



# Powder House News

May/June 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., May 31 and June 28.

## **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 Director Victoria Flynn**

Hello everyone, we wanted to thank you for your participation in the grab and go meals, the MFA Art in Bloom virtual program. We hope that you take the time to complete our survey. We are making sure that we are meeting the needs of seniors in town. Any and all feedback/constructive criticisms are appreciated so we know what needs to improve. Our survey is also on Survey Monkey. We will post a virtual link for those who feel better completing it electronically. Any questions, please feel free to reach out at 978-838-2750 or at [coadirector@townofberlin.com](mailto:coadirector@townofberlin.com).

## **Public Safety**

As you all know; public safety does have a sharps container and a medication dispenser in the lobby. While we are glad that people are using these services, there have been several instances of people putting in sharps/needles without any coverings on them. We need ALL sharps/needles to be properly secured and covered fully before going into the sharp's container. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to public safety or ask them before leaving used sharps for disposal.

Please join the Police Department and Victoria on Tuesday, June 7 at 19 Carter from 5 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. to discuss the role and importance of social services/mental health collaboration with public safety. More details to follow.

## **Elections**

The Annual Town Meeting will be held on May 2 at 6:30 p.m. at Berlin Memorial School. Town Elections will be on May 9 from 12 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Berlin Town Offices. **If you need transportation for voting**, please call 978-838-2750.

In general, if you are having difficulty getting out of your home for voting, absentee ballots may be an option for future elections. Please contact the Town Clerk at 978-838-2931 to get additional information.

## **Better Day Adult Social Day Program**

The COA had the pleasure of meeting with Regina Wolf Fritz, the Executive Director from the Better Day Adult Social Day Program in Marlborough in March. For those of you who are unaware, social day programs provide socialization and activity, focusing on those who have a dementia/mild cognitive impairment disorder. Better Day, previously known as Pleasantries Adult Day Services, is a non-profit 501(c) that has been in existence since 2020.

Better Day has a committed staff of six and has about 12-15 friends that come to their place. Better Day has a structured day, starting at 7:30 a.m. and ending at 5 p.m. Better Day does have an option for friends to start arriving around 10 a.m. Some activities include baking, arts and crafts, games and field trips. Better Day does not have any transportation options so families would need to make sure that friends have rides accounted for.

At this time, Better Day services are only through private pay (non-insurance coverage). We are hoping that we can do a tour of their lovely grounds to provide you a better sense of their environment. If you have any questions, please visit <https://betterdayprogram.org/> or call 508-481-0809. The webinar is on YouTube under Council on Aging meetings.





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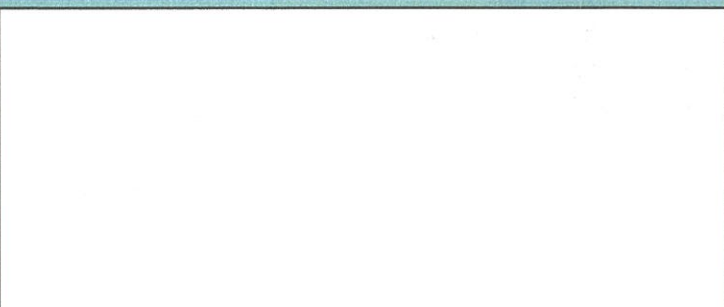
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## The Five W's

The answers to the WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN and WHY for this article about the bell in the Town center's First Parish Church belfry were written by Barry Eager and amended with pictures by Rebecca Von Geldern. Remember this article when you hear the bell ring, and see if you recall what the tolling pattern means.

## THE BELL IN BERLIN

Berlin got its first bell in 1826 when the Second Meeting House (now First Parish Church) was built. The old meeting house of 1779 had no tower or bell. It was likely that a drum was used to call people to worship on the Lord's Day.

That first bell was purchased from the bell foundry of George H. Holbrook of Medway, Mass. Mr. Holbrook had been an apprentice at the Paul Revere foundry.

Additional records in the town archives indicate that additional expenses for the bell and bell frame totaled \$18.01, including \$2.58 for the bell rope.

This bell was used for a decade until it was cracked or otherwise damaged. At that time, Massachusetts was in the process of separating local and state government from the Congregational Church, established in colonial times by the early Puritan settlers. This was done to comply with the First Amendment of the U. S. Constitution. In the spring of 1836 the town meeting voted to relinquish all right and title to the Meeting House and bell to the Congregational parish. The parish then proceeded to return the old bell to the Holbrook foundry where it was apparently melted down and a new one cast. \$115.57 was raised by subscription to pay the cost beyond the value of the old bell metal. This bell was used until 1899.

The Town paid people to ring the bell daily at noon and 9 p.m. for many years. (This was long before we had other ways to check our time pieces through radio and other electronic means.)

