

# Cummington Council on Aging

## December 2019 Newsletter



Cummington Council on Aging  
 P.O. Box 95, 33 Main St.  
 Cummington, MA 01026

Chrisoula Roumeliotis  
 413-634-2262  
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 Office Hours: Tues 9-1, Thurs 4-8

### December Calendar of Events

<u>Monday</u>	<u>Tuesday</u>	<u>Wednesday</u>	<u>Thursday</u>	<u>Friday</u>
<b>2</b> <b>Veteran's Agent</b> 9:00-11:00 <b>Exercise Class</b> 9:30-10:30 <b>Coffee Hour</b> 10:45-11:45 <b>Needlework Group</b> 1:00-4:00	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> <b>Exercise Class</b> 9:30-10:30 <b>COA Board Meeting</b> 11:00	<b>6</b>
<b>9</b> <b>Exercise Class</b> 9:30-10:30 <b>Coffee Hour</b> 10:45-11:45 <b>Needlework Group</b> 1:00-4:00	<b>10</b> <b>Living Fully, Aging Gracefully</b> 1:00-3:00 in Library Room	<b>11</b> <b>Ladies Lunch Bunch</b> Terrazza Restaurant at the Greenfield Country Club Meet at church parking lot at 11:15 to carpool	<b>12</b> <b>Exercise Class</b> 9:30-10:30 <b>Coffee Hour</b> 10:45-11:45	<b>13</b> <b>Friday Night Café</b> at the Village Church 7:00-9:00 pm <i>Performance by                      Cliff Eberhardt</i>
<b>16</b> <b>Veteran's Agent</b> 9:00-11:00 <b>Exercise Class</b> 9:30-10:30 <b>Coffee Hour</b> 10:45-11:45 <b>Needlework Group</b> 1:00-4:00	<b>17</b> <b>Blood Pressure Clinic</b> 11:30-12:00 <b>Holiday Luncheon</b> 12:00 Holiday songs and carols by Burnsie	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> <b>Exercise Class</b> 9:30-10:30 <b>Coffee Hour</b> 10:45-11:45	<b>20</b>
<b>23</b> <b>Needlework Group</b> 1:00-4:00	<b>24</b> No COA office hours this morning	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b> No COA office hours this evening	<b>27</b> <b>Friday Night Café</b> at the Village Church 7:00-9:00 pm <i>Performance by                      Lonesome Brothers</i>
<b>30</b> <b>Exercise Class</b> 9:30-10:30 <b>Coffee Hour</b> 10:45-11:45 <b>Needlework Group</b> 1:00-4:00	<b>31</b>			

## Happy Birthday in December!



Peter Lang, Lawrence Slezak, David Robb,  
Steven Emerson, Michele Marcoux, June Whiteman,  
Anne Parsons, Martin Dempsey, Nancy Gokey,  
Peter Tessier, Bona Kidston, Marc Hoechstetter,  
Louise Dynok, Maureen DeMaranville,  
Madelaine Zadik, Brenda Arbib, Mary Owens Perry,  
JoDee Simard, Daniel Dashnaw, Holly Anderson,  
John Goehring, Gary Burt, Loredana Holmes,  
Theodore Lynds, Kevin Boissonnault,  
Ann-Marie Baronas, Paul Garipey, Lorin Delisle,  
Antoni Sakowicz

### Your COA board members are:

Elliot Ring, Chairman (634-5666)  
Gail Roberge (634-0244)  
Worth Noyes (634-8003)  
Kathy Knox (634-8041)  
Ann Eisenhour, Foot Care Coordinator (634-2243)  
JoDee Simard, Coresponding Secretary and  
Treasurer (634-5051)  
Anne Parsons, Recording Secretary (634-5707)

### Aging Gracefully in the Hilltowns!

A community discussion group, sponsored by the Council on Aging, focusing on Living Fully, Aging Gracefully, and Befriending Death, is open to all residents of the Hilltowns and beyond. The group is *always open to new members* and meets at the Cummington Community House library, Main Street, on the second Tuesday of each month from 1-3. For further information, please contact: Wynne or Lucy at 634 5576, [wynlucy@gmail.com](mailto:wynlucy@gmail.com) or Annie at [annieb@crocker.com](mailto:annieb@crocker.com)

