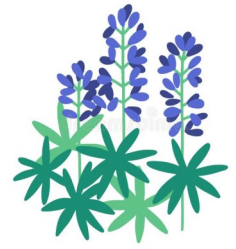


Plainfield Council on Aging

June 2020 Newsletter



Plainfield Council on Aging
Town Offices, 304 Main St.
Plainfield, MA 01070

Susan Metcalfe LaRock, COA Coordinator
Phone: 413-743-5345
slarock@town.plainfield.ma.us

June Notes and Tips during Covid-19

Plainfield Mutual Support Network

The Plainfield Mutual Support Network (PMSN) in coordination with the Plainfield Police Department, Board of Health and the Council on Aging is up and running full steam ahead. Presently we have approximately 17 members who oversee the group of volunteers who are willing to help with grocery shopping, pharmacy needs as well as just reaching out to individuals who would like a friendly smile or visit on the telephone. We are still in an environment of social distancing and quarantine requirements and are required to wear masks when out in public.

Again, please note that individuals over 70 and others with certain health conditions are at increased risk of complications if they contract the COVID-19 virus and so we ask that they can in turn volunteer to place neighborly phone calls, help us run this service, contribute to the Hilltown Food Pantry or find alternate ways to support others without direct contact. We also welcome younger neighbors to serve our community by letting them shop and/or pick up prescriptions, etc.

Here again is the PMSN web page:
plainfield-ma.us/supportnetwork

One can also check out our Facebook page, (Plainfield mutual aid and support) for additional information. Remember that you can call (413)634-1030 also for requests or more information. We have also added the HCDC COVID-19 Hilltown Response to our web page (hilltowncdc.org/covid19) for further information and as a valuable resource.

The Rev. Henry Burton (Ton) Whiteside of the Plainfield Congregational Church has arranged Sunday services at 10:30am via Zoom.com. He is working closely with the fire and police departments to reach out to families in need.



All town offices are still closed to the public at this time. You can send mail or reach out by phone. Several departments have set up Zoom meetings as well. The Town Hall and the Shaw Hudson Library are also closed for now. The transfer station is open during its regular hours. (Check with plainfield-ma.us for more information.)

Joan's Hilltown Exercise Sessions

Joan Griswold has not been idle during this pandemic! She has created some virtual exercises for all of us. Check them out. They are a lot of fun and are guaranteed to get you moving.

Chair: youtube.com/watch?v=2sdBcLwWQMg

Stretch break:

youtube.com/watch?v=8mfGAVomopY

Zoom sessions: Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 10:15 am:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3492265138>

The Difference between Spring Allergy Symptoms and Covid-19

With spring in full force, it is important to know the difference between allergies and COVID-19, and understand when you should be concerned. The point is when you develop shortness of breath in addition to flu-like aches and pains. Although fever is a common symptom of COVID-19, it's helpful to know that you can have the virus without ever developing a fever. If your symptoms improve with medication or when you stay inside, it's likely you are dealing with allergies. If you suspect your symptoms might possibly be COVID-19, keep a journal of symptoms, possible triggers, and details such as whether windows are open when symptoms start, the time of day when symptoms are worst, the daily weather, and the length of time between when taking an allergy medication and when you feel relief. This should give you a

greater feeling of control, and that's important because, often, fear comes from a sense of uncertainty and lack of control. Sometimes, just sitting down to document your symptoms will allow you to feel you are doing something to take charge of your health.

Accentuate the positive while facing difficult times; it's good for your health

Many people have offered information about positive living, but one author, Joanna Castro, from Lifestyle Fifty, best captures the "11 Positive Things Nobody tells you about Aging", some of which are reprinted below:

1. You don't always have to be right

Remember when you were younger, how important it was to be right? Well, as the years pass by, we begin to understand that being right isn't nearly as important as listening to and weighing up every side of the argument, even possibly deferring to someone else's point of view. We begin to understand that it's often better to lose a few battles in order to win the war.

2. You learn not to judge

In the Western world, we learn early on to want material things and strive to get them. While this isn't altogether bad, it often brings with it envy and jealousy. We might begin to judge others on their material assets and not on who they are as people. As we get older, 'stuff' becomes less important than people and relationships and we learn not to judge, but just to accept people as they are.

3. You begin to want less

We accumulate so much 'stuff' on our journey through life in the Western world and much of this is redundant and in excess of what we actually need. As we get older, we begin to realize that sometimes less is more. It's an incremental understanding that we don't need to surround ourselves with a whole lot of material things.

4. Your children become your friends

It's hard to think of our children as friends when they are firstly so dependent upon us and then perhaps when they're rebellious against us, or even hate us, during their teenage years. What nobody tells us is that as they become adults, grow into their own lives and fulfill their own dreams, we as parents take on a different role. Children now return to the family home and hearth as individuals in their own right and as friends. people think and not taking ourselves so seriously becomes an option once again.



Thank You for Your Donations!

