



# Powder House News

Nov./Dec. 2022

## **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 29 and December 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 Victoria Flynn at [coadirector@townofberlin.com](mailto:coadirector@townofberlin.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.

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

Hello all! I would like to let you all know that I am continuing to split my time between both social services and council on aging. This means that I am partially stationed in the public safety side of town offices half of the week. Social Services Department is working to get some mental health webinars going. The COA is still offering tai-chi, yoga, blood pressure clinics, meals on wheels and van rides. Though these services target seniors, younger people can participate. Case management, such as assistance for any public benefits or needing any mental health resources, are available to ALL RESIDENTS, regardless of age. Please reach out to me at 978-838-2750 or at [coadirector@townofberlin.com](mailto:coadirector@townofberlin.com) if you have any questions, comments or concerns.

## **Fuel Assistance and Mass Save**

This year, with additional heating costs expected this winter, people may be eligible for some energy assistance. In Berlin, the agency that we work with is Montachusett Opportunity Council (MOC) in Fitchburg. To qualify, a household of one needs to make less than \$42,411 annually or \$55,461 for a household of two. If you have not applied previously, you will need have the following documentation to show proof of residence: list of all household residents, identification proof for all household residents, copy of lease/mortgage, copy of all energy/utility bills, and proof of income.

Those who were approved last year, the recertification process is ongoing now. For new applicants, residents can start applying in November. You can try to apply online and upload documents but you may need to go in person. If you are deemed eligible, you will be notified and funds will be dispersed to your utility companies. To apply for fuel assistance, you can contact MOC at 978-342-4520 or register online at <https://toapply.org/INTFITCH>. If you have any questions, please call us at the COA at 978-838-2750.

## **Holiday Twinkle Tour**

With the holidays quickly approaching, the Berlin Seniors and COA are co-sponsoring the 3rd Annual Twinkle Tour. For any resident or business that wants to participate, we are asking for you to register with Judy Mills by November 18th. Properties need to be fully decorated for consideration by November 30th. There will be an opportunity for guided tours with transportation on Saturdays and Sundays. Please reach out to the COA at 978-838-2750 or [coadirector@townofberlin.com](mailto:coadirector@townofberlin.com) with any questions.

The Twinkle Tour Bus will be available to all. Reservations will be honored first (recommended). All others by space available — first come, first served.

The bus will pick up at 135 Pleasant St. and at First Parish Church after the Tree Lighting Ceremony. Our first stop will be at the Live Nativity and along the way at approx. 6 p.m., will stop at St. Joseph the Good Provider Church Holiday Fair. We will continue on. Guests can cast their votes on the bus in a sealed container or text 774-245-4240. The bus will run on the first 3 Saturdays of December. For reservations, please call Judy @ 978-227-2664.

## **Election Day Transportation**

If you are in need of transportation to the town offices on November 8th for voting, we can help. Call us at 978-838-2750 to reserve a seat.



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Berlin Council on Aging

06-5323

## The Five W's

Linda Wheeler, wife of Buddy Wheeler, the third generation of his family to devote themselves to the operation and diversification of Balance Rock Farm, has offered us this background view of the farm's past and present operations.

### BALANCE ROCK FARM HISTORY

Balance Rock Farm is a fifth generation family farm. The farm stand was originally used as a cobbler shop during the Cottage Shoe industry of the 1800s. Lester, Adelia and Cora Berry maintained a small diversified farm alongside the shoe business. Previous to that, hair combs were carved from horn in an older building that no longer stands.

Around 1942, the Berry's nephew, Fred Wheeler, began to work at the farm and over time acquired it from his aunts and uncle. Fred married Ruth Bridges in 1948 and together they had four children. He expanded the milking operations while hiring out with a backhoe and a dump truck which he fondly called "Old Lizah". Fred and Ruth's youngest son, Fred, Jr. (Buddy), married Linda Ganusko in 1977. In 1978 Fred took Buddy on as his partner. Various cousins and nephews were employed as they continued to expand the milking herd and added on a milking parlor. At its peak, the dairy herd consisted of about 130 holsteins, with a few jerseys in the mix. Three children were born to Buddy and Linda: Erin Lee (1979-1983), Shane, and Lauren.