*"The group, lightly led by our guides, is an amazing experience: as open, honest and alive as it is confidential and respectful."*

### A welcome to the Family Center and a little rearranging

The COA would like to welcome the Cummington Family Center back to the Community House. We look forward to sharing this space again. The family center is a parent-run organization that supports families with young children in Cummington and throughout the hilltowns by offering drop-in playgroups, parent education, and community gatherings. Their programs generally run on Wednesdays and Fridays.



You may have already noticed that we have done some rearranging as the small room next to our office has been returned to the Family Center's

use. Our health related clinics (including Foot Care, Blood Pressure, and future Flu clinics) will now be held in the COA's main office. Otherwise, our programs and activities will not be affected.

### Walk Friendly

On October 20th, the Historical Society hosted the kick-off of the Cummington Walks brochure in the Parsonage. Cummington was able to take advantage of a grant through Healthy Hampshire to develop a map of 12 walking routes suitable for all ages. Each walk indicates distance, ability level, ground condition and a description. We thank the handful of residents who worked with Healthy Hampshire through the spring and summer on this project. Maps are available at the Community House, the Creamery and other sites around town.

### Walking Club

Please note that the Wednesday walking group at the fairgrounds is on break until spring.

### Luncheon and performance

Please come to our monthly luncheon on December 17th. You can look forward to a delicious baked ham luncheon. Please bring a side dish, salad or dessert.



Following the luncheon, Cummington's Burnsie will perform assorted songs, including holiday songs and carols. Bring your good cheer and frivolity and join us in sing-a-long.

### Ladies Lunch Bunch

The Ladies Lunch Bunch will be going to the Terrazza Restaurant at the Greenfield Country Club on December 11th. Those interested in carpooling should meet at the church parking lot at 11:15am.

### Weather cancellations

In case of bad weather, any activities scheduled by the COA will be cancelled if school has been cancelled. Look for Central Berkshire Regional School District on NBC (Channel 22 News) or check on their website ([www.wwlp.com](http://www.wwlp.com)) and click on cancellations. Our activities will run as normal in the event of a 2-hour delay. Please use your best judgment on whether the roads are safe for you to drive on.

### Closures for holidays

The COA office will be closed on Tuesday, December 24 and Thursday, December 26. I will be checking and returning phone and email messages throughout the week, however. Exercise class and coffee hour are also on break during the week of December 23rd.



## Regional News

### Seniors Aware of Fire Education



The December holidays will be with us before we know it. Many of the customs involve candles. So, here are a few things to be mindful of when using candles:

- Consider using battery-operated, flameless candles; what doesn't burn can't burn you or your house.
- When using candles that burn, place them in sturdy, safe candleholders that will not burn or tip over.
- Keep candles at least 12 inches from anything that can burn.
- Never leave a burning candle unattended.
- Never use a candle where medical oxygen is being used.
- Be careful not to splatter hot wax when extinguishing a candle.

Have very S.A.F.E. holidays!

~ Worth Noyes, SAFE Educator  
Williamsburg & Cummington Fire Departments

*The Senior SAFE program is sponsored by many of your fire departments and the Massachusetts Department of Fire Services.*

### FY20 Housing Rehab Program

Hilltown CDC will be submitting an application for the FY20 CDBG Grant to apply for Housing Rehab in the towns of Chesterfield, Cummington, Goshen, Peru, Plainfield, Williamsburg, and Worthington. If you have used the Housing Rehab Program in the past, or plan to use it in the future, we'd like to hear from you.

We continue to look for ways to improve our programs at the CDC, and we welcome your ideas, suggestions, or input about our programs. If you have any recommendations on how we could better design the Housing Rehab Program, improve our overall effectiveness, or any suggestions that might enhance the delivery of our services, please let us know? You can call, email, or fax your comments for our upcoming grant application until January 3, 2020. We look forward to hearing your ideas. Thank you.



