

# Plainfield Council on Aging

## December 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

## Holiday Luncheon

Wednesday, December 13th at Noon  
Town Hall



We will be serving roast beef, mashed potatoes, veggies, and Mary Potter will make her famous cheesecake. Jack Swindlehurst will sing Christmas songs while we enjoy desserts. Feel free to contribute holiday sweets. You can gauge your holiday stress by getting a blood pressure reading after lunch too (gratis the Hilltown Community Health Center and Mary Krol).

*A Holiday Concert performed by  
Laura Wetzler*

Saturday, December 9th 2-3:30pm  
Plainfield Village Church

They will perform "Worldbeat Songs of Peace and Love and the Holiday Season". This event is open to the public. The Plainfield COA will sponsor the concert; donations are welcome. Please join the COA community in celebrating the season.



## Flu & Covid Vaccine Clinic

Due to registration problems, **another flu and COVID vaccine clinic will be held December 13th at the Plainfield Public Safety Complex, at 38 North Central Street, from 10am to noon** or until all vaccinations are done.

Pre-registering is recommended using the link: [home.color.com/vaccine/register/northampton](https://home.color.com/vaccine/register/northampton) or by calling **413-587-1314** to register over the phone. Seniors (60+) who register will get a \$25.00 gift certificate. Pre-registering saves time at the clinic and helps plan for staffing & supplies. The goal is to make vaccines available to anyone, so walk-ins will be accommodated. All ages 2 and up are welcome to participate. There is no cost, and no health insurance is needed to receive a vaccine. However, health insurance information is collected to reimburse some of the Northampton Health Department's expenses.

**A new exercise class followed by a delicious and nutritious lunch** is being offered at Earthdance complimentary of your COA and Earthdance Creative Living Project. Exercise classes will be conducted by Judy Messer who will focus on structural and flexible strength training for balance & bones using introductory Yoga and Pilates techniques.

DATES: Tuesdays (Dec 5, 12).  
TIME: EXERCISE from 11am to noon,  
LUNCH noon to 1 pm

Please rsvp Polly for lunch: **413-212-1581**. Feel free to join us just for lunch or exercise too. Meet us at Earthdance, in the Beautiful Square Studio, 252 Prospect Street. Check out Judy at **JudyMesser.com** or call her for more information, **413-221-3012**. If you can, please bring a set of hand weights (2 or 3 pounds).

**Need a ride?** Volunteers Dennis Carr (available noon-4pm) and Erik Burcroff (available 8-4pm) will

take you as far as Pittsfield, Northampton, Easthampton, or North Adams. Call Dennis at **413-634-5031** or email him at **sweeneyonce@gmail.com** and Erik at **413-262-1587** or email him at **shoshawalker@gmail.com** to arrange rides. Donations accepted.

You can also take advantage of the “**Hilltown Driver Pool**” service that the Hilltown CDC provides. Locally hired drivers (1 of which is a Plainfield resident) are available to take individuals to doctors or on medical errands. Please go to the HCDC website for more information on how to take advantage of this service at **www.hilltowncdc.org/transportation**. To schedule a ride, Contact Ed Pelletier at **413-296-4232** between 8:15am-9:45am M-F or leave a voicemail.

(Need a flexible job? The HCDC (Hilltown Community Development Corporation) is looking to hire more drivers for their “Hilltown Driver Pool” service. The pay is \$16/hour with \$0.585 cents per mile from your door and back for gas reimbursement. You make your own hours by choosing whether to provide a ride or not when the dispatcher calls. Extra car liability insurance coverage is also part of the deal. It’s a fun and easy gig tailored to your needs, and you get the satisfaction of helping someone. If interested, please contact Ed Pelletier at 413-296-4232.)

