



Powder House News

March/April 2021

COA Mission

Our mission is to enhance the quality of life of seniors in the community by providing services, which include nutrition, health screening, education, and other programs to meet their needs.

COA Board Meetings

Board meetings are held on the last Tuesday of the month at 4 p.m., March 30 and April 27.

Office Location

The Council on Aging office is located at the Town Offices, 23 Linden St., bottom floor, Room 118.

COA Members

Bob Blair, *Co-Chair*
Pat Wheeler, *Co-Chair*
Kate Bliss
Rachel Boyer
Wes Durant
Lori Fearebay
Karen Schultz

Phone

978-838-2750

Medical Equipment

The COA has a supply of medical equipment available. We accept donations of thoroughly clean equipment in good condition. Please consider donating your clean, used equipment so we can pass it on to someone in need. Contact Lori Fearebay at 978-804-8487, jfearebay@msn.com, or the COA phone 978-838-2750.

Transportation Services

Transportation is available Monday through Friday. Rider information forms are available on the Berlin town website under Boards & Committees / Council on Aging / Bus Services. Call 978-838-2750 for assistance.

Fuel Assistance

Fuel Assistance or the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) provides financial aid for those eligible. New applicants can apply between November and April. Recurring applications will be mailed out to residents in August.

To determine if you are eligible, please check out the fuel assistance website at <http://www.partnersforcommunity.org/default/index.cfm/fuel-assistance/eligibility-information/>. Currently, a household of one is eligible if annual income is less than \$35,510. A household of two is eligible if income is less than \$46,437. Please call 978-342-4520 to make an appointment for fuel assistance. Applications need to be completed by appointment only.

Homeowners and renters can be eligible for fuel assistance. Those who pay for their heating costs can qualify. The COA suggests reaching out to 978-342-4520 to have specific questions answered for qualification. Proof of residency and heating payments will be required, as well as personal identification documents. These include Driver's license/State ID, birth certificates and social security cards as well as copies of your lease/housing agreement paperwork.

Additional information needed includes wages, bank statements, any rental income agreements and any public benefits assistance. Any additional information and applications can be downloaded from their website <http://www.partnersforcommunity.org/default/index.cfm/fuel-assistance/forms-documents/>.

The local fuel assistance office for North Central MA:

New England Farm Workers' Council, Fuel Assistance Program,
473 Main St., 3rd Floor, Fitchburg, MA 01420 / 978-342-4520

Please reach out to the COA at 978-838-2750 and at coa@townofberlin.com if you have any additional questions.

COVID vaccinations

As many of you are aware, the COVID-19 vaccination process can be confusing to understand. We, the Council on Aging members and staff, want to help bring any updated information or clarifications as soon as we get them.

As of mid-February 2021, the Commonwealth is prioritizing vaccinations for seniors who are 75 years of age and older. It was recently announced caregivers who escort those to vaccinations may be eligible to be vaccinated as well.

In Berlin, the Council on Aging is working to create a waitlist for those interested in receiving the COVID vaccination. We are working with the Berlin Board of Health as well as our regional Nashoba Board of Health. There have been 2 clinics, as of mid-February 2021, in Fort Devens. We are hopeful that more clinics will be held so more seniors can be vaccinated.

Due to ever-changing information, we are asking people to call the Council on Aging at 978-838-2750 or check out the COA page and Facebook page to get updated information. We can be reached at coadirector@townofberlin.com if you want to be added to the waitlist for COVID vaccines.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to us with any questions. We will get back to you as soon as we can. We hope that all Berliners will have access to vaccines soon.



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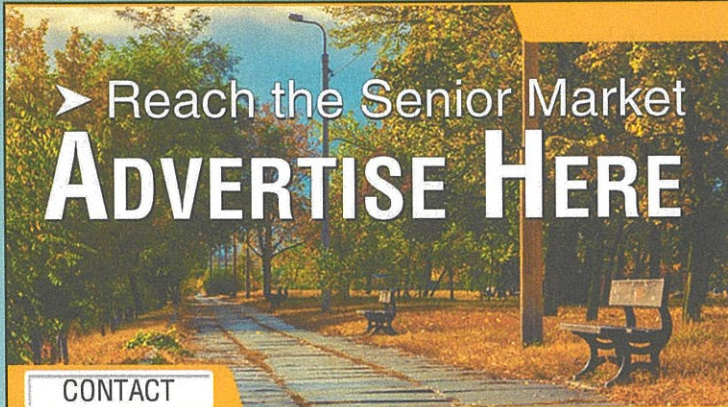
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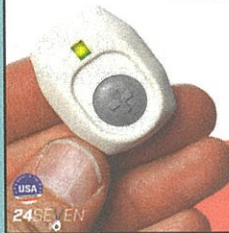
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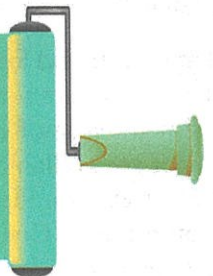
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Berlin Council on Aging

06-5323

John Cronin

Hi, my name is John Cronin, and it was an honor of a lifetime to have been sworn in as your State Senator in January. The pandemic has caused havoc in our daily lives and as a consequence I was unable to campaign face to face and have more of a chance for you to get to know me and for me to learn about you. I hope to change that in the coming weeks and months as I represent you and the community of Berlin in the State Senate.