As profitability in the dairy industry became difficult in New England, Buddy and Fred decided to try direct marketing their milk. In 1994 the old cobbler shop became a farm stand. They contracted with Lundgren and Jonaitis Dairy in Shrewsbury to bottle the milk in glass, allowing the dairy aspect of the farm to remain profitable for another decade. A series of events forced the bottling plant to close and Balance Rock Farm was forced to return to wholesaling milk. Around 2004 the farm ceased milking cows and switched their focus to raising meats and eggs. Today the farm stand offers quality meats (some grass fed), eggs and other products sourced locally, including cheeses, ice cream, honey, maple, jams, sauces, coffee and more.



Home gardeners and landscapers also enjoy enriching their growing season with manure and compost sourced from Balance Rock Farm.



The farm continues today as a tribute to Buddy and his family heritage. Sadly, Buddy passed on October 31, 2021, at the age of 64, due to Covid. Buddy & Linda's son, Shane and his wife Lynette, are the current stewards of the farm with their three girls, Lexi, Tessa and Erin Rose. Cheering her brother on from the sidelines is Lauren, her husband Bobby and their son Nico. Uncle Shane is hoping Nico maintains his 3 year old enthusiasm for farm life at least through his teenage years! There are 140 acres in pasture and hay land. Maintaining the open space and providing quality, nutritious food to our community is our goal. The farm is not certified organic, but has not used commercial fertilizers, pesticides or hormones in production since 1983.

When you visit the farm, be sure to visit the goats, Caramel, Baby and Angel; the alpacas, Cappacino and Rocky; the sheep, Perdie; and then there is Chicken Little, our alarm clock rooster. Occasionally, you may see Sheriff, our quarter horse. Oh and we mustn't forget Gruffery James, the cat who found us. Check him out on his very own Instagram page.

The Balance Rock Farm family has been blessed with a little piece of God's green earth to steward. We are grateful and honored to be able to offer value and service to our community and to continue the legacy of our loved ones who came before us.

# 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)" website 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 9-11 a.m.**

Senior Yoga COA Room 118. Zoom Meeting Web Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89963068074>  
Meeting ID: 899 6306 8074)

## 13th annual Arts and Fine Crafts Fair

**Nov 19, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.**

at Berlin's 1870 Town Hall on Woodward Avenue. The creative works of 28 artists will be featured and available for sale.

## BERLIN CHURCHES

### First Parish Church

**Sunday Worship** (every Sunday): 10 a.m. Meetinghouse and Zoom

**Pizza Night** Second Friday of each month 5-7 p.m.  
Meetinghouse (11/11 and 12/9)

**Friendship Village Fair** Saturday, 11/9 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Meeting House. Soup and sandwiches

**Christmas Eve Service** 12/24 at 5 p.m. Meetinghouse and Zoom

### St. Joseph The Good Provider Catholic Church

**Daily mass:** Mon.-Fri. at 7:30 a.m.

**Weekend masses:**

Saturday, 4 p.m., Sunday, 8:30 a.m. and 10:45 a.m.

**Reconciliation:** 3:30-4 p.m.

### St. Joseph's Christmas Shoppe Fair:

Saturday Dec. 3, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. & Sunday Dec. 4, 9 a.m.-12 p.m.

Visit our Christmas Café, opening early this year with some delightful breakfast fare and a selection of teas and coffee.

For lunch we'll be offering homemade hearty fare, including; chowders, stews, chili and cabbage soup along with sandwiches, hot & cold beverages and an assortment of delightful desserts. After you've eaten visit our wonderful cookie and bake shop, shop our fine selection of gift baskets, Christmas crafts, raffles, mugs of greens, and our wonderful Christmas Past room.

