



# Powder House News

March/April 2024

## **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 26 and April 30.

## **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  
Lori Fearebay  
Linda Robinson  
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 Victoria Flynn at [coadirector@townofberlin.com](mailto:coadirector@townofberlin.com), or the COA phone 978-838-2750.

## **Transportation Services**

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

## **From COA/Social Services Director Victoria Flynn-Sankaran**

### **Excise Tax Bills**

A reminder from the Treasurer's Office that excise tax bills will be coming out soon. The online UniPay system can be used for excise tax payments. If you have any questions about the Unipay system or excise taxes, you can reach out to the Treasurer's Office at 978-310-5906.

### **Tax Exemptions**

The Assessor's Office would like to remind residents that the deadline to file for tax exemptions is March 31. There are income and asset requirements that determine eligibility. If you have any questions or want to drop off a completed application, you can reach out to the Assessor's Office at 978-838-2256.

### **Election Calendar for 2024**

- **In-Person early voting** during regular hours plus Saturdays and Sundays  
11 a.m.– 1 p.m. Town Offices, 23 Linden St., lower level
- **Open voter registration for Presidential Primary** February 24, 9 a.m.– 8 p.m.
- **Nomination Papers for Town Offices** start February 29 during regular hours
- **State Presidential Primary**, Tuesday, March 5–7 a.m.–8 p.m.
- **Annual Town Meeting ballots** available for early voting March 26 during regular hours
- **Open voter registration for Annual Town Meeting or Election**, April 25, until 8 p.m.
- **Annual Town Meeting**, Berlin Memorial School, Monday, May 6, 7:30 p.m.
- **Annual Town Election**, 23 Linden St., lower level, Monday, May 13, Noon to 8 p.m.
- **Open voter registration for State Primary**, August 12, 9 a.m.– 8 p.m.  
In-Person Early voting hours start August 24 through August 30, regular hours
- **State Primary**, Tuesday, September 3, 7 a.m.– 8 p.m
- **Open voter registration for State Election**, October 26, 9 a.m.– 8 p.m.  
In-Person Early voting hours start October 19 to November 1, regular hours
- **State Election**, Tuesday, November 5, 7 a.m.– 8 p.m.

### **Dog Licenses**

ALL DOG LICENSES EXPIRE March 31, 2024. Tags are available by mail with a stamped self-addressed envelope, during office hours or on line if a dog was licensed last year and has a current rabies certificate. Intact Male / Female are \$11.00. Neutered male / Spayed females are \$7.00. A current rabies certificate must be kept on file. Checks can be made payable to "Town of Berlin." Credit card payment is accepted by Unipay through [townofberlin.com](http://townofberlin.com). All dogs over six (6) months must be licensed. If you no longer own a dog, please make a note on the form so the clerk can adjust the records.

Dog license notices will **not** be mailed. This is your written notice. Give your email address and if needed, we will notify you of the rabies clinic date or before the fines start.

## Celebrating Completion of First Year of Operation



Nashoba Neighbors is an all-volunteer, 501(c)3 non-profit that works to enable seniors in Berlin, Bolton and Lancaster to remain in their own homes as long as possible with the help of neighborly volunteers.

The group's volunteers and members joined together at Berlin's XIX Carter in February to celebrate the successful conclusion of their first full year of operations. Volunteers were cited individually and collectively for the number and quality of the services they rendered.

As the Nashoba Neighbors "2023 Impact Report" noted, 44 senior members received services from volunteers who donated 663 hours to fulfill 363 requests for assistance. Member requests for rides to medical appointments, shopping and cultural events constituted the largest percentage of services sought. Volunteers fulfilled those requests by driving a total of 6916 miles in their own vehicles and with an attendant contribution of \$767. in gas and car maintenance expenses. Nashoba Neighbors daily call volunteers contributed 1494 hours fielding requests for information and connecting members with volunteers. One third of members received financial assistance to reduce their membership fees.

Outgoing Board President Susan Henry of Berlin noted that perhaps Nashoba Neighbors' most important impact was "the caring relationships that grew between members and volunteers." She added: "There is something deeply satisfying and replenishing in the vibrant connections that continue to form at Nashoba Neighbors."

