

Plainfield Council on Aging

January 2025 Newsletter



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

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

January Luncheon

Wednesday, January 15th at Noon
Town Hall

We will be serving meat and vegetarian chili, corn bread, salad and dessert. Other desserts are welcome. A nurse from the Health Department in Northampton, Kelly Hughes, will give a presentation during dessert. She will cover important Winter Safety topics, including preventing falls in winter, staying warm during a power outage, recognizing symptoms of hypothermia, and medical conditions in cold weather. Additionally, she will provide tips for creating a Winter Emergency Plan and highlight the importance of the File of Life.

Sound Healing events will ring in the New Year for us on **January 6th and 20th** in Town Hall at 11am. Sound healing is the use of specific instruments, tones and vibrations to balance and heal the body, mind and spirit. This creates nervous system rebalancing, deep rest, and emotional release. Jennifer O'Connell will be playing harmonic quartz crystal bowls along with chimes at this event. Bring a blanket and pillow to rest on the floor while the event takes place. Each session can accommodate eight reservations. Call or email Polly to secure a spot at **413-212-1581** or **pryan@town.plainfield.ma.us**. Donations welcome, otherwise it's FREE!

Join us for a matinee at the Town Hall on **January 18th at 2pm**. A notice will be sent out in the new year about what's playing. Popcorn and other treats will be had along with plenty of comradery.

Interested in learning about new findings around dementia? Kathy Service from the Northampton Health Department will give a presentation on the latest memory loss research on **Saturday January 25th at 11am** in Town Hall. Join us for new insights, coffee and cookies.

Interested in learning Tai Chi? There has been a date change. Richard Larson, a fellow senior and dancer from Goshen, will lead a class in the 8 Ways and principles of Tai Chi at the Cummington Community House **on Wednesdays at 2 pm**. These 8 simple repeating movements, involving the principles of Tai Chi, develop strength, balance, relaxation and peace of mind as a moving meditation. Richard studied Tai Chi form and the 8 Ways at the NY School of Tai Chi Chuan. This class is ongoing and free. You may join at any time.

Additional Healthy Bones & Balance exercise classes will be held at the Cummington Community House and led by Polly! She will lead classes every Tuesday at 3pm and every Friday at 9:30am. Feel free to join anytime. The classes are free and ongoing. Classes are also scheduled at the same location on Mondays and Thursday at 9:30.



Our SHINE/Connector expert, Deb Hollingsworth, has retired! It will be hard to fill her shoes! **Caroline Solan** is replacing her and can answer all your Medicare/Advantage plan health insurance questions. She is available in person on Wednesdays at Highland Valley Elder Services (HVES, 320 Riverside Drive in Florence). You can also call HVES at **413-586-2000** and leave her a message or book an appointment. The most expedited way to reach her would be to send her an email at **csolan@lifepathma.org**.

The Connector Program is run through the Northern Hilltown COA consortium. This program helps guide people in finding services beyond health insurance. If you need this kind of help, contact Jennifer O'Connell at **communityconnectjo@gmail.com**

If you have questions about MassHealth call Buliah Mae Thomas at the Hilltown Community Health Center 413-238-5511 or email her at bthomas@hchcweb.org

Got Food? There are several programs for receiving food and/or prepared meals delivered to your home regardless of your income. Check in with Polly to find one that fits your needs. And, if you wish to help a neighbor by volunteering to pick up food for them, please check in with Polly as well.

Grab and go hot meals are available for Plainfield's 60 and over residents at the Cummington Community House. They can be picked up **every Tuesday between noon and 12:30**. To register or order for the first time, call Chrisoula at 634-2262 or email croumeliotis@cummington-ma.gov. A suggested donation of \$3 per meal supports Highland Valley Elder Services who prepare them.

Funding that has provided us with **FREE Technical support** on a myriad of devices, street to house internet hookup, and devices to access the internet is ending February 28, 2025. Please visit <https://northernhilltownscoas.org/> for more information on how to take advantage of these services from now through February 2025. **Free iPads** are available for anyone who would like to get trained on how to access a digital copy of the COA newsletter. Contact Peg Whalen for more information at nhillcoastech@gmail.com or call 413-404-4566.

