

Plainfield Council on Aging

June 2022 Newsletter



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

Polly Ryan, Coordinator
413-212-1581
pryan@town.plainfield.ma.us

June Luncheon



When: **June 8, 2022**
(unless otherwise restricted by the Board of Health)

Time: **12 noon**
Where: Plainfield Town Hall
Menu: Hot dogs, hamburgers, potato salad, baked beans, jello salad

Our May lunch featured ham and baked beans, cole slaw and pea salad, apple sauce, and a super trivia contest.

Polly Ryan, our new Plainfield COA coordinator, is looking forward to being of service to you!

Feel free to contact her:
pryan@town.plainfield.ma.us or call her at **413-212-1581** or meet her at our COA lunch.

Get Your 2nd Covid Booster

The Massachusetts government recently announced that, following recommendations from the federal government, 2nd boosters are now available for anyone 50 or older as long as it's been at least 4 months since their 1st booster. A few of the many handy places to get boosted include:

Pittsfield: Big Y, Walgreens, CVS
Greenfield: Big Y, Walgreens, CVS
Florence: Walgreens
Northampton: Big Y, Walmart

Foot Care Clinic

The foot care clinic is up and running again with Piper Sagan every other month at the Community House in Cummington. Cost is \$50 per person. Masks are required.

Please contact Chris at:
croumeliotis@cummington.ma.gov or call 634-2262 to leave a message or ask a question.

Happy Birthday!



Gordon Brackett, David Bulissa, Stephen Bushway, Linda Carver, Wayne Hubbard, Michael Crane, Richard Green, Judith Hanson, Kethi Harding, Mary Harrison, Marilyn Marie Holtz-Patti, Wayne Hubbard, Barry Hudson, Peter LaPointe, John McMahon, Michael Melle, Susan Mellstrom, John Nelson Jr., Patricia North, Jay Sessions, Debra Skaling, Franklin Skaling, Ralph Timberlake, Cynthia Tuthill, Susan Westwood, Dudley Williams, David Wood, Richard Green, Dario Coletta

Medical Equipment Swap

Remember, the COA currently has equipment available, including wheelchairs, walkers, crutches & canes, shower chairs, raised toilet seats & free-standing commodes plus assorted braces, pedal exercisers, bed guards, and trekking poles. Call Susan at 634-0025 if you need equipment.

Worried About Memory Loss?

Memory loss happens to the best of us. It's normal with aging to rely on our calendars more than we used to or put our keys in the same spot every

day so we don't forget where they are. But memory with Alzheimer's disease is usually worse. Here's a list, progressing from early stages of Alzheimer's to later, of what to watch for.

- **Difficulty Planning** or following a recipe or forgetting to pay bills
- **Difficulty With Familiar Tasks** like using a kitchen appliance or playing a favorite game or working on a favorite hobby.
- **Confusion About Places And Time**, like forgetting the date or the season, becoming confused about where you are or getting lost in familiar places
- **Visual Disturbances** such as mistaking a shadow for a hole or misidentifying a family member. Others may have difficulty with reading or adjusting to changes in light.
- **Difficulty Writing Or Speaking-** such as struggling to find the right word or calling things by the wrong name, having a hard time following a conversation or repeating yourself.
- **Misplacing Items:** We all misplace our keys or our purse sometimes, but people with Alzheimer's often put things in unusual places such a cell phone in the refrigerator or your keys in your sock drawer. Alzheimer's sufferers become unable to retrace their steps to find things and may accuse others of stealing.
- **Poor Judgment** usually starts with decisions about money such as spending in inappropriate ways or stopping regular payments. People with Alzheimer's may also pay less attention to grooming and hygiene and make odd decisions about what to wear.
- **Social Withdrawal** as in no longer participating in favorite hobbies, sports, or social activi-

ties. This may happen because patients have forgotten how to do the things they used to enjoy, or it may be due to frustration and shame over all the changes that they have experienced.

- **Mood Swings** are another sign of Alzheimer's disease. People can become anxious, agitated, confused, suspicious, depressed, and fearful.

See a doctor if you notice any of these warning signs—the earlier the disease is detected, the more you can benefit from treatments and drugs and participate in decisions about your care.