There have long been two bell ropes in the Meeting House. The heavier rope is connected to a large wooden wheel attached to the bell's hanging apparatus. When this rope is pulled, the bell swings to and fro and the clapper inside the bell strikes it with each swing. Exposing the mouth of the bell at each end of the swing spreads the sound out from the tower. This is what is called pealing the bell. The bell is still pealed each Sunday morning at 9 a.m. (traditionally referred to as the rising bell). Prior to our first fire siren, pealing the bell was also the local fire alarm. Pealing the bell is customary at times of celebration.

The second, smaller rope is connected to a clapper which lies on the floor of the belfry. When it is pulled, the clapper strikes the bell, which remains stationary. This is called tolling the bell. The bell was traditionally tolled on Sunday from the time the minister left his parsonage until he reached the pulpit in the Meeting House, indicating that worship was about to begin. The church still tolls the bell briefly each Sunday just before the service begins.



### The Passing Bell

It was also customary in the 19th Century to toll the bell in recognition of each death of a local resident. This was done at sunrise or sunset following the death. The bell would first be tolled a few strokes to attract attention. Following a pause, it would be struck three times if the deceased was a man, twice if it was a woman, or once if it was a child. After another pause, the tolling would continue with one stroke for each year of the person's age. The passing bell was tolled in most towns of that time. A description in the records of an 1833 Bolton town meeting confirms the times and manner of tolling. The tolling of the bell for deaths was discontinued about 1895 in Berlin.

The custom was revived here in January of 1968 on the death of long-time Moderator and Constable Clifford H. Wheeler. Vincent S. Eager, chair of the Town's Art and Historical Committee, did the tolling. The tolling was limited to the time of sunset due to changed living conditions of the townspeople. It has been continued for more than half a century by the Committee and the Historical Commission, with occasional help from the members of the Berlin Art and Historical Society, and with the permission of the First Parish Church. A very few other towns have revived the custom.

### The Present Bell

In 1899 the second bell of 1836 was cracked. This resulted in a new campaign for contributions and the purchase by the Church of a new bell from the Meneely Bell Co. of Troy, New York. Contributions totaled \$170.00. The cost of the bell was \$131.45. Lyman Leighton was paid \$18.57 for raising the bell (and likely lowering the old one). The new bell is thirty-seven inches in diameter and weighs 1,000 pounds.

Poet and church member Mrs. Clara L. S. Eager was to choose an inscription for the bell. Lines of a hymn by Alfred Lord Tennyson were placed on the new bell: "Ring out the old, Ring in the new... Ring out the false, Ring in the true."



## 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

**Thursday, May 5 and Thursday, June 2 from 10-11 a.m.**  
**Blood Pressure Clinic**, run by Nashoba Associated Boards of Health in the Council on Aging Room 118 on the lower level of the Town Office Building at 23 Linden Street

**Tuesdays from 1-2 p.m.**

**Tai Chi** with Jeff Cote in COA room 118 on the lower level of the Town Office Building at 23 Linden Street.

**Saturdays from 9-11 a.m.**

**Senior Yoga** with Sharon Santello via Zoom or in the COA Room 118 on the lower level of the Town Office Building at 23 Linden Street

### ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

**Monday, May 2 at 6:30 p.m.**

at Berlin Memorial School, 24 South Street

### ANNUAL TOWN ELECTION

**Monday, May 9, from noon to 8 p.m.**

at the Town Office Building, 23 Linden St.

Park in the front parking lot. Enter the front door and take the stairs or elevator down to Room 114 on the lower level.

### LIONS CLUB

**Saturday, May 7 from 8 a.m. to noon**

**Scrap Metal Drive fundraiser** Bring scrap metal to Cordelia's Farm on Pleasant Street or call in advance to arrange for pick-up of heavy or bulky items

**Saturday, May 21 from 8 a.m. to noon**

**"Toll Road Fundraiser"** on Central Street in Berlin

### BERLIN SENIOR CITIZENS ASSOCIATION

**Sunday, May 15 at 2 p.m.**

**"Seacoast Stompers" concert**, presented by Berlin Seniors and the COA on the South Commons. In case of rain, the concert will move to the 1870 Town Hall.

**Sunday, June 12 at 2 p.m.**

**A professional actress** presents an enactment of the life of abolitionist and radical social reformer Abby Kelley Foster, who was active from the 1830's to the 1870's. The presentation is on the South Commons on South Street or, in case of rain, in the 1870 Town Hall on Woodward Avenue.

### BERLIN CHURCHES

#### First Parish Church

**Sunday worship service:** 10 a.m. in the church except for the FOURTH Sunday of the month which is by ZOOM.

**Bible study:** THIRD Wednesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. in the yellow building at 24 Central St.

