



Powder House News

Nov./Dec. 2020

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., November 24 and December 29.

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
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. We are currently short on wheelchairs and rolling walkers with seats. If you have one you are no longer using, please consider donating it 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.

Calling All Seniors

Months ago, when the Covid 19 pandemic was just ramping up, a group of 30 volunteers from the Council on Aging, Berlin Senior Citizens Association and the Berlin community-at-large joined forces to contact all Berlin seniors. The goal was to assess everyone's general health and any needs they might identify that our community could help supply. While very few specific requests for help were fielded, cloth face masks to protect against the spread of the surging virus were popular. In all, more than 200 masks made by dedicated Berlin volunteers were distributed to our seniors and their families.

Now, with the Covid 19 virus acting like a bad house guest and refusing to leave, we are about to launch another round of calls. Additional call volunteers are needed and we will again be offering cloth face masks, with about 30 remaining on hand from our spring calls. Please let the neighbor who calls you know if you need one. If you wish to be a supplier of masks, please call the Council on Aging Director, Victoria Flynn, at (978) 838-2750.

We'll be talking to you soon. **Please continue to wear masks and maintain physical distancing when gathered with others as measures to prevent spreading or contracting the virus.**

From The Berlin Senior Citizens Association Board

The Berlin Senior Citizens Association Board has been working hard on providing Seniors with quality programs in spite of the Covid19 restrictions. Lunches and formal meetings are on hold for the time being. We are working on some ideas to honor our veterans for the month of November. Berlin Cable has two videos of programs posted on youtube done by the Berlin Art and Historical Society in past years honoring our Berlin Veterans. Here are the links for the two programs:

- **WWII Women Veterans Program:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bOgSswSHF9Y>
- **Pearl Harbor Program:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kW8am53nXW4> tells the story of some of our Berlin Veterans who were there on that infamous day.

They can also be seen on the cable channel.

The Jackson Gillman Concert which was held back in September at South Commons recording is also available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M2P6KevBfJM>. It is also playing on the cable channel.

The Board has not forgotten our members. Contact Judy Mills at 978-838-0403 for questions or concerns.

We are here to help.



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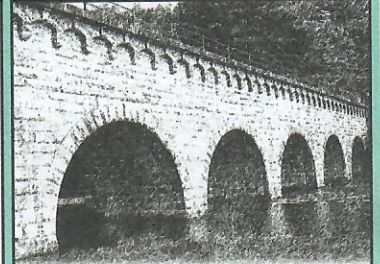
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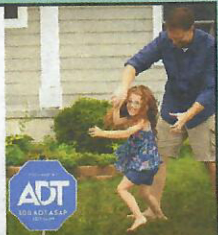
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Berlin Council on Aging

06-5323

Greetings from



Dear Friends,

We are easing into our role of serving the community through providing a place for people to connect. As of now, we are open at 19 Carter as follows:

Mondays 2-4 p.m.

Wednesdays 9-11 a.m.

Fridays 9-11 a.m.

We are following state mandated recommendations of mask wearing and social distancing. We are limiting the number of people on each floor to 25.

Please join us for a cup of coffee or tea during these times and enjoy a visit with friends and neighbors.

Sign up for a weekly email on our website 19Carter.org. We will be adding activities and opening hours as time goes by.

We are starting a new Thursday Afternoon Music Series to provide live music occasionally. Please see our website 19Carter.org or Facebook page for more info. Facebook.com/19CarterCommunity.

with good cheer,
Evy Dueck
19 Carter Manager

Wish list for 19 Carter:

- Hose nozzles (gun type)
- Square and pointed shovels
- Rakes (metal tined and plastic)
- Garden trowels

BERLIN ESSENTIAL WORKER RETIREMENTS

During this Covid tribulation we're experiencing, we frequently hear the term "essential worker" to describe those whose work is vitally important to the smooth functioning of our lives. Following are the stories of essential workers in our own community who are now retiring from the jobs to which they devoted years of dedicated, competent, cheerful service to meet our personal and community needs.

