

Plainfield Council on Aging

May 2023 Newsletter



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

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

May Luncheon

Wednesday, May 10th at Noon
Town Hall

We will be serving pork roast, roasted potatoes, vegetables, applesauce, and desserts. The luncheon will be followed with a performance by Morris dancers. Please note this is a scent free event. Thank you for this support.



Cross Box Boot Camp

Tuesdays: April 18, 25 and May 9, 16
4pm
Town Hall, second floor

(if it's nice out, training will take place on the town basketball court).

Judy Messer is a certified boxing instructor who will offer spring training boxing style! This circuit training uses various fitness, boxing, and yoga techniques, plus equipment. Judy will demonstrate at each station and make modifications, providing a safe and fun work out for all skill levels and ages. No previous boxing training is necessary.

This is a multigenerational activity sponsored by the Plainfield COA through a HVES grant. Registration is required with Judy for one of 12 spots. Contact Judy directly at Judymesser.com, 413-221-3012, or SnowBirdStrong@gmail.com

Yoga Strength & Stretch

April 18, 25 and May 9 and 16
10:30-11:30am, Plainfield Town Hall

with Yoga therapist Judy B. Messer. Emphasis will be on breathing, strengthening stabilizing mus-

cles, and stretching to release stress and muscular tension. Includes chair, standing poses, and any modifications needed. Great for injury prevention, procedure recovery, aging, and athletes! All levels welcome, booking 4 class sessions at a time, \$45 for 4 weeks. Reserve with Judy: 413-221-3012 or Judymesser.com

May 16th (rain date May 23rd) at 11am Walk with Polly & Joan

Joan Griswold and Polly will host a walk on the Sunset Route of the Plainfield Walks trails. The trail begins at the junction of Governor St. and Summit St.. Parking is available at Summit Farm, 131 Summit Street, in Plainfield (just off the left of Governor St. on the right). Everyone who participates will be entered in a drawing to win a gift certificate to the Hilltown Mobile Market! Light refreshments will be provided for all.

The Massachusetts Council on Aging is sponsoring another walking challenge beginning May 1 and ending October 31st. Check it out at <https://walkmachallenge.com/>. Participants who complete any of the challenges are entered into a drawing where they could win a gift certificate from \$10 to \$50, and they earn a raffle ticket that gives our Plainfield COA a chance at winning \$1000. Polly is signing up and will gladly walk with anyone who schedules a time with her, please call 413-212-1581. She would love to explore the Plainfield Walks trails.



A support group for those impacted by memory loss and anyone interested in helping them will be held at Plainfield Church in Margaret's Room on Saturday, May 13th at 11am. If you're interested in learning or sharing how we might care for our neighbors struggling with this, please join us. Please RSVP with Polly at 413-212

-1581 or pryan@town.plainfield.ma.us. To learn more, go to dfmassachusetts.org/about-us/

In need of computer or phone technology support? Every month technical support with Peg Whalen will be available at no cost. She is available between 1:00 and 3:00 pm every second Wednesday of each month in the Town Hall. A state grant through EOE and the COA consortium is funding this service. Call or text Peg at 413-404-4566 or email nhillcoastech@gmail.com in advance to schedule enough time for help with your specific needs.

Dancing with Polly continues Wednesday May 24th at 10am in the Plainfield Town Hall. Enjoy dancing at your own pace to some of the participants' favorite music (send Polly songs you like, and she'll get them on the playlist). This has become a popular dance exercise event. RSVP with Polly would be much appreciated at 413-212-1581 or pryan@town.plainfield.ma.us.

The Mobile Market will be back in July and may stop in Plainfield (we're working on it)! In the meantime, you can order online (hilltownmobilemarket.com) for pick up at their store Tuesday-Friday 8am-7pm and Saturday-Monday 10am-4pm located at 19 Sawyer Road, Worthington (in the old Sawyer Farm Store). Organizers of this project want to make sure that economics are not a barrier for shopping locally. If you or a loved one self-identify as food insecure, please do reach out, they can help. There is a free refrigerator in the works and should be online any day now. Home deliveries can also be arranged.

