

# Plainfield Council on Aging

## March 2022 Newsletter



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

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

### March Luncheon



When: **March 9, 2022**  
(unless otherwise restricted by the Board of Health)

Time: **12 noon**  
Where: Plainfield Town Hall  
Menu: Corned Beef & Cabbage

Fun contest:  
WIN A PRIZE for the MOST UNUSUAL or SILLIEST  
or MOST GLAMOROUS HAT!

Once again, the COA luncheon had to be canceled in February due to the sharp rise in COVID cases in town. Hopefully we will be able to hold the March COA luncheon as listed above. If you wish to be included on the COA call list for cancellations, updated news, etc., please email your name and phone number to shonneus@town.plainfield.ma.us. We expect these luncheons will be temporarily scheduled on a monthly basis until further notice.

Remember we still require **proof of vaccination** to attend these luncheons as our way of insuring everyone present is protected and comfortable meeting together in the dining hall.

### Covid-19 At-Home Testing Information

Plainfield is not eligible to receive free COVID self-tests from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

- **Using a COVID-19 self-test.** You can take a self-test at home. They are easy to use and

give you rapid results. These tests may be used if you have COVID symptoms or been potentially exposed to someone with COVID. You can also use these self-tests if you are considering joining indoor gatherings with others who are not members of your household. There are two types of tests for COVID-19. Viral tests tell you if you have a current infection, and antibody tests tell you if you've been previously infected.

- **Where to obtain COVID-19 tests.** You may obtain your test kit in one of two ways: Online: **special.usps.com/testkits** or by phone: 1-800-232-0233, (TTY 1-888-720-7489)

### Foot Care Clinic

The foot care clinic is up and running again with Piper Sagan every other month with the next one scheduled for **Tuesday, March 8th** at the **Community House in Cummington**. Slots from 11 a.m. on into the afternoon are still available. Cost is \$50 per person. Masks are required.

Please contact Chris at croumeliotis@cummington.ma.gov or call to leave a message at 634-2262 for any questions.

### Future Plans And Programs

Due to the increase in local COVID-19 cases and the variability in the weather, the Plainfield COA will hold off on planning future programs until the warm weather returns. If there are programs or trips you might be interested in, please let us know. You can reach us via email at shonneus@town.plainfield.ma.us or 413-743-5345. Please leave a voice message including your name and phone number. We are looking forward to planning a great year once again!

### Plainfield Walkability

Along with Joan Griswold, several members in Plainfield are looking into the feasibility of creating walking routes in Plainfield. This group met on

Zoom on Monday, February 7th at 6:30 pm. More information may be found in the Plainfield Post. Anyone interested in joining this group is more than welcome. Please contact Sue Honneus for more info at [shonneus@town.plainfield.ma.us](mailto:shonneus@town.plainfield.ma.us).

### Medical Equipment Swap

Remember, the Plainfield COA has medical equipment available. The inventory includes wheelchairs, walkers, crutches and canes, shower chairs, raised toilet seats and free-standing commodes plus assorted splints and braces, pedal exercisers, bed guards, sox assists and trekking poles. Call Susan Pearson at 634-0025 for further information or to borrow some equipment. If there is something we do not have, Ashfield has additional equipment. Call Deb Scott at 413-628-4547 or email her at [cbuilders95@yahoo.com](mailto:cbuilders95@yahoo.com).

### A Bit Of Humor – A Very Sticky Situation

As the movie was just getting to the peak thriller moment, a woman began searching for something on the floor which disturbed the man in the seat next to her.

“What are you looking for?” the man asked, clearly annoyed.

“I dropped a caramel on the floor.”, she said, continuing to search under her seat. “I think it fell under my seat.”



“You’re going to all this trouble for a caramel that fell onto a dirty floor?”, the man asked her in disbelief.

“I most certainly am!”, the woman replied. “My teeth are in it!”

*~ Compliments of a COA Board member*

### Is the COA Newsletter Important to You? Let us know!

The newsletter is funded by the Service Incentive Grant (SIG) from Massachusetts and managed by the Northern Hilltowns Consortium of COAs of which the Plainfield COA is a member. SIG has funded the newsletter for over 6 years and the Consortium has managed its logistics for all 7 Northern Hilltowns– designing, printing and mailing it to your home complete with a regional section linking each of our towns. As each fiscal year comes to an end on June 30<sup>th</sup>, we need to continue to communicate the value of the newsletter to our funders. You are the most uniquely positioned to express that value. Has the newsletter been important to you over the years -- particularly during the isolation and stress of the pandemic? If so, would you be willing to write a brief testimonial on its significance? If so, please contact your COA Coordinator at [shonneus@town.plainfield.ma.us](mailto:shonneus@town.plainfield.ma.us). Thank you in advance.



### ***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



This month's fire safety tips have to do with our state's open burning season, which began January 15 and ends May 1. I am sharing this information here in March, so you might do your outdoor burning this month rather than wait until April. April is usually the worst month for brush fires, because last year's dead grass, leaves and wood are dangerous tinder and the April winds are strong and unpredictable. To burn brush safely.

