

Goshen Council on Aging

February 2025 Newsletter



Goshen Council on Aging
40 Main Street
Goshen, MA 01032

Kerry Normandin, Coordinator
413-268-8236 x118
coa@goshen-ma.us

Valentine Luncheon

Tuesday, February 11th at Noon
Town Hall



Please join us for a Valentine's Day themed luncheon on February 11 at noon at the Goshen Town Hall in the downstairs area. Lunch will be a variety of dishes from the Panda Garden in Williamsburg, including vegetarian and gluten free options. **This month, please call Henrietta at 268-7465 by Feb. 4** to let her know your choice of dinner. After lunch, if you are able to stay for an hour or so, the Goshen Community Engagement Committee would like your input and ideas to better our Town for the future. They have designed an interactive game for us to play to learn about our love and hopes for Goshen. Gift cards will be given to those who participate in the game!

Firefighters & Friends February Fest To Prevent Fires and Falls

Saturday, February 15th from 8:30-10:30am
Goshen Town Hall

The Goshen Fire Department and the Goshen COA will host an interactive event to engage, educate, and promote the safety of older adults. Lieutenant Steve Estelle will review fire safety, including smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors. He will also discuss ways to help prevent falls. COA Coordinator Kerry Normandin will lead a Fall Prevention Bingo game and multiple prizes will be awarded!

Hot coffee and donuts!
Free giveaways!

Senior 
SAFE

Older adults from all of the Hilltowns are welcome.
Spread the word!

Exercise Classes with Joan- Exercise classes continue with Joan Griswold on Wednesdays at 10:15 in the Goshen Town Hall. We will continue to focus on functional movement which enhances our physical strength and balance, allowing for ease and comfort with our daily tasks. Please wear supportive footwear and bring water and free weights if you have them. There is a brief health questionnaire Joan will have you fill out. This class is also offered simultaneously on Zoom, so if you prefer this method, please contact Joan at joan@bybhealth.com. Let's keep moving!

Feb. 5 – Crafts Group this month meets in the Library or in the adjoining dining room. This month Roxanne Cunningham and Pat Wheeler will be leading a class on Quilling. Quilling has deep roots in history and started in the Renaissance when nuns and monks used to quill to decorate book covers. It consists of rolling paper into various shapes to create a design or a picture. We have kits with enough materials so everyone can make something. Or, if you prefer, bring your own craft project to work on in community with us. Doing creative projects is good for our brains and our bodies– we encourage you to do something creative!

Feb. 7- Community Connections Group will be held in the Goshen Town Hall upstairs dining room from 10-11am. This month we welcome Deb Hollingworth, recently retired from her position as a care coordinator with the Northern Hilltown Consortiums of COAs. Deb will speak to us about healthcare, insurance, and how to be prepared. Deb has a wealth of knowledge to share. Bring your questions! All are welcome!

Feb. 18 and 25- HVES grab and go lunches- HVES delivers meals to Goshen COA on the third and fourth Tuesdays of the month. Participants pick up their hot lunch at the Goshen Town Hall from 12:30-1:00pm. The lunch for Feb 18 is

choice of lasagna with meat sauce or breaded fish with tartar sauce and the choice for the 25th is beef goulash or cheesy ratatouille. The meals also include milk, vegetables, and dessert. There is a suggested \$4 donation given to Highland Valley to offset the cost of the meal. Please call Kerry at 268-9354 if you would like to sign up to get these nutritious and delicious meals.

Feb. 19- Games Group will meet in the Library from 2-4pm. This is a fun way to spend an afternoon. We have games available, but if you have a favorite you would like to play, bring it along! We are always open to learning new games, as well as playing old favorites!

Feb. 20-Technology Help in the Library with Goshen resident Stephen Morley who volunteers through the Tech Connect Program. He will be there 12-2pm. Bring any and all questions regarding your computer, your phone, your tablet to Stephen and he will help problem solve with you! We are so lucky to have this volunteer program!

“Blue Binder Tip of the Month”- Please review all of your financial accounts and be sure you have beneficiaries listed. This will save your loved ones time and hardship and ensure your wishes are heeded.

Goshen Age Friendly Group has medical equipment you can use free of charge. Please call Henrietta Munroe at 268-7465 if you find yourself in need.

Winter Weather: Please be aware that if the Hampshire Regional School District is closed, the COA programming that day will be canceled.

Calling All Lunchtime Heroes!

Want to make a difference in the lives of children at New Hingham Regional Elementary School? We're looking for enthusiastic volunteers to join our lunch supervision team!

Here's what you'll do:



- Help supervise students during recess and lunch (between 12-1pm on school days).
- Ensure a safe and fun environment for the kids.
- Maybe even play a game or two!

Why volunteer?