The organization continues to seek more volunteers to meet the needs of the growing numbers of seniors expressing interest in membership. To learn more about the many ways to volunteer with Nashoba Neighbors, visit their website: [www.nashobaneighbors.org](http://www.nashobaneighbors.org) and call: (978) 226-8844.

## COVID-19 tests

We have a limited supply of COVID tests. They are available first-come, first-served and no more test kits are expected to arrive so once these are out, that's it.

The federal government is allowing residents to receive 4 free COVID tests again. If you are interested, please go to <https://special.usps.com/testkits> and fill out the information. Expect the tests to arrive within 2-6 weeks.

If you have already claimed your free test kits, you still may be eligible for reimbursement or free kits through your insurance company. You can reach out to Victoria to get more information regarding this option.

## Applying for MassHealth

This past year, MassHealth has gone through a massive re-determination process for almost 2 million users. This spring, MassHealth is going back to their 12-month redetermination cycle.

There are several types of MassHealth plans that seniors may be eligible for. MassHealth Standard is full health insurance coverage with strict income and asset guidelines. Extra Help (known nationwide as Prescription Advantage) provides some additional prescription support. This program helps to provide lower costs for medications and may help provide coverage. Health Safety Net helps to provide coverage for deductibles for hospital or skilled nursing services.

MassHealth applications for those over 65 are submitted by paper, fax or mail only at this time. There are two different types of MassHealth applications for seniors. The application will vary depending on the services you are applying for. If you are interested in learning more about MassHealth, you can make an appointment with Victoria (call 978-838-2750 or email [coadirector@townofberlin.com](mailto:coadirector@townofberlin.com)) Local agencies are also having walk-in appointments to apply. If you go to <https://hcfama.org/cac-calendar/>, it will let you know when these appointments are available.

## Social Services Funding

Recently, the Commonwealth cut about \$1 billion of social services programs from their current FY24 budget. State funded entities may need to make adjustments regarding care services provided. This may impact some Berlin residents. Please reach out to Victoria at 978-838-2750 or [coadirector@townofberlin.com](mailto:coadirector@townofberlin.com) if you have questions or if your services get impacted.

*It may look official,  
but it's not.  
The IRS doesn't  
initially contact  
taxpayers by email.*

*Keep an eye out for  
IRS impersonator  
scams.*

[www.irs.gov/alerts](http://www.irs.gov/alerts)



From: IRS Refunds <  
Subject: Communication - 03-28-2018  
Date: March 28, 2018 at  
To:



E-mail sent date: 03/28/2016 , 1:09 PM

**Error message:** We have detected some incorrect information on your tax refund account.

Simply confirm your security by clicking here to be able to receive your refund as usual.

Your Privacy Rights

The IRS is committed to protecting the privacy rights of America's taxpayers. These rights are protected by the [Internal Revenue Code](#), the [Privacy Act of 1974](#), the [Freedom of Information Act](#), and IRS policies and practices. Visit the [IRS Electronic Freedom of Information Act Reading Room](#) for more information about these laws. We document much of our internal policy on these laws in [IRM 10.5.1, Privacy Policy](#).

**FAKE**

Don't click!

## The Five W's: Berlin's who, what, when, where, and why

### Berlin Prepares for Visitors from Berlin

This was the headline of an article in the July 3, 1990 edition of the "Clinton Item". It noted the expected arrival of six young adults from Berlin, Germany as part of the Berlin Meets Berlin — USA project. Only a year prior to this visit a group of business people in West Berlin, Germany had decided to commemorate the City of Berlin's 750th birthday, which had occurred in 1987, by starting a cultural exchange program between young adults in their city with their counterparts in some of the 26 Berlins in the United States. Trans-Atlantic discussions with Berliners in the United States led to the establishment of dates and logistical plans for these visits to take place.

In the summer of 1989, six young citizens of Berlin, MA were driven by local organizers to an airport where they boarded flights to West Berlin, Germany for a two week immersion in German culture, politics, geography and cuisine, all while living with host families and with all travel expenses paid by the German founders of the program.

