

Plainfield Council on Aging

August 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

Dine out at

Williamsburg Snack Bar

Friday, August 11th at 11:30am

In lieu of the COA Luncheon, we will be dining out at the Williamsburg Snack Bar on Friday, August 11th at 11:30 am. The Hilltown CDC Van will transport up to 12 residents to and from Town Hall for this excursion leaving at 10:45am and returning at 2pm. **Please RSVP with Polly by August 9th at 413.212.1581 or pryan@town.plainfield.ma.us.** Pick anything off the lunch menu except lobster and dinners. The tab is being picked up by COA, but donations are always welcome.



Good news about our COA Newsletter!

While the earmark of \$25,000.00 is still a consideration in the State budget, the Massachusetts COA (MCOA) has granted us supplemental funds through a "Service Incentive Grant" to cover publishing the newsletter for one more year. THANK YOU MCOA!

Jan Gibeau, Chair of the Northern Hilltown Consortium, deserves the credit for doing the leg work on this and she had this to say: "**Hooray! We did it! The written word lives on for another year and educational programs and conferences will continue. Can you believe it?**"

Well, with her at the helm, I believe it! Thank you, Jan! Did you know you can get a color digital copy (PDF) of the newsletter? To subscribe, email Kristen Estelle at regionalcoanews@gmail.com

The proposal to MCOA for transportation funding has also been granted on behalf of Plainfield, Cummington, Windsor, Goshen, Worthing-

ton, and Westhampton COAs for residents over 60. The funds will subsidize the already existing "Hilltown Driver Pool" service that the Hilltown CDC provides. This is a separate service from the Easy Ride Van. Locally hired drivers are available to take individuals to doctors or on errands when the Van is booked. Please go to the HCDC website for more information on how to take advantage of this service:

www.hilltowncdc.org/transportation

Please note that this funding is separate from the HEN program and its services, which remain the same. This funding can be used to supplement the HEN program with only transportation services should HEN funds run out. If anyone chooses to use the Hilltown driver pool instead of HEN for transportation, the HEN funding may last longer in providing more in-home services.

A note of thanks from Polly – I just want to extend my appreciation and thanks to the Plainfield COA Board members: Sue Honneus, Shirley Todd, Bonnie Phillips, Mary Potter, Ann Irvine and Susan Pearson, who volunteer their time helping me to help you. Barbara Westwood also volunteers to send you all birthday cards. If anyone else would like to occasionally give a neighbor a helping hand with chores or companionship, please let me know at pryan@town.plainfield.ma.us or **413-212-1581**. I hope you are enjoying your summer.

Our monthly support group for those impacted by memory loss and their caregivers will be on **WEDNESDAY August 16th in Town Hall at 9am** (I cannot meet on Saturdays this summer). If you're interested in learning or sharing how we might care for our neighbors struggling with this, please join us. Together we will decide what to explore.

Dancing with Polly continues on **Wednesday August 16th at 11am** 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**.



Midsummer, Tobago
by Derek Walcott

Broad sun-stoned beaches.

White heat.
A green river.

A bridge,
Scorched yellow palms

from the summer-sleeping house
drowsing through August.

Days I have held,
days I have lost,

days that outgrow, like daughters,
my harbouring arms.

Grab and go hot meals are available for Plainfield's 60 and over residents at the Cummington Community House. They are ready for pick every 2nd and 4th Tuesdays each month between noon and 12:30 but must be ordered one week in advance (in August, pick up is the 8th and 22nd, please order by August 2nd).

To order meals, call **Chrisoula** at **634-2262** or **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 September. Please call **Piper Sagan** at **413-522-8432** to arrange a home visit in the meantime (\$80 a session).

The monthly **technical support** with Peg Whalen will be on a hiatus for the months of July and August. In the meantime, you can still call or text **Peg** at **413-404-4566** or send her an email at **pegwhalenworkshops@gmail.com** to schedule a time for help with your specific needs.

Another vaccine clinic is being planned for this fall, most likely in October at the Safety Complex. Presently, it will be for flu shots only. Covid boosters may be included if the vaccine for the newest variant becomes available by the time the clinic is scheduled.