- It's a rewarding way to give back to your community.
- You'll get to interact with energetic and positive students.
- It's a flexible commitment of just one hour a day!

Ready to join the fun?

All volunteers must complete a CORI check, which can be easily facilitated through the school's Main Office. Contact Jess at **(413) 296-0000** or jliimatainen@hr-k12.org to get started!

Happy Birthday in February!

Lisa Roberts, Stanley Jablonski, Tena Heath, Frank Kosior, Siegfried Haug, Gary Batrano, Jane Hillman, William Dyer, Robert Zuraw, Melanie Dana, Nicholas Cockoros, Albert Maiolatesi, Dawn Scaparotti, William Kerby, Eric Liimatainen Jr., Carl Eldred, Stephanie Sanders, Frank Phillips, Nelson Nieves, Joan Loven, Roxanne Cunningham, Donald Chevalier, Gregory Roberts, Wanda Roberts, Deborah Tirrell, Dale Morrow



The Goshen COA counts on YOUR support to continue our important programming for local seniors!

I would like to contribute to the Goshen COA. My contribution of \$_____ is attached.

(Please write your check to Goshen Council on Aging and write "program support fund" in the memo line. Checks can be sent to Goshen COA, 40 Main St. Goshen, MA 01032)

Name _____

Address _____

Hilltown Community Health Center Needs Assessment

You know what your community needs, and we want to hear from you! Hilltown Community Health Center is conducting a community health needs assessment to learn what you feel your community needs. This survey takes about 15 minutes to complete. If you have questions or would like to speak in person, please contact Debbie DiStefano at ddistefano@hchcweb.org or by phone at (413) 289-8214. Thank you for your consideration.



www.surveymonkey.com/r/HCHC2025

HVES – Good to Know!

If you don't know about Highland Valley Elder Services (HVES), let me tell you a little bit about them. One of their many programs is Money Management; I have volunteered there for several years and can recommend it.

Here's the deal. The first level of their program sets up assistance for elders who are still able to make financial decisions, but might be having some difficulty dealing with their budget, check book, mail, or bank accounts. A second level of the program has HVES provide supervision of individuals who are unable to manage their own financial affairs. An employee of HVES is appointed to manage participant's government benefits and is responsible for writing and signing checks.

What I do for people in the program at the first level is help sort their mail, write out checks for them to sign, and monitor their bank balances. If needed I will talk to their bank about a problem, and help them access HVES for help with fuel assistance, medical insurance, and other such needs. I'll make sure their credit report has been checked for errors and try to help them avoid scams. It's all designed to make their financial life a bit easier.

For all their programs, check out HVES online at highlandvalley.org/our-services/ or call 413-586-2000 ext. 113. Call me if you have questions about volunteering in the Money Management program.

For financial safety,
Jean O'Neil
TRIAD Committee member
jeanoneilmass@gmail.com, 413-268-2228

Seniors Aware of Fire Education

Open Burning Season began on January 15th and will end on May 1st. You will need a permit from your town's Fire Department, which are given on days when it is safe to burn. It is not safe to burn on windy days or on "red flag" days. The Department of Fire Services recommends the following safe open burning practices:

Senior 
SAFE

- The fire area should be at least 75 feet from any dwelling.
- You can only burn from 10am until 4pm.
- You can burn brush, cane, forest debris, and pruning.
- You cannot burn grass, hay, leaves, stumps, tires or construction material and debris.
- An adult should always be present during the burn.
- Keep children and pets a safe distance from the fire.
- Start the fire with paper and kindling. Never use gasoline or any other flammable liquid.
- Build one small fire at a time and slowly add to it.
- Have fire control tools at hand — shovels, rakes and a pretested water supply.
- Be prepared to extinguish the fire if the wind picks up or the fire weather changes, before the town calls you to put it out.
- The safest time of the year is when the ground is wet, frozen or snowy. There are a whole lot of Red Flag days in April during which open burning is not allowed.
- Be aware that the fire towers are staffed during open burning season and they are quick to identify and call in unsafe burns.
- If the fire begins to get out of hand, immediately call 911 and have the Fire Department handle it before it gets to any buildings or woods.

Have an early and SAFE open burning 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.

Tech. Help and Training for February



We Are Surviving into the Future!

TechConnect will continue providing services. 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! 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 the 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 emailing **coatechconnect@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** or check the website, **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

Please remind us if you requested one and are still waiting. There is still time to join the Digital World. Ky Martus continues distributing devices. 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 Two Fridays, 11:30-1:30 (2/7 and 2/21)
- Cummington Community House, 33 Main St.