Please contact Paula S. Bilodeau, Housing Rehab Program Manager, at (413) 296-4536, ext. 123, fax (413) 296-4020, or email paulab@hilltowncdc.org for comments, program information, or for an application.

### Would you like to receive your newsletter by email instead of snail mail?

If so, please email Kristen at [regionalcoanews@gmail.com](mailto: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!

### Credit Reports and Death

Some columns are less enjoyable than others to write. My condolences to the two friends who have need for this information in the last month.

Each individual has an account with each of the credit bureaus. This wonderful financial tool is yours alone! With a good credit score, you can get better loan rates, insurance rates, and other benefits. When someone dies and the credit bureaus are told of the death, the account is closed and the score goes to zero. This is to prevent scoundrels from using the account information for their benefit. It also may help you as a survivor from being harassed by someone wanting to part you from your money.

As a survivor, in addition to all the emotions and details you are dealing with, it is a good idea to get a copy of the deceased's credit report from each of the three bureaus so you can get a clearer picture of his or her finances and learn if you are responsible for anything, such as being a co-signer on a credit card. The request for a copy can be made by a spouse or executor.

Send a letter with the following information about the deceased: legal name, Social Security number, date of birth and of death, last known address, a copy of the death certificate or letters testamentary. Include your full name, your address, and if not a spouse, the court document showing your executor status.

After that, you can request the credit bureaus close the account and mark it "Deceased. Do Not Issue Credit". The Social Security Administration should forward this request, but I'd advise making sure it happens. Addresses for the three credit bureaus are easy to find online but call me if you have troubles.

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

## Older Patients Deserve Age-Friendly Care

"I've been on my gout medication since the 1990s. No one ever suggested I stop taking it, doc." Jerry was a new patient, in for a general health checkup. He had a variety of health conditions and was taking at least 6 different medicines. When I asked him how long it'd been since his last gout flare, he proudly replied, "I haven't had one in 20 years." Now, maybe he hasn't had a recurrence in two decades because he's been on the medicine, or rather, maybe he just doesn't need to be on the drug anymore.

Jerry's experience isn't unusual: many older patients are still taking medication that had been prescribed to them when they were much younger, without anyone questioning whether they should still be taking it. Think about it – has your doctor ever comprehensively reviewed all your medicines with you – and discontinued one or lowered a dose? It's critical that you review your medications with your doctors and see if there should be any changes. Every drug has risks and benefits, and that balance can sometimes shift as we age. In fact, certain drugs should be outright avoided as you get older. Yet, most older patients are unaware of this.



This is one of many findings surfaced by a recent survey on age-friendly health systems conducted by WebMD and The John A. Hartford Foundation. We surveyed nearly 3,000 patients and caregivers, age 65 and older, and the results were a bit sobering. We learned that the care of older adults is mired in misinformation, especially among minority populations, with older patients and caregivers mistakenly believing that sharp declines in the quality of life are inevitable. Here are a few of the findings that I found most concerning:

- Forty percent of those surveyed were unaware that certain prescription medications affect the quality of their thinking.
- More than two-thirds of caregivers said that the person in their care has difficulty walking around, and half said that they had fallen within the past year. And very few are doing any activities to improve mobility.
- Only a very small percentage talk to their doctors about their concerns and fears or share their future health goals.
- Forty percent of respondents incorrectly think that depression is an inevitable part of aging.

So why are older patients not getting the care and the information that they need?

I think part of the reason is that patients and caregivers often aren't sure what to expect – and what they should demand – from doctors and the health care system. They just accept the status quo, but we need to change that. Patients and caregivers need to know that they can and should ask for care that meets their specific needs.

Advances in medicine have allowed us to live longer,

and that's great. But now we need medical care that will help to optimize our health as we age. We need age-friendly care that is evidence-based, causes no harm, and is always consistent with what matters to the older person. But that kind of change will only happen if patients and caregivers ask for it and start to expect it. So, if you're an older patient, or caregiver, I hope you'll take a few minutes and read the results of the survey ([www.webmd.com/healthy-aging/age-health-care-survey](http://www.webmd.com/healthy-aging/age-health-care-survey)) It may open your eyes to some things that you didn't know you could be asking of your doctors.