Happy Birthday!

Imants Ansberg, Robert Baker, James Bernard, Stephen Biangini, Steve Bzomowski, Claude Dupont, Susan Flores, Maud Geng, David Honneus, Ann Irvine, Lee James, Ann Kohn, Nancy Lawrence, Jeremiah Lobrose, Karen Madeiros-Blair, Guy Matsuda, Susan McMahan, Donna Monroe, Steven Nartowicz, Peter O'Brien, John O'Dea, Robert Persing, Norman Pfeifer, Corey Powers, Allan Roberts, Bruce Rustemeyer, Polly Ryan, Avery Sharpe, Carmen Sinno, Bruce Stockwell, Merton Taylor, Douglas Wabnig, Alison Walters, Joan Wattman, Pamela Wayne, David Westort



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

Artificial Intelligence

You've read about it, here it is! Actually, it has been here for awhile. I spoke a text on my phone, trying to say "Cats really know how to nap". The first word appeared on my screen as Katz but by the time I finished my sentence it had changed to Cats. That is a form of AI.

We see it in autocorrect, when our email recognizes an address we start to type, or when Siri figures out who to call. When we have to select all the images with a sidewalk in them to continue to the web page we want, that is a form of AI. Many Applications (Apps) use AI.

In addition to these useful and positive activities, doctors are using AI to help prepare their case notes and discharge papers, saving them time. A recent study at the Mayo Clinic used AI to supplement physician readings for colon cancer and found more polyps than the doctor did. Maps and navigation tools have given us benefits in ease and accuracy of use. E-banking allows us to bank from home.

ON THE OTHER HAND, as AI becomes more sophisticated, it can cause problems. The ability to clone voices is growing so scammers can use AI to duplicate voices and facial images of a grandchild and really alarm a grandparent into sending money. Voice cloning can trick us into sending money to a friend who calls. We are already seeing campaign ads done by AI that show fake photos and videos, helping to spread misinformation and false events.

Things are only going to get worse as potentially very useful Artificial Intelligence gets co-opted for nefarious purposes. Remember last month's note on mindset? We need to keep our Game Brain engaged!

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

Another Conversation about Memory Scheduled for the Fall!

More than 90 people signed up for the conference on June 22. The Community Center could only accommodate 60 people, leaving 26 on a waiting list. The keynote by Dr. Starr, combined with presentations by Sharon Asher and Deb Hollingworth, set the stage for a day that made it easy to talk about a wide range of sensitive issues. By all measures it was a success.



When asked to evaluate the day, these were some of the comments:

“Better than expected.”

“Almost as good as someone by my side to do what’s needed.”

“I’ve been working with people with memory problems for a long time and I actually learned something new today.”

“Made me realize my brain is better than my body.”

What was most helpful?

- Dr. Starr answered important questions
- Description of brain function
- Gentle but firm presentations of facts
- Positive focus of the day
- Chatting with others at my table
- What to expect if this happens to someone in your family
- The presenters did not catastrophize Dementia
- Deb’s experience with her parents

More information wanted:

- Home care resources; where to start, who pays, what’s available
- Finding local in home care services in the Region
- Programs that pay caregivers
- Supportive housing options
- Later life planning help understanding health insurance
- How to make ends meet with dwindling Finances
- Discussions about depression and “nervousness”
- How to find individual counseling for planning for the next stage
- Learning how to talk with someone with memory impairments

- How to respond to tense and difficult interactions
- Common caregiving stresses and how to get help
- Financial pitfalls, protections and planning for long term care
- Affordable options when continued care at home is not possible
- Use of light and touch therapies

Next Steps

First and foremost the conference will be repeated in the fall!

Plans are underway to provide monthly small group forums to dig deeper into the topics listed above and more. Look for the plan in the next issue.

I’m at the place
in my life where
Errands count as
“Going Out”

IF THERE WAS A PILL TO CURE
PROCRASTINATION, I WOULD
PROBABLY TAKE IT TOMORROW.