Drop-In tech support, 2nd Weds. 10-12 (2/12)

- Goshen Free Public Library, 42 Main St. Drop-in tech support, 3rd Thurs. 12pm-2pm (2/20)
- Plainfield Shaw Memorial Library, 312 Main St. Drop-In tech support, 3rd Thurs. 5:30-7:30pm (2/20)
- Westhampton Library, 1 North Rd. Drop-in tech support, 4th Thurs. 2-4pm (2/27)
- Williamsburg Meekins Library Drop-In tech support 2nd Tuesday 2/11 from 10 to Noon Nash Hill Place Resident Drop-In tech support 2nd Tuesday 2/11 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**

Tech Workshops:

- 2/7, 10:30-11:30 Using Chromebooks
- 2/19, 10-11:30 iPhones (rescheduled from 1/29)
- 2/21, 10:30-11:30 Understanding & Using Zoom

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** 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 May 6. One day at **Encore Casino**. Free Slot play. Lunch on your own. Restaurants on site. Cost TBD. I need 40 to sign up to make this trip affordable.

Day Trip May 19. **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 \$144. Make check payable to Landmark Tours and mail to the address above by March 24.

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 by April 8.

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. Make the check payable to Diamond Tours and mail to the address above. **There are a few open seats.**

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.

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 ballpark-fare buffet are included. Cost \$90.00. Make check payable to Francine Frenier and mail to address above by June 1.

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 by August 1. 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. Make the check payable to Diamond Tours and mail to the address above. **As of February 2025, Diamond Tours is expecting this trip to go, despite the hurricane damage around the area. 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 February 2025

It's that time of year when we begin to gather up tax documents, just like 140 million other tax payers. You might add some additional documents for your MA tax return. Massachusetts is one of 25 States to offer the Circuit Breaker Tax refund designed to help low income home owners. **This year the MA Circuit Breaker maximum benefit has increased to \$2,730... so it's worth taking the time to figure out if you are eligible!**

The Circuit Breaker benefit was 'invented' back in the late 1960s. Massachusetts began offering in it the mid-1990s. Now the program has grown to 25 States plus the District of Columbia. Here in New England- Maine, Vermont, and Connecticut- have Circuit Breaker programs. Programs vary from State to State, but all offer a tax refund to seniors who are low income home owners.

To be eligible:

1. You need to be a Massachusetts resident, meaning your primary residence is here, in MA.
2. You need to be 65 or older.
3. Your property tax needs to be more than 10% of your income. EXAMPLE: property tax is \$5,200, income would need to be less than \$52,000/year.
4. You can file for Circuit Breaker in any year(s) that at least one homeowner in the household was 65 or older by December 31st.
5. Your income must be less than \$72,000 single, or \$109,000 married filing jointly. (Each year this income figure changes/increases for cost of living.)
6. Your property cannot be worth more than \$1,172,000 (this figure also increases each year)

To apply:

1. You file a Massachusetts income tax (whether or not you have taxable income) and include a Schedule CB with your tax return.
2. You will need to provide proof of property tax paid. Usually a copy of your property tax bill is sufficient, but they can ask to see cancelled checks to prove payment. (You need to be current with your property tax payments)
3. You can also count 1/2 of your water/sewer bill(s) in which case you would need to include copies of those bills
4. You need to provide income information which includes: taxable income like social security, pension, employment. Gross, not net income. (Circuit breaker does not count one time income like life insurance payments, inheritance, property sale.)

For more information, visit www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-senior-circuit-breaker-tax-credit

**Goshen Council on Aging
Town of Goshen
40 Main Street
Goshen, MA 01032**

**Goshen COA
Board:**

Kerry Normandin,
Coordinator

Suzanne Krebs

Henrietta Munroe

Pat Wheeler

Nancy Wood

Patti Woodward

Newsletter Editor
and Designer:

Kristen Estelle

regionalcoanews@gmail.com

Senior Circuit Breaker Tax Credit Info Session

Thursday, February 6th from 3-4:30PM

Hilltown CDC, 387 Main Road, Chesterfield (in the conference room)

Presented by Denise LeDuc

DID YOU KNOW seniors over the age of 65 can get a Senior Circuit Breaker Tax Credit on their tax return in Massachusetts? Even if you do not need to file a MA tax return- file one and include schedule CB to receive up to the maximum of \$2,730 for 2024. This is a refundable credit, which means even if you do not owe MA taxes you can get this sent money to you. To be considered, 2024 total income for a single cannot exceed \$72,000, head of household \$91,000 and \$109,000 for married filing a joint return. Your property taxes must exceed 10% of your Massachusetts income for the year. If you did not file the CB form you can go back and file for the past three years!

For more information, visit

www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-senior-circuit-breaker-tax-credit

ALSO if you are over 70 and meet income requirements you may qualify for some exemptions through the town- you will need to file for this by March 31st annually.

Please join us for this important program!

Questions? Contact Joan Griswold: 413-296-4536 x102