And, in case you are wondering, Jerry did decide to stop his gout medicine and he has been doing very well!

~ John Whyte, MD MPH

*John Whyte, MD, MPH, is a board-certified internist and the Chief Medical Officer at WebMD, where he leads efforts to develop and expand strategic partnerships that create meaningful change around important and timely public health issues. As a popular health writer, he has been published extensively both in medical and mainstream publications.*

## General Contractors

### **Are you are interested in steady, local work?**

Hilltown CDC is currently seeking General Contractors who are interested in bidding on Housing Rehabilitation projects funded by grant programs. We recently received the FY19 Housing Rehab Grant and will be bidding 22 projects in the upcoming months. In addition, we're in the process of applying for the FY20 Housing Rehab Grant for another anticipated 20-22 projects.

Projects are planned in the towns of Chesterfield, Cummington, Goshen, Peru, Plainfield, Williamsburg, and Worthington with an average project cost of \$30,000.00 - \$40,000.00. Contractors working on Housing Rehab projects are guaranteed payment for all work with a quick turnaround on invoices as well as a steady source of local, year around work.

**GC's must possess a valid Contractor Supervisor's License and a Home Improvement Contractor's License. Lead certification is preferred, but not required. General Liability coverage as well as Workers' Compensation insurance (if applicable) is required.**

HCDC is an EEO/Section 3 Employer. Women and minorities are encouraged to apply.

**Please contact Paula Bilodeau, Program Manager, at (413) 296-4536, ext. 123 for an application or email [paulab@hilltowncdc.org](mailto:paulab@hilltowncdc.org).**

*Funding is provided by the US Dept. of HUD/DHCD and MA CDBG Programs.*

# On the Go!



The Northampton Senior Center has arranged the following outings, and you are welcome to join!

\*Please make your reservations early as these trips fill up fast!\* **Call Francine Frenier at the Northampton Senior Center: 413-587-1228.**

## Quick Look 2020

**Jan 14: New England Air Museum**, docent guided tour, lunch on your own at Friendly's in Windsor, CT. \$65 due by Dec. 14th.

**Feb 24: Day trip to the MGM Casino in Springfield.** Cost is \$25 per person. Casino bonus to be determined. Payment is due by January 27th. Limited seats. No refunds due to bargain price.

**May 1-10: Memphis/Nashville 10-day bus trip.** See the Grand Ole Opry, Country Music Hall of Fame, Memphis Rock N' Soul Museum, Graceland and other sites. Cost per person in a double room is \$1070. Receive a \$25 discount if paid in full by February 3, 2020.

**May 31-Jun 13: Mediterranean Cruise 14 days**— only a few seats remain. Passport required. Excursions available. Deadline to sign up January 15, 2020.



## Share the Love with Vulnerable Seniors this Year



Highland Valley  
ELDER SERVICES

Exciting news! For the 12th year running, the Meals on Wheels network is participating in the 2019 Subaru Share the Love Event. Over the past eleven years, Subaru and its retailers have helped Meals on Wheels to deliver more than 2.2 million meals nationwide to seniors in need.

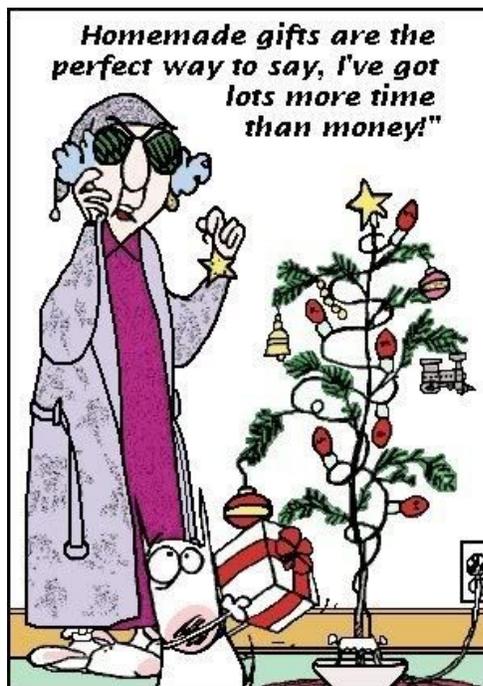
Why does Subaru support Meals on Wheels? Too many seniors are struggling to stay independent and healthy. **One in four seniors lives alone in isolation and one in seven seniors might not know from where their next meal is coming.** This is simply unacceptable, which is why Highland Valley Elder Services provides the nutritious meals, friendly visits and safety checks to the seniors of Hampshire and Hampden counties. This vital support keeps seniors in their own homes, where they want to be. We're incredibly grateful to Subaru and its Retailers for supporting our organization and the seniors we serve.