The Plainfield Library hosts drop-in tech support every 3rd Thursday of each month from 5 pm to 8 pm. Tech Savvy, Plainfield resident, Lee Locke-Hardy, has graciously volunteered her time

for this. Thank you, Lee!

The next **Foot Care Clinic** at the Community House in Cummington is scheduled for **January 7th**. Please call Piper Sagan at 413-522-8432 to schedule an appointment (\$50) or a home visit (\$80/session).

The Plainfield Mutual Support Network (PMSN) has a list of volunteers willing to provide rides to local vendors and medical appointments. Please call 413-634-0170 a few days ahead to schedule something. Leave a message with your contact information and details of your transportation needs.

Need a friend or support? Join Polly and/or a nurse for coffee hour. Schedule a time convenient for you by calling 413-212-1581 or email pryan@town.plainfield.ma.us.

Happy Birthday!

Linda O'Dea, Kate Albrecht, Alfred Chicoine, Havelock Purseglove, Leon Tuthill, Andrew Van-Assche, William Latimer, Phoebe Bushway, Lawrence Preston, Paula King, Helene Tamarin, Sandra Powers, Bert Marshall, John Gardner, Elaine Holder, Nancy Benson, Mary Flahive, Anne Knight.



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

True Story – the Grandparent Scam

So we have an educated and intelligent friend, no one's fool, who is also a grandparent. He got a call from a man saying he was a public defender in California and the grandson is at fault in a really bad car accident.



He needs \$10,000 for an appearance bond or he will go to jail – please call back immediately. Our friend used to work in the correctional system and the thought of his grandson in jail was too awful. Our friend also knew that his grandson and son were on a camping trip, so it was possible that he had gotten into a scrape but couldn't be reached by phone to verify this; he tried anyway, no answer. When our friend called the man back and said that much money was a problem, the man said he could manage the situation with \$5,000. Bingo - lost money.

So what do we do to avoid this particular scam?

You know I'm going to say don't answer the call if you don't know the caller, but if you do answer, have a plan. The scammer says "This is your grandson" and you say "Billy?" They say, "Yes, it's Billy." (You don't have a grandson named Billy). You say "But where is his Mom Marian?" They will probably hang up at this point and you have verified that this is a scam.

Limit personal information on social media. For instance, telling others – you never know who is listening – that you are so proud of Carl for making the soccer team on his 15th birthday, which was just yesterday. That gives the scammer four pieces of solid information to make his story real to you.

Protect your contact information, e.g., don't include your phone number and mailing address and email in your signature line in emails. Again, more information for them.

Check their messages to you, their email addresses and web page addresses to see if they are plausible. If the caller says they are from the government and gives a web address, is the suffix a .com instead of .gov or .MA?

Hang up after the first call and contact someone, anyone, who might know if your grandson could possibly be wherever the scammer says.

Listen to the teller when you go to the bank to withdraw cash! If they say something like "Are you sure this is safe?" think about it for a minute. Tellers are now trained to spot the actions that lead to these calls and loss of money.

Be safe, y'all.

Jean O'Neil

TRIAD Committee member

jeanoneilmass@gmail.com, 413-268-2228

Seniors Aware of Fire Education

Winter is here and people and many people will be out there in the cold and on or near very cold water. They will be skating, ice fishing, and driving their snowmobiles on lakes, ponds and even rivers.

Accidents do happen and a lot of people experience cold water emergencies resulting in HYPOTHERMIA — the extreme loss of body heat. If your core body temperature gets below 95 degrees, it can be fatal if untreated. Hypothermia caused by cold water draws away body heat 20-30 times faster than cold air.



So here are a few things to consider about avoiding or dealing with cold water emergencies:

- Dress properly for cold weather activities. Wool insulates better when dry or wet than man-made fabrics do.
- Keep your feet warm and dry by wearing snow boots and heavy-duty socks.
- Keep your head covered, because you can lose your body heat 50% faster through your head.

If someone falls through the ice or into cold water:

- Call 911 immediately. Many of our fire departments are trained for and have special equipment for cold water rescues. Our ambulances are staffed and equipped to care for a hypothermic patient. So, do not hesitate to call 911.
- Do NOT go out on the ice. You do not want to chance being a victim.
- REACH...THROW...or ROW.
Try to REACH the person with a stick.
Try to THROW something like a rope, life jacket or any thing that can float to the person.
If a boat is available, ROW to the victim to the shore.
- Send someone out to the nearest access point to guide the emergency responders to the cold water victim.

