

Plainfield Council on Aging

February 2018 Newsletter



Plainfield Council on Aging
P.O. Box 37
Plainfield, MA 01070

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February Events & Features

February Luncheons



***Join your friends for lunch
at the Plainfield Town Hall!***

- **Wednesday, February 14th at Noon**

Menu: Vegetable jambalaya with rainbow rice, deviled eggs and homemade bread. New York Apple-bourbon cake for dessert! **Yes, share / bring your favorite side dish!** No matter how much you contribute, it's always appreciated!

- **Wednesday, February 28th at Noon**

Menu: Corn, cilantro & farro salad. Moroccan chicken with sour cream. We are requesting your favorite homemade dessert!

Socialize!

Interested in improving your chess game? Bring your set. Know how to play Bridge and willing to welcome new players? "Two-Crak, Flower, nine-Dot, Red, Take". No, it's not some code from outer space. It's Mah Jongg! There are a few players among us and we welcome beginners and on-lookers.

Blood Pressure Clinic will be held at the Plainfield Town Hall, prior to lunch, on **February 14th**. All are welcome. No costs involved.

Join us at the **Plainfield COA Board meeting Wednesday, February 14th**, after the lunch (about 1:30 p.m.) Tell us what we can do going forward into the New Year! We're here to listen.

Lunch cancellations due to Winter Weather: Check in with TV Channel 22 or 40, along with WHMP Radio and the Mohawk Regional School District announcements.

Foot Care Clinic will be held at the Plainfield Town Hall, **Tuesday, February 6th at 9am**. Appointments are prescheduled. Please call Ms. Oni, the foot care nurse: 413-522-7219. A session includes a check-up of your feet and your shoes, a foot massage and cutting of your toenails. The cost is \$30.

Happy Birthday to our February celebrators!

Anna Hathaway, Ed Kohn, Rema Loen,
Gail Fusco, Anna Hanchette, Steve Ridel,
George Robinson, Ursala Burnham,
Lieve Coolidge, Paul Hogan, James Pugiese,
Rebecca Coletta, Ron Scott, Sue LaRock,
Ute Stebich, Virginia Ansgberg,
Ronald Major and Barbara Ann Cheda.



**Wishes to BILL SCHUSSER on his
100th BIRTHDAY!**

**"You're as spry as the first day I met ya!"
~ Debbie Thibault**

I am always amused to hear people poo-hooing our senior gatherings. You certainly know what racism and sexism are. What about Ageism? Ageism refers to stereotyping on the basis of age. Like all social change, confronting and understanding ageism starts between our ears. And it is not only about OLDER folks. **Ageism affects everyone!**

Think about it just for a moment: when is the last time you assumed someone was "too old" or "too young" for something—a task, a relationship—or someone judged you on the same basis? We've heard judgements around older women and "old man" behavior framed as "just the way things are." We need to wake up and embrace a more accurate view of growing older. Aging is a natural process, not a pathology!

Next time, ask yourself: "Yo, is this Ageist?"

Culled from "This Chair Rocks: A Manifesto Against Ageism" by Ashton Applewhite. (Elaine Sidney, Board Member PCOA, Comments: Elaine.Sidney@icloud.com. Thank you.)

Thank You for Your Donations!

Your donations help support our monthly pot-lucks and other services here in Plainfield. We hope to expand on our services in the future to help support more seniors. **Please consider a tax deductible contribution.** If you would like to contribute, please fill out the form below and send it with your check made out to the Town of Plainfield and write "Plainfield COA" on the memo line. We thank you for your continuing support!
--**Deborah Thibault**

Utility Discounts

Did you know that if you qualify for certain benefit programs, you may be able to get a credit on your utility bills?

If you qualify for SNAP, Mass Health, Fuel Assistance or Veterans' Service Benefits (Chapter 115) to name a few programs, you may be eligible for a discount on your utility bill ranging from 20-30%. Here is a list of companies and their phone numbers to contact. Have your utility bill with your account number handy when you call.

National Grid – 800-322-3223
Eversource – 877-659-326 (billing dept)
Columbia Gas – 800-882-5454

WALKING: Simply put, physical activity is downright amazing for your health. Being physically active every day can help control winter weight gain. Here are some tips:

1. Dress appropriately for cold weather walking. A warm hat, scarf and gloves will keep you from losing too much body heat.
2. Plan ahead for walking in the cold. Walk during the warmest part of the day. If you become chilled, it is time to turn around and get back inside.
3. Find places to walk (outdoors and INDOORS). If it's too cold, icy, or snowy, consider mapping-out a walking route inside your home. Listen to podcasts or your favorite music and SING ALONG!
4. Invite a Walking Partner. If you enjoy walking with others, remember to walk with someone who will keep you moving, but not outpace you.
5. Walking briskly 22 mins. a day gives you wonderful health benefits including helping to control Winter weight gain. Have Fun!