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

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

**Weekend masses:** Sat., 5:30 p.m., Sun., 8:30 a.m. and 10:45 a.m.

### XIX CARTER

#### Open

Mondays 1-4 p.m.

Tuesdays 12-4 p.m.

Wednesdays 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

Thursdays 1-4 p.m.

Fridays 9 a.m.-Noon

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

#### Tuesdays noon-1 p.m. Soup at Noon

Join us for lunch—enjoy a freshly-made soup prepared by Berlin's General Store or bring your own lunch. Meet special guests each week as part of our "Guess Who's Coming to Lunch" Series. Suggested donation \$5.

#### 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 9-11 a.m. Community Coffee

#### 2nd & 4th Wednesdays 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Old Time Music Jam

#### 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 Thursday afternoons for a game of cribbage or other games that might grab your fancy or bring a book to read on the couch or work on the puzzle ... all are welcome!

#### Fridays: 9-noon Community Coffee

### Events

#### Thursday, May 19 at 7 pm Movie Night

featuring "Chariots of Fire" \$5

#### Saturday, June 4 at 7 p.m. Outdoor concert

Salty Hawgs \$12

#### Saturday, June 11 at 7 p.m. Outdoor concert

Pastiche \$12

#### Saturday, June 18 at 7 p.m. Outdoor concert

Cameron Campbell Trio \$12

#### Saturday, June 25 at 7 p.m. Outdoor concert

Southcoast Troubadours \$12



## Meet Your Town Movers

### Meet Fred Cummings, Jr., Highway Superintendent / Facility Director



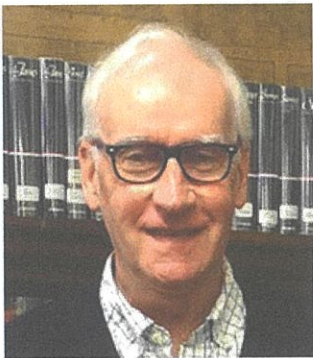
My name is Fred Cummings, Jr. I am 48 years old and have two absolutely amazing children. I first moved into town back in 1984 after the apartment building we were living in burned down. I started my involvement with the Town of Berlin shortly after returning home from bootcamp in 1991 as a Call Firefighter. The following year I became an EMT and started responding to calls on the Rescue Squad. At that time, I was working for a general contractor who helped me study and obtain my Construction Supervisors License.

In 1997, as I was starting a family and living in Clinton, a position of Truck Driver / Laborer opened up at the Highway Department. Shortly after being hired I moved back to town and obtained my CDL and hydraulic license which led to a career change for me. Other opportunities opened up in town for me such as becoming a soccer coach for my kids' teams along with being the Inspector of Animals and promoted to Lieutenant on the Fire Department.

In 2005 I graduated from the Reserve Police Academy in Boylston, however, I never pursued that field — instead I spent 13 years working night shift as a 911 Dispatcher for the town of West Boylston to save money to buy a house.

Throughout the 30 years I have been involved with the town, I have met some pretty amazing people and have learned so much from each of them. I have worked under the direction of 3 Superintendents in which each one had a different style and work ethic. Each style helped me develop different skills to do my job more effectively and for that I'll be forever grateful. I was appointed Highway Superintendent / Facility Director back in February and have had several people ask me "so are you going to stay"? My response to that was, "well I put together a capital expense request and had only one week to prepare a budget for three separate sections that fall under Highway, learn the ins and outs of CH90 requests — what could possibly be worse than that"? — ABSOLUTELY nothing! I love coming to work everyday and will continue until I can no longer fulfill the responsibilities of this position. I'd like to conclude with just one reminder — with every sunrise comes a new day full of opportunities.

### Meet Bob Hodge, Library Director



My name is Bob Hodge and I have been the Berlin Public Library Director since 2013. Prior to coming to work in Berlin, I was employed as a law librarian at several large Boston law firms and finally at Suffolk University Law School Library.

I live in Clinton with my wife Frances and daughter Lily and grandchildren Major age five and Avid age two. I had been doing volunteer work with the Friends of the Bigelow Free Public Library in Clinton and for sometime had been seeking a public library position in the area. That opportunity came to fruition when I was hired as the director here in Berlin.

It has been a pleasure to work with a talented staff, trustees and friends group to keep the library a vibrant place and offer the kind of collection and programming that the community deserves. A big part of that is our membership along with neighboring towns in the CW/MARS Network.

We remain focused on maintaining the structure of our library building which was constructed in 1928 as well as preparing for the future renovation of this building or potentially looking at a new building in another location. Our planning efforts and documents are available on the library website and the results of a town wide survey.

Prior to becoming a librarian, I had a career of sorts in Athletics as a distance runner. I devoted many years to the sport and worked for a time in the athletic shoe industry. In 2019 I published a book "Tales of the Times" A Runner's Story. Copies available in your local library.

