



Photo Courtesy Of Charley Rose

# WORTHINGTON COUNCIL ON AGING NEWS

## FEBRUARY 2026

### BOARD MEMBERS

PHYLLIS DASSATTI-*Coordinator*  
JAY DRESCHNACK - Chair  
MARY KAY FARLEY-Co-Chair  
*Newsletter*

EILEEN DANERI  
PAT KENNEDY  
HELYN MYRICK  
HELEN PELLETIER  
CAMILLE SMITH  
JUDY SENA-Secretary

### HILLTOWN CDC HOUSING REHAB PROGRAM

Offers low to moderate income homeowners as an affordable means to repair their homes. All loans are offered as "deferred payment loans", so there are NO monthly payments and NO interest. A PORTION OF THE LOAN has an accelerated forgiveness schedule for homeowners aged 70 and older. For more information CONTACT:

Paula S. Bilodeau, Housing Rehab Program Manager  
Hilltown CDC, P.O. Box 17, Chesterfield, MA 01012, Phone (413) 296-4536 Fax (413) 296-4020



## **WORTHINGTON COA EVENTS**

### **JANUARY POT LUCK LUNCHEON**

The Council on Aging hosted a pot luck luncheon on January 12<sup>th</sup>. Over 40 people enjoyed each other's fabulous food, visiting with friends and making new acquaintances. Come to the next one and bring your friends! (Photo courtesy of Ed Pelletier)

February 9, 2026- POTLUCK VALENTINE'S DAY PARTY -12:00 at Town Hall

# WEEKLY ACTIVITIES:

## Sundays & Wednesdays

Yoga

Town Hall

9:30 – 10:30

Eileen Daneri-

238-4461

## Mondays & Fridays

Bones & Balance

Town Hall

10:00-11:00

Marcia Estelle-

238-5554

## Aerobic Training

Monday 4:00-5:00

\$10.00/class

walk-in \$12.00

## Strength Training

Town Hall

Thursday 4:00-5:00

Judy Babcock

238-4457



## TOWN NOTARY SERVICE

COA board member, Jay Dreschnack Notary Public is available to notarize your documents. call (413) 406-8884, to make an appointment. He will come to your house. There is no charge for this service for Worthington residents.

## COMPUTER ASSISTANCE

COA board member, Eileen Daneri will be available to assist you with computer issues. Please call 238 - 4461 or email: [eadanermail.com](mailto:eadanermail.com) to inquire





## MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

### FEBRUARY 19, 2026 Grab-n-go meals

Enrollment forms must be completed before requesting a meal. These forms are available at all COA events. To order your meal(s) call: **238-1999**. Order deadline February 15, 2026

Each month there will be two choices for dinner This month's Menu: CHICKEN PARM, GOULASH PASTA CALIFORNIA VEGETABLES SPINACH, APPLESAUCE

Every third Thursday, meals that have been ordered, will be available for pick up at the Town Hall (12-1:00) We suggest that you bring your own bag for easy transport. If you or someone you know has not enrolled, contact Phyllis Dassatti (413) 238-5962 to arrange participation



February 23, 2026  
Town Hall  
1:00

## CHIT CHAT IDEAS



Do you remember:  
The boldest thing you ever done?

Your best friend from elementary  
school and where they are now?



**ANNUAL ST. PATRICK'S LUNCHEON**  
**MARCH 9 12:00 TOWN HALL**  
**COMPLETE CORNED BEEF DINNER PROVIDED BY THE**  
**CHESTERFIELD STORE & CAFE.**  
**RESERVATIONS REQUIRED. ADDITIONAL INFO TO**  
**FOLLOW** *(underwritten by the Roland Fund)*



# LOCAL EVENTS

WORTHINGTON LIBRARY-238-5565

HOURS Tuesday; 3-7

Thursday 10-6

Saturday 10-4

LISTONS- 238-0144

Old North Road

FEBRUARY:

:

**2/8 Soup-er Bowl party - enter the soup contest and watch the super bowl**

**2/12 Blooming Table Events Flower Bar**

**2/28 Frostbite Festival - with music, outdoor bar, raw bar & vendors**

MARCH:

**Acoustic Sundays in March and April 12pm - 3pm with local musicians.**

**Saint Patrick's Day celebration 3/14 and 3/15 with New Leaf Traditional Irish Music**

**12pm - 3pm both days with specialty menu items.**

LINKS AT WORTHINGTON-238-4464

Ridge Road

[FEBRUARY FRIDAY FUN 6:00 in club house all are welcome!](#)

[Cocktails & live music](#)

MEMBERSHIP OFFER:

10 Pack of Plays for \$300.

18 holes including cart.

