

Goshen Council on Aging

February 2026 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 10th at 12pm

John James Memorial Hall, 42 Main St. Goshen

Please join us for a festive luncheon on February 10th at Noon in the Town Hall! Lunch will be catered by Spruce Corner Restaurant with a choice of Chicken Divan or Vegetarian Linguine Normandy Alfredo, a tossed green salad and sliced Italian Bread. And, as always, we will serve a delicious dessert. Please email or call Kerry at **268-9354** by Feb. 2 to let her know you are coming and your choice of meal. Nurse Lily Stafford from the Foothills Health District will be available to take blood pressure, answer health-related questions, and provide resources. Gina Papineau from the Assessor's Office will speak about tax exemptions that are available for the residents of Goshen.

The Goshen COA and Goshen Fire Department invite you to:

Firefighters & Friends February Fest To Prevent Fires and Falls

Saturday, February 21st from 8:30-10:30am
John James Memorial Hall, 42 Main. St, Goshen

Join us for an interactive event to engage, educate, and promote safety in older adults! Goshen Fire Captain Steve Estelle will review fire safety, including smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors, and will also discuss an initiative by the fire department on ways to prevent falls. Leader of the COA exercise classes, Joan Griswold, will lead us through some key exercises for balance and stability. We will have handouts to educate about fall risks and ways to modify our homes for increased safety. There will be hot coffee and donuts to welcome you and free giveaways! Older adults from all of the Hilltowns are welcome. Spread the word!

Feb. 4 from 2:00-4pm: Games Group will meet in the library on the first Wednesday of the month from 2-4pm. We have a variety of games to choose from and we welcome new game ideas. It is a fun way to meet new people and spend an afternoon. Please come and join us!



Our carolers back in December.
Photo courtesy of Helen Mollison.

Did you know that Helen has compiled Goshen COA scrapbooks? Please contact us if you'd like to take a look at our history! (Thanks, Helen!)

Feb. 6 from 10-11am- Community Connections. Join us in the upstairs dining room at the Town Hall. On the first Friday of the month, the COA works with Jennifer O'Connell from the Hilltown CDC to connect us to local experts on health, wellness, and living intentionally. This month we welcome Hannah Morano from Sweet Birch Herbals, a community herbalism center in Ashfield. Hannah will teach us about foods and herbs we can use to reduce inflammation in our bodies and provide relief from pain. Please join us!

Feb. 11th at 9:15am- Goshen and Chesterfield older adults have been invited to **New Hingham Regional Elementary School** for their February All School Meeting which is an assembly hosted by a class where students share recent projects and community members are welcome. We will have a special COA section of chairs, so let Kerry know if you plan to attend. We hope to make this a monthly event!

Feb. 17 and 24 - 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. 17 is a choice of Sloppy Joes on a Bun or Goulash and the choice for Feb. 24 is Tuna Salad or Chicken Salad. 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. We would love to increase participation in this program!

Feb. 18 from 2-4pm- Crafts group will meet on the third Wednesday in the Library or Dining room adjacent to the library if we need more space to work. Bring your crafting project and work together with a supportive and fun group. Get some new ideas and share your ideas and skills with others. There have been many articles written that conclude participating in the arts creates paths to healthy aging!

Our condolences to the friends and family of:

**Carl Eldred
Frank Kosior Jr.**

Feb. 19 -Technology Help in the Library will be available from 12-2pm. You can ask questions regarding your computer, your phone, your tablet or any other technology related question and we will do our best to help. The Tech Connect page of this newsletter also has information about other technology related services. This just in...



Good news! TechConnect will resume computer workshops with our partner TechHub beginning in March. Workshops are one hour long beginning at 10:30 am. All classes will be held at 400 Main St., Chesterfield, downstairs. Call our main number **413-296-5080** and leave a message to register.

Hilltown Easy Ride is a Hilltown Community Development program that provides transportation for seniors in the Hilltowns to important medical appointments, to gain access to healthy food and to keep important self-care and social opportunities.

If you have interest in being a paid driver, the HCDC is hiring. This is an on-call position that pays \$20 per hour and reimburses for mileage. Please reach out to Ed, the Easy Ride Program Coordinator to express your interest. He can be reached at **(413) 296-4232** or by email: ride@hilltowncdc.org

Exercise Classes with Joan- Exercise classes continue with Joan Griswold on Wednesdays at 10:15 in the Goshen Town Hall. The focus is on functional movement which enhances physical strength and balance. 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. Fitness is fun!