**Grab and go hot meals** are available for Plainfield’s 60 and over residents at the Cummington Community House. They are ready for pick up every 2nd and 4th Tuesdays each month between noon and 12:30 but must be ordered in advance (in December, pick up is the 12th and 26th, please order by December 5th). To order meals, call Chrisoula at **634-2262** or email her at **croumeliotis@cummington-ma.gov**. Suggested donation is \$3 per meal for Highland Valley Elder Services who prepare them.

**Technology support is returning in a new fashion!** Peg Whalen will still be giving one on one help by appointment. The COA Consortium received a \$300,000 grant from EOEA to increase rural digital literacy and internet access in our consortium area. The project has four goals: FREE internet service to those households without; FREE laptop/tablet devices; FREE training to use their new or current devices; FREE ongoing technical support. Contact Peg Whalen at **413-296-5080** or email **coaTechHelp@gmail.com** for more information and/or to request FREE equipment & hookups to the internet.

**Polly will take a hiatus from Dancing** in December but promises to return in the New Year of 2024!

**The memory support group will also take a break in December** and reconvene in the New Year. An experienced nurse in memory care, Kathy Service, will be on hand to discuss topics of interest. Please let Polly know what issues you care to explore: **pryan@town.plainfield.ma.us**

### *Happy Birthday!*

Susan Lococo, Kathryn Pugliese, Mark Stinson, Jennifer Lee, David Perkins, John Tobin, Judith Cole, Janis Talbot, Lionel Beck, Lina Bernstein, Robert Mellstrom, William Gilbert, Sandra Morann, Bonnie Pierce, Robert Fusco, Edward Morann, Jerry Little



### ***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

The holiday season is upon us. Here are a few ways by which you can keep your celebration bright and safe:

Senior   
**SAFE**

- Buy lights and electric decorations that are listed by an approved testing service.
- Replace lighting that has frayed wire, broken plugs, sockets or switches.
- Never overload outlets. Use no more than three (3) strands of lights on a single extension chord.
- Never, ever use candles on trees, near live and other flammable decorations.
- Never leave a burning candle unattended.
- Consider using energy efficient LED lights that stay cool.

Keep the season bright SAFELY!

--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!



### December's Good News

By Deb Hollingworth

In time for the Holidays: some good news from Boston. Governor Healy came through on the proposed increase for the Circuit Breaker benefit. Doubled it! From \$1200 to \$2400. The Circuit Breaker is a "rebate" on your property tax for low income home owners. That was the original premise. But low income means you qualify if your property taxes represent more than 10% of your gross income. And you can add your water/sewer bill to that amount too if you are billed for that. Example: if your property taxes and water/sewer bill are \$5,000 and your income is less than \$50,000/year, then you'd qualify for the Circuit Breaker benefit. For more information, you can contact your senior center for details and they can help you apply. NOTE: to apply you must file a Massachusetts income tax return (whether or not you have taxable income) and include a Schedule CB. You tax return is processed, and you are sent a check!

And if that wasn't enough, there are more presents under the tree. Mass Senior Action has been working on this for years, and has succeeded in getting the asset eligibility limit removed for the MassHealth Buy-in programs. I'll say that again: assets will no longer be counted. This means that if your income is less than \$2,734/month, or, if you are married, less than \$3,698/month, the State of Massachusetts will pay your Medicare B premium and you will get a letter from social security saying your check will be increasing because they are no longer deducting for Medicare B.

This is huge. And many of you will qualify.

We may have to wait a while until MassHealth is able to process our ....ready for this?....2 page application! The regulation change goes into effect January 1st, 2024, and hopefully we won't have to wait long before they are up and running, ready to process our applications. Stay tuned for updates.

Who knew we'd get two such great benefits to start next year! Happy Holidays!



## The Book- Part 4. Household Matters

By Jean O' Neil and Deb Hollingworth

Our home may be our castle (Sir Edward Coke, 1604). But Jean and Deb do not have serfs to run things, and we assume neither do you. Therefore, we have to do it all.