By all accounts, Berlin's participants were delighted with their experiences of living with their hosts and being steeped in all things German. One of the sobering sites they visited was the forbidding Berlin Wall, the barrier erected by East German authorities, backed by their Soviet enablers, to keep those repressed by their authoritarian regime from escaping to West Berlin. Over the years of the wall's existence, from 1961 to 1989, more than 5000 people, including some 600 border guards, managed to escape by jumping from the windows of buildings at the border, or crawling through sewers or going over the wall and its barbed wire\*. Another estimated 120 people died trying. And then it was gone. Instability in the Soviet Union, which was about to dissolve, and corruption in the East German government that led to its collapse, created conditions that enabled the abandonment of the wall as a tool of repression and its demolition on November 9, 1989. Eleven months after the fall of the wall, East and West Germany were reunited. Thus, the first group of young Germans who came to stay with host families in 1990 came from a substantially changed Germany than that visited by our Berlin young people in 1989. As one Berlin host, anticipating the arrival of Berlin guests said: I hope someone brings a piece of the wall." Several did.

In 1990, it was Berlin's pleasure to welcome young German Berliners here to live with local families for about two weeks and to experience as much of our lives as their hosts could pack into their days. Information about how government works was demonstrated by a visit to the Massachusetts State House and historic sites in Boston. A Boston Harbor cruise, a Red Sox game (most of the visitors said they had not seen a baseball game before), a visit to Old Sturbridge and to a concert at Fruitlands Museum, a tour of the DEC and Stratus Computer Companies, swims and cookouts at both Bill Wheeler's farm and Bill Lowe's home, free golf at Berlin Country Club, a trip to Cape Cod in motor homes driven by



*Students from West Berlin, Germany visited the State House during their recent trip to Berlin, Mass. They were accompanied by Williard Wheeler of Berlin and their hosts from Berlin. The group was the guest of Rep. Robert A. Durand. Shown with Durand (left) and Wheeler (right) are: (front row) Inga Peicher and Host Theresa Ryan; (middle row) Host Christopher Dona, Inga Schmuldach, Silke Schmelle, Oliver Pade and Manuel Scheffler; (back row) Host Thomas Ryan and Sebastian Dietzmann.*

Bill Wheeler and Mary Ellen Matthew and an overnight stay at York Beach, Maine hosted by Ray and Pam Dona were other highlights of their visit. One of their realized goals was the purchase of Levi jeans, much in demand in Germany, but pricey at nearly \$100. a pair. They cost a mere \$35. here.

Clearly, all this hosting involved a great deal of planning and work by our Berlin residents. Resident hosts, over the years, included: Ginny and Phil Zukatynski, Ray and Pam Dona, Walter and Gail Bickford, Thomas and Lynn Ryan, Bill and Joanne Wheeler, Philip and Marie Wheeler, Roger and Charlotte Stanley, Dennis and Lori Fearebay, Bob and Madeline McTague, Walter and MaryAnn Makar, Don and Connie Wight, Lawrence and Nancy MacDonald, Jonathan and Judy Bridge, Gerald and Carolyn Cashin, Doug and Ann Phipps and Edward and Lucy Ayers. Volunteers here raised hundreds of dollars through turkey dinners and other fundraising events to pay for entry fees, concerts, game tickets and transportation expenses incurred while hosting our German guests. The amount of kindness and generosity spontaneously offered and then continued through the years of this exchange program may be worn as a badge of pride by all our citizens and serve as a stimulus for other volunteerism now and in the years ahead.

In all, this Youth Bridge cultural exchange program operated from 1989 through 1995, with many local young people offered two-week, in-person, eventful trips to stay in and learn about Germany and about the same number of German visitors enjoying our local hospitality. Each of the participants has been gifted an experience that has informed their understanding of a part of the world they might otherwise not have experienced.