We are very grateful to everyone who has donated/contributed to the COA these past several months. You allowed us to flourish in the challenge to better serve the folks in Plainfield. The COA relies on the support of friends like you so we continue that conversation and understanding. Thank You!

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 and mail to Plainfield COA, 304 Main St. Plainfield, MA 01070)

Name _____

Address _____

Thank You for Helping to Support Your Neighbors!

Plainfield Council on Aging

Seniors Aware of Fire Education



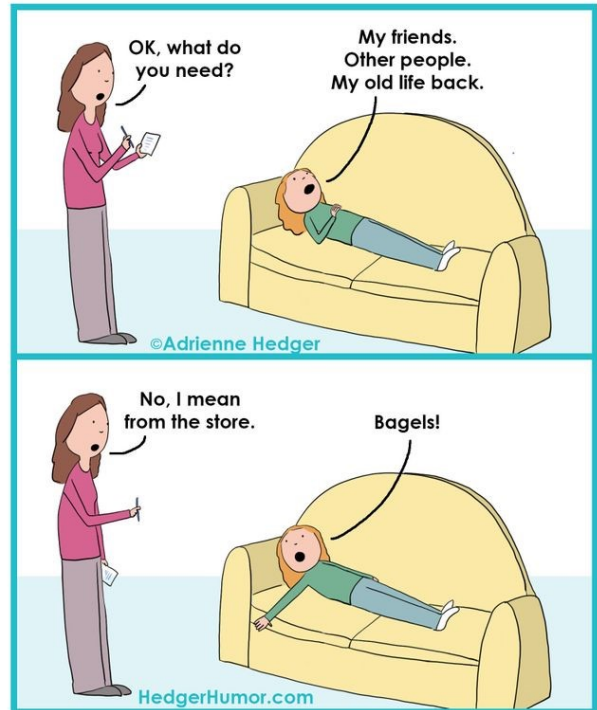
As we stay at home during the pandemic, it gives us a good opportunity to do a safety check of our homes. This month the focus is on electrical safety. Here are some things to think about and/or do:

- Electrical work should be done by a licensed electrician.
- Check all electrical appliances and replace cracked, damaged or loose cords.
- Have outlets replaced if plugs do not fit snugly or the outlet does not accept plugs with one blade larger than the other.
- Plug only one high-wattage appliance into an outlet at a time, even if there is space for another one.
- Avoid using extension cords as fixed features.
- Be sure that arc fault interrupters have been professionally installed to shut off the electricity when a dangerous situation occurs.
- Find reasons for blown fuses or tripped circuit breakers and have an electrician inspect and correct the problem.

--Worth Noyes, SAFE Educator
Williamsburg & Cummington Fire Departments

The Senior SAFE program is sponsored by many of your fire departments and the Massachusetts Department of Fire Services.

Scenes From Self-Isolation



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. Include your address so I will know which mailing list to take you off of. Thanks!

Sorry – more organization!

One of my cousins is very well organized. I am her backup executor and every year she sends me an updated list of all her financial stuff including passwords. For most of us, it is an amazement to get this done once, never mind every year. But if we can emulate her, our survivors will thank us! Here is a list of questions that should be addressed, with the answers written out and given to those who will deal with our affairs. Do recognize that the person who holds your power of attorney, or eventually your executor, will be able to access documents. But giving them a jump start is really helpful.

- * Do you have a will, where is it kept, and who is the attorney who prepared it?
- * Have you given someone a power of attorney for financial affairs? If so, who is it, and where is the document kept?
- * Have you given someone a power of attorney for health care? Same questions as above.
- * Have you done a MOLST and/or other end-of-life instructions? And where are those?
- * What bank do you use?
- * Do you have a safety deposit box? Where is the box located and where are the keys? Do you have a current list of contents for the box? And where is it? I hope not only in the box...
- * Where are essential personal papers such as birth and marriage certificates, Social Security and military service records, retirement papers?
- * Where are life, health, and property insurance policies kept? Who issued each of the policies and how do you reach them?
- * Do you have a financial adviser? How do you reach him or her?

Feel free to add any questions that apply specifically to you and that are not covered here. Thanks to Marsha Goetting at the Montana State Extension Service for the genesis of this list.

Neatly,
Jean O'Neil, TRIAD committee member
413-268-2228, jeanoneilmass@gmail.com

Good News!

By Deborah Hollingworth

I'm hoping as you read this next month, in June, that Spring has finally arrived and we have seen the last of frost and snow. Safe to plant tomatoes, safe to begin to relax our social distancing? However, the landscape has changed, and getting together in large groups may not be part of our lives for a while. If there is good news in all this, it is that we have discovered new ways to help each other. Neighbors are volunteering to help those who cannot get out to do grocery shopping, need to get to medical appointments, or just need to hear another voice. Check and chat activities have sprung up, more of us are learning to Zoom and connect virtually. All of us are checking in with our family and friends more often, and developing a new appreciation for what, perhaps, we had taken for granted....human contact.