Fran Gill, who just moved across "the frontier" to live with her beloved dog Pixie and cat Sam in the Meadowbrook Mobile Home Park in Hudson, retired as manager of the Berlin Food Pantry. Fran founded the pantry with Pam Dona and Catherine Waugh in 2010. They were prompted by a comment from Town Clerk Eloise Salls who relayed an inquiry from someone asking if Berlin had a food pantry. With help from Berlin resident Buzz Harris on the legal and organizational intricacies of setting up a non-profit agency, the ladies launched pantry operations in November of 2010. Starting with a clientele of three families, the pantry now serves twenty-six, offering personal care and household cleaning products and pet food in addition to a wide variety of fresh, canned and frozen foods received from other food pantries and individual and business donors.

Mary Mikelk succeeds Fran as pantry manager and will work to ensure the smooth operation it enjoyed under Fran's leadership.

Abundant thanks, Fran, for a job well done and welcome, Mary, as you assume your new role.

Village Power Equipment: Berlin farmers and probably most Berlin property owners have enjoyed decades of local sales and service of the equipment they use to harvest their crops and maintain their yards and woodlands, thanks to the existence of Village Power Equipment on Pleasant Street. Now, owners Charley Pidacks and Peter Bjork are retiring from the business they have run with competence and friendliness for the last thirty-five years.

They purchased the business in 1985, taking over an enterprise called Village Farm Equipment, begun in 1951 by Willard Wheeler and his brother-in-law Lee Kavanaugh, first as an auto service center and gas station, with Henry Wheeler Sr. as their head mechanic. They would add the sales and service of Case tractors and farm equipment to their offerings, and then added International Harvester (IH) and Farmall machinery to their business when Ed Rugg brought those lines with him when he joined the company in 1956. Henry Wheeler Sr. exited the business in 1965 when he succeeded his father as Berlin's police chief.

By 1985, when Charley and Peter took over the operation, most of its sales and service centered around yard, garden and forestry equipment and the name was changed to Village Power Equipment.

Charley and Peter had hoped a younger buyer or team would take over Village Power's mission, but found that younger mechanics nowadays are drawn to the better-paying work on cars and trucks, and so decided to close the business as of September 30. Their friendly demeanors, deep product knowledge and skillful service work will be sorely missed.

Thanks and happy trails to Charley Pidacks and Peter Bjork.

Changes at the Berlin Family Food Pantry

Fran Gill has retired after managing the Berlin Family Food Pantry for 10 years — Thank you Fran! Mary Mikelk will be taking over as Manager. The Pantry now has a dedicated phone number 774-245-8320. The Pantry has reopened with new safety protocols in place. Clients are welcome to shop in-person if they prefer, or we are still taking orders by phone, text or email and

packing boxes for pickup or delivery on Tuesdays and Saturdays. If you need some assistance please know that all client information is confidential. We can offer you basic food staples, household items, some extras, toiletries, and sometimes, special needs or requests. Please call or text us at 774-245-8320 or visit us at www.berlinfamilyfoodpantry.org. Proof of residency in the Town of Berlin is required.

Meet Your Town Movers

We continue our introductions of the folks whose energies and inspirations help propel and steer the Good Ship Berlin on its voyage through the waters of life. In this edition of The Powderhouse News, meet Wes Durant,

the newest member of the Council on Aging, and Mary Mikelk who succeeds Fran Gill as Manager of the Berlin Family Food Pantry.

Meet Wes Durant, Jr., Berlin Council on Aging

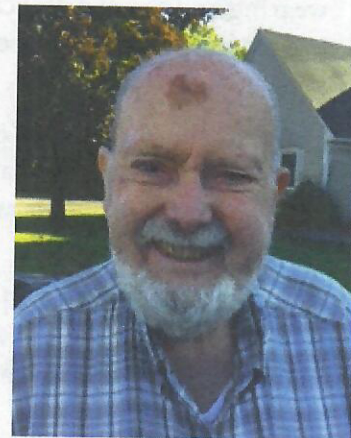
My family moved to Berlin in 1965. I have three children and nine grandchildren. I spent fifty years in the insurance business.

I was a Cubmaster and Scoutmaster both in Berlin and Bolton, where over forty-five of my scouts attained the rank of Eagle Scout. I took 900 scouts and leaders to the Philmont Scout Ranch in Cimmaron, New Mexico over six years, one of the greatest challenges of my life. You take them out as boys and bring them back as men.

On my Berlin farm, I raised horses and Black Angus cattle.

In Berlin, I served on the Finance Committee and the Board of Selectmen. I was also responsible for the incorporating and building of Northbrook Village I, which was a very interesting project.