Santa will be visiting 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday — a great photo opportunity. 52 West Street/Route 62, Berlin, MA

## XIX CARTER

**Open**

Mondays-Friday 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

**Mondays 1-4 p.m. TeaTime**

**Tuesdays 2-3:30 p.m. History Matters**

Please join Historical Commission Chair June Miller to find out the when and where of something "old".

**Wednesdays 9 a.m.-Noon Community Coffee**

**Every Wednesday: 7-9:30 p.m. Irish Session**

Players and listeners are welcome. Suggested donation: \$5

**Thursdays 1-4 p.m. Cribbage**

Stop by for a game of cribbage or other games, bring a book to read on the couch, or work on the puzzle.

**Fridays: 9-noon Community Coffee**

**Katie O'Neill and Friends Concert: Saturday, Nov 12, 7-9 p.m.**

Party Pieces: an evening of favorite songs and tunes from the Celtic, Folk, and Great American Songbook traditions. With Katie O'Neill, Sean Gilmartin, Michael Kerr, Deborah Temple, and special guests. Drawing from the deep wells of multiple genres, this group of experienced performers bring an eclectic musical celebration to 19 Carter. A "party piece" is a musician's signature song — something they have made their own and are identified by in their musical circle — and this group has a whole bunch to share! Suggested donation for the evening is \$5.

**Stop by for coffee and homemade muffins**  
**Saturday, Nov 19, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.**

**Shop Local: Saturday, Nov 26, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.**

Stop by Saturday morning to browse our great collection of holiday baskets created with fresh greens to benefit the Friends of the Berlin Public Library and the many one-of-a-kind gifts created by local artists.

**Inclusion Coffeehouse, Friday, Dec 16, 7-9 p.m.**

Lori Diamond & Fred Abatelli will host this magical, memorable musical event featuring talents of some extraordinary young musicians/artists. This coffeehouse is a joyous event of INCLUSION where we will celebrate everyone's unique gifts! Songwriters, singers, dancers, poets and comedians will all be sharing the stage, kinship and camaraderie. Special appearance by Anelise & her Family Band! <https://www.ldfamusic.com/anelise-music>

**Hunter Stone and Friends Concert:**  
**Thursday, Dec 22, 7-9 p.m.**

**Paul Rishell and Annie Raines Concert:**  
**Saturday, Jan 21, 2023**

**Healing Arts Marketplace:**  
**Sunday, Jan 22, 2023, 11 a.m.-4 p.m.**

## Meet Your New Town Mover

KRISTEN RUBIN is our new Town Administrator as of September 16th.

### Meet Kristen Rubin, Town Administrator



I would like to take a moment to introduce myself as Berlin's new Town Administrator and to say hello. My name is Kristen Rubin and I was previously the Assistant Town Administrator in Leicester. I started on September 16th and have spent my first few weeks meeting with employees, boards/committees and residents in addition to exploring the Town to learn about key issues and what makes Berlin unique.

I applied to Berlin because of its small-town, friendly, rural feel which reminds me of Leicester. Prior to going to Leicester in 2014, I served in various economic/housing/community development positions for the City of Worcester and the County of Monterey in California. I hold a master's degree in public administration along with a B.A. from Middlebury and have over 15 years of local government experience. I have a true passion for public service and could not be more excited to embark on this next journey in my career.

On a personal note, I live in nearby Leominster with my husband, our three dogs and my nine-year-old stepson. I enjoy chatting about dogs and travel. I plan to spend as much time as possible getting to know Berlin and look forward to bringing my family to local events.

When I am not in meetings, I strive to have an open-door policy. You are welcome to stop by my office at any time (even just to say hi) and can also make an appointment if you would like to have a longer discussion. Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions or concerns, no matter how big or small. I am very much looking forward to meeting all of you and learning how I can best serve the Town of Berlin.

### Van Rider Policies and Procedures

The COA has been getting an increase of van usage which we are very happy about. We want to make sure that Berliners are aware of what the policies are for van usage. If there are any questions, please call us at 978-838-2750.