Culled from Susan Weber Buchholz, Ph.D., RN.

The Plainfield Council on Aging counts on YOUR support to help build important programming for local seniors!

- I would like to contribute to the Plainfield Council on Aging. My contribution of \$ _____ is attached.
(Please write your check to The Town of Plainfield)

Name _____

Address _____

Thank You for Helping to Support Your Neighbors!

Plainfield Council on Aging



Regional News

Outreach in the Hilltowns: Progress to date

By Peg Whalen
Regional Outreach Coordinator for the
Northern Hilltowns Consortium of COAs

The Northern Hilltowns Consortium of COAs Service Incentive Grant supports COAs as they expand senior outreach in the hilltowns. We will be reporting outreach progress and the state of outreach in each town. This month we report on Plainfield.

The Plainfield Council on Aging and the town-based Plainfield Cares organization are serving roughly 250 town seniors. The Plainfield Council on Aging has added three board members including two from Plainfield Cares. Plainfield Cares is a volunteer organization created in 2016 and continues into a third year of support for residents. Plainfield COA nutrition outreach continues with Plainfield’s COA luncheon twice a month – the only northern hilltown offering meals and social contacts twice a month.

Plainfield Cares offers short-term/transitional assistance for people returning to town after illness, injury or surgery. Care includes coordinating meals, helping with basic tasks, arranging company, doing pet care, and meeting other time-limited needs. Volunteers also are available to take residents to medical appointments, treatment, and meet other needs for rides. Additionally, the organization supports library use like rides to the library, book return or reading pickup. Outreach includes volunteers calling every senior to talk or meet and arrange delivery of information seniors need for safely ageing-in-place in Plainfield. Several residents have enjoyed conversations with callers and gotten detailed Plainfield-specific information and resource packets. There are enough information packets for seniors of any age.

Packets also are available for viewing at the library.

The COA urges residents to request an information packet, attend lunch, or talk with a volunteer by phone or at a convenient home visit. Even if you don’t need assistance yourself, you can become an informed neighbor or friend able to share information or offer suggestions to people you quietly watch out for or already are helping.

FY18 Housing Rehab Program

Hilltown CDC will be submitting a grant application for FY18 to continue the Housing Rehab Program for the towns of Chesterfield, Cummington, Goshen, Peru, Plainfield, and Worthington. If you have used the Housing Rehab Program in the past or would like to use it in the future, we’d like to hear from you.

We welcome your ideas, suggestions, or input about the design of the program and how we could improve the overall effectiveness of our services. Please call or email your comments no later than February 9, 2018. We look forward to your input. If you’re interested in applying for the Housing Rehab Program, please be sure to request an application when calling or emailing.

Contact Paula Bilodeau, Program Manager, at (413) 296-4536, ext. 123 or email paulab@hilltowncdc.org for more information or an application to the program.

Funding is provided by the US Dept. of HUD/DHCD and MA CDBG Programs.

Surely I don’t really need to check...

Here is one more credit report note, then I promise I’ll change topics. For a while.

I’ve had a couple people ask if they really need to check their credit report if they don’t use a credit card or they aren’t going to make a big purchase. Short answer – yup.

Long answers – A credit report may contain items other than credit cards such as some debit or gas cards, mortgages, car loans, medical accounts, telephone plans, public records, and who is accessing your report. Keeping up with your credit reports can help you avoid identity theft, assure a family member hasn’t messed you up, fix errors, and learn how to improve your credit score. With a better score, you may be able to get or negotiate lower rates (insurance, loans, rentals) or get a higher credit limit to help fund a small business.

Here’s a shocker: if a thief gets ahold of your identity and charges his family’s phone plan to it, or her medical bills, it won’t be him or her who has to straighten out the mess. The mess can be straightened out, but the process is not something you will enjoy doing.

Another shocker – long ago, when I was learning how to be an adult, there was no need to know about credit reports and scores! Life is different now. As always, if what I write can help you help someone else, feel free to use these notes.

Cheers,
Jean O’Neil, TRIAD Committee Member
413-268-2228, jeanoneilmass@gmail.com

Become a VITA Volunteer!