That can only be good for their sense of the connectedness of all the occupants of this planet we share. And the success of this endeavor should hearten and encourage those who may have persuaded themselves that they cannot make a positive difference in the world. \*Wikipedia

## COMMUNITY EVENTS CALENDAR

For a complete listing of the meeting times and places of all Berlin town boards, commissions and committees, go to the "[mytowngovernment.org](http://mytowngovernment.org)" and click on "berlin, ma"

### COA

**Tuesdays from 1-2 p.m. Tai Chi** with Jeff Cote in COA room 118. Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81287909508> Meeting ID: 812 8790 9508

**Saturdays from 9-10 a.m. Senior Yoga, Saturdays from 10-11 a.m. SAIL yoga** COA Room 118. Zoom Meeting Web Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89963068074> Meeting ID: 899 6306 8074

### BERLIN CHURCHES

#### First Parish Church

**Sunday Worship:** 10 a.m. Meetinghouse and Zoom  
**Family programming:** First and third Sundays  
**Pizza Night:** Second Friday each month 5-7 p.m. Meetinghouse.

#### St. Joseph The Good Provider Catholic Church

**Daily mass:** Mon.-Fri. at 7:30 a.m.  
**Weekend masses:** Sat. 4 p.m.; Sun. 8:30 a.m. and 10:45 a.m.  
**Palm Sunday Easter Flower Sale:** Saturday, March 23, following the 4 p.m. Mass; and Sunday, March 24, following the 8:30 a.m. and 10:45 a.m. Masses  
**Holy Thursday, March 28:** Mass at 7 p.m.  
**Good Friday, March 29:** Service at 3 p.m.  
**Holy Saturday, March 30:** Easter Vigil at 7:30 p.m.  
**Easter Sunday, March 31:** Mass at 8:30 a.m. and 10:45 a.m.

### XIX CARTER

**Open:** Monday-Friday 9 a.m.-5 p.m. / Saturday 10 a.m.-1 p.m.  
**MON:** TeaTime 2-4 p.m.  
**TUES:** Morning Meditation 8:15-8:45 a.m. Soup 12-1 p.m.  
**WEDS:** Coffee Hour 9 a.m.- Noon; Irish Session 7-10 p.m.  
**THURS:** Afternoon Games 2-4 p.m.  
**FRI:** Coffee Hour 9 a.m.- Noon; Open Studio 9 a.m.- Noon; Fiber Arts 2-4 p.m.  
**SAT:** Scones 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

### MARCH

**Fri., March 1, & Sat., March 2, 7:30-9 pm: Off Brand Improv!** Come laugh and have a good time! Ages 16+. Tickets: \$18 in advance; \$20 at the door (cash only!)

**Sun., March 3, 4-5:30 pm: Armchair Traveler: Berlin, Germany** Ruediger Volk will share footage from Berlin, Germany. Authentic food and wine will be available. All are welcome!

**Monday, March 4, 7:30-9 pm: Comedy Open Mic** Sign up by emailing host Mike Koutrobis on the Saturday prior. Ages 18+ adult humor! Suggested donation: \$5

**Sat., March 9, 4-5 pm: Spring Equinox Sound Healing** Reiki Master and Sound Healing practitioner Gina Cranford will lead the group on a journey of healing vibrations as we approach the Spring Equinox. Registration: \$10

**Thurs., March 14, 7-9 pm: Jazz Night/Nolan Slate & Friends** Join us for an evening of jazz standards and improvisations. All instrumentalists and vocalists are welcome, listeners as well! Suggested donation: \$5

**Sat., March 16, 7-9 pm: Katie O'Neill & Friends** An evening of songs and tunes from the Celtic and folk traditions to celebrate St. Patrick's Day! Tickets: \$15 in advance; \$20 at the door

**Sun., March 17, 7-9 pm: A Celtic Celebration** An evening of music, dance, singalongs and stories to celebrate Ireland's culture on St. Patrick's Day. Tickets: \$15 in advance; \$20 at the door

**Fri., March 22, 6:30-8:30 pm: Homeschool Q & A** Thinking about homeschooling? A panel of current former homeschooling families and homeschooling alums. For more info, reach out to host Jenna Humpton.

**Sat., March 23, 1-2 pm: Estate Planning Seminar** Join licensed attorney Jennifer Fay to get real answers to important issues: nursing home costs, the probate process, death taxes, etc.