Let me tell you about myself. I grew up in North Central Massachusetts, born in Leominster and raised in Fitchburg and Lunenburg. My first job was as a janitor at the Worcester County House of Correction. My parents taught me the value of public service and I was fortunate to have been accepted to the United States Military Academy at West Point. I graduated and was commissioned as an Infantry Officer and served two tours in Afghanistan leading infantryman in combat. This experience helped to shape who I am today.

After leaving the Army as a Captain, I returned home to both my family and the communities I grew up in. Having a passion for helping others, I worked at the Harvard Law School Legal Services Center with professors and students providing legal advocacy to indigent veterans.

I ran for State Senator to create more opportunities for my generation to raise their families in the communities where they were born.

I will be around the district, learning the needs in each local community and I look forward to meeting you in the future. In the meantime, if you have any constituent needs, please email me at John.Cronin@masenate.gov and call my office at 617-722-1230.

I look forward to meeting you and advocating for you on Beacon Hill.
Senator John J. Cronin

Home Oxygen Safety

If you or a loved one uses home oxygen

- Do not smoke
- Make sure the dwelling has working smoke alarms. Test them monthly.
- Have a home fire escape plan with a minimum of 2 ways out of every room and an outdoor meeting place. Practice the plan at least twice a year.
- Keep oxygen and tubing 10 feet away from heat sources such as candles, matches, lighters, heaters, wood stoves, electric razors, hair dryers, cooking stoves and smoking materials.
- Do not use petroleum-based products such as oil-based lip balms or lotions. They catch fire easily.

Risks of home oxygen

- Using home oxygen increases the risk of fires and burns.
- Using home oxygen increases the amount of oxygen in the air; furniture, bedding, clothing and hair, making it easier for a fire to start and spread.
- When more oxygen is in the air, fires burn hotter and faster.
- There is no safe way to smoke around home oxygen. Turning off the oxygen is not enough because your clothes, hair, bedding and the tubing are oxygen-enriched.

Until you quit smoking, if you must smoke;

- Disconnect the oxygen
- Wait ten minutes
- Go outside to smoke

There is not a safe way to smoke, but it allows time for oxygen to come off your hair and clothes, and lowers the danger of fire.

Nashoba Neighbors

Nashoba Neighbors, a new nonprofit in Bolton, Berlin, and Lancaster, is in the works! Based on the old fashioned idea of neighbor helping neighbor, we will coordinate a network of volunteers to help our members with needs such as personalized transportation to appointments, social and cultural programs, new learning opportunities, technology help, minor household repairs, and well-being calls and visits. **Our goal is to have older adults stay engaged and thrive!**

To stay informed on our progress or learn how you can help, please contact:

Catherine Pfau at 978-337-3059 or email catherinepfau@gmail.com or Susan Henry at 978-838-2985 or email sfh744@mail.harvard.edu

Meet Your Town Movers

BARRY EAGER has been Berlin's Town Meeting Moderator since 1985, ensuring that meetings proceed civilly and according to rules of order. Additionally, he chairs the Cemetery Commission and the Historical Commission.

MARGARET NARTOWICZ, named to the newly-created post of Town Administrator in 2019, is responsible for overseeing the efficient and cost-effective operation of all Berlin municipal departments and facilities.

Meet Barry Eager, Town Moderator and Historian



I have lived in Berlin all my life, excepting attendance at UMass Amherst in 1962-66. My association with the Berlin Memorial School began with first grade when the original building (now the Town Offices) opened in March of 1951. I returned to teach at BMS in 1969, continuing full time for 25 years, and then substituting for 18 more. I have wonderful memories of my colleagues in the staff and, especially, the students over all that time.

My parents were founding members and past presidents of the Berlin Art and Historical Society; I remember attending Society events as a child. The Historical Commission and the Society occupy some of my time nearly every day.

Well before being elected Moderator, I was appointed to the first Town Report Committee in 1972, continuing until the committee was dissolved in 2020. I am committed to making town government open to all citizens. Town Meeting is the most basic institution of American democracy. I also recognize that as the people change through generations and migration, so too, the community changes with them.