Poem of the Month:

SPRING by Mary Oliver

I lift my face to the pale flowers
of the rain. They're soft as linen,
clean as holy water. Meanwhile
my dog runs off, noses down packed leaves
into damp, mysterious tunnels.
He says the smells are rising now
stiff and lively; he says the beasts
are waking up now full of oil,
sleep sweat, tag-ends of dreams. The rain
rubs its shining hands all over me.
My dog returns and barks fiercely, he says
each secret body is the richest advisor,
deep in the black earth such fuming
nuggets of joy!



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

It is that time of year again. Our lawns are growing. So, here are my annual tips on gasoline and lawn mowers:

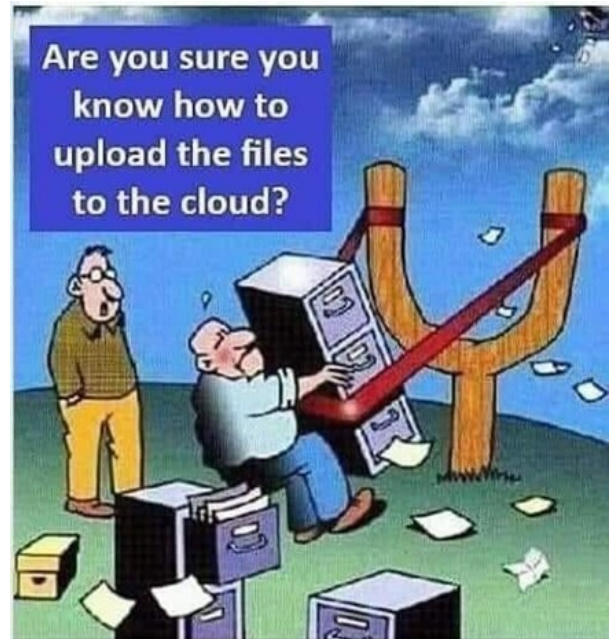
Senior 
SAFE

- ⇒ Remember, gasoline vapors are highly flammable. They stay on your clothing and can ignite if you light a match for any reason.
- ⇒ Store gasoline only in approved containers. Store them outside or in a building not attached to your house. Never keep gasoline inside your house.
- ⇒ Keep gasoline away from all heat sources such as grills, campfires, fire pits and smoking materials.
- ⇒ Never fuel a lawn mower while it is hot. Let it cool off first.
- ⇒ Do not use gasoline to start a cooking fire, camp fire or pit fire.
- ⇒ Keep hands and feet away from a mower while it is running. If you have to clean grass out from under the mower, detach the spark plug wire and wait for the mower to cool down before up ending it to get the grass out.

Have a SAFE mowing 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.



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!

What DOES my POA do?

You know how I nag on the Big Five... Let's say I am in a coma and unable to take care of anything in my life. Or both arms got broken so I can't use my hands, or I have a tick-borne disease with total brain fog. Or here's an option: I won a four-month world cruise and will be going! What happens to my business / routine part of life? Happily, I arranged for a trusted friend to have my Durable Power of Attorney (POA) and I make sure that is activated before I go.

What does the POA do to benefit me? Let me count the ways. They can:

- ⇒ pick up my mail and read my email.
- ⇒ pay the bills that come in the mail.
- ⇒ monitor my bank account to make sure that automatically-paid bills are in fact paid and paid correctly.
- ⇒ monitor my bank account for anything that looks wrong.
- ⇒ file my taxes.
- ⇒ receive the notice that a CD is coming due and either cash it in or invest it again, depending on what they know my wishes are.
- ⇒ renew my house and car insurance policy.
- ⇒ watch my medical bills to make sure that charges are valid.
- ⇒ keep an eye on my benefits programs such as Medicare.
- ⇒ go online at annualcreditreport.com once a quarter and check my credit reports for anything that looks wrong.

In short, they keep my life going until I get back to it! There are several types of POAs, so a person should read further before assigning one. This note is about the financial POA, stay tuned for the health POA.