**Sun., March 24, 6-8 pm: Jazz Jam** All instruments and musicians welcome. For questions, please email Ken Parrish. Suggested donation: \$5

**Fri., March 29, 6:30-9 pm: Movie Night: Crazy Rich Asians** Sponsored by Cordelia's Farm. Tickets: \$15 Pizza, salad and popcorn are included in price!

**Sun., March 31, 2-4 pm: Movie Matinee: Crazy Rich Asians** Sponsored by Cordelia's Farm. Tickets: \$10, Popcorn included.

### APRIL

**Sat., April 6, 2-4 pm: Braver Angels Discussion on Trust in Media** Recent surveys have shown a significant decrease in trust of the media across the entire political spectrum. An open discussion into this important issue.

**Sun., April 7, 4-5:30 pm: Armchair Traveler: Taiwan** Padraig Redington will share footage from his recent travels to vibrant Taiwan. Authentic food and wine will be available. All are welcome!

**Tues., April 9, 1:30-2:30 pm: Book Club: Presidential Biography** We welcome anyone to join us! Please contact Program Organizer Ann Ribbens to learn the book of choice.

**Sun., April 14, 6-8 pm: Jazz Jam** All instruments and musicians welcome. For questions, please email Ken Parrish. Suggested donation: \$5

**Thurs., April 18, 7-8 pm: Free Improv Workshop** Led by Meredith Charles, is designed to challenge and inspire participants to stretch their brains and limits. Register at [19Carter.org](http://19Carter.org). Limited to 20 participants!

**Fri., April 26, 6:30-9 pm: Movie Night: Barbie** Sponsored by Cordelia's Farm. Tickets: \$15 (pizza, salad & popcorn included in price)

**Sat., April 27, 7-9 pm: Mac's Garage** A night of folk, blues and country. Tickets: \$15 in advance; \$20 at the door

**Sun., April 28, 2-4 pm: Movie Matinee: Barbie** Sponsored by Cordelia's Farm. Tickets: \$10, Popcorn included.

## Meet Linda Robinson, COA Member



I was born in Arlington, raised my kids in Bedford, and moved to Berlin almost four years ago. I have three daughters, three sons-in-law, and six grandchildren. I enjoy traveling, crafts, and spending time with my family and friends.

I am a physical therapist by training and worked in direct care for many years, primarily in home care. I treated mostly older adults, although I also specialized in treating kids with cystic fibrosis. I moved into health care administration, first in home care and most recently as the Operations Director for PACE, an all-inclusive program that enables older adults to remain living in their community.

I partially retired at the end of 2022 and wanted to use some of my new found time to give back in some way to my new community. Being on the Council on Aging seemed to fit well with my experience and I hope that I can be a positive contributor to the support of older adults in Berlin.

### Thank You Rachel Boyer

Rachel has resigned her position on the COA Board. She has served the Board since November 2020. We would like to thank her for her time and her help in serving our seniors.

### Downsizing Seminar

Have you thought about downsizing and need help? Have you thought about moving but never really have moved? How do you know you are doing the right things?

Please join us for an afternoon of real estate chat! You will receive information from seasoned real estate agents Kelly Wheeler Lajoie and Kelly Killeen and real estate lawyer Andrea Leland on taking steps to your selling and buying needs.

Topics will include: How can you start getting your house ready to sell? Should you make improvements or sell as is? What are today's buyers looking for? How do you find your new forever home?

Please join us Tuesday, March 19, at 4 p.m. at the Northborough Senior Center located at 119 Bearfoot Rd., Northborough, MA. There is a sign-up list at the center or you can call 508-393-5035.

### Van Services

The COA van is still scheduling for future rides. As of now, the COA van is booking rides on Tuesday–Thursday only. We ask for at least 48-72 hours' notice ahead of time.

Rides are scheduled as first-come, first-served. We require that all residents complete a COA Rider Application prior to your first ride.

### Berlin Public Library: March and April Programs

**Story Time with Ms. Sara**  
Mondays at 11 a.m.

Join us in the Children's Room to read a new story together every week.