Did you know you can attend programs at COAs in all the Hilltowns? There are so many great programs going on! Be sure to check out the COA newsletters of all the local Hilltowns on our consortium website www.northernhilltowncoas.org

Happy Birthday in February!

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



The Goshen Council on Aging 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 make out your check to "Goshen Council of Aging" and write "Program Support Fund" in the memo line; mail to Goshen COA, 40 Main St. Goshen, MA 01032.)

Name _____ Telephone _____

Address _____

Email _____



Regional News

SENIORS AWARE OF FIRE EDUCATION

Open Burning Season began in January 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:



- 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 burns.
- 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 adding to it slowly.
- 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.

--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.

ALL THOSE PAPERS!

So you know how you throw something out and the next day wish you had it? Sadly, that can happen with papers! You ask, Do I HAVE to keep them ALL?? The good news is short, No!. The bad news, you have to figure out which to keep. Some of these decisions are personal, some are not. Personal – should you keep old love letters? First car registration? You decide. Not personal – here I'll explain taxes, or rather, the IRS explains succinctly. I used this link:
www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/how-long-should-i-keep-records

Taxes: Keep tax returns and associated documents, like 1099s, or other documents filed with returns or that could effect your future returns. "The length of time you should keep a document depends on the action, expense, or event which the document records. Generally, you must keep your records that support an item of income, deduction or credit shown on your tax return until . . . you can amend your tax return to claim a credit or refund, or the IRS can assess additional tax." In short, the IRS explains that you should keep records:

- 3 years if the last two bullets below do not apply to you.
- 3 years from the original filing date or 2 years from your tax payment date, whichever is later, if you later refile a claim for credit or refund.
- 7 years if you file a claim for worthless securities or bad debt deduction.
- 6 years if you do not report income that you should, and it is more than 25% of the gross income shown.
- Indefinitely if you do not file a return.

Whew!

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

ARE YOU TURNING 65 THIS YEAR?

By Melissa Wilson, Director,
Williamsburg Senior Center

If so, do you know you are eligible and should sign up for Medicare 3 months before your 65th birthday?

Most people become eligible for Medicare when they turn 65. Your Medicare enrollment steps will differ depending on whether or not you are collecting retirement benefits when you enter your Initial Enrollment Period (IEP).

If you are receiving Social Security retirement benefits or Railroad Retirement benefits, you should be automatically enrolled in both Medicare Part A and Part B. Here is a link for more information:

www.ssa.gov/medicare/sign-up

For example, if you turn 65 on July 4, 2026, the enrollment window is open from April 1 to October 30. If you miss this deadline, you may have to pay higher premiums for Medicare Part B, which covers doctor bills, outpatient fees and other medical expenses:

www.aarp.org/medicare/faq/turning-65-when-to-apply-for-medicare/

Although there is a 7-month window to sign up for Medicare (3 months before your birthday, your birthday month, and 3 months after your birthday)...if you wait and sign up in those 3 months after your birthday, there is a delay in when your coverage will start. If you sign up before your birthday, your coverage will start the first day of your birthday month. You do not have to worry about incurring a penalty for late sign up if you are still working and covered by your employer's health insurance, or if you are married and covered under your spouse's work insurance.

GOOD NEWS FOR FEBRUARY 2026

By Deb Hollingworth

This is just a reminder for folks who have a Medicare Advantage plan: if you don't like your plan, or you received a termination notice that your plan was ending, you have until March 31st to switch. Anyone who has a Medicare Advantage plan during this "disenrollment" period (January 1st - March 31st) can switch to another Advantage plan, or disenroll and go back to original Medicare A & B and pick up a Medicare D plan for Rx coverage. You can check with your SHINE counselor to determine the best option. So, after Open Enrollment (October through December 7th) each year when you can review your Medicare options and change coverage, there's a "disenrollment period" where you can dump or change your Advantage plan.

For the curious or those looking for a challenge...

Our annual SHINE training is this April. We are always looking for volunteers who would like to learn about and help others understand more about their health insurance. I have to say that SHINE training was the most important information I received over the past 30 years. If you're looking for a volunteer opportunity where you can really make a difference, you should consider becoming a SHINE counselor.

