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 at 413-238-5511 or bthomas@hchcweb.org.

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 and transportation; and more.

Happy Birthday in November
Patricia Stout, Patricia Brundage, Donna Douglas, John Eisenhour, Dennis Forgea, Bob Arbib, Daniel Loux, Charles Marinus, Margaret Urbanowski, Mary Dygert, William Millington, Peg Daniels, Dann Emerson, David Gokey, Barbara Badner, Allan Kidston, Barbara Konieczny, Peter Watson, Jonathan Ginzberg, Beth Lang, Kathleen Watson, Joseph Gomes, Georgann Matuewezski, Gail Roberge, Rich Roberge, Shevaun Keogh-Walker, Amy Pulley, Alice Cozzolino, Robert Godfrey, Cynthia Lynds, Laura Sheppard, Kevin Higgins, Philip Morin, Robert McNamara, John Warriner, Mark Irzyk, Mary Hubert, Tracy Granger



November Regional News

Seniors Aware of Fire Education

Most of the rechargeable batteries we use everyday are lithium-ion batteries. They power cell phones, laptops, power tools, e-bikes, scooters, and many other devices. When used incorrectly or damaged, they can overheat, start a fire, or even explode.

Here are a few ways to stay safe:

- Look for products tested and listed by UL, ETL, or CSA. You can find these safety insignias on the product label or packaging.
- Always use the charging cord that came with your product.
- If you lose a charger, purchase a replacement from the manufacturer.
- Charge batteries on a hard, flat surface, away from anything that can burn.
- Never charge batteries on a bed, couch, or other soft surface.
- Charge larger devices, such as e-bikes and scooters, outside when possible.
- Keep charging devices away from exits and doorways so a fire does not block your way out.

A few simple precautions can help prevent a lithium-ion battery fire.

Have a S.A.F.E. charge!

Capt. Steve Estelle,
SAFE Educator
Goshen Fire Department

TECH CONNECT
SUCCESS FOR OLDER ADULTS

TECH HELP FOR NOVEMBER

TechConnect will be offering **Q&A style classes this fall on the second Tuesday of each month** at the Chesterfield COA Community Center. Bring your questions and contributions to our roundtable discussion. Hosted by Lizzy Canady from 1-2pm on the following dates:

11/10/2026: Medical Portals, taught by Peg Whalen
12/8/2026: Artificial Intelligence: Trends & Topics

No registration necessary.

Tech Support home visit is available by appt. Call or message 413-296-5080 to arrange a home visit.

Devices for you: Refurbished PC laptops
We have free refurbished laptops while supplies last. Please call 413-296-5080 and leave us a message if you are interested. If you received a device from us and are not using it, please call us to arrange a return so someone else can use it.

Drop-in Centers *(no appointment needed)*
Sites open to residents of all towns
(except Nash Hill location)

Chesterfield Community Center 400 Main Rd.
Weekly on Every Tuesday from 11:00 to 2:00

Goshen Library, Drop-In tech support from 12:00 to 2:00, 3rd Thursday this month, 11/19

Westhampton Library Drop-In tech support, from 2:00 to 4:00, 3rd Thursday this month, 11/19

Williamsburg
Meekins Library Drop-In tech support (call library for latest information) 413-268-7472
Nash Hill Place Resident Drop-In tech support from 10:00 to Noon, 2nd Tuesday, 11/10

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

NORTHAMPTON OPEN MEDIA

GOOD NEWS FOR NOVEMBER 2026

By Deb Hollingworth

Here we are in November, the middle of Open Enrollment for Medicare plans. At the risk of beating a dead horse....because you've probably heard enough about Open Enrollment ... here's a review of your options, and reasons you might want to check them out.

My first question is:
"What coverage do you have now?"
...My next question,
"How is that working for you?"

If you're happy with your current coverage, and you haven't received any letters from your insurance provider saying there would be changes..... you can sit tight this year.