We do have a multitude of lakes, ponds and rivers in our hilltowns. Moving water can change the thickness of ice without you seeing it. The only really safe place to skate is at a skating rink. Be SAFE out on the cold water!

--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.

Tech. Help and Training for January



We Are Still Alive!

Tech Connect continues providing services through January and February. We have trainings this month and tech support will continue through February. Please take advantage of continuing service while we remain active. And we haven't given up looking for ways to extend services. We will know more by February.

PLEASE READ! Delivering now: Internet Hotspots

Need affordable internet access? Have you already requested affordable internet? We have a solution that may work for you. Hotspots are small cellular devices you can use to access internet. Hotspots work in most areas in the hilltowns. If you are interested in learning more, please contact us by phone or email. If you requested affordable internet and were not contacted, please reach out to us again. Calls to **413-296-5080** are now returned and email to coatechhelp@gmail.com is also a great way to reach us.

Tech Support Available by appointment

Receive technology help by email, phone, drop-in, or by appointment: coaTechHelp@gmail.com, phone or text msg **413-296-5080**.

Devices for you: PC laptops, refurbished Chromebooks, iPads and Android tablets

There is still time to join the Digital World. Ky Martus continues distributing devices. Please remind us if you requested one and are still waiting. We have more PC laptops, refurbished Chromebooks and iPad and Android tablets. If you need or are waiting for a device to connect to the internet, have something so old it is not working effectively, or need a different type of device, please contact us. Email coatechconnect@gmail.com, leave message at **413-296-5080**, or use online request form on our website, www.northernhilltownscoas.org

Drop in Centers: All are Welcome at Any Location! (no appointment needed)

- Chesterfield Community Center, 400 Main Rd. Weekly on all Tuesdays from 11:00 to 2:00 Three Fridays, 11:30-1:30 (1/10 and 1/24)
- Cummington Community House, 33 Main St. Drop-In tech support, 2nd Weds. 10-12 (1/8)

- Goshen Free Public Library, 42 Main St. Drop-in tech support, 3rd Thurs. 12pm-2pm (1/16)
- Plainfield Shaw Memorial Library, 312 Main St. Drop-In tech support, 3rd Thurs. 5:30-7:30pm (1/16)
- Westhampton Library, 1 North Rd. Drop-in tech support, 4th Thurs. 2-4pm (1/23)
- Williamsburg Meekins Library Drop-In tech support 2nd Tuesday 1/14 from 10 to Noon Nash Hill Place Resident Drop-In tech support 2nd Tuesday 1/14 from 10 to Noon
- Worthington: drop-in tech support at COA office. Call COA for date & time: 413-238-5962.

Tech Training:

Must pre-register for training no later than one week before the scheduled training date. All classes held at the Chesterfield Community Center, 400 Main Rd, lower level. To register, email coaTechTrainer@gmail.com, call or text **413-296-5080**, or sign up through the website www.northernhilltownscoas.org

Computer Classes:

Beginner's Windows Laptop Class will continue on Thursdays on January 9 and 16 from 1:00 - 2:30.

Intermediate Windows Laptop Class continues over three more Wednesdays: January 8, 15, and 22, 10:30-Noon.

Tech Workshops:

- 1/10, 10:30 - 11:30 Misinformation
- 1/15, 12- 1:00 Self Learning
- 1/24, 10:30 -11:30 Google Suite
- 1/29, 10- 11:30 iPhones
- 1/29, 6 - 7:00 pm Learn & Watch: YouTube, Libby, Kanopy



On the Road Again...

2025 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 or overnight April TBD. One dat at **Encore Casino** or an overnight at **Turning Stone Casino in Verona, NY**. Please email me which casino you'd like.

Day Trip May TBD. **Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum & Maggiano's Little Italy.** Enjoy a delicious family-style lunch at Maggiano's. Tour three floors of galleries at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum on your own. Price TBD.

Day Trip June 8. **Winnepesaukee Railroad.** Enjoy a complete turkey dinner, prepared by Hart's Turkey Farm Restaurant, aboard the train while touring the shores of Lake Winnepesaukee. Price \$137. Make check payable to Landmark Tours and mail to the address above.