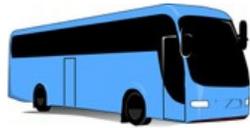
We really need a couple counselors for the hilltowns. If you tried to schedule an appointment to go over your options during Open Enrollment this year, you know the problem. Too many folks need help, not enough counselors to meet the need. "I could never do that" you say? "Too complicated for me to understand"? Not so!

You don't have to know everything.

There are between 40-45 SHINE counselors who cover Hampshire/Franklin County. And fortunately we work together and help each other, operating kind of like a "hive" mind. So if you get a call, or meet with someone needing help, and you're not sure of the information, help in is just an email away. You don't need to know absolutely everything, you just need to know where to get answers.

If you want to know more, feel free to get in touch. Contact coa.volunteer@Burgy.org or call the Williamsburg Senior Center Monday or Thursday mornings at 413-268-8407.

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**

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 TBD, Cruise and Lobster Lunch Enjoy a cruise TBD. Before the cruise, enjoy lunch at Fosters in York Maine. Choice of lobster, BBQ chicken or vegetarian option. Price TBD. Make a check payable to Landmark Tours and mail to the address above by April 6, 2026.

Day Trip June TBD, Million Dollar Quartet play. In the planning stages. Theater is in New London, NH. Includes luncheon. Price \$TBD. Make a check payable to Landmark Tours and mail to the address above by April 6, 2026.

Day Trip July 1st, FDR Homestead & Library and Hudson River Cruise. Take a scenic cruise on the Hudson River. Enjoy a boxed lunch of gourmet sandwiches on board. Tour the home of Franklin D. Roosevelt & the first Presidential Library. Price \$140. Make check payable to Landmark Tours and mail to the address above by May 6, 2026. Wait list only.

Day Trip August and September Encore Casino and Big E.

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 has quickly filled up. Please email to be added to the wait list.

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 assistance with:

- Benefits such as Fuel Assistance, SNAP, Social Security, etc.
- Living independently at home
- Arranging for repairs
- Connecting to local groups / activities to have fun with others
- Transportation
- Discussing what you may need

Any and all inquiries are welcome.

Call Jennifer at 413-296-4536 ext.110 or email communityconnectjo@gmail.com

TECHNOLOGY HELP FOR FEBRUARY



Tech Support home visits are available by appt.

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

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. We have received a new shipment and have plenty of inventory. Leave a message at 413-296-5080

Drop-in Centers (no appointment needed)

Chesterfield

Chesterfield Community Center 400 Main Rd.

Weekly on all Tuesdays from 11:00 to 2:00

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

Westhampton Library Drop-In tech support, from 2:00 to 4:00, 4th Thursday 2/26

Williamsburg

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

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

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

NOTE: Plainfield and Cummington residents should call 413-296-5080 for an appointment or use the Chesterfield Community Center drop-in site.

Internet Hotspots

Funding for hotspots data will end this month. Call 413-296-5080 for help on finding the right low-cost internet plan for you.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT MEDICARE

By Deb Hollingworth

Who is eligible for Medicare?

- You become eligible for Medicare when you turn 65 and have paid into social security for 40 quarters or 10 years.
- You become eligible at any age... if you have ALS/Lou Gerich's disease or End Stage Renal Disease
- You also become eligible if you have been disabled for 2 years, collecting social security disability.

What does Medicare cost?

- Medicare A is free.
- Medicare B has a monthly premium which this year (2026) is \$202 / month. If you are collecting social security benefits this is usually deducted from your monthly benefit.
- If you are 65, but not collecting your retirement benefit yet...you can be billed for the Part B premium.

Do I have to enroll when I turn 65?

- Most folks enroll in Medicare A when they become eligible, because it's free.
- You can delay enrolling in Medicare B if you are still working, and covered under your employer's insurance or your spouse's employer's insurance.
- There is a penalty for late sign up.

What if I have MassHealth, or a Connector Plan...do I need to get Medicare?

- Yes, you do. Because the State mandates you sign up for Federal (Medicare) coverage when you become eligible.
- MassHealth has a team that helps you expedite this.

Contact your SHINE counselor for details.

**GOSHEN COUNCIL ON AGING
TOWN OF GOSHEN
40 MAIN STREET
GOSHEN, MA 01032**

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SCAM ALERT!



A caller says your Social Security number has been linked to a crime.

They might tell you to:

- Move your money to a safe account to protect it.
- Withdraw cash and deposit it into a "government ATM."
- Withdraw cash or buy gold bars. A courier who will come to your home to pick it up.

What should you do?

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

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.**