If you want to check to see if there will be changes to your RX co-pays next year, you can go on line at Medicare.gov , or speak with a SHINE counselor. Use the online Plan Finder to check out prices for 2027. The Plan Finder looks at RX co-pays for both Advantage plans well as stand alone Medicare D plans. You can also see Plan details for Advantage Plan co-pays for medical services.

There are a number of reasons why this might be important..... could be a change in medical conditions, a new diagnosis, or a new Rx that you need to take. And this year, those of you who received a letter from BlueCross about changes in their HMO and PPO plans should look at options to change coverage.

Options during Open Enrollment:

1. You can dis-enroll in your Advantage plan by enrolling in a medicare D plan. (This will automatically end your Advantage plan as of January 1st when your D plan becomes effective)

2. You can enroll in a different Advantage plan

3. You can go back to original Medicare when you enroll in a D plan.

4. If you go back to original Medicare with a stand alone D plan... you can pick up a Supplement plan (like Medex) anytime during the year.

Remember that these changes we make now during Open Enrollment, take effect January 1st 2027.

Questions?....

1. You can call Highland Valley 586-2000 to make an in-person appointment with Caroline Solan, our SHINE counselor for the hilltowns.
2. Phone Lifepath, in Greenfield 413-773-5555... Lifepath is our Regional SHINE office.
3. Call the Medicare help line 800-633-4227....please excuse the typo in last month's Newsletter!
4. For help with BlueCross changes, you might start with the customer service number on the back of your card.
5. Call your senior center.

BOARDS OF HEALTH ARE ASKING YOU TO SHARE YOUR OPINIONS & EXPERIENCES

Here is an chance to share your opinion and play a role in shaping state policy and funding. The Hilltown CDC and your board of health are working to get people in the Hilltowns to complete the MA Department of Public Health's Health Equity Survey.

Health equity recognizes that people do not all start with the same resources or face the same barriers to good health. Achieving health equity means identifying and addressing these conditions, like differences in income, disability, and other socioeconomic characteristics. These conditions can prevent rural people and communities from attaining good health.

Answering the questions is an easy way to bring programming and funding into our communities. This is the first of many resources DPH will be sending to rural hilltowns, so let's have a voice! The time to participate is now.. The survey is open until the end of November. This is an opportunity to support both health and community residents in need of a little extra. You will find the survey here: Mass.gov/HealthSurvey , or go to Mass.gov and search for "DPH Community Health Equity Survey." Your voice matters, make it loud and clear.

HOMEBOUND VACCINE PROGRAM



Amherst, Chester, Chesterfield, Cummington, Easthampton, Granby, Hadley, Hatfield, Huntington, Middlefield, Northampton, Plainfield, Southampton, Worthington

SCAN THE QR CODE

NEED HELP REGISTERING?
Call: 413-587- 4903

COVID VACCINE
Pfizer

FLU VACCINE
Regular and High Dose (available during flu season)

- Homebound visit available for Covid, Flu vaccine for ADULTS only
- Homebound includes persons with limited mobility and/or difficulty getting out of the home and their caretakers.
- Please have your insurance card available

OR REGISTER ONLINE

northamptonma.gov/2219/vax

Hampshire Public Health Shared Services Collaborative
Prevent. Promote. Protect.



Fitness for All with Joan

Better Health. Stronger You. A Healthier Community.

Move Strong. Move Well. Live Well.

Weekly Class Schedule



Functional fitness designed to help you feel stronger, steadier and more confident in everyday life.

All Fitness Levels Welcome!