Hilltown senior centers are creating a host of new activities, and thinking of new ways to be safe, promote wellness, and stay in touch. If you want to volunteer to help a neighbor, if you need food, if you need puzzles, books, or help with errands, the Good News this month is that you can call your senior center, it's just a phone call away.

Explore the World without Leaving Home

Feeling cooped up and longing to explore a new landscape or historic interior?

Here are some virtual tours to explore online:

- Virtual MA, Massachusetts Regional Tourism Councils: www.massvacation.com/virtual-ma
- Panorambles: www.panorambles.com
Rich, detailed tours photographed by local photographer Mark Roessler.
- Visit the Metropolitan Museum of Art to see its British Galleries and a presentation:
www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions/listings/2020/british-galleries
- Historic Deerfield is a treat in its digital form: www.historic-deerfield.org.
- Mass Moments is a daily almanac of Massachusetts history. Visit the website to read short essays depicting an event in Massachusetts for each day of the year:
www.massmoments.org



Listen by Naomi Shihab Nye

Before you know what kindness really is
you must lose things,
feel the future dissolve in a moment
like salt in a weakened broth.
What you held in your hand,
what you counted and carefully saved,
all this must go so you know
how desolate the landscape can be
between the regions of kindness.
How you ride and ride
thinking the bus will never stop,
the passengers eating maize and chicken
will stare out the window forever.

Before you learn the tender gravity of kindness,
you must travel where the Indian in a white poncho
lies dead by the side of the road.
You must see how this could be you,
how he too was someone
who journeyed through the night with plans
and the simple breath that kept him alive.
Before you know kindness as the deepest thing inside,
you must know sorrow as the other deepest thing.
You must wake up with sorrow.
You must speak to it till your voice
catches the thread of all sorrows
and you see the size of the cloth.

Then it is only kindness that makes sense anymore,
only kindness that ties your shoes
and sends you out into the day to gaze at bread,
only kindness that raises its head
from the crowd of the world to say
It is I you have been looking for,
and then goes with you everywhere
like a shadow or a friend.



Living in a New World

Covid-19 has launched people of all ages into a new world of cyber communication. It's a "push that came to shove" when the triple challenge emerged to protect older adults from exposure to the virus, finding ways to stay close while following guidelines for social distancing and reach out to each other as the new norms of "normal life" evolve.

We are fortunate that the timing of changes comes as we are finally about to get Broadband in the Hilltowns. Learning to use the internet is becoming more and more a necessity than a luxury as we build stronger communities.

Highland Valley Elder Services has informed us that "each Council on Aging can receive as much as \$3500 of Title IIIB community support funds to better equip COAs in providing services in creative and adaptive ways, to meet the changing needs of our senior population due to Covid-19. "The goal is to allow COAs to promote greater capacity to provide remote services to consumers during the Covid pandemic and beyond."

Some examples of funding include upgraded technology and capacity to communicate by using updated technology and internet services

What kind of programs do we envision? One of the most important issues in developing "Age Friendly Communities" is the desire for more and more accessible information about life in our communities, not just about older adults, but for everyone. Some of us will be setting up computer classes using interactive screens to teach the basics for small groups wanting to talk with each other in limited but social distancing locations. Much better than a teacher moving from person to person to coach you by looking over your shoulder at individual small screens. It'll all be on a big screen onsite that allows you to actually see how to operate and change information tailored to your community or region. It could also be done through the internet with a teacher available both in person and online.

Three of the COAs in the Hilltowns already provide exercises with Joan Griswold's use of ZOOM classes and others are invited. Funding from Highland Valley currently supports this important program. More than one chair yoga teacher plans to also offer some online classes. Who would have thought that we could expand contact and health programs by seeing each other virtually? It's not the same as up front and personal, but as we gradually move toward safer ways of coming together we can also keep our online relationships going.

By the time you read this, you will have no doubt learned of other new programs and services. The Chesterfield COA has wanted for some time to let people what is going on at the Community Center without having to come inside.



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Attn: Susan Metcalf LaRock
Plainfield Town Offices
304 Main St.
Plainfield, MA 01070

PRSR STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT 183
Greenfield MA

Plainfield COA

Susan LaRock, Coordinator
slarock@town.plainfield.ma.us

Shirley Todd, Chair
Ginger237ma@yahoo.com
413-634-2134

Susan Pearson, Secretary
spearsonbooks@gmail.com
413-634-0025


Lina Bernstein
lbernste@fandm.edu

Linda Carver
lindacarver17@yahoo.com

Ann Irvine
irvinea@verizon.net
413-634-5698

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DOOR- to-DOOR SALES



If you're considering hiring someone who knocks on your door and offers home improvement services...

- Don't rush or feel pressured into making an immediate decision;
- Get a written estimate and tell them you will get back to them;
- Ask for and check their references before agreeing to have the work done;
- Get bids from established, local companies and compare prices;
- Check with your town hall to see if they need a license or permit to solicit door-to-door;
- Check with your local consumer protection program or police department.

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