Must be used during the week. No expiration date.

Contact Marcie at [Marcie@greenbarkbookkeeping.com](mailto:Marcie@greenbarkbookkeeping.com)

(put "membership" in subject line)

R. H. CONWELL STUDENT BREAKFAST

FEBRUARY 27 8:30 A.M.

Join the students for breakfast and stay for the All-School Meeting. Breakfast is \$4.00 and begins at 8:30a.m., followed by all School Meeting which begins at 9:00

If interested, please email Ashley at [Atompkins@rhconwell.org](mailto:Atompkins@rhconwell.org)





# Regional News

## SENIORS AWARE OF FIRE EDUCATION

Open Burning Season began in January and will end on May 1st. You will need a permit from your town's Fire Department, which are given on days when it is safe to burn. It is not safe to burn on windy days or on "red flag" days. The Department of Fire Services recommends the following safe open burning practices:



- The fire area should be at least 75 feet from any dwelling.
- You can only burn from 10am until 4pm.
- You can burn brush, cane, forest debris, and pruning.
- You cannot burn grass, hay, leaves, stumps, tires or construction material and debris.
- An adult should always be present during burns.
- Keep children and pets a safe distance from the fire.
- Start the fire with paper and kindling. Never use gasoline or any other flammable liquid.
- Build one small fire at a time adding to it slowly.
- Have fire control tools at hand — shovels, rakes and a pretested water supply.
- Be prepared to extinguish the fire if the wind picks up or the fire weather changes, before the town calls you to put it out.
- The safest time of the year is when the ground is wet, frozen or snowy. There are a whole lot of Red Flag days in April during which open burning is not allowed.
- Be aware that the fire towers are staffed during open burning season and they are quick to identify and call in unsafe burns.
- If the fire begins to get out of hand, immediately call 911 and have the Fire Department handle it before it gets to any buildings or woods.

--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.*

## ALL THOSE PAPERS!

So you know how you throw something out and the next day wish you had it? Sadly, that can happen with papers! You ask, Do I HAVE to keep them ALL?? The good news is short, No!. The bad news, you have to figure out which to keep. Some of these decisions are personal, some are not. Personal – should you keep old love letters? First car registration? You decide. Not personal – here I'll explain taxes, or rather, the IRS explains succinctly. I used this link - [www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/how-long-should-i-keep-records](http://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/how-long-should-i-keep-records)

Taxes: Keep tax returns and associated documents, like 1099s, or other documents filed with returns or that could effect your future returns. "The length of time you should keep a document depends on the action, expense, or event which the document records. Generally, you must keep your records that support an item of income, deduction or credit shown on your tax return until . . . you can amend your tax return to claim a credit or refund, or the IRS can assess additional tax." In short, the IRS explains that you should keep records:

- 3 years if the last two bullets below do not apply to you.
- 3 years from the original filing date or 2 years from your tax payment date, whichever is later, if you later refile a claim for credit or refund.
- 7 years if you file a claim for worthless securities or bad debt deduction.
- 6 years if you do not report income that you should, and it is more than 25% of the gross income shown.
- Indefinitely if you do not file a return.

Whew!

Jean O'Neil  
TRIAD Committee member  
[jeanoneilmass@gmail.com](mailto:jeanoneilmass@gmail.com); 413-268-2228

## ARE YOU TURNING 65 THIS YEAR?

By Melissa Wilson, Director,  
Williamsburg Senior Center

### **If so, do you know you are eligible and should sign up for Medicare 3 months before your 65th birthday?**

Most people become eligible for Medicare when they turn 65. Your Medicare enrollment steps will differ depending on whether or not you are collecting retirement benefits when you enter your Initial Enrollment Period (IEP).

If you are receiving Social Security retirement benefits or Railroad Retirement benefits, you should be automatically enrolled in both Medicare Part A and Part B. Here is a link for more information: [Medicare How to enroll in Medicare if you are turning 65](#)

For example, if you turn 65 on July 4, 2026, the enrollment window is open from April 1 to October 30. If you miss this deadline, you may have to pay higher premiums for Medicare Part B, which covers doctor bills, outpatient fees and other medical expenses: [AARP-65-this-year-When-should-I-apply-Medicare](#)

Although there is a 7-month window to sign up for Medicare (3 months before your birthday, your birthday month, and 3 months after your birthday)...if you wait and sign up in those 3 months after your birthday, there is a delay in when your coverage will start. If you sign up before your birthday, your coverage will start the first day of your birthday month.