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 August 24. **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 **NOW**.*

*Day Trip September TBD. **The Big E**, an annual favorite, with free entertainment at Honor Court Stage. Watch for details. Tentative date September 22. We will depart from the Big E at 4pm.*

*Multi Day Trip September 10-12. **Nantucket Island. REDUCED PRICE. 3 days- 2 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 \$689 p/p double occupancy due **NOW**. Mail to the address above. Limited seats.*

*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. Due **NOW**. Contact Francine to reserve your seat. **Two seats remain.***

*Day Trip October 9. **Lake George Cruise** - Take a 2.5 hour luncheon cruise through the vistas of Lake George. A Captain's Luncheon Buffet will be served on board. Special pricing for Worthington Seniors \$75, for all other seniors the cost is \$125. Make your check out to Landmark Tours and mail to Worthington COA, PO Box 7, Worthington, MA 01098 by September 5th. Two pick up locations-- Worthington and Northampton. A similar trip sold out recently, so reserve early. For further information contact Phyllis Dassatti at 413-238-5962.*

*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 \$259 payment to First Choice **NOW**. Mail to the address above. A few seats remain.*

~~COMING IN 2024~~

*Multi Day Trip May 2024. **Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island & New Brunswick. Passport required.** Cost TBD per person dbl. occupancy.*

This 9 day trip includes: 8 nights lodging including 5 nights in Canada, one night stay in Maine coming and going. 14 meals including: 8 breakfasts and 6 dinners. Guided Tour of Acadia National Park, Guided Tour of Halifax, Peggy's Cove & Lunenburg.

~~Since Lake George and Lake Sunapee were so popular and sold out in 2023, I will run these two trips in 2024.~~

Consortium website opens door to "rooms" full of information

Thanks to the work of Peg Whalen, the seven hilltowns of northwest Hampshire County, from Westhampton to Plainfield, Worthington to Williamsburg, are rolling out their redesigned website, <https://northernhilltownscoas.org> This website gives easy, early access to all the Councils on Aging newsletters, in full color, every month. The website also has a section for each town, CHESTERFIELD, CUMMINGTON, GOSHEN, PLAINFIELD, WESTHAMPTON, WILLIAMSBURG, and WORTHINGTON, with NEWS and announcements, CALENDARS, NEWSLETTERS, contact information, photos, and links to important in-town resources and events. The website supplies users access to written information, instructions, video about topics on GETTING THE HELP YOU NEED, links to USEFUL WEBSITES and services access, and many other information sources and volunteer opportunities. The site also describes special INITIATIVES the seven COAs are taking part in, cross-town calendars, and regional news.

Related to Tech Tips, the site has a TECHNOLOGY section dedicated to supporting aging in a digital world, with technical support sources, how-to instructions, workshop video, visual and written handouts about devices and tech uses, links to existing online sources for technology classes, training and technical assistance, and shortly, will have a calendar of scheduled local trainings. Please visit the website regularly and get familiar with its resources. You can reach the site at

<https://northernhilltownscoas.org> (Note, both hilltowns and COAs have "s" after their name, use care in entering the website.) We suggest you bookmark the website so you can quickly and return often to check on the wide variety of activities and services the area COAs are offering.

If you currently are unable to access the internet, your local library can help you visit the website. If you have suggestions or comments about the website, please share them on the site or let your COA know. This website is for EVERYONE in our seven towns. We invite you to help us tailor it to meet the needs and expectations of all the older adults we serve.

Please note, technical support is ongoing throughout the summer, by appointment only. Pre-arranged hours will resume in the fall. Contact your COA or reach out to Peg Whalen for assistance at

pegwhalenworkshops@gmail.com or text your name and questions to **413-296-5080**.

**Plainfield Council on Aging
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SCAM ALERT!



Protect Yourself & Avoid a Scam

- Screen your calls & hang up if the caller tries to pressure you.
- Block unwanted calls & text messages.
- Don't give out personal information over the phone, through email or text message.
- Resist the pressure to act quickly.
- Stop & talk about the situation with a friend or family member.
- Never pay someone you don't know by gift card, wiring money or cryptocurrency.

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