Grab and Go hot meals are available for Plainfield's 60 and over residents at the Cum-

ington Community House. They are ready for pick up the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of every month between noon and 12:30 but must be ordered one week in advance (in May, pick up is the 9th and 23rd, please order by May 2nd).

To order meals, call Chrisoula at 634-2262 or email croumeliotis@cummington-ma.gov. Suggested donation is \$3 per meal for Highland Valley Elder Services who prepare them.

The next **Foot Care Clinic** at the Community House in Cummington is scheduled for **May 9th**. Please call Piper Sagan at 413-522-8432 to schedule an appointment (\$50) or to arrange a home visit in the meantime (\$80 a session).

Our COA has Covid supplies like rapid test kits (over 500), masks, and hand sanitizer that are available at the town offices and the library. You can also call Shirley Todd at 413-446-9608 to arrange to get some. She is now our new medical equipment coordinator as well.



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



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!

Your State Representatives

State Senator Paul Mark

Email: paul.mark@masenate.gov

Phone: 413-464-5635

Mail: 773 Tyler Street
Pittsfield, MA 01201

Nearby local office hours:
Williamsburg Town Hall
2nd and 4th Tuesdays from 1-3pm

State Representative Lindsay Sabadosa

Email: Lindsay.Sabadosa@mahouse.gov

Phone: 413-270-1166.

Mail: 76 Gothic Street
Northampton, MA 01060

Caregivers Part 3, Electronics

The last in this installment... like I'm writing a serialized short story here... we turn to electronics and keeping your care recipient financially safe.

Our cell phones and internet access are both a major benefit and potential bugaboo all in one! There are many ways to get into trouble but also steps to take to avoid issues. I don't have room to completely describe all the tips here so call me if you need more info.

1. **Passwords.** They should be strong, they should be unique, they should be safeguarded. PAGES have been written on managing passwords.

2. **Two-factor authentication.** This means you put in a password, then get an email or phone text with a second password which is required to continue.

3. **Privacy settings.** Require a code or photo or fingerprint to activate a device. Turn off location tracking. For GPS directions, don't use the real home address; fudge it by giving a park or address close by. On social media, read that media's instructions to learn how to limit who can see a post, meaning just close friends or the entire world.

4. **Security.** Use anti-virus software and keep it up to date. Keep the operating system up to date to take advantage of their security improvements. Activate the firewall. Learn how to erase personal data from a lost phone. Use an authenticator app that will connect to the elder's accounts and alert you when somebody tries to log on (Thanks, Peg Whalen).

If you are working with an elder with diminished capabilities, consider some of the steps that parents can take with their children to provide safety. See <https://connectsafely.org/controls/>. This will help you block an online site that the elder repeatedly accesses to order unneeded merchandise, for instance.

Take care,

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

May's Good News

By Deb Hollingworth

There may be help paying for your Medicare B premium if your income is less than \$2,734/month or less than \$3,123/month if married. Countable assets need to be less \$18,180 or \$27,260 married. This is a significant increase in the financial eligibility limits for this program, and one of the ways the State is helping residents with their health insurance costs.

We often forget about the Medicare B premium because it's deducted from our social security benefit before the remaining benefit is auto deposited in our checking account. So we never get a bill, just a reminder at the end of the year from social security saying this is your benefit, this is what we took out for your Medicare B premium. This year it's \$165/month. So if you do the math that's \$1,980 for the year. If you qualify, you get a letter from social security saying they are putting that \$165/month back in your check.

This benefit is called the Medical Savings benefit or the Senior Buy-in benefit or the MassHealth Buy-in benefit. Frustrating? Confusing enough without giving a benefit multiple names, but who am I to argue?

Better news: if your income is less than \$2,309/month, this Senior Buy-in acts like a Medex plan. Meaning, it supplements your Medicare, so when you have a doctor visit, or any medical service, Medicare pays about 80% of the bill and this Senior Buy-in pays the rest. You have no co-pays.