You do not have to worry about incurring a penalty for late sign up if you are still working and covered by your employer's health insurance, or if you are married and covered under your spouse's work insurance.

## GOOD NEWS FOR FEBRUARY 2026

By Deb Hollingworth

**This is just a reminder for folks who have a Medicare Advantage plan...if you don't like your plan, or you received a termination notice that your plan was ending, you have until March 31st to switch.**

Anyone who has a Medicare Advantage plan during this "disenrollment" period (January 1st - March 31st) can switch to another Advantage plan, or disenroll and go back to original Medicare A & B and pick up a Medicare D plan for Rx coverage. You can check with your SHINE counselor to determine the best option. So...after Open Enrollment...October through December 7th each year when you can review your Medicare options and change coverage...there's a "disenrollment period" where you can dump or change your Advantage plan.

### **For the curious or those looking for a challenge...**

Our annual SHINE training is this April. We are always looking for volunteers who would like to learn about and help others understand more about their health insurance. I have to say that SHINE training was the most important information I received over the past 30 years. If you're looking for a volunteer opportunity where you can really make a difference, you should consider becoming a SHINE counselor.

We really need a couple counselors for the hill-towns. If you tried to schedule an appointment to go over your options during Open Enrollment this year, you know the problem. Too many folks need help, not enough counselors to meet the need. "I could never do that" you say? "Too complicated for me to understand? Not so!

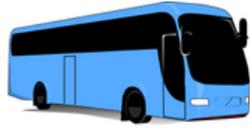
### **You don't have to know everything.**

There are between 40-45 SHINE counselors who cover Hampshire/Franklin County. And fortunately we work together and help each other, operating kind of like a "hive" mind. So if you get a call, or meet with someone needing help, and you're not sure of the information, help is just an email away. You don't need to know absolutely everything, you just need to know where to get answers.

**If you want to know more...feel free to get in touch. Contact [coa.volunteer@Burgy.org](mailto:coa.volunteer@Burgy.org) or call the Williamsburg Senior Center Monday or Thursday mornings 268-8407**

## On the Road Again...

### TRIPS IN 2026



**Contact Francine Frenier to reserve your seat  
BEFORE mailing payments.**

For more info call **413-296-4291**

Email: **francine.frenier@gmail.com**

**Mail: 11 Stage Rd. Williamsburg, MA 01096**

**Multi Day Trip April 17-21, Washington DC** 5 days, 4 nights Admission to the George Washington Mount Vernon Estate, Garden & Memorial, Arlington National Cemetery, Smithsonian Institution, Capitol Building, World War II Memorial and more. Price \$790. Take a \$25 discount if paid in full by January 26, 2026. Make the check payable to Diamond Tours and mail to the address above.

**Day Trip May 3, 2026, Sunday A Grand Night for Singing** at the Seven Angels Theater in Waterbury, CT. Pre-show lunch at San Marino's Restaurant. Price \$132. Make check payable to Landmark Tours and mail to the address above by March 6, 2026

**Day Trip June TBD, Cruise and Lobster Lunch**  
Enjoy a cruise TBD. Before the cruise, enjoy lunch at Fosters in York Maine. Choice of lobster, BBQ chicken or vegetarian option. Price TBD. Make a check payable to Landmark Tours and mail to the address above by April 6, 2026.

**Day Trip June TBD, Million Dollar Quartet play.** In the planning stages. Theater is in New London, NH. Includes luncheon. Price \$TBD. Make a check payable to Landmark Tours and mail to the address above by April 6, 2026.

**Day Trip July 1st, FDR Homestead & Library and Hudson River Cruise.** Take a scenic cruise on the Hudson River. Enjoy a boxed lunch of gourmet sandwiches on board. Tour the home of Franklin D. Roosevelt & the first Presidential Library. Price \$140. Make check payable to Landmark Tours and mail to the address above by May 6, 2026. Wait list only.