**Friends of the Library meetings**  
Wednesday March 6 and April 17 at 11 a.m.

Any member of the Friends of the Berlin Public Library is welcome to attend a meeting to discuss fundraising and other event ideas.

#### Crafternoons

Tuesday March 5, Thursday March 14, Tuesday April 16 from 4-5 p.m. and Saturdays March 30 and April 20 from 12-1 p.m.

Each crafternoon will feature a new craft activity with all supplies and directions provided.

These judgement-free projects will let you explore your creativity and learn a new skill. Visit our website for more information about what our upcoming crafts are. Suitable for kids and adults alike.

**Egg Hunt Story Time**  
Monday March 25 th , 11 a.m.

At this special story time, can you find all the eggs hidden around the library?

**Solar Eclipse presentation**  
Tuesday April 2 at 6 p.m.

Aldrich Astronomical Society President Jim Zebrowski will give a presentation about solar eclipses. This the presentation is for all ages and will also include a close up look at space artifacts and updates on the James Webb Space Telescope.

This event will take place at the 1870 Town Hall.

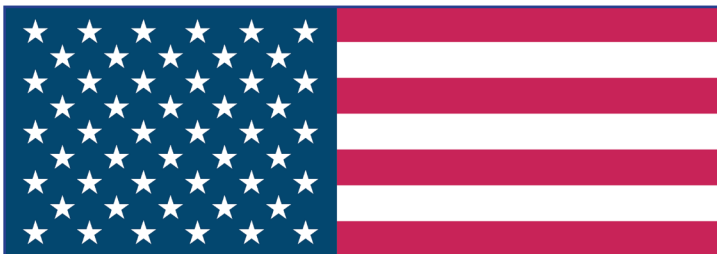
**Baseball Songs and Stories with Howie Newman**  
Saturday April 13 at 2 p.m.

Ring in the 2024 baseball season with Howie Newman. Howie will sing baseball songs, do baseball trivia and tell stories about his days as a sportswriter on the Red Sox beat. He covered baseball for the Boston Globe, Lowell Sun, Patriot Ledger and Associated Press. He will also tell you about how his bumper sticker ended up in the Baseball Hall of Fame and Sports Illustrated. This event will take place at the 1870 Town Hall.

For more information on programs, visit the library website [berlin.cwmars.org](http://berlin.cwmars.org)



Berlin Fire & EMS Department had a Firefighter for the Day Contest at their Open House on October 7, 2023. On November 16 there was a new chief in town! Meet the "Chief of the Day", first-grader, Harper. Chief Harper had a busy day running the Department and making decisions.



## VETS TALK PROGRAM

A PLACE WHERE VETERANS CAN COME TOGETHER



**Veterans from Bolton & Berlin are invited to the Bolton Senior Center on the 1st Tuesday of each month at 10AM.**

Join us for VETERANS ONLY coffee, camaraderie & conversation with others who have served.

**600 Main St. Bolton, MA 01740**

2024 dates are below. Please RSVP to the COA if you would like to attend!

**2/6, 3/5, 4/2, 5/7, 6/4, 7/2, 8/6, 9/3,  
10/1, 11/5, 12/3**

For more information call the Bolton COA at 978-779-3313 or 978-779-3314 CLPI

## Digital Literacy Classes for Mar/Apr 2024

As discussed in previous issues, we are continuing our digital literacy classes in March and April. We are **REQUIRING** pre-registration for these classes. If the class you are interested in is full, you can be added to the next available class. There are pre-class and post-class surveys that we are asking each participant to fill out. Refreshments will be provided at each class. You are welcome to bring your own tech device. Just notify us during the registration.

We are trialing some skills sessions, these sessions will allow seniors to practice any tech skill with us and provide general feedback.