Why is this Good News now? It used to be that you couldn't have more than \$7,000 in countable assets, and your income had to be much lower. So many more people could qualify now and see \$165/month put back in their social security check.

Curious? You can contact a SHINE counselor through your senior center to see if you qualify.

Massachusetts will end its COVID-19 Emergency status on May 11

1. What does that mean for our residents?
The COVID-19 public health emergency in Massachusetts and the vaccine mandate for more than 40,000 state workers will both end on May 11, in conjunction with the federal government's end date for the public health emergency

2. So what happens going forward?
Three years after the onset of the pandemic, the state, and much of the world, is shifting towards treating COVID-19 less like a pandemic and more like a respiratory illness.

2. So COVID-19 is over?
No, we will continue living with COVID-19. We can now incorporate the tools to manage this virus into our standing response to respiratory illness within our communities and healthcare system.

3. No More vaccine mandates then?
Certain workers will still be subject to vaccine mandates under rules from the state Executive Office of Health and Human Services and the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

4. Does this mean nobody is getting COVID-19?
No, on March 30th Massachusetts health officials reported 2,023 new COVID-19 cases and 59 new deaths in the last week. So for those with weakened immune systems, masking, social distancing, hand washing, and monitoring yourself for systems remains important.

5. What should I do if I'm having symptoms?
As always, if you're not feeling well, stay home! Your local Boards of Health, through the Foothills Health District will continue to provide free COVID19 test kits as long as they're available. If symptoms are mild, use over the counter measures. If severe, feel free to reach out to your Public Health Nurse (contact info below), your Primary Care Provider, or if life threatening call 911.

FootHills Health District: Michael Archbald, RN
413-268-8408 (office)
413-522-7112 (cell)

The Regional COA Newsletter benefits from your support!

I would like to contribute to the COA Newsletter. My contribution of \$_____ is attached.

(Please make out your check to "Northern Hilltown Consortium/ Town of Chesterfield" and mail to: Chesterfield COA, PO Box 7, Chesterfield, MA 01012.)

Name _____ Telephone _____

Address _____

Email _____

On the Road Again... 2023 Trips



Contact Francine Frenier to reserve your seat **before** mailing any payments to determine availability: 413-296-4291, francine.frenier@gmail.com. Mailing address: 11 Stage Rd., Williamsburg, MA 01096.

*Day Trip June 20. **Encore Casino.*** Boston Harbor casino trip. **Free \$20 slot play.** Make payment to Francine Frenier for \$42 due **NOW.** *Special \$22 discount for Chesterfield seniors aged 60 and over.* Lunch on your own, options available on site. Mail to the address above.

*Day Trip July 20. **Lake George Cruise-*** Take a 2 1/2 hour luncheon cruise through the vistas of Lake George. The Captain's Luncheon Buffet will be served on board. Danny Lombardo performs on the keyboard. Make payment to Landmark Tours for \$113. **WAIT LIST ONLY.**

*Day Trip August 10. **Garden in the Woods-*** This trip includes a walking guided tour of the Garden in the Woods in Framingham followed by a luncheon at the Longfellow's Wayside Inn. Entrée choices are Breast of chicken, Baked Salmon, or Yankee Pot Roast. Two floors of historical exhibits to explore at the inn. A stop at Hebert Candy Mansion. Make payment to Landmark Tours for \$122 due **June 10th.** Mail to the address above.

*Day Trip August 23. **Saratoga Racetrack,*** Saratoga Springs, NY. This trip includes lunch at the Inn at Saratoga. Entrée choices are Chicken Normandy or Pasta a la Saratoga. After lunch, spend time at the racetrack in our reserved grandstand seats. Over 60 concession stands on the grounds. Make payment to Landmark Tours for \$130 due **June 10th.** Mail to the address above.