Locally I devote much time to the First Parish Church, which I have attended all my life. I have sung in the choirs of the church since age five. For over fifty of those years I was directed by Barbara Krackhardt, who was also my teacher in kindergarten at the Church and first grade at BMS. The choir members, past and present, are special friends. I also have sung in recent years with the Old Sturbridge Village Singers.

Since childhood I have pursued a hobby of steamboats and ships. Watching (and riding) the steamers at Woods Hole on Cape Cod is a pastime I have never outgrown. It led me to the Steamship Historical Society by 1973. I have held office in that society since 1977. My maritime library and collection now occupies more than one room of my house.

This has led me to interests in travel and photography. I have toured all fifty states and the ten provinces of Canada. I also visited Great Britain, Bermuda, Japan and French Polynesia, always traveling at least partly by sea. Programs on my travels have been presented to the Senior Citizens here.

Another interest in recent years is Worcester Fellowship, an outdoor church for homeless and isolated people in Worcester. I had not anticipated singing a cappella solos outdoors on Worcester Common in midwinter. It happens.

It seems there just isn't enough time.

Meet Margaret Nartowicz, Town Administrator



I became Berlin's first Town Administrator in July, 2019 after having served as a municipal public service employee for nearly 30 years. My municipal service career began as a secretary in Amherst's Department of Public Works and with lots of hard work and determination, my career blossomed from there. I knew early on that front-line public service was the path I was meant to follow and I've lived by a long-standing mantra that "municipal government is in my blood".

Beyond my family, who I adore, my heart belongs to serving the community. The simplest reason for this is that it provides me the opportunity to endeavor to help others every day. Berlin is a small town filled with ingenuity, volunteerism, compassion, and creativity, and I am deeply honored that I was chosen to serve you. Over the past year, we have faced many unprecedented and daunting challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Throughout this particular challenge and other challenges yet to come, I will continue working tirelessly to try to help in the spirit and purpose of public service. I am here for you.

The Five W's

In this issue of the PHN, DAVE WESTERLING concludes his two-part narrative, "Berlin's Silent Angels", on the origins and purpose of Berlin's Lester Ross Dam.

JUNE MILLER authored an article in the January/February PHN introducing the Berlin Art & Historical Society, the buildings under its charge, and one of its

collections of ephemera. In this March/April edition, she offers us a short tutorial on preserving our family histories through the organizing of photographs, letters, deeds, military records, diaries and other materials, to create the possibility of presenting the stories they tell in written form for our children and descendants.

Berlin's Silent Angels (Part Two) by Dave Westerling

So, to continue with this little story, the construction of the multipurpose flood control facilities required some nifty engineering designs which were functional and required almost no maintenance. Multipurpose you ask? Besides the retention of very large flows which would cause damage and loss of life on the "downstream" cities and towns, what else did we want them to do? Lots. We wanted them to provide a pond for fish and wildlife habitat deep enough for overwintering of fish and with shorelines for migrating ducks to feed. We wanted them to provide water for a steady downstream flow below the dam during the summer season for aquatic life and wetland plants. And we wanted them to provide for hiking, recreation and outdoor activities for our citizens.

Two sites in Berlin best suited for these purposes were selected: a large site on North Brook named after Lester G. Ross, just upstream of Linden Street and a second site on Brewer Brook just off Pleasant Street near Jones Road. The Ross site has a 10 acre permanent pool which enlarges to 178 acres during severe storms. At that point the depth of the pool is about 33 feet deep. That volume is equivalent to about 1.9 billion (with a B) gallons of water. The water is then released after the storm passes to provide a steady low stream flow during the dry season.

These facilities reduce flooding of real estate and reduce dangerous conditions downstream. Remember in Part 1 where we talked about those big vacant mills in Maynard for instance? Stage Left! Enter Ken Olsen. This guy wanted to build a machine that does stuff we humans do. He called it a "programmable data processor." It's a start-up, so funds are short. How about using those old mill buildings as a place to build these programmable "thingamajigs"? Little Digital Equipment Corporation built computers and put the Upper Assabet River locale on the map. Things have only gotten better since. And there are so many other areas where similar things happened.

Why use the term Angels? There are nine of these Angels on the Upper Assabet River. And besides providing recreation benefits and wildlife habitat, the experts now estimate the

annual value flood reduction benefits of the nine angels is \$1.7 million (with an M) on an annual basis. The average age of the nine dams is about 50 years. (Am I getting old?) You do the math, \$1,700,000 times 50 years is about \$85,000,000. THAT LOOKS LIKE AN ANGEL TO ME!