### Skills Sessions will be held on:

- Friday, March 1, 11 a.m.- 12:30 p.m. at the Town Offices
- Wed., March 27, 11 a.m.- 12:30 p.m. at Northbrook II
- Friday, April 5, 11 a.m.- 12:30 p.m. at the Town Offices
- Wed., April 24, 11 a.m.- 12:30 p.m. at Northbrook II

### Library Digital Information Classes with Victoria Dube

- Wed., March 13, 11 a.m.- 1 p.m. at the Library
- Wed., March 20, 11 a.m.- 1 p.m. at the Library

### Berlin Tech Services Class with Victoria Dube

- Friday, March 8, 11 a.m.- 12:30 p.m. at the Town Offices

### Introduction to Digital Literacy

Friday, April 19, 11 a.m.- 12:30 p.m. at the Town Offices.

If you have any questions, please call us at 838-2750 or email Victoria directly at [coadirector@townofberlin.com](mailto:coadirector@townofberlin.com).

For additional info: <https://www.bcoa-aging-at-home.org/>

## Coffee Talk

Prior to the Annual Town Meeting, the Select Board is going to have a coffee talk to review warrants and answer questions. Coffee Talk is scheduled for Thursday, April 18, 2024 at 7 p.m. at the Berlin Town Offices Room 227.

A zoom link will be made available closer to the Coffee Talk to join virtually. Please reach out to Dee at [selectmen@townofberlin.com](mailto:selectmen@townofberlin.com) if you have any questions.

## Annual Spring Town Meeting

The Berlin Town Meeting is scheduled for Monday, May 6, 2024 at 7 p.m. at Berlin Memorial School's gymnasium.

At this time, cable access will be recording the town meeting but there is no live virtual feed for the meeting.

## Berlin History Makers: Fred and Edie Brewer: Best Buds

Shopping for colorful plants to brighten my yard each spring always led me to the little greenhouse on Highland Street run by Edie and Fred Brewer. I had heard that they raised the plants in some sort of greenhouse back behind the hill in their back yard. Silly me. As a newbie town resident with only 20 or so years at our place at the time, I was clueless as to what lay out of sight. About a year ago, as Mary Redington and I were on the hunt for lumber to be used in the restoration of Berlin's oldest town-owned building, the Hearse House, we were advised to have a chat with Fred Brewer, who has stacks of rough-cut lumber he produced by using a very large sawmill in his back yard. We walked with him to his out-back area and were blown away by discovering what lay behind the Brewers' backyard hill. The flowers I had so admired in Edie's small front yard greenhouse originated in not one, but TWO 100' greenhouses, and a nearby 50-footer.

Fred related that, to acquire one of the 100' units, he and Edie drove down to eastern Long Island in a long-bodied Ford F-600 truck. The trip down was okay, mostly on interstate highways, but what should have been a simple round trip turned into an adventure when the highway they had traveled on was closed to traffic when re-paving work was undertaken at night. Now traveling local roads in the dark and without the benefit of today's GPS technology, and in a lengthy downpour, Fred and Edie, lost and exhausted, spent the night sleeping — sort of — in the cab of the truck. It was just one of the challenges that Team Brewer have conquered in their long and interesting married life.

Both Fred and Edie are born-and-bred Berlin townies with deep roots in town and with a long list of contributions to the betterment of their birthplace.

Fred's great grandfather was Leonard W. Brewer, a farmer whose land included a portion of what came to be known as Chedco Farm, including the land where today's Holiday Farm sits, across Central Street from Brewer Road. Fred's grandfather, Alfred, bought land on South Street, starting where the late Arthur Lange lived, and extending down to what is now the site of Berlin Memorial School and the South Common. He kept cows, grew hay and potatoes and asparagus. His grandson Alfred, Edie's husband, helped out with work at that farm as a youngster and young man while living on Pleasant Street. Meanwhile, the younger Alfred's eventual wife-to-be, Edie, was growing up, first on Carter Street, then on Oak. Her grandfather, Charles Allen Nutting, worked as a farmer on Truman Felton's farm. Edie's father was Charles E. Nutting, a machinist who worked full-time at LaPointe's and part time as town plumber.

Little Edie and Fred progressed through four of Berlin's elementary schools: Center, South and West and, when it was built, the first Berlin Memorial School. Edie apparently caught Fred's eye because in springtime, he took her to school in his buggy, pulled by his pony Molly. After elementary school, Fred was off to Worcester's Boys' Trade high school, where he learned the machinist's trade, subsequently working at Parker Manufacturing Company in Worcester and at Fenwell. Edie went to Northborough High School, focused on business courses, and worked at an insurance company and then Colonial Press.