I enjoy working with people, especially seniors.



Mary Mikelk, the New Manager of the Berlin Family Food Pantry

I've lived in Berlin since 1987. My husband Paul and myself have spent years renovating and preserving the old Berlin House/Hotel (across from St. Joseph's). Professionally, I have spent the majority of my career in the business consulting world working with companies to solve problems or create new business opportunities. I've been a member of the Berlin Family Food Pantry for over 7 years, the Assistant Treasurer and now the Pantry Manager.

Food insecurity and helping those facing that challenge has always been something that I've been passionate about. In college I couldn't afford the milk and margarine needed to turn the 10 cent box of Kraft Mac & Cheese into a meal but those 5 cent packages of ramen noodles were a staple because all you needed was water — granted not the healthiest diet — but you go with what is available and you can afford at the time. Having to juggle daily expenses, keeping a roof over your head and the lights on can be a challenge at best and especially now during these trying times. Having a Food Pantry is a necessary relief for many. If anyone who is facing the challenge of choosing between keeping food in the refrigerator and on the table or having to pay bills and rent, please do not hesitate to call me. We are discreet, we care, we will help. 774-245-8320



Medicare Fraud Awareness

In the confusing world of health insurance, seniors may feel that they are on their own to try and understand their Medicare benefits. With misinformation or confusion comes the opportunity for people to take advantage. Unfortunately, Medicare fraud is alive and well. People are out there trying to get your personal Medicare number, Social Security number, date of birth or banking information. Dennis Hohengasser from the Medicare Fraud Project discusses trying to make sure that your information remains protected and is accurate. The Massachusetts Senior Medicare Patrol is there to help you out.

Dennis reviewed that there are 7 kinds of Medicare fraud to be aware of. These methods include identity theft (Medicare calling asking for your Medicare #), services not rendered (billed for services you never received), drug diversion (medications for you go elsewhere), false fronts, provider offices, up-

coding (billing higher prices) and up-bundling (service billed one by one-blood tests) and COVID (there are no free tests or home testing kits).

Medicare can cover more than just doctor's office visits or an inpatient hospital stay. If you become injured, Medicare can pay for durable medical equipment and home health services. However, there are stipulations for what can be fully covered and what you would be responsible for. Ambulance transportation costs can be covered if there is a medical necessity for you to have it. If you have questions if a service is going to be covered, you can ask the billing departments, SHINE counselors, or the Senior Medicare Patrol.

Your Medicare statements can help you see what services have been billed. Dennis recommends that you keep a record of services you have received to compare to these statements. It is advised to keep 2 years worth of statements. Be an engaged consumer. Keeping a

personal health care journal will help to reduce risk of fraud. Information to include in this journal ranges from medications to list of appointments and lab work and questions you have for your providers.

If you see any errors on your statements, you can file an appeal. There are 180 days to do so. The Senior Medicare Patrol can be your first stop to getting the appeal filed.

Please feel free to reach out to the Council on Aging, the Senior Medicare Patrol and other Medicare professionals at the following resources:

Senior Medicare Patrol

978-946-1243 / masmp.org

1-800-Medicare

mymedicare.gov

Reporting scams

800-946-1243

reportscam@masmp.org

SHINE Counselors

800-243-4636 / shinema.org



12 Woodward Ave., Berlin, MA 01503

PRESENTS

A Family Entertainment Event

Saturday, November 7, 2020

3 - 4:30 p.m.

Tickets are \$13 each*

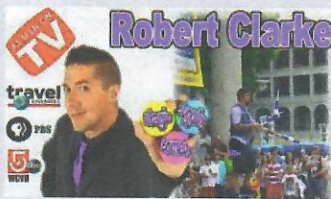
*Tickets will not be sold at the door. Tickets must be purchased online through Eventbrite at 1870townhallberlin.eventbrite.com

Craig Sutton



Get ready for a party! Pro DJ/Emcee Craig Sutton will get every one dancing around and bouncing to the beat AND the family-friendly music will definitely make you move! Based in Framingham, MA, Craig has performed at hundreds of events and for tens of thousands over the years.

Robert Clark



Superb, sophisticated and stylish! Boston Magician & Juggler Robert Clark will entertain, mystify and keep you wanting more. Providing total variety magic shows in Boston and beyond that include awesome magic, cool juggling skills, hilarious comedy routines and tons of audience interaction. This show is non-stop, high energy and crowd pleasing. A show for all ages young and old and not to be missed.