- Your brush pile must be at least 75 feet from dwellings.
- Burning is permitted between 10am and 4pm.
- Get or call in for a burning permit from your Fire Department or town office.
- Use paper and kindling to start the fire and add larger pieces of wood.
- Do not use gasoline or kerosene to start a fire because of the risk of injury.
- Have fire control tools at hand, shovels, rakes, water supply.
- An adult must attend the fire until it is totally out.
- Watch the wind, if it picks up enough to move a flag, extinguish the fire.
- If the fire gets out of control, immediately call the fire department (911).

Have a SAFE burning season!

--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.*



**Would you like to receive your newsletter, in color, 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!

**Wills, two questions**

QUESTION. Do I really have to do a will?

Answer 1. No, you do not have to do a will if you are okay with the state distributing your assets for you, and if you don't care that you potentially leave a gigantic headache for others.

Answer 2. Yes, if you do care how your assets are divided up, if you want a relative or friend taken care of, if you would like a favorite charity to benefit from your hard work, if you want to be kind to those who must finish up your life's matters.

QUESTION. Won't this cost me an arm and a leg?

Answer 1. If you have a simple estate, you may be fine doing a will using pre-prepared forms. They can be done carefully and correctly (i.e., make sure you follow the directions) and in our state be accepted by the court. "Simple" means few investments or real estate, and uncomplicated family lines. Check out **Nolo.com** (the Quicken WillMaker) and **Legalzoom.com**, two of the longer-standing sources.

Answer 2. There are some sources available to us to get low-cost attorney help. Contact the places below and inquire about income thresholds.

- Community Legal Aid in Hampshire County, **(413) 584-4034**
- Hampshire County Bar Association Lawyer Referral Service, **(413) 586-8729**
- MA Legal Resource Finder, **masslrf.org/en/home**
- National Association of Elder Care Attorneys, **www.naela.org/**

PS Remember we have until April 20 to recheck our credit reports for totally free!

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

## March's Good News

By Deb Hollingworth

The Massachusetts Circuit Breaker tax credit has been around for a couple decades now, but I still think it's one of the best kept secrets.

It was designed to give low income homeowners a break on their property taxes.....up to \$1,170 this year. (And you can file for this benefit even if you are renting!)

My frustration is that you have to file a Massachusetts income tax return in order to apply for this benefit. The folks this benefit was meant to help often don't have taxable income, meaning their incomes are too low, so they don't have to file an income tax.

For the first decade or so this benefit was available, very few people applied, even though thousands were eligible! It's because they didn't file an income tax...they didn't need to, so they never applied for the benefit.

Question: Can you file an income tax return if you don't have taxable income? Sure, but why would you?

Here's the reason to file: if your income is less than \$62,000 (single) or less than \$93,000 (married) and your property taxes and half of your water/sewer bill add up to more than 10% of your income, then you are eligible.

At last, some relief from rising property taxes: as long as your home is assessed at less than \$848,000. When you file a Massachusetts income tax return, you include a schedule CB which captures information on your property taxes and water/sewer costs.

You might Google "Mass.gov circuit breaker" for a complete description of the program. They have an excellent video that goes through the process step by step. Imagine getting up to a \$1,071 rebate on your taxes...and if you haven't filed before, but think you might have been eligible in previous years...you can get Massachusetts income tax return forms online for 2020, 2019, 2018 and file for those years too!

If you do this before April 15th this year, you could be eligible for 4 years worth of rebates!



## For those who are caregivers and those who care about how we treat each other...

Some very good tips for caregivers can be found in a free booklet by Jennifer Ghent-Fuller called The Dementia Experience ([www.smashwords.com/books/view/210580](http://www.smashwords.com/books/view/210580)) It's worth the read.

As I read it, I began to wonder if some of the tips could just as well apply to how we generally treat each other everyday. Some tips are thoughtful reminders for all of us. Some could be good for avoiding arguments in the home, especially with teenagers, for instance. Certainly these are good tips if you are trying to take care of someone who needs your help. Given limitations on space, I've included only a partial list, but as you look them over why not pick out the ones that you think would make anyone's day easier?

### The "Dont's"

- Do not demand that they reason or problem-solve
- Do not demand that they remember
- Do not demand that they get their facts straight
- Do not correct their ideas or scold them
- Do not think that they really do remember, but are pretending not to
- Do not use a "bossy" dictatorial attitude in care

### The "Do's"

- Enter into their frame of reality, or their 'world'
- Be aware of their mood or state of mind
- Use few words and simple phrases
- OR use no words, just friendly gestures and simple motions
- Constantly reassure them that everything is 'OK'
- Maximize use of remaining abilities
- Provide a safe physical environment

### Language Needs

- Use clear and simple sentences
- Speak slowly and calmly
- Wait patiently for a response
- Speak softly, soothingly and gently
- Reassure with your tone and manner
- Do one thing at a time
- Be aware of your body language and use it to communicate relaxation and reassurance
- Use a soft, soothing touch
- Be aware of the individual's unique triggers
- If they become distressed, stop immediately and allow them time to calm down – don't try to restart the activity right away

Having taught this material for years, I still marvel at how much it hones our abilities to be sensitive human beings. ~Jan Gibeau

## On the Road Again...



### 2022 Trip Lineup

Listed are the bus trip destinations with various travel groups. Most trips are limited to 36 passengers. Chesterfield COA and *Friends of Northampton Senior Center* are helping with the cost of some trips. Contact Francine Frenier if interested or want more information by calling 413-296-4291 or emailing francine.frenier@gmail.com.