Some of these items will not apply to renters but many will, so use what fits you.

### Household Overhead

What does it take each month, each quarter, to keep things running? Include information on utilities, heat, electricity, phone and internet. Who is the provider, how to contact them, what is the monthly cost, how is the bill paid (write a check, automatic from bank?). You might repeat information on house or renter insurance. It doesn't hurt to double count, meaning you may have already provided a password for an account reading from one of our previous articles, but adding it here may be helpful to someone else trying to arrange to keep things going.

### Household Management

What has to happen to keep things running? Change the water filters, change the air filters, clean the water softener, clean the washing machine and clothes dryer vents, check and replace fire and smoke detectors. Outdoors: oil the garage door, clean the gutters, refresh a deck finish, clean the grill pan. Just in case anyone else was irritated by the huge invasion of Asian lady beetles this year – no, they are not ladylike – add in a check of places around the house where bugs and larger animals (mice, anyone?) can get in.

Both Jean and Deb keep a file of potential contacts, meaning folks who might come in useful. That might include a backup for snow clearing, or a new person to clean gutters.

Computers have become indispensable to many of us in managing our affairs. Include who you get to fix or update your computer. And again, it doesn't hurt to repeat the password to open the computer. Add appropriate backups to your Book file, meaning the location of a backup hard drive and any password for access.

### Household Improvements

It is really useful to keep records of major home improvements, both for warranty purposes and possible tax credits. Consider if you have done a heating system upgrade, installed solar power, done ra-

don mitigation, made major roof repairs, added insulation or new windows and doors, made handicap modifications, or other major renovations.

### Specific to you

Do you have a plant that came from your grandmother? Include watering instructions.

So about that heirloom clock – when Jean's husband's father and stepmother got married, they each had pieces and parts of the same old striking kitchen clock. They assembled a single clock and got it working. We now have it and enjoy it. But if you don't hold your mouth right when you wind it and if you don't wind it twice a week, it gets quite petulant. So the directions for running the clock are in our instructions on household management.

**And P.S.** We know this is a lot, truly we do. Next month, the last month, is a wrap-up with suggestions for taking bites of the elephant (or whatever large image you want to use). So be brave and of good cheer – the end is in sight!



If you or someone you know is age 60 or older and has been a victim of fraud, help is standing by at the National Elder Fraud Hotline.

# 1-833-FRAUD-11

1-833-372-8311

[www.justice.gov/stopelderfraud](http://www.justice.gov/stopelderfraud)

10:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m. eastern time, Monday–Friday

English/Español/Other languages available

### Reporting is the first step.

Reporting can help authorities identify those who commit fraud and can also prevent others from becoming victims. Our experts will help victims navigate this process.

### No fear, total understanding.

The hotline is staffed by professionals who know how to support victims of fraud. Callers can count on our case managers to be caring and understanding.

### Personalized service at no cost.

Callers will reach a case manager who will help them through the reporting process at the federal, state, and local levels. Victims will also be connected with other resources on a case-by-case basis.

### Providing Help, Restoring Hope

Financial scams and abuses that target older people are happening more and more. This hotline is a free resource created by the U.S. Department of Justice Office for Victims of Crime to help people report elder fraud.

### What to expect when calling 1-833-FRAUD-11 (1-833-372-8311).



We will respond quickly. We will connect you to a live contact as soon as possible.



Victims will be assigned a case manager.



Callers will always be treated with understanding and respect.

## On the Road Again... 2024 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 Tuesday, May 14. Neil Diamond -The Tribute from Las Vegas* - Rob Garrett, known as the King of Diamonds, performs at the Aqua Turf Club, CT. Family style meal of Chicken ala Kathryn & Broiled Scrod included. The \$137 Payment to FNSC is due by March 12. Please mail them to the address above. **ONLY FIVE SEATS AVAILABLE.**

*Nine Day Trip May 29- June 6, 2024. Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island & New Brunswick. Passport required. Check your expiration date.* Cost \$1,644, per person dbl. occupancy - \$25 discount if paid in full by **February 20th.** Make payment to Diamond Tours and mail next year to the address above. **Wait List Only.** Going on the waitlist is encouraged on this date.