MONDAY 9:30 AM Zoom Only	Cardio Sprints & Total Body Strength	A fun, challenging workout with cardio bursts, strength, balance and core work.	Sponsored by Joan. Donations are appreciated.
WEDNESDAY 10:15 AM Goshen Town Hall and Zoom	Total Body Strength	Build strength, improve balance and boost your energy with a variety of functional exercises.	Sponsored by Goshen COA
THURSDAY 10:15 AM Zoom Only	Kind & Gentle Movement	Support your everyday movement with gentle, focused exercises for strength, balance and flexibility.	Sponsored by Williamsburg COA
FRIDAY 9:00 AM Goshen Town Hall and Zoom	Smooth Moves	Gentle movement with a focus on balance, strength, mobility, foot & hand strength and flexibility.	Sponsored by Joan. Donations are appreciated.
FRIDAY 10:15 AM Goshen Town Hall and Zoom	Super Total Body Strength	Cardio, strength, balance, core work and flexibility — with options to challenge your level.	Sponsored by Joan. Donations are appreciated.

Strength | Balance | Mobility | Flexibility | Cardiovascular Fitness

Come Move With Us!

In person or via Zoom
Classes offered Monday – Friday
413-537-8337
Joan@bybhealth.com

Certified Group Fitness Instructor ♡ Personal Trainer ♡ Health Coach ♡ Nutrition Specialist

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Sharing and Caring: A Memory Cafe

A group led by two speech-language pathologists for adults with memory loss and their care partners.



Every 1st Thursday, 1pm-2:30pm, Oct 2026-Jun 2027
John James Memorial Town Hall, 42 Main St. in Goshen, MA
Contact Kerry at COA@goshen-ma.us or **(413) 268-8236,** ext. 118

CORRECTION:

The October Newsletter incorrectly identified the Plainfield Fire Chief. The current Chief is Robert Shearer.

Our apologies for the error.

LOSING HILLTOWN LANDLINES by Peg Whalen

Early in September, current Verizon phone and DSL customers received a six-page letter. Many hilltown customers found it confusing and, understandably, feel concerned. I want to explain why Verizon is making this change, clarify what the letter actually says, and answer some common questions.

WHY IS THIS CHANGE HAPPENING?
What drives this change? Increasing costs and decreasing profits. Verizon has to make costly repairs and replace copper wires because their coverings age, stretch, crack, and break. Copper theft is increasing. Maintaining outdated wires for less households doesn't make financial sense.

DOES THE LETTER REALLY SAY?
Customers first see the words "What's Changing and When" and the date "November 30, 2026." **What will actually happen to you on November 30, 2026?** Nothing! That date simply marks the day Verizon told the FCC it wants to discontinue service. It is simply Verizon's request, not a final decision. Verizon cannot disconnect your service without required approval. The FCC has not decided the matter as of October 15th. A September 29th document indicates the FCC needs more time to review their request and won't automatically approve it. I believe you can count on the change happening eventually. **Will it happen on November 30, 2026?** NO!

The letter's 3rd page contains a notice because the FCC required Verizon to include it. The notice explains how you can share your opinion. The FCC will post its public notice on its website, www.fcc.gov. As of mid-October, that notice has not appeared. If you or your town officials submit comments to the FCC, identify the proceeding using WC Docket No. 26-252. .

My summary of the rest of the letter? "You should know there are plenty of options for getting phone service, and each comes with its own pitfalls."

Technical jargon may also confuse you. Here is what some of it means:

- "Legacy" are older "obsolete" equipment, including some landline-connected home alarms and personal emergency buttons,
- "Fiber" means fiber-optic wires. These wires have hair thin strands of glass that transmit sound/info using light, hence the term optic.
- "FiOS™" is Verizon's trademarked name for its fiber-optic service.
- "Mobile wireless voice options" are wireless calling services, either cell phones, satellite phones, WIFI calling or VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol). If you own a flip phone, a flat phone that doesn't fold, cell phone, smartphone, iPhone, Android or Pixel, you already have a mobile wireless voice option.