### HERE'S HOW IT WORKS

This November 14, 2019, through January 2, 2020, for every new Subaru vehicle purchased or leased, Subaru will donate \$250 to the customer's choice of participating charities.\* Meals on Wheels is one of four national participating charities and has been since the inception of the event. Through this event, as a member of Meals on Wheels America, Highland Valley Elder Services will receive a share of the donation from Subaru vehicles sold at participating Subaru Retailers.

You might not be in the market to purchase a new car, but if you are, please look into the Subaru Share the Love Event to learn more. If you're not shopping for a new vehicle, *you can still help* by spreading the word to your family and friends. Share our posts about the Share the Love Event on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. And remember: this holiday season you can ensure our senior neighbors are not forgotten, when you purchase or lease a new Subaru and select Meals on Wheels as your charity of choice.

\*Disclaimer: Subaru will donate \$250 for every new Subaru vehicle sold or leased from November 14, 2019, through January 2, 2020, to four national charities designated by the purchaser or lessee. Pre-approved Hometown Charities may be selected for donation depending on retailer participation. For every new Subaru vehicle sold or leased during the campaign period, participating retailers will donate a minimum of \$50 in total to their registered Hometown Charities. Purchasers/lessees must make their charity designations by January 15, 2020. The four national charities will receive a guaranteed minimum donation of \$250,000 each. See your local Subaru retailer for details or visit [subaru.com/share](http://subaru.com/share). All donations made by Subaru of America, Inc.



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Kristen Estelle,  
Newsletter Designer  
regionalcoanews@gmail.com

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

## Out and About in December

**Wednesday, December 4th, 6 pm**  
**An Intro to Aromatherapy: The Basics**

*Williamsburg Town Offices Caf *  
*143 Main Street, Haydenville*  
Presenter: Kay Judge, Clinical Aromatherapist

This class is designed to provide a basic understanding of what the use of essential oils is all about. Create a room spray from commonly used essential oils to take home. A materials fee of \$25.00 will be collected. All are invited! Please call 268-8407 to register.

**Sat. December 7th, 9am-3pm**  
**Fundraiser Vendor/ Craft Fair**

*John James Memorial Hall, 42 Main St., Goshen*

This event raises money for the Chesterfield-Goshen Children's Fund, which helps provide holiday gifts to local children and families who need a little help this season. Baked goods, handmade wreaths, raffle and more.

**Sun. December 15th, 3pm**  
**Hymn Sing**

*Goshen Congregational Church, 45 Main St., Goshen*

**Fri. December 20th 9am & 10am**  
**Spa Day at Smith Vocational**

*80 Locust St. Northampton*

Smith Vocational collaborates with the Chesterfield COA by offering a "spa day" once a month to seniors in the surrounding area. Cosmetology students are offering: Haircuts \$6.00; Manicures \$5.00; Facials \$9.00. Please call 413-587-1414 x3531 to make an appointment. Each appointment takes about an hour and are scheduled for 9am and 10am in Room 124 of Building A at the school.

**Mondays, 4:30-5:30pm**  
**Ukulele Group**

*Williamsburg Town Offices, Auditorium*  
*143 Main St. Haydenville*

All are welcome! Dan Frank is facilitator and members have varying ability; all come for the sheer enjoyment of strumming their ukuleles and singing along. A free-will offering is collected at the end of the session.