*Day Trip June TBD. 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.

*Day Trip July TBD. Encore Casino.* Boston Harbor casino trip. Lunch on your own, options available on site.

*Day Trip August 7th. Resorts World Casino-- Catskills, NY trip.* Can you get enough of Elvis? Enjoy a lovely ride to the Catskills. Included: King in Concert show, Buffet Lunch and \$25 free slot play, driver gratuity. The \$145 Payment to FNSC is due by May 5. Please mail to the address above. Please include your date of birth for the player card.

*Four Day Trip September 30- October 3. Lancaster, PA. Sight & Sound production of the biblical show Daniel.* Cost \$646, per person dbl. occupancy - \$25 discount if paid in full by **June 20th.** Includes: Sight & Sound Theater show, tour of Philadelphia, time in Hershey's Chocolate World, 6 meals, hotels, driver gratuity. **Make payment to Diamond Tours and mail next year to the address above. Call now to reserve your spot.**

*Day Trip October TBD. Lake George Cruise-*Take a 2½ 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.

## Technology Help and Training for December and January

December **DROP-IN** Center hours canceled. Tech support can be scheduled **by appointment.** See **contact numbers below.**

**DROP-IN** will be continuing in January on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> weeks of each month, on Wednesdays, 10am–3pm, at the Chesterfield Community Center. DROP-IN or pre-schedule a time slot online at [northernhilltownscoas.org](http://northernhilltownscoas.org). More DROP-IN days to be added as we identify volunteers willing to commit to time for support. 1/3, 1/17, 2/7, 2/21

**Second and fourth weeks computer classes:** Continuing in December on Thursdays from 1-3pm, in the Computer room at the Chesterfield Community Center, lower level. Classes scheduled for 12/7, 12/23, 01/11, 01/25, 2/1, 2/15. Class size limited. Please call 296-5080 or email [coatechhelp@gmail.com](mailto:coatechhelp@gmail.com).

**Get answers to your tech questions by phone:** 413-296-5080, and leave a message. Calls returned within 1 day or sooner. Same day support coming as volunteers are identified.

**Get help with your technology questions by email** at [coatechhelp@gmail.com](mailto:coatechhelp@gmail.com). Same day response is often provided.

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### December Tech Talk

Scammers have found a new way to exploit our technology. With the growth in smartphone use, iPhone and Android, our text messages have been invaded. This form of scam is called “Smishing” or “SMS phishing”. This has occurred because texting is low cost for scammers and it works just often enough to keep them doing it. This is what you need to know: No bank will EVER ask for banking info by text message. Report any text like this to your bank and then to the FTC (ReportFraud.ftc.gov). Never click a link or make a call in response to a text claiming to be from your bank. If you do click, immediately call your bank's fraud/security number. Learn more at [www.banksneveraskthat.com/](http://www.banksneveraskthat.com/)

You can block text message senders, similar to blocking unwanted callers. The way to block differs by the type of device. Contact us for help by emailing us at [coatechhelp@gmail.com](mailto:coatechhelp@gmail.com), calling or texting **413-296-5080**. Someone will help you block the annoying texts and calls.

*Adapted from Senior Planet:  
The Weekly Orbit 11/07/2023*

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

PRSR STD  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
PERMIT 183  
Greenfield MA

**Plainfield COA**

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

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

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

**Susan Honneus**  
413-743-5345  
stormpetrel22@gmail.com

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

**Mary Potter**  
413-734-5430  
mary@potterhomebuilders.com

**Bonnie Phillips**  
413-634-2290  
bfillups21@icloud.com

Newsletter Designer  
**Kristen Estelle**

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