Multi Day Trip June 22-26. **Montreal & Ottawa.** Passports required. Visit the Biodome, Notre Dame Basilica, Montreal's Underground City, Parliament Hill, Cruise on the St. Lawrence River. Price \$1,052. Discount of \$25 if paid in full by March 26, 2025. Make the check payable to Diamond Tours and mail to the address above. Only a few seats left.

Day Trip July TBD. **FDR Homestead & Library and Hudson River Cruise.** Take a scenic cruise on the Hudson River. Enjoy lunch at Mahoney's Irish Pub & Steakhouse (TBD.) Tour the home of Franklin D. Roosevelt and the first Presidential Library. Price TBD.

Day Trip August 3. Triple A affiliates, **Boston Red Sox vs Philadelphia Phillies** **Lehigh Valley IronPigs** at Polar Park, Worcester, MA. A pre-game tour of Polar Park and a ball-park-fare buffet for our group are included. Cost \$90.00. Make check payable to Francine Frenier and mail to address above.

Day Trip Sept. TBD. **The BIG E**, an annual favorite, with free entertainment at The Court of Honor Stage.

Day Trip Oct. 9. **A Chorus Line.** Center orchestra seating for the 50th Anniversary Production on stage at the Goodspeed Opera House in East Haddam, CT. Lunch at The Gelston House. Price \$177. Make a check payable to Landmark Tours and mail to the address above. Note date change.

Multi Day Trip October 12-18. **Biltmore Estate & Smoky Mountains, Asheville, NC.** Seven

days, six nights. Visit the Biltmore Estate, the St. Lawrence Basilica, historic Gatlinburg, TN & Asheville, NC. Guided tour of the Smoky Mountains National Park. Price \$1,099. Discount of \$25 if paid in full by July 18, 2025. Make the check payable to Diamond Tours and mail to the address above. **As of January 2025, Diamond Tours is expecting this trip to go, despite the hurricane damage. Please stay tuned.**

Day Trip Nov-Dec. **A Holiday Event in Waltham, MA.** Reagle Music Theater Players beloved Christmas extravaganza--100 performers, live orchestra, dancers, living nativity, and yuletide tunes. Pre-show lunch at The Chateau Restaurant. Price TBD. Sundays.

Good News for January

By Deborah Hollingworth

Let's talk about buyer's remorse: when you've made a decision, or done something and now you're having second thoughts. Wished you hadn't done that... If it's a health insurance decision that you regret, because you've made a change in your coverage and now you wish you hadn't, then there's good news because even though the deadline for Open Enrollment has passed and now it's January 2025, **YOU CAN MAKE CHANGES IN YOUR HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE** if you want to regardless that the deadline's past, regardless if you've enrolled in a new Rx plan, regardless if you've chosen a Medicare Advantage plan. You can change your mind.

Why would you change your mind?

Well, you could have been swayed by advertising you saw on tv saying you could get additional benefits so you enrolled in a Medicare Advantage plan and found out that your doctor, or hospital isn't in network. Or you could have missed the Open enrollment deadline of December 7th to sign up for different Rx coverage- you "meant" to, but you didn't. Where does the time go? Or you could have gotten a new medical diagnosis and you wonder if you should change your insurance coverage as a result because you have all these co-pays whenever you see a medical provider. Or you went to the pharmacy to pick up your Rx and were unpleasantly surprised at the co-pay cost. I still remember the pharmacist looking at me and asking: "Do you know how much this is going to cost you?" before letting me know that my blood thinner had a \$600 co-pay (and that was last year...it's gone up for 2025)

But regardless the reason or the worry, regardless of how confusing or complex our health insurance coverage seems, the good news is that there is usually a way to change your coverage. Our SHINE counselor, Caroline Solan, can take a look at your coverage, determine if it's the best option and help you change it if you need to. You can contact Caroline by calling Highland Valley at **586-2000** and asking for a SHINE appointment.

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SCAM ALERT!



*You get a call or message saying that **your Social Security number has been linked to a crime** and you need to **act now**.*

- They may tell you to move your money to protect it.
- They may tell you to take out cash and drop it off.
- They may tell you to buy gold and give it to a courier.

What should you do?

- Hang up!** It's a scam.
- Do not give out or confirm your Social Security number to anyone who calls you.
- Do not make payments or move money.

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.**