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program

The Hilltown CDC is partnering with the Berkshire County United Way to bring VITA to the Hilltowns of Western Massachusetts, and is seeking volunteers to help low-to-moderate income individuals in preparing tax returns.

VITA offers FREE basic tax return preparation by IRS-certified individuals, with electronic filing to qualified households that make \$54,000 or less. By volunteering for just a few hours a week from early February to mid April, you could help to provide THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS in benefits for working, income-eligible individuals and families in Western Massachusetts. The VITA Program offers **free tax help** to income eligible individuals to build assets and gain access to financial resources that will enrich their lives.

No experience necessary – All volunteers will receive training and materials appropriate for their position. Specific training dates will take place beginning in January of 2018. **No risk**- Volunteers are

covered under the Volunteer Protection Act and are not accountable for tax returns filed to the IRS.

Volunteer Positions available:

- **Greeters**

As a Greeter, you will create a welcoming atmosphere at VITA sites while also helping to check in families and individuals accessing VITA services. While tax training is not required for greeters, a positive attitude is critical to being effective in this important role.

- **Tax Preparers**

Are you good with numbers, computers, and forms? Tax preparers work with filers to prepare their federal and state income tax returns. Volunteers receive free, in-depth training and must pass an IRS certification test.

Helping with the VITA program can be rewarding while serving a vital role in our community. To find out more, please leave a message for Program Coordinator Assistant, Lisa Westervelt, at the Hilltown CDC at 413-296-4536, extension 100, or email at LisaW@hilltownCDC.org

Need help with your housing repairs?

Hilltown CDC received funding for the FY17 Housing Rehab Program, and we're currently applying for the FY18 Housing Rehab Grant. We're accepting applications from homeowners who live in **Chesterfield, Cummington, Goshen, Plainfield, Peru, and Worthington** who need help with their housing repairs. Here's a sample of some the work that can be performed under the Housing Rehab Program:

HOUSEHOLD INCOME GUIDELINES/ LIMITS:

<u>Household Size</u>	<u>Gross Annual Income</u>
1	\$44,800
2	\$51,200
3	\$57,600
4	\$64,000
5	\$69,150
6	\$74,250
7	\$79,400
8	\$86,750

Possible Repairs:

Siding	Roofs and Chimneys
Windows, Doors, and Siding	Floor Joists, Flooring
Insulation, Walls, Ceilings	Foundation Work
Septic Systems and Sewer Tie-in's	
Handicap Accessibility Work	
Plumbing and Electrical	
Wells, Pumps, and Hot Water Tanks	
Lead Paint Removal	
Asbestos Removal	

These are **NO interest/NO payment loans** which may be entirely forgiven, and all repair work is completed by a licensed contractor of your choice. Please don't delay, funding is available and you may be surprised to find out you qualify! Contact Paula Bilodeau, Program Manager, at (413) 296-4536, ext. 123 or email paulab@hilltowncdc.org for more information and an application.

Funding is provided by the US Dept. of HUD/DHCD and MA CDBG Programs.



On the Go!

The Northampton Senior Center has arranged the following outings, and you are welcome to join!



Please make your reservations early as these trips fill up fast! **Call Francine Frenier at the Northampton Senior Center: 413-587-1228.**

April 20– Friday: Polish Center of Discovery & Learning, a unique museum filled with 10 rooms of Polish history, emigration and culture. Located in Chicopee. Enjoy a German-fare lunch on your own at the Munich House prior to the museum stop. Sign up early, seats are limited. Cost is \$36.

April 26- Thursday: Sister Act, a musical comedy, will be performed at Westchester Theater in Elmsford, NY. A full luncheon is included. Cost is \$125. There is a \$10 discount if paid in full by March 15.

May 8- Tuesday: Maggiano's Cooking Demo & Lunch, and JFK Library Centennial Celebration. Learn tricks of the trade and enjoy a 3 course family-style luncheon. Then visit the JFK Library for its 100th celebration exhibit. Cost is \$114. There is a \$10 discount if paid in full by March 27.

May 25-June 4 : Mt. Rushmore and the Black Hills of South Dakota, 11 days, via bus, \$950 with double occupancy. Roommates available. Fourteen attractions and sites galore. Pay in installments or pay in full by Feb. 1 and receive a \$25 discount. \$100 Deposit. Trip insurance available.

June 21-Thursday: The Gilded Age of the Berkshires. Tour Ventfort Hall and The Mount. Buffet lunch on terrace at The Mount. Cost is \$112. There is a \$10 discount if paid in full by May 7.