1. To ride the van, we need to have a completed Berlin Rider Van Registration form. It can be downloaded at <https://www.townofberlin.com/sites/g/files/vyhlf4156/f/uploads/coa-rider-application.pdf>, one can be mailed to you, or the van has copies on it as well for completion.
2. We are requesting 48-72 hours MINIMUM for van ride requests. Van ride requests will be processed on a first come, first serve basis. Medical appointments will take precedence over other ride requests.
3. If you are booking for a medical ride, the COA CANNOT TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANYONE. If there is a procedure that will require you to be under anesthesia or require additional care, we will deny the ride unless someone else is going with you. Our job is to safely get you to your destination and back.
4. Before going on the van, we are doing a temp check/COVID questionnaire for all riders. We need riders to wear masks while on the van for the safety of all.
5. Multiple people may be riding the van at the same time. Riders are allowed to have a caregiver or helper ride with them. The helper will need an emergency contact established with the COA for safety purposes.

### Community Needs Survey— UMASS Boston

The Town of Berlin has decided to have a Community Needs Assessment assessable to all residents 18 and older. This survey is meant to assess if Berlin's municipality is meeting the wants and needs of our residents as well as the ease for Berliners to safely age in place. We are aware that there are needs that are not being addressed and we need additional information from Berliners to help us make the necessary changes. UMASS Boston is going to be leading the survey study.

In January, a postcard with information for survey completion will be mailed. About 1-2 weeks later, the survey will be available. Senior households will be mailed paper surveys with an envelope to be returned to UMASS Boston. A QR code and a website will also be available for completion. The Town of Berlin wants to stress that **NO ONE REPRESENTING TOWN GOVERNMENT WILL SEE YOUR RESPONSES** to the survey. All responses and questions will go directly to UMASS Boston.

In spring 2023, UMASS Boston will share with the town the results of the survey summarizing the data collected.

### 1870 Town Function Hall

is available for your entertaining or event functions.  
978-310-5922 or email [1870TownHall@TownofBerlin.com](mailto:1870TownHall@TownofBerlin.com)

## RECIPES FOR HAPPINESS

Here are some recipes to brighten your day from Berlin residents. If you'd like to share favorites of your own, send them to the COA office at 23 Linden Street, Berlin, or to Bob Blair at 28 Summer Road, Berlin and we'll make a place for them in upcoming editions of the "Powder House News".

### JULIE WILLIS' BLUEBERRY SQUARES

*Julie Willis, while not yet a senior, offered this recipe for a much-loved treat her Mom used to make. When COA Meals on Wheels used to be made at St. Joseph's Church in Berlin, Julie was one of the volunteers who prepared them.*

- 2 sticks butter or margarine
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1 cup oatmeal, ground (1 cup after grinding)
- 1 cup flour
- 1/2 cup walnuts
- 3 cups blueberries (fresh or frozen – if frozen, thaw first)

Cream butter and sugar. Add eggs, vanilla, oats, flour, and walnuts. Mix well. Spread half of the batter into a 9x12 baking pan. Sprinkle blueberries over batter. Sprinkle with additional 1/2 cup sugar and 2 tablespoons flour. Make dots of batter over the blueberries, not covering completely. This will spread out while baking and partially cover blueberries. Bake at 350° for approximately 40 minutes.

### RUEA BAUM'S HERMIT RECIPE

*Submitted by Ann Phipps*

#### Cream Together:

- 1/2 cup butter                      3/4 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup Crisco                      3/4 cup brown sugar

Mix and add to above 1/4 cup molasses mixed with 1-1/2 teaspoons baking soda (let sit for a few minutes)

Beat together with fork in a separate cup 2 eggs plus 1 tablespoon cool water, leave 2 tablespoons in a cup and add the rest to above mixture.

#### Add together and mix well:

- 3 cups flour                      1 tsp. ginger
- 1 tsp. cinnamon                1/2 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. ground cloves

After above ingredients are well combined add 1-1/2 cups golden raisins

Grease 2 cookie sheets and spread 2 strips of batter down each of the 2 pans

Brush tops with remaining 2 tablespoons of beaten egg water solution

Bake at 350° for 15 to 18 minutes, cut when cooled.