COVID Protocols: Doors will open at 2:30 p.m. Please arrive at least 15 minutes prior to show. All attendees will be required to sign in and apply hand sanitizer prior to entering the building. Household members will be seated together and spaced 6 feet away from other groups. Masks must be worn at all times.

Cooking Fires in Residential Buildings

Each year, from 2016 to 2018, fire departments in the United States responded to an estimated average of

189,300

**cooking fires
in residential
buildings.**

These fires caused an estimated:



deaths



injuries



in property loss



U.S. Fire
Administration

Nashoba Neighbors

We are excited to be forming a new organization called Nashoba Neighbors in Bolton, Lancaster and Berlin! Our purpose is to help older adults stay in their homes by providing assistance and community.

Here are some questions that we get:

1. How will it work?

It is based on the idea of neighbors helping neighbors. There will be a group of volunteers who will assist members with things like transportation, handyman services and friendly phone calls. We also want to enable members to stay connected with other members and volunteers.

2. Who are the volunteers?

They will be community members as well as members of Nashoba Neighbors. We believe that everyone has something to offer.

3. How can Nashoba Neighbors benefit me?

One of the biggest benefits is the peace of mind you will have by knowing that someone will be available to lend a hand when you need it.

We want to start spreading the word about Nashoba Neighbors. Right now we are busy behind the scenes and won't enroll members and volunteers until the time is right. We do want to gather names and email addresses of people in our community who may be interested in learning more and keeping up to date with our progress. We are also looking for people to help us create and lead Nashoba Neighbors.

You can email Catherine Pfau in Bolton at catherinepfau@gmail.com or call her at (978) 337-3059 OR Susan Henry in Berlin at sfh744@mail.harvard.edu or call her at (978) 838-2985.

Feel free to send us your questions as well!

Friends of the Library

Due to the pandemic and concern about the flu season we will not be having our yearly Craft Show at the 1870 Town Hall.

Holiday Greens Sale

Decorative containers of Holiday Country Greens will be sold at the Library, Holiday Farm, and 19 Carter on Saturday, December 5, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Using both outside and inside venues (dependent on the weather)

Proceeds to fund Library Programs

Great for Gifts!

Gone But Not Forgotten

Robert Hughes . . . September 9
Connie Barter . . . September 27
Carol Thurburn . . . September 28
Richard Smith . . . October 3
Sylvia Wheeler . . . October 10



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Berlin Council on Aging

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Powder House News

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SHINE Information Opportunity

Hello everyone. As the year comes to an end, it is time for open enrollment (Oct. 15 – Dec. 7, 2020) and Medicare updates for seniors. What does this mean?? Well, for those eligible for Medicare, this is the time to make changes to your health insurance.

Between October and December, the U.S. Government releases updates to the Medicare part B benefits for the next year. This is the deductible that you would be responsible for, usually coming out of your Social Security benefits. When you turn 65, you are eligible to enroll in Medicare within 90 days of your birthday. If you choose to enroll, great. If you choose not to, there are special circumstances that allow you to enroll without penalty in a future time.

Penalties can be expensive and they can last a lifetime. It is important to

make sure that if you choose to enroll in Medicare Parts A or B, that you have done so without risk of penalty. Are you aware of Medicare Part C- Advantage plan coverage?? Open enrollment allows you to also pick a prescription Medicare Part D plan for additional coverage.

The Berlin COA is working with the Central Mass SHINE Program and there is a webinar coming on November 4th via Zoom. Below is the link if you would like to attend. Also, the contact information for the Central Mass SHINE is listed as well.

Any questions?? You can contact the COA at coa@townofberlin.com or call at 978-838-2750.

Topic: OEP-Clinton, Berlin & Bolton
Time: Nov. 4, 2020 10 a.m. Eastern
Time (U.S. and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/91759287930?pwd=emRWZFRlVzN3MVIyV2M2N2pqNXJUZz09>

Meeting ID: 917 5928 7930

Passcode: 692482

By Phone

+1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

Meeting ID: 917 5928 7930

Passcode: 692482

VOTE

Tuesday, November 3, 2020
from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.
Berlin Town Offices, 23 Linden St.,
Room 114, Lower Level
Park in back. Use Emergency
entrance.