June 26-28: Three Day Tour to Lancaster, PA. Two shows, *Jesus* at Sight & Sound Theater and *The Wizard of Oz* at Dutch Apple Dinner Theater and more. \$434 with double occupancy. Pay in installments or pay in full by April 5th and receive a \$25 discount. \$50 Deposit. Trip insurance available.

July 10 – Tuesday: Tour of Mark Twain Home and Wickham Gardens. Lunch at Promenade Shops on your own. Cost is \$74. There is a \$10 discount if paid in full by June 1.

July 24 – Tuesday: Best of Boston. Duck Boat Tour, lunch on your own at Quincy Market and

New England Aquarium. Cost is \$109. There is a \$10 discount if paid in full by June 12.

August 7 –Tuesday: Tour of Fenway Park and Lunch at Cheers. Enjoy some free time in Boston. Cost is \$123. There is a \$10 discount if paid in full by July 1.

Sept. 7-11: Washington D.C., 5 days, via bus, \$540 with double occupancy. Full day at the Smithsonian. Pay in installments or pay in full by June 1 and receive a \$25 discount. \$100 Deposit. Trip insurance available.

Dec. 10- Monday: White Christmas Big Band show and luncheon at Aqua Turf, Plantsville, CT. Rob Zappulla and his 13-piece Big Band will perform holiday favorites. Cost is \$102. There is a \$10 discount if paid in full by October 30.

Dec. 17- Monday: The nostalgic holiday favorite, A Christmas Carol is performed at The Bushnell. A pre-show luncheon at Aqua Turf, Plantsville, CT. is included. The all-inclusive price is \$106. There is a \$10 discount if paid in full by October 30.

Coming to the Bushnell Hartford, Ct.
HAMILTON--date to be determined.
(probably late 2018 early 2019)

Spa Days at Smith Vocational

Come enjoy some pampering! Smith Voc seniors from the Cosmetology program are offering the following:

- Shampoo, cut & style \$5.00
- Manicure \$4.00
- Pedicure \$8.00
- Basic Facial \$8.00



Spa Days will be on the following Fridays: **Feb. 9, Mar. 16, Apr. 13 and May 18**, in Room 124 of Building A at the school. To enable the students to prepare for the specific services, **please call 413-296-4007 to make an appointment.** Each appointment takes about an hour and are scheduled for 9 am and 10 am. Following the Spa Day, enjoy lunch at the Oliver Smith Restaurant!

Would you like to receive your newsletter by email instead of snail mail?

If so, please email Kristen at regionalcoanews@gmail.com to be put on the email list.

Plainfield Council on Aging
c/o Deborah Thibault
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**Plainfield Council
on Aging**

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This Newsletter is sponsored in part by a grant from The Executive Office of Elder Affairs.

Out and About in February

Thurs. Feb 15th at 2pm
Snow date Thurs. Feb 22nd at 2pm
Need a Ramp?
Easthampton Council on Aging
19 Union St. Easthampton



Do you need a ramp to get in and out of your home? Do you know someone who does? For many, the expense and effort of hiring a contractor are daunting. Stavros's Home Sweet Home program is designed to help seniors and people with limited mobility have ramps installed. Home Sweet Home program staff assess needs, provide help with financing, and oversee installation. Come to the Easthampton Council on Aging to hear a presentation by Home Sweet Home program director Lois Brown, who will talk about the best way to contact her program, financing options, and more, with time for questions afterwards. **RSVP: 413-527-6151.**

Sun. Feb 18th at 2pm
Contemplating Common Creatures
by Fran Ryan
Chesterfield Comm. Center, 400 Main Rd.
Chesterfield, MA

In this Horizon Production presentation, environmental educator, Fran Ryan, will reveal the secret lives of the Eastern chipmunk, the Eastern gray squirrel and the meadow vole. We will discuss their characteristics, behaviors, lifecycles and shed some light on these creatures with whom we share our world.

While many of us know a little something about those "charismatic species," like bears, big cats, wolves and whales - the big stars of the wild kingdom- these little guys just don't get a lot of press. Their stories, however, are just as fascinating.



Come and get a peek into the lives of these interesting furry neighbors and see what makes them tick, and how best to live happily along side them.

Funded in part by a multigenerational grant awarded by Highland Valley Elder Services to the Chesterfield COA, which coordinates these programs in partnership with: the Westhampton COA, Chesterfield Public Library, CFCEs of Westhampton and Chesterfield, Davenport Childcare, and New Hingham PTO.