*Multi Day Trip September 10-12. **Nantucket Island.*** Three days to two nights. Includes ferry to and from the island, guided tour of the island and all access pass to historical sites. Make payment to First Choice for \$748 p/p double occupancy due **June 21st.** Mail to the address above.

*Day Trip September 14. **Lake Sunapee Luncheon Cruise- Vermont Country Store.*** A two hour luncheon cruise on Lake Sunapee in New Hampshire. This trip includes Luncheon buffet and a stop at the Vermont Country Store. Make payment to Landmark Tours for \$111 due **July 10th.** Mail to the address above.

*Multi Day Trip September 29-October 9, 2023. **Mt. Rushmore, Crazy Horse - S. Dakota & Devils Tower - Wyoming.*** 11 days. Stops at Corn Palace, Wall Drug, National Museum of Great Lakes, Iowa Museum of Natural History, Des Moines Art Center, and Eck Visitors Center at

Univ. of Notre Dame. Cost \$1,178. \$25 discount if paid in full by **June 22, 2023.** Contact Francine to reserve your seat.

*Day Trip November 4. **Elvis- A Musical Revolution- North Shore Theater.*** An exciting musical in Beverly, MA where you will hear 40 of Elvis' hits. Lunch at Danversport Yacht Club included. Make payment to First Choice for \$259 by **July 21st.** Mail to the address above. A few seats available.



Hilltown Mobile Market

Support the Hilltowns' first year-round local farm market

Order locally produced goods online or visit our storefront located at:

19 Sawyer Road in Worthington, MA

Storefront hours: Tuesday - Friday: 8 AM - 7 PM
Saturday - Monday: 10 AM - 4 PM

Coming soon:

Free delivery to a pick up location near you and door delivery service available for a small fee

Check us out at:

www.hilltownmobilemarket.com

Writers Workshop in Goshen

If you have ever been told: "You really should write that down!" you might consider this workshop. It will be taught by a local writer and former psychologist who knows how paralyzing apprehension can be. We will do easy exercises to get past our reluctance to commit thoughts to paper. And we will select stories that offend nobody and bring smiles to our readers' faces.



This class will start with two sessions in May with the option to continue. People from all towns are encouraged to attend. It will be held at the Goshen Town Hall at 42 Main Street, in the upstairs dining room. The classes will be on two Fridays: May 12 and May 26 from 1pm-2:30pm. Please call or email Kerry Normandin (**268-8236 x118** or **coa@goshen-ma.us**) by May 8 to register for this great workshop.

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

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PERMIT 183
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Elder Law Education Program - 2023

Local seniors can learn about elder law issues at a free event (in person) hosted by the Williamsburg Senior Center on **May 17th at 3:00 pm at the Town Office building, 141 Main St., Haydenville.** The presentation is part of the statewide Elder Law Education Program sponsored by the Massachusetts Bar Association.

Among the topics this year are Veteran's Affairs Financial Benefits, how to protect your home and assets, power of attorney and health care proxies, reverse mortgages, Homestead and Life Estates, Medicare/Medicaid changes, and alternatives to nursing home care.



Please register in advance for this event by calling the senior center at **413-268-8410** or emailing **seniorcenterdirector@burgy.org**.

ATTENTION MASSHEALTH CONSUMERS

If you receive MassHealth you may have noticed that since March 2020 you haven't gotten a recertification review. These are usually sent out every year to recertify your eligibility for MassHealth. Covid changed that. Anyone who was on MassHealth before March 2020 did not lose benefits during the Public Health Emergency. This coverage protection ended April 1st 2023. MassHealth has begun to review eligibility for over a million MassHealth members. If you have MassHealth you will be receiving a Big Blue envelope with a recertification application and letter explaining how to fill it out and return it. Until this happens, your MassHealth coverage will remain in place.



MassHealth expects to take a year getting everyone recertified. So you may receive your Big Blue envelope next month, or in October, or next February. Until then, your coverage remains in place. If you have questions when you get your Big Blue envelope, you can call your senior center to speak with a SHINE counselor.