COMMON QUESTIONS
How do I get help? Contact your Council on Aging (COA), TechConnect, 296-5080, MA Department of Telecommunications, 800-392-6066, Whip City Fiber, 413-485-1251, Wired West, 833-991-9378 or other service.
What happens to medical devices? Some older medical monitors connect to landlines. Newer medical devices can use the same technology as cell phones. Tell your doctor about the upcoming change. Your doctor can help you find a replacement that communicates through cellular networks.
Do I have to get internet service? Or a cell phone? Maybe. If you already have broadband, Wi-Fi, a funny-looking box with flashing lights, a hotspot, or an internet bill from Whip City Fiber or Wired West, you are already paying for internet service. Adding phone service may be simple. If you don't have internet service, you could get it and use it only for your phone, or you could choose a basic cell phone instead.
Are any options exactly like a landline during a power outage? Nope! Today's alternatives all require electricity, either from an outlet or a battery. However, you can buy battery backups that provide temporary power when the electricity goes out. Think of them as tiny generators. Options include an uninterruptible power supply (UPS), a device with a built-in battery, or a portable power station. You can also charge phones and laptops from a car battery using an inexpensive adapter that plugs into the vehicle's cigarette-lighter-style outlet. And during extended power outages, town emergency plans include places where residents can charge their devices.
How do I pick an option? This doesn't have to be expensive. Help is available if you want to find the lowest-cost option. TechConnect staff can help you understand the choices and decide which one best meets your needs.
Do I have a choice? No. **Is it fair?** Maybe not. **Is there help?** Yes! Plenty of help is available with choosing, obtaining, and learning to use your new service.

On the Road Again...

TRIPS IN 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

Trips in 2027

Multi Day Trip April 25- May 1 Savannah, Jekyll Island & Beaufort, SC. Seven days, six nights. Visit Savannah, "The Belle of Georgia," Magnificent Beaufort, SC " The Queen of the Carolina Sea Islands," and Port Royal Sound Maritime Museum and more. Price $987 per person, double occupancy. A $25 discount is given if paid in full by January 25, 2027. Sign up NOW and pay later. Make the check payable to Diamond Tours and mail to the address above *after the first of the year*.

Multi-day trip October 17-23, 2027 Chicago, 7 days, 6 nights. The partial itinerary includes a tour of Chicago, a skyline cruise on Lake Michigan, a visit to a historic Navy Pier and museums. Includes hotels, breakfasts and 4 dinners. Price $946 per person, double occupancy. A $25 discount is if paid in full by July 17, 2027. Sign up NOW and pay later. Make the check payable to Diamond Tours and mail

Multi Day Trip July 22-25 ** (exact dates to be determined) 3-days/2 nights trip to Baltimore to see the Red Sox play two games against the Baltimore Orioles along with some sightseeing.

Day Trip December TBD Christmastime at the Reagle Theater in Waltham, Ma.
In the planning stages.

TechConnect TECH TALK from Peg Whalen

Remember Disney's "It's a Small World After All"? I've always loved that song and its message of connection. Today, our world is connected in ways we could hardly have imagined when that song first captured our hearts. Taking a little creative license, I've given the familiar tune a new digital twist

It's a Digital World For All
It's a world of tech, and a world of skills
It's a world of change, and a world with thrills
There's so much to be shared
That it's time we're aware
It's a digital world for all.

I'd love it if all of us were singing this song. Many of you already do, and I encourage more of you to join them and add your voice.

You've lived through party-line phone service, rotary dialing, and wireless phones. Today, we have handheld computers that make calls, take pictures, send text messages, write emails, and connect us through video. *Telehealth* appointments let us meet with our primary care providers from home. *Mobile banking* saves trips to the bank, *prescription refills* are easier, and *online shopping* means fewer trips to stores. We can explore subjects that interest us, learn almost anything for free, and even work or volunteer from home. We can watch young family members who live elsewhere grow up, share holidays with loved ones through video calls, and stay connected through social media like Facebook and Instagram. Online games offer stimulating interactions and a way to relieve boredom. Digital connections also help us maintain friendships with people we might otherwise lose touch with, whether we've moved closer to adult children or retired from jobs where we enjoyed the company of coworkers.

There really is so much to share, explore, and learn. I encourage you to build your digital skills in whatever ways you find helpful. The possibilities are waiting for you.