**Day Trip August and September** Encore Casino and Big E.

**Multi Day Trip September 27- October 3, Mackinac Island,** the quaint Michigan island where no vehicles are allowed. Trip is for 7 days, 6 nights. Tour the island by horse & carriage, cruise the Soo Locks, visit Bronner's Christmas Wonderland, Frankenmuth Bavarian Village and much more, not to mention the plentiful fudge shops. Price \$959. Take a \$25 discount if paid in full by June 27, 2026. Make the check payable to Diamond Tours and mail to the address above.

***No money is due until next year. This trip has quickly filled up. Please email to be added to the wait list.***

## Your Community Connector

Jennifer O'Connell is working for the Hilltown COAs as the Community Connector. She is available to help Hilltown residents that are experiencing challenges, hardship and/or need assistance. Jennifer can help you meet a variety of your needs to make life easier.

Some examples are assistance with:

- Benefits such as Fuel Assistance, SNAP, Social Security, etc.
- Living independently at home
- Arranging for repairs
- Connecting to local groups / activities to have fun with others
- Transportation
- Discussing what you may need

**Any and all inquiries are welcome.**

**Call Jennifer at 413-296-4536 ext.110 or email [communityconnectjo@gmail.com](mailto:communityconnectjo@gmail.com)**

## TECHNOLOGY HELP FOR FEBRUARY



### Tech Support home visits are available by appt.

Call or message 413-296-5080 to arrange a home visit or email [coaTechHelp@gmail.com](mailto:coaTechHelp@gmail.com) for help.

### Devices for you: Refurbished PC laptops, desktops, Chromebooks, and iPads

If you need a device to connect to the internet or have something so old it is not working effectively, please contact us. We have received a new shipment and have plenty of inventory. Leave a message at 413-296-5080

### Drop-in Centers (no appointment needed)

Chesterfield

Chesterfield Community Center 400 Main Rd.

Weekly on all Tuesdays from 11:00 to 2:00

Goshen Library, Drop-In tech support from 12:00 to 2:00, 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday, 2/19

Westhampton Library Drop-In tech support, from 2:00 to 4:00, 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday 2/26

Williamsburg

Meekins Library Drop-In tech support from 10 :30 to 12:30 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday, 2/10

Nash Hill Place Resident Drop-In tech support from 10:00 to Noon, 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday, 2/10

Worthington tech support - contact Eileen Daneri [eadaneri@gmail.com](mailto:eadaneri@gmail.com).

**NOTE:** *Plainfield and Cummington residents should call 413-296-5080 for an appointment or use the Chesterfield Community Center drop-in site.*

### Internet Hotspots

Funding for hotspots data will end this month. Call 413-296-5080 for help on finding the right low-cost internet plan for you.



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT MEDICARE

By Deb Hollingworth

### Who is eligible for Medicare?

- You become eligible for Medicare when you turn 65 and have paid into social security for 40 quarters or 10 years.
- You become eligible at any age.... if you have ALS/Lou Gerich's disease or End Stage Renal Disease
- You also become eligible if you have been disabled for 2 years, collecting social security disability.

### What does Medicare cost?

- Medicare A is free.
- Medicare B has a monthly premium which this year (2026) is \$202 / month. If you are collecting social security benefits this is usually deducted from your monthly benefit.
- If you are 65, but not collecting your retirement benefit yet...you can be billed for the Part B premium.

### Do I have to enroll when I turn 65?

- Most folks enroll in Medicare A when they become eligible, because it's free.
- You can delay enrolling in Medicare B if you are still working, and covered under your employer's insurance or your spouse's employer's insurance.
- There is a penalty for late sign up.

### What if I have MassHealth, or a Connector Plan...do I need to get Medicare?

- Yes, you do. Because the State mandates you sign up for Federal (Medicare) coverage when you become eligible.
- MassHealth has a team that helps you expedite this.

**Contact your SHINE counselor for details.**

**WORTHINGTON COUNCIL ON AGING  
ATTN: PHYLLIS DASSATTI PO BOX 7  
WORTHINGTON, MA 01098**

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**JAY DRESCHNACK , CHAIR  
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JUDY SENA, SECRETARY  
HELYN MYRICK  
HELEN PELLETIER  
PAT KENNEDY  
SUSAN VANBUREN  
EILEEN DANERI  
CAMILLE SMITH**

# SCAM ALERT!



A caller says your **Social Security number** has been **linked to a crime**.

They might tell you to:

- Move your money to a safe account to protect it.
- Withdraw cash and deposit it into a "government ATM."
- Withdraw cash or buy gold bars. A courier who will come to your home to pick it up.

*What should you do?*

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

*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.**