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

June's Good News

By Deb Hollingworth

Are you thinking about housing options? House too big, or are you feeling isolated in your apartment? Are you thinking about your homeowners property taxes, or the price of heating oil, or whether you want to be at the beck and call of your wood stove? Maybe it's time to think about moving to a less demanding, more socially interesting living situation. If you are concerned about health issues, ready to downsize and never want to move again, an assisted living residence might be a good choice. An assisted living residence is an apartment with support services which usually include: meals, housekeeping, laundry service, personal care and social activities. We have a number of them (over two dozen) in our area. Cost is a determining factor, but food, social activities, and the sense of community are key issues that usually influence the decision to move.

Let's talk about cost.

Assisted living apartments are expensive until you begin to add up what your current monthly overhead is. What if you didn't have to pay homeowners insurance, or utilities, or taxes, or the grocery bill? Would the monthly assisted living rent seem that expensive by comparison?



Many folks sell their home in order to finance several years rent in an assisted living. But what if you don't have a home to sell? Or your home has a mortgage that has to be paid and the remains of your sale might be meager? Some assisted living apartments are subsidized by MassHealth. There's also a VA benefit if you are a veteran or were married to a veteran, and most Long Term Care insurance policies also will pay a portion of your rent in an assisted living.

To determine which assisted living residences offer subsidized apartments, or to see if you might qualify for any of these subsidies, you might call your Senior Center for a start, or call Highland Valley Elder Services and ask to speak to their Options counselor. (413-586-2000).

Let's talk about other factors that influence your decision where and when to move, such as food and social activities.

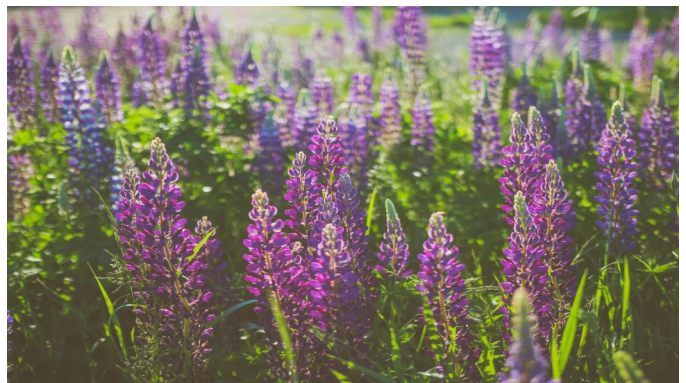
I had a volunteer work in my department for 20 years. He started when he turned 70 and "retired"

at 90. His wife died before then and the house they had lived in seemed empty. While it was well kept and in a good neighborhood, it began to need more attention. And he had to find someone to plow the driveway in winter, mow the lawn in summer, replace the water heater, put in the air conditioner. Life wasn't getting less complicated, so he sold his home and moved to an assisted living. Shortly after that, he invited me to lunch. The menu had two choices for entrees with a good selection of vegetables. Meals were sensibly sized. The dessert menu, however, had 24 choices. I approved because when you reach a certain age, the tough decisions should be about what to have for dessert.

Moving is a Big decision. And often is predicated by deteriorating health, loss of spouse or concern about becoming isolated and not having much mental stimulation. Assisted living residences might be the answer.

The COA newsletters roll for one more year!

Everyone is pleased and relieved to know that the Executive Office of Elder Affairs has approved our request to extend the Service Incentive Grant to cover the cost of keeping up the production of the newsletter that goes to over 2400 households in seven Hilltowns for one more year, allowing us to keep the written word alive. We are grateful and appreciative of support from not only EOEA but from so many people who made this possible -- each of you who wrote letters about the importance of receiving hard copies every month; the COA Coordinators from each town who advocate and work hard to reduce the isolation that comes when access to important information is not accessible; all of the COA board members who made their voices heard; support from the Hilltown CDC and other nonprofit organizations in exploring options; and especially our state representatives, Lindsey Sabadosa and Natalie Blais, whose strong support led to the decision to keep the written word alive and our rural towns "Hilltown Strong".



On the Road Again...



2022 Trip Lineup

These are the bus trips being planned for 2022 with various travel groups. Most trips are limited to 36 passengers. *Friends of Northampton Senior Center* is 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 June 15. Encore Boston Harbor Casino. Cost is \$37 which includes \$20 free slot play. Meals on your own. Meet the bus at Sheldon Field, Old Ferry Rd, Northampton at 7 a.m. *time subject to change. Make payment to Francine Frenier and mail to: Francine Frenier, 11 Stage Rd. Williamsburg, MA 01096. Due NOW.