### PAUL ANDERSON'S SEAFOOD CHOWDER

*Berlin resident Paul Anderson enjoys ocean fishing off Nantucket. This chowder recipe shows how his catches provide a delicious treat at the lunch or dinner table.*

#### Ingredients:

- 2 cups water
- 2 teaspoons clam base (Market Basket often has this in the bullion aisle.)
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 large onion (about 1 cup chopped)
- 2 large red potatoes, unpeeled, cut into bite-sized pieces (about 1/2 inch cubes)
- 8 ounces firm white fish such as tilapia cut into bite-sized pieces (though less firm fish like cod/schrod works too – it just breaks up into smaller pieces; our favorite firm fish is striped bass)
- 8 ounces peeled, deveined, tail off shrimp, cut into bite-sized pieces
- 1 can (6.5 ounces) of minced or chopped clams
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1/4 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 3/4 cup frozen (or fresh) yellow (or white) corn kernels
- 1 cup of heavy cream (or half and half, if you prefer a lighter broth); can also add more cream if you prefer a chowder with more broth

- Place water and clam base in a bowl and microwave for 2 minutes. Remove from microwave, stir and set aside.
  - Melt butter over medium heat in a soup pot.
  - While butter is melting, coarsely chop the onion and add to the pot.
  - Cook and stir occasionally until onion begins to soften, about 2 minutes.
  - While onion is cooking, cut the potatoes, fish and shrimp into bite-pieces and add to the pot.
  - Add the clam broth mixture to the pot and raise the heat to high.
  - Add the canned clams and their juice, Worcestershire sauce, thyme, and pepper and bring to a boil.
  - When the chowder comes to a boil, add the corn and bring to a boil again.
  - Reduce heat to medium and cook at a slow boil for about 5-8 minutes, until the potatoes are tender.
  - Remove from heat, add heavy cream and stir.
  - Chowder can be returned to stove top to warm but make sure it does not boil as that can curdle the cream.
- Makes about 4 servings.

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# Powder House News

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## Friends of the Library Update

As the leaves turn their brilliant colors we think of cleaning up the summer gardens and preparing for early winter activities. The Friends will be clearing the Children's Garden and the front gardens and planting more daffodils and croci for Spring. In addition, the Friends will have a table at the 13th Annual Berlin Art and Fine Crafts Fair held at the 1870 Town Hall on Saturday November 19 selling holiday wreaths and swags. Then on November 22, Friends will be putting together our Winter Greens Arrangements for sale starting on Saturday November 26 at the Library, 19 Carter, and Holiday Farm. Every year, the arrangements are different and make for great hostess gifts or something to decorate an office or table. All materials for this project are donated and all proceeds from these activities support programs at the Berlin Public Library. Our next Book Sale will be late spring. Membership with the Friends is another way to show your support and membership forms are always available at the library.

**TAX EXEMPTIONS:** Seniors, veterans and those with visual impairments may be eligible for exemptions for taxes. Please contact the Assessor's office to see if you are eligible.

## Gone But Not Forgotten

Louise Porter	June 16
Bert Brine	July 3
Elizabeth Andrews	July 16
Raymond Hoy	July 18
Norman Rainville	July 31
Eugene Kraszeski	August 17
William Gardiner	August 22
David Babcock	August 26
Thomas Hartland	August 30
Margaret Cranford	September 7
Raymond Hanley	September 14
Flora Replogle	September 22
Gerald Blanchard	September 24
Jane Rutman	October 1
Stephen Sullivan	October 2

## Sand buckets

Last year, the COA was able to secure Lowes buckets and we were able to fill them with sand (thanks to the Highway Department) to distribute them to various residents. If you participated last year and need a refill or are interested in getting your own bucket, please reach out to us at 978-838-2750 or at [coadirector@townofberlin.com](mailto:coadirector@townofberlin.com).