#### Senior/Veteran Work-Off Program FY23

The Senior/Veteran Work-Off Program for fiscal year FY23 will begin on July 1, 2022. This program allows for eligible senior property owners and veterans to work a maximum of 125 hours during the fiscal year, earning credits to their tax bills for the following fiscal year. The goal of the program is to assist seniors and veterans with staying in their homes by lowering their tax bills. For more information, visit the COA web page or call the COA office at 978-838-2750.

#### Gone But Not Forgotten

Margaret Prachnick . . . . .	February 24
James Fahey . . . . .	February 26
Elizabeth Bashaw . . . . .	March 8
Gordon Holyoak . . . . .	March 23
Charles Allman . . . . .	April 1
Hazel Miele . . . . .	April 8
David Mccarthy . . . . .	April 13



## Council on Aging Survey

The COA is looking for your feedback. Please take this survey or use our electronic version through the Survey Monkey link on the COA website. We are looking for input in order to meet the needs of our seniors and what we can do better. We would like to know if people are interested in a community center in town. Please feel free to call us at 978-838-2750 if you have any questions. Thank you.

### 1. INVOLVEMENT WITH OTHER TOWN OFFERINGS

*(check all that apply):*

- Berlin area churches
- 1870 Town Hall
- Library
- 19 Carter
- Community/senior centers in nearby towns (which ones?) \_\_\_\_\_
- Northbrook Village I or II
- Other Town Boards/Committees \_\_\_\_\_  
What activities do you enjoy doing there?  
\_\_\_\_\_

### 2. What services have you used (or are using) from the Berlin COUNCIL ON AGING?

- Grab-and-Go meals
- Durable medical equipment
- Winter sand buckets
- Van transportation:
  - Medical appointments
  - Grocery or pharmacy
  - Shopping trips
- Tai Chi
- Yoga
- Blood pressure tests
- Case management (calling the COA for help in accessing services)

### 3. Is there anything you would like the Council on Aging to offer that we do not offer already? (check all that apply):

- Game club
- Bingo
- Board and card games
- Book club
- Body Groove
- Arts and crafts (specify which ones)  
\_\_\_\_\_

### 3a. INCREASED SOCIAL ACTIVITIES:

- Talks or workshops on gardening
- Cooking tutorials
- Group walks
- Discussion groups
- Sing-alongs
- Increased webinars/Zoom sessions
- Election information sessions

Increased transportation offerings:

- to area places of interests (Fruitland's Museum, Mount Monadnock, Tower Hill, Wachusett Mountain, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_
- to orchards or farms \_\_\_\_\_

### 3b. GENERAL EDUCATION:

- Increased availability of housing and tax information
- Increased mental health awareness information.
- Increased awareness on Medicare, Medicaid, elder law
- Increased general knowledge about elder health and nutrition

### 4. Would you be interested in attending activities or classes in a community center in Berlin?

- Yes  No

### 5. DEMOGRAPHICS:

How many members of your household are answering this survey? \_\_\_\_\_

Age(s):

- 50-60  60-70  70-80  80-90  90+

Gender(s):

- Male  
 Female  
 Other

Are you Retired?

- Yes  No

How long have you lived in Berlin?

- 1-2 years  
 3-5 years  
 6-10 years  
 More than 10 years

**PLEASE MAIL YOUR COMPLETED SURVEY TO: Berlin Council on Aging, 23 Linden Street, Room 118, Berlin, MA 01503**



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# Powder House News

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*Prescription Advantage is administered by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs.*

## Berlin-Boylston Regional School Committee

Residents of Berlin and Boylston will be electing all six members of the Berlin-Boylston Regional School Committee on November 8, 2022. This is the first school committee election since the school district was regionalized. The regional agreement stipulates that this election shall take place on the biennial state election ballot and that voters shall choose regional representatives, rather than representatives only from their own town. On November 8, Berlin voters will vote for three candidates from Berlin and three from Boylston. Currently, almost one third of all Berlin residents are senior citizens.

None currently serve on the regional school committee, although their taxes pay for school-related expenses that total more than 40 percent of the town’s total budget. Some seniors have grandchildren in our school system and a number of seniors have had careers as teachers or administrators in school systems here or elsewhere, giving them added appreciation of the complexities involved in nourishing an effective educational experience for the town’s youth.

The upcoming school committee election is an opportunity for seniors to contribute to a strong school system through

selection and evaluation of the district’s superintendent, policy making, and budget deliberations. Want to learn more? Reach out to current and former school committee members to ask your questions and consider whether this role may be a good way for you to give back to the town.

Nomination papers are available at the Town Clerk’s Office and must be filed by approximately the third week in July. Specific details are available on the school committee page of the district website (<https://www.bbrsd.org/domain/50>) or by calling Berlin Town Clerk Eloise Salls at 838-2931.