Day Trip June 23. Zooma Trattoria with pasta demonstration and Little Italy Tour in Providence RI. Includes lunch: Chicken Piccata and lots of Italian sides. \$94 due NOW. Payable to Landmark Tours. Mail to Francine Frenier, 11 Stage Rd, Williamsburg, MA 01096 Flyer available.

Day Trip July 28. Winnepesaukee Railroad luncheon and train ride. Turkey dinner aboard the train catered by Hart's Turkey Farm. \$102 due by June 23rd. Payable to Landmark Tours. Mail to Francine Frenier, 11 Stage Rd, Williamsburg, MA 01096 Flyer available. WAIT LIST ONLY.

Day Trip August 20. Red Sox Triple A affiliate, **Woo Sox** vs Rochester Red Wings in Worcester, MA. Tentative Date Saturday 8/20/22. Private buffet for our group included. Cost to be determined.

Day Trip August 25. Lobster Luncheon at George's of Galilee and Shopping in Newport. Includes 1.25 lb. lobster at Georges of Galilee Waterfront Seafood Restaurant. \$101 due by July 23rd. Payable to Landmark Tours. Mail to Francine Frenier, 11 Stage Rd, Williamsburg, MA 01096. Flyer available.

Multi Day Aug 15-17. Kennebunkport & Portland Maine Coastal Tour. 3 days. Lobster meal included. Nice relaxing sightseeing trip. Cost \$359. Payment due NOW. 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: Chicken Parmesan & Broiled Scrod. Cost \$114, \$10 discount if paid by June 30th. Flyer Available.

Day Trip September 10. Thomaston, Connecticut. **Naugy Scenic Train Ride.** Stop at Fascia's Chocolate Factory. \$120.00. \$10 discount if paid by July 30. Lunch entrée choices: Chicken Marsala, Salmon or Pork Tenderloin at Black Rock Tavern. New Date Saturday, 9/10/22.

Day Trip Sept. The Big E. Free Entertainment at Court of Honor Stage. Date & Cost TBD.

Day Trip September 22. Norman Rockwell Museum & Studio tour with Lunch at Red Lion Inn. Lunch choice: Chicken Pot Pie or Jack's Meatloaf or Fish & chips. \$100 due by August 23rd. Payable to Landmark Tours. Mail to Francine Frenier, 11 Stage Rd, Williamsburg, MA 01096. Flyer available.

Day Trip Late Sept. Wareham, MA. Cranberry Bog Tour. Date & Cost TBD.

Day Trip Oct 4. Octoberfest! The Schnitnel Brothers perform. Self Drive to the Log Cabin. Luncheon and Cost to be determined.

Multi Day Oct 14-23. Nashville, Memphis & Rock & Roll Hall of Fame—10 days. \$1,205, \$25 discount if paid by July 2nd. Flyer available. Only a few seats remain.

2023

Multi Day April 24-30. Myrtle Beach Show Trip. 7 days. Cost \$TBD, \$25 discount if paid early.

Multi Day October. Mt. Rushmore & Devils Tower. 11 days. Cost \$TBD, \$25 discount if paid early.

YOU'RE INVITED LAURA WETZLER RETURNS



**Sunday, June 5th at 2pm
Chesterfield Community Center**

**Singer, Songwriter, Guitarist Laura Wetzler
Songs of Resistance, Hope & Love**

**Partly funded by
Highland Valley Elder Services**

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

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

HOME IMPROVEMENT



If you're going to hire a Home Improvement Contractor...

- Make sure they're registered or licensed with the state
888-283-3757 www.mass.gov/consumer;
- Make sure the payment schedule is broken into 3 payments: 1/3rd at the start of the project, 1/3rd in the middle and 1/3rd when the work is complete;
- Make sure the contractor takes out the building permit in their name;
- Make sure you check the contractor's references;
- Make sure you have a written contract;
- Make sure you have a copy of the contractor's insurance;
- Make sure you check to be sure there are no complaints against the contractor.

*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**