Fred and Edie married in 1958. They welcomed two children — Cynthia and Frank — to their team and settled into their house on Highland Street. Well, almost. As Fred put it: "We didn't have much money then," so, like some other couples in town, lived in just the finished basement of what, when eventually topped, became the house they occupy today. Their whole south side yard was given over to raising pansies which they sold, both at retail and at wholesale, including 40,000 plants a year to Fiske's Nursery in Northborough.

Over time, they added greenhouses out back and cultivated many thousands of plants for sale. Not all the plants went on the market, though. Edie supplied flowers for Sunday services at Berlin's First Parish Church for 46 years.

Not content just to be IN Berlin, but wanting to participate in and support it, Edie and Fred put their shoulders to the wheel in many ways. Edie worked with and led both Brownies and Girl Scouts. She served First Parish Church in many capacities, as a Sunday School teacher, as Treasurer of the church offices and the church fair and as one of the founders of the Many Hands Thrift Shoppe. On the municipal front, Edie took a position with the Town Treasurer's office under the tax work-off program, and then continued there as a part-time employee for four years. She has long served as an officer of the Berlin Historical Society and continues to do so. Edie and Fred were both members of the Hudson Car Club. The Brewers' previously-noted back yard has more than one antique Hudson awaiting some TLC. Edie still drives a like-new blue and white 1954 Hudson Jet sedan, while Fred plied the local roads in a 1953 Hudson Hornet. He is now working to complete restoration on a 1947 Hudson pickup truck. Fred served as a volunteer with the Berlin Fire Department in his younger years, when it was largely volunteer-staffed.

And here I thought Fred and Edie were just a friendly, laid-back couple with a strong penchant for things floral. It's now apparent to this writer that they have played — and continue to play — a vital role in helping Berlin to remain a friendly, supportive, right-to-farm community. As the old saying goes: We couldn't have done it without you. — Bob Blair



# Powder House News

TOWN OF BERLIN, COUNCIL ON AGING, 23 LINDEN ST., BERLIN, MA 01503

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U.S. POSTAGE  
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BERLIN, MA 01503

## Powder House News Changes

There may be some upcoming changes for the Powder House News. For many years, the Council on Aging has been mailing the Powder House News to seniors. The COA has put in a request to have the Powder House News become a town paper. This has not been finalized, but if this funding comes through, the Powder House News will look different in the fall.

Costs of the Powder House News are continuing to rise, especially postage. The COA has tried our best to mail out hard copies to all senior households. While we would like this to continue, budget constraints are making this more challenging each fiscal year. We are asking residents, if you can, to please sign up for a digital copy by emailing (Digital PHN Copy) at [coadirector@townofberlin.com](mailto:coadirector@townofberlin.com) or call us at 978-838-2750. Each Powder House News is posted on the town website at <https://www.townofberlin.com/council-aging/pages/powder-house-news>.

**Thank you, Thank you!** The Berlin Council on Aging would like to thank its gracious sponsors for helping to keep the Powder House News going: **Berlin Farms; Berlin General Store; Berlin Seniors; Chef Du Jour and Kristine Romano, Esq., LLM, PC.**

## Gone But Not Forgotten

Cheryl Bashian .....December 13  
Stephen Brown ..... January 1  
Doris Freitas ..... January 9

## Fire Safety Checks

The Berlin Fire Department is offering a free home safety check to residents, particularly seniors who may be in need of updated smoke detectors/carbon monoxide detectors. If you are interested or have any questions, please reach out to the Fire Department at 978-838-2444.

## COA Vacancy

The Berlin Council on Aging has a vacancy on its board. If you are interested in serving or have any questions, please reach out to us at 978-838-2750 for more information.

Any Berlin resident over 18 can apply, though we do encourage seniors to get involved.

Meetings for the foreseeable future are in person in the Town Offices Room 118 or through Zoom (last Tuesday of the month 4 p.m.).