

Worthington Corners

July 2023 COA Newsletter



Worthington Council on Aging
2 Packard Common
Worthington, MA 01098

Phyllis Dassatti, COA Coordinator
Phone: 413-238-5962
coa@worthington-ma.us

Welcome July!

The steady heat of summer is the secret ingredient for the magic of summer.

"But tomorrow may rain, so I'll follow the sun"
~ The Beatles

July 4th-Independence Day

"I think of a hero as someone who understands the degree of responsibility that comes with freedom" ~Bob Dylan

You might be a redneck if you have ever barbecued Spam on the grill!

COA Food Drive

Come by the **Worthington Corners Grocery** from **3:30-5:30pm on July 1st** to drop off any non-perishable food or personal items you would like to donate. Cash or check welcome, payable to Hilltown Food Pantry. Or, you may call Phyllis at **238-5962** for home pick up prior.

The Ragtime Five Brass Quintet Concert

An enthusiastic crowd enjoyed the Ragtime 5 Brass Quintet concert June 11. Some of the more familiar tunes, ragtime, swing, marches and more were performed. The quintet included two trumpets, a slide trombone, tuba and a French horn. Snacks were served, and the conversation was lively, with friends seeing old friends, some from out of town.



Calendar of Events

There will be no potluck in August.

Knitting, other crafts, color therapy, chit chat
July 13th, 3pm
COA office

Foot Care Nurse

July 24th, COA Office
Call Piper Sagan, RN, to schedule: 413-522-8432

Healthy Bones & Balance Class

Monday and Friday 10:00-11:00, Town Hall
Call Marcia Estelle at 238-5554 for more info.

Yoga Class

Sunday and Wednesday 9:30, Four Corners Farm
"First-timers": call Eileen at 238-4461 to check on the updated schedule.

Exercise Class

Monday 4:00-5:00 pm Aerobic Training
Thursday 4:00-5:00 pm Strength Training
At the Town Hall

Cost: \$10 per class; \$12 per class for walk-in.
Call Judy Babcock at 238-4457 for more info.

The Senior Farmers' Market Coupon Program

This program provides coupons to low-income older adults across Massachusetts that are redeemable at farmers' markets for fresh locally grown produce and honey. It is designed to promote consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables, to encourage recipients to shop at farmers' markets and support farmers that serve low-income consumers.

Applicants must meet the following conditions:

- They must be at least 60 years old.
- They have income at or below 185 percent of the Federal Poverty Level.
- Disabled individuals who are less than 60, living in housing facilities primarily occupied by older individuals where congregate nutrition services are provided, are eligible for the pro-

gram and may receive farmers' market coupons.

Contact Phyllis Dassatti for more information and application process: **413-238-5962**

Tech Support

There will be no summer hours in July and August for Tech Support. If you have any questions, you may email Peg Whalen:

pegwhalenworkshops@gmail.com

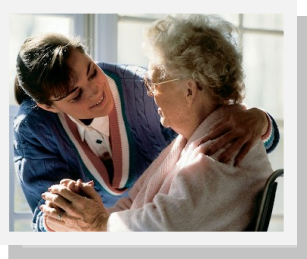
Tech Support:

Go to preference file, click on the pull down menu, find the option that says "Nothing Works Right" and uncheck it.

"How's opening a window going to help my computer?"

Caregiver Respite Scholarship Program

Scholarships of \$400 are available to caregivers of seniors to reimburse for in-home respite services or adult day health centers. If you know of someone and need more information, contact: Caregiver Support/Outreach Coordinator Crystal Wright-Partyka at **413-685-5283**. This program has been produced in full from a grant awarded to the Massachusetts Association of Council on Aging of Elder Affairs.



The Future Of The Worthington Corners Newsletter

As you know, the Council on Aging writes a newsletter which includes a regional section, that gets mailed to 232 Worthington households every

month. The printing and mailing costs are paid for by the Service Incentive Grant (SIG). This grant, from the state of Executive of Elder Affairs, was awarded to the Northern Consortium several years ago. This funding ends June 30, 2023.

As a result, the Worthington Corners newsletter and its distribution is very much in jeopardy.

We are working to secure future funding. Avenues being pursued are through the state legislature and possibly a new round of SIG grant request for proposal. It is unknown if these efforts will be successful. We hope to have an answer soon.

As stated in our November 2022 newsletter: The newsletter has been our modern-day town crier and a way to bring us together, feel less isolated, and to let us know about important developments that may impact us. There is no other method that has the widespread impact that is achieved through the distribution of this newsletter.

****Please read the regional section of this newsletter for more detailed information.****

Part-time Resident Service Coordinator (HUD) opening at the Maples Senior Housing, an independent living, federally subsidized, affordable housing community of 23 residents, average age 80. Familiarity of experience with Resident Service Coordinator or Community Worker/Navigator position is helpful. Job is 15 hours per week, \$21 per hour, no benefits. RSC collates with residents to offer available voluntary options for federal, state, and other agencies, educational, health, financial, food, and social support services. This job is great for someone looking for a part-time way to contribute to the well-being for seniors.