*Day Trip. Encore Boston Harbor Casino.* Postponed till May/June 2022.

*Day Trip May 5. Country Shopping in Southern Vermont Trip.* Includes visit to Grafton Village Cheese, lunch at The Marina, and stops at the Vermont Country Store & Allen Brother's Farm Market. Cost \$103, \$10 discount if paid by 3/24/22. Vaccination proof requirement by the restaurant. Flyer available.

#### Taking interest lists on the following:

*Day Trip May 18: Dancing Dream Abba Tribute Band* at Aqua Turf in Plantsville, CT. Includes chicken & salmon lunch. Cost \$113, \$10 discount if paid by 3/31/22. Flyer available.

*Day Trip June 9. Corvettes Doo Wop Revue. Whole New England steamed Lobster* and all you can eat chicken & ribs with all the fixings. Self-Drive to the Log Cabin. Cost \$68. Half price for Chesterfield seniors age 60 and over. Due by May 9. Flyer available.

*Day Trip Aug 10. The Jersey Tenors*, a musical tribute to Frankie Valli & the Four Seasons at Aqua Turf in Plantsville, CT. Includes lunch. Cost \$114, \$10 discount if paid by 6/30/22. Flyer Available.

*Multi Day Aug 15-17. Kennebunkport & Portland Maine Coastal Tour.* 3 days. Cost \$359, \$25 discount if paid by 5/8/2022. Flyer available.

*Multi Day Oct 14-23. Nashville, Memphis & Rock & Roll Hall of Fame*—10 days. \$1,205, \$25 discount if paid by 7/2/22. Flyer available.

*Day Trip July. Thomaston, Connecticut. Naugy Scenic Train Ride.*

*Day Trip July/August. Worcester, MA Red Sox Triple A affiliate team, Woo Sox game.*

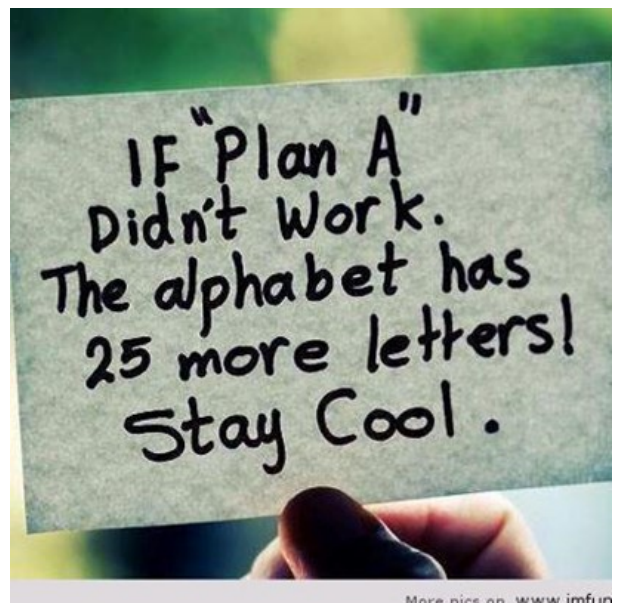
*Day Trip Sept. The Big E*

*Day Trip Late Sept/Early Oct. Wareham, MA. Cranberry Bog Tour.*

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More pics on [www.imfun](http://www.imfun)

**Plainfield Council on Aging**  
**Attn: Susan Metcalfe Honneus**  
**Plainfield Town Offices**  
**304 Main St.**  
**Plainfield, MA 01070**

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413-634-5698

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

### Haircuts are being offered at Smith Vocational School Cosmetology Department!

Cuts starting at \$6.00

To make an appointment  
call (413) 587-1414 ext. 3531

Dates are Fridays:  
March 18th, April 15th and  
May 20th.



Community Action is pleased to announce our **Older Adult Home Modification Program (OAHMP)**, a new initiative designed for eligible lower-income homeowners, age 62 and older, living in Franklin and Hampshire Counties and looking to maintain independence and lead safe and productive lives in their homes.

Through this program, lower-income older adults can improve general home safety through no-cost modifications that reduce the risk of falling, increase accessibility, and improve the home's functional abilities.

If you currently receive Fuel Assistance and could benefit from the installation of grab bars, railings, temporary ramps, tub/shower transfer benches, raised toilet seats with hand rails, and stair steps, please contact us!

For income eligibility and more info visit: [www.communityaction.us/homerepair](http://www.communityaction.us/homerepair)  
Contact Community Action: 413-774-2310 option 4, [homerepairs@communityaction.us](mailto:homerepairs@communityaction.us)



**COMMUNITY ACTION  
PIONEER VALLEY**  
Access • Opportunity • Community