So when a tropical storm is barreling up the East Coast with it's eye dead set on New England, I start thinking about rainfall amounts and runoff flows. It's in my genes. Many would tremble under the threat of an oncoming monster. I think of our Angels and no one messes with Angels. I know they will be there at the peak of the storm when things are the worst. That's what Angels do, right?

And these facilities use zero amounts of fossil fuel energy. They are silent special places where nature carries the day. Try a short hike at either Lester Ross Site or Brewer Berlin Meadows Site. Trail Maps are on the Conservation Commission web site at

<https://www.townofberlin.com/conservation-commission/pages/individual-trail-maps>

Bring a book, take along your dog on a leash and enjoy the day. One of the delights of living here in Berlin.

Gone But Not Forgotten

Margaret Kinosian	12/21/20
Carolyn Cotter	12/28/20
Juanita Ernst	1/3/21
Marilyn Neilsen	1/5/21
Gregory Gosselin	1/15/21
Mark A. Matthew	1/18/21
Shirley Small	1/28/21

Berlin Food Pantry
978-562-3895

Virtual Preservation Roadshow — Family Collections by June Miller

Photographs, papers, personal effects ... all can be woven into a story that creates the narrative of who we are and where we come from. Examining and piecing together visual information takes us on an interesting and fascinating journey.

In late January, I attended a Virtual Preservation Roadshow, a webinar offered by the New England Historical Genealogical Society in preserving family collections. Here are just a few suggestions to help you on your way to make your collection of family memorabilia accessible and to preserve its contents.

Getting started:

I learned that the first order of business is to take a survey, and, even before that, you might want to identify your goal(s). Do you want to work on genealogical research, hand the collection off to the next generation or donate it to a repository?

- List family names whose items are included in the collection.
- List names of people who contributed to the collection.
- Summarize types of materials in the collection and their locations ... in boxes, file cabinets, binders ... in the attic or a closet.

Three basic steps come next:

- Identify what you have
- Assess and triage issues that are causing damage to items
- Decide what needs to be protected and choose appropriate storage

Document types: letters, diaries, vital records, deeds, estate papers, military records, genealogical notes

Format: scrapbooks, albums, loose photographs, oversized certificates, digital media

Condition issues: deteriorated tape, rusty fasteners, mold, insect/rodent damage, brittle paper, dust

Supplies needed: archival document boxes and/or folders, protective sleeves PAT certified

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A. S. Clerk of the Board

June's voter registration



June with Mama in her big brother's Chevrolet convertible

Paper storage should be acid free, lignin free and buffered. Plastic enclosures should be archival (no PVC) ... use polypropylene, polyethylene or uncoated polyester.

Taking a survey is just the beginning but allows you to be comprehensive, recognizing the breadth of what you have and saving you from future reorganizations. If your collection is overwhelming in size, view your collection in "chunks" to be combined later into one overall survey.

It's a labor of love so have fun with it!

COA Contact information:

Feel free to reach out to us at coa@townofberlin.com, coadirector@townofberlin.com and at 978-838-2750.

Please check out our website

www.townofberlin.com/council-aging and at

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Berlin's Holiday Lights a Success

The Town of Berlin sparkled at night during the month of December. A holiday lights contest was sponsored jointly by Berlin's Council of Aging and the Town's Senior Citizens Association. A grand total of 91 locations (individual homes, businesses and neighborhoods) were decorated. All participated in the contest which was named Berlin's "Twinkle Tour 2020." Town residents were provided with a map and a list of locations participating in the contest. All were encouraged to take the tour and vote for their favorites in each category: Homes, Businesses and Neighborhoods.

The town's COA and Senior's Association want to thank the following businesses for supporting the event by donating funds that were used for the competition's prizes: Balance Rock Farm, Berlin

Auto Service, Berlin Farm, Berlin Orchards, Dunkin, Gillis Landscape, Golden Skep Farm, Holiday Farm, Many Hands Thrift Shop, North Brook Farm, Riverside Shell, Roux's Garage, and Wheeler's Garage.

Winners of the competition were announced. In the Residential Category were: 1st prize to Jamie McNamara; 2nd prize to Rick and Julie Lee; 3rd prize to Betsy Eschelbacher; and Honorable Mention to Gordon Miller.

In the Businesses Category, there were two winners: 1st prize to North Brook Alpaca Farm and Mill; and 2nd prize to Saint Joseph the Good Provider Church.

The same was true for the Neighborhood Category: 1st prize to North Brook Village I; and 2nd prize to The Rockwell Apartments.

Free Book swap



Dear Friends,

Donate any books you enjoyed reading this past year and stop by to check out what others have contributed.

We'll display the donated books out on tables so everyone can browse them safely.

Cheers,
Evy

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Mon 2 - 3:30 p.m.
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Fri. 9:30 - 11 a.m.