For more information: Patty Kimura, The Maples: **(413) 238-5836** or email **maples@ehmchm.org** Please send resume/cover to Director of Resident Services Christine McPherson LMSW by email: **cmcpherson@ehmchm.org**

The Worthington Council on Aging counts on YOUR support to help build important programming for local seniors!

I would like to contribute to the Worthington Council on Aging. My contribution of \$_____ is attached.

Please write your check to The Town of Worthington and send to Worthington COA, PO Box 7, Worthington, MA 01098)

Name _____

Address _____

Thank You for Helping to Support Your Neighbors!

LIES MY MOTHER TOLD ME

By I Might Be Funny

1. "It's illegal to drive with the overhead light on."
2. "If you swallow your gum, it will stay in your stomach for 7 years."
3. "Keep making that face & it'll freeze like that."
4. "I have eyes in the back of my head."
5. "You can't swim for 30 minutes after eating."
6. "Don't sit so close to the TV, you'll go blind."
7. "The dog went to live on a big farm."
8. "I'm just running into the store for *one* thing."
9. "A watermelon will grow in your stomach if you swallow the seeds." © I Might Be Funny
10. "Maybe...I'll think about it."

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

Scams and Our Brains

We read a lot about the different scams and the scammers that are out to get us (no, it is not paranoia if they really are, goes the old joke), but what about our role in scams? I got to thinking about the "How" part of our avoiding scams. Perhaps it comes down to how we think about them. Our mental state may direct how we respond to a potential threat.

So, we get an offer, a message, some communication, and wonder if it could be a scam. Are there hard and fast rules to help you to decide? Not always but there are three that should tickle your brain.

- ⇒ If the person asks you for something related to crypto currency, It Is A Scam.
- ⇒ If the person says they are calling from Medicare, Social Security, the IRS, or the FBI, It Is A Scam.
- ⇒ If they are calling from your bank and asking for personal information like your account number, debit card number or pin, account log-in credentials, Social Security Number, or account balance, It Is A Scam.

Other rules are fuzzier, but consider:

- ⇒ Was it an unsolicited phone call?
- ⇒ Was it an unsolicited and maybe poorly worded email?
- ⇒ Was it an unsolicited door visitor?
- ⇒ Does it sound too good to be true?
- ⇒ Do they say there is great benefit but no risk?
- ⇒ Is the speaker or writer pressuring me to hurry, act fast, keep this secret?
- ⇒ Have any friends or family warned me about responding to calls and emails?
- ⇒ Do I think I'm too smart or well-informed to fall for a scam?
- ⇒ What does my instinct say? Or if you prefer, what is my gut reaction?

Probably our best defense against the scams is our brain!

Thoughtfully,

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

July's Good News

By Deb Hollingworth

There are 2.4 million Massachusetts residents who are enrolled in MassHealth's programs. Usually we have to re-certify every year, that is, fill out what looks like an application every year to let MassHealth know about any changes in our circumstances. Did we get married, did our spouse die, did our financial situation change? Is our address the same? In March 2020, when Covid put us in a "public health emergency", re-certification stopped because our MassHealth coverage was frozen in place.

Now that the Covid public health emergency has ended, MassHealth has to start the re-certification process again. For all 2.4 million of us. The good news is that more folks have been hired to help us do this. Highland Valley and LifePath (in Greenfield) have received money to hire a Benefits counselor to help with the re-certification application. So here are some numbers to call if you have questions about the Big Blue envelope.

You can call MassHealth's customer service line at **800-841-2900** or Highland Valley at **413-586-2000** and ask for their Benefits counselor, or LifePath at **413-773-5555** to ask for their Resource Consultant. Closer to home you can contact your Senior Center to speak with your SHINE counselor.

Saving the Written Word: Councils on Aging Newsletters at Risk

Funding from the Executive Office of Elder Affairs for the monthly newsletter ended on June 30th. The Northern Hilltowns Consortium of Councils on Aging has been working diligently to find a way to save it. It's the major way we reach out to 2,326 households with people 60 years or older. It's important. Better communication was one of the priorities people cited in our Age Friendly survey as a priority in making our towns more livable.

What does the newsletter do to make communication stronger? We've focused more and more on getting the word out about:

- Town and regional events that help people feel less isolated and more connected to their communities and each other.
- Access to food, exercise classes, health insurance plans and benefits
- Use of broadband and internet resources, learning how to use iPhones, computers and other equipment needed to enter the digital world

- Learning about scams and how to reduce vulnerability.
- Groups in each town that meet regularly meet to work on arts and craft projects, puzzles, playing cards, etc.
- Educational programs about major issues affecting us as we age, such as memory problems, loneliness, financial problems, access to medical services, long term care and end of life issues.

Losing the newsletter puts all of this in limbo. The Consortium has applied for a number of grants but the process itself is very competitive. We will not know the results until after the final state budget is signed by Governor Healy. Representative Lindsay Sabadosa and Senator Paul Mark have been working hard to support our efforts by filing bills in both the House and Senate. At the time of this writing the request did not make it out of the House budget committee, but the Senate voted to fund \$25,000. We appreciate their work on our behalf. Unfortunately, we need close to \$42,000 each year to keep the newsletter alive.

We have applied for a major grant from EOEA to increase digital equity in rural communities. The hope is to expand electronic access for people who want to switch over to digital copies but also make it available on the Consortium website: **northernhilltownscoas.org**, the town websites, Facebook, and a range of related internet access points. We recently learned that applications that have been submitted resulted in a total of \$3 million dollars, twice the \$1.5 million of the funds available.

The Consortium is still committed to keeping the newsletter going as long as we can. In our June monthly meeting the group voted to use funds from our membership dues to cover the August edition.

Let's hope that we are fortunate enough to get the help we need, but June and possibly July are cliff-hangers for now.

Respectfully,
Jan Gibeau
Chair, Northern Hilltown Consortium of
Councils on Aging



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 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 **NOW**. Mail to the address above. **WAIT LIST ONLY.**

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**. Mail to the address above. **NOTE DATE CORRECTION.**

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 **NOW**. Mail to the address above. Limited seats.

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 **NOW**. Mail to the address above. **WAIT LIST ONLY.**

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.

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.

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.

Aging and Technology Survey Results

We are grateful to everyone who contributed their experiences with technology by participating in the Aging and Technology survey and offer thanks to even more people expressing interest in the results. We mailed over 3,516 questionnaires to everyone 60 and older in Chesterfield, Cummington, Goshen, Plainfield, Westhampton, Williamsburg, Haydenville, and Worthington. The response was overwhelming, with over 1,225 returns, a response of 35%.

Here's what we learned:

Our results show 85% of older adults in the Hilltowns use technology daily, 10% use it never, rarely or once in a while, and 5% use it monthly or weekly. The top three reasons for none or infrequent technology use are knowing little to nothing (44%); having no interest (35%); and over one-quarter have concerns about stolen identity, theft, or home break-ins. Of the small number of people never or infrequently using technology, 15% said they cannot afford internet service and computers.

Of those responding to the survey 91% said that they have a computer, laptop, or tablet and are able to access the internet. Almost one in ten (8%) have no technology of any type. About 3/4 report having printers. The types of phones people use varied; 59% still have a landline, 90% have cellular phones, and 90% of these are smartphones. Three quarters have Broadband internet service from either Comcast, Dish, Direct TV, Satellite or Whip City fiber network.

People said that they make use of technology in a variety of ways. Most people use email (93%). Other ways include: searches on the internet, order prescriptions online, make telehealth appointments, use medical/health care portals. Over half of people (52%) use social media of some type to access retirement accounts or online Social Security accounts. Slightly over a third have an online Medicare account.

Who helps with technology?

The major source of help comes from adults: adult or child/teen family members (74.2%) or friends (24.2%). *Continued on next page.*

Worthington Council on Aging
Attn: Phyllis Dassatti
PO Box 7
Worthington, MA 01098

PRSR STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT 183
Greenfield MA

Worthington COA

Phyllis Dassatti,
Coordinator
coa@worthington-ma.us
413-238-5962

Camille Smith, Chair

Helyn Myrick, Co-Chair

Judy Sena, Secretary

Helen Pelletier

Pat Kennedy

Susan VanBuren

LeAnn Mason

Eileen Daneri

Newsletter Designer:
Kristen Estelle
regionalcoanews@gmail.com

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What are the concerns about “going online”?

Safety was a concern and one-third of people indicated that they have been or may have been a victim of computer or internet scams. Among these scam victims, 6% lost money, 11% report viruses, 3% lost information, and/or 2% had damage to equipment. Very few reported financial loss or damage to authorities, with less than 5% alerting police, DA, or government entities, banks or credit card companies.

The questionnaire includes a section about older adults' interests in learning more and how they want to get technical support and training.

Almost half of those responding expressed definite or possible interest in learning more. The most requested ways of learning include having someone to call when they have a problem or question and scheduling one-on-one help (40.8%). Workshops (34.5%) and drop-in locations (29.9%) were also identified as ways to learn more. Over 1 in 4 said that being told about helpful websites, watching online videos, and ongoing technology classes were good ways to help them learn more. That's good to know because all these services currently are available across our seven northern hilltowns or online.

Of the nearly half interested in learning more, the devices they most want to learn to use/use better are smartphones and computers/laptops. Over 70% of people identified technology uses they most wanted to learn, including taking, managing, saving, or sending photos, streaming to TV, scanning documents, and attaching documents.

This survey has been very helpful in charting the course to making life on the internet easier, but we could use more help to get there. If you are among the advanced/expert users and are willing to share a small amount of your time to help other older adults please let us know at nhillcoastech@gmail.com

What's ahead?

The Consortium has applied for a major grant from the Executive Office of Elder Affairs that could be a strong way to move us forward. In addition to the needed services identified in the grant, it may also provide a way to help more people get Broadband, have access to hotspots and use laptops at identified computer sites in the Hilltowns.

Your voices have been heard and we await decisions when Governor Healy signs the new budget.