



# Powder House News

July/August 2021

## **COA Mission**

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

## **COA Board Meetings**

Board meetings are held on the last Tuesday of the month at 4 p.m., July 27 and August 31.

## **Office Location**

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

## **COA Members**

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

## **Phone**

978-838-2750

## **Medical Equipment**

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

## **From the Berlin Citizens' Association**

While the Covid pandemic may have scuttled the Berlin Senior Citizens' Association series of monthly luncheons and entertainment at Berlin's First Parish Church, it didn't prevent the group from shifting gears and focusing on presenting programs in a safe, spacious outdoor setting at the South Common bandshell area across the driveway from Berlin Memorial School.

Using funding from the Berlin Arts Council's grants program, and with financial and co-sponsorship help from the Berlin Council on Aging, the Seniors are offering a diverse trio of shows this summer.

On Sunday, June 27, at 3 p.m., Tony Funches, former lead singer with The Platters, will reprise the hits of the 50's that had us humming along while taking a turn on the dance floor with our best guys or gals. The South Common grass may be a little more problematic for tricky foot moves, but don't be shy about giving it a go.

Sunday, July 25, brings a high-energy, finger-snapping menu of Dixieland, swing and blues music performed with gusto by the Seacoast Stompers. Regulars, for six years, at the Acton Jazz Club, they enjoy a loyal fan base in their home state of Massachusetts and throughout New England.

The third show, at a September date yet to be announced, features Ted Zalewski, author, educator and Screen Actors Guild actor, known internationally as the foremost historical interpreter of Theodore Roosevelt. Channeling the words and thoughts of our former president, Ted will give us an entertaining and informative look into the life and influence of one of our most interesting national leaders.

Bring your own chairs and sunscreen, or bring a cushion and use a folding chair provided by the Council on Aging. Water and rest room facilities will be available on site. Ample parking is available close to the South Common gazebo/bandstand. Share the events with family and friends. All are welcome.

## **COA end of fiscal year recap**

Hello everyone. As our FY21 fiscal year comes to a close, we head into FY22 on a more positive note. The COVID-19 pandemic is thankfully waning and we are figuring out what the next steps are.

The COA will continue to offer van services as well as wellness classes. We were glad to get our senior calls going as well as offering some home delivered meals.

The COA is going to be teaming up again with the Berlin Seniors for some upcoming live events during the summer. The COA is also offering those in town to come to our Room 118 location during the hot days of summer to provide some relief for our seniors.

With this being said, the COA would like to hear from you about potential interests and activities. We have several ideas in the works but we want to hear from you as well so we can best serve you. Please feel free to let us know any suggestions you may have by reaching out to us at [coadirector@townofberlin.com](mailto:coadirector@townofberlin.com), our Facebook page or calling 978-838-2750.



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Berlin Council on Aging

06-5323

## Mindfulness and Mental Health Awareness

Hello Everyone. As summer quickly approaches, we know that many of you are getting excited about getting outside and spending time with friends and family. We recently met with Aileen Lemoine, a pharmacist from Mass College of Pharmacy to review what depression and anxiety are and the impact of various treatments.

It is common to have moments or times of feeling anxious and depressed. Life events and stress can certainly have an impact on our overall wellness. However, having prolonged feelings of anxiety or sadness that impact the ability to go to work, or do other activities, can be an indicator of a bigger issue. Seeing help through therapy or working with a provider for medication treatment can be steps in the right direction.

Mindfulness is letting yourself be aware of all of your body's sensations. A body scan goes from head to toe or vice versa, slowly going over each section. If body scans are not of interest, just allowing yourself to be fully aware of your surroundings and letting your thoughts flow also counts. Just taking a few minutes daily will allow you to get a greater understanding of what your body is feeling and what your natural reactions are.

At the Council on Aging, we are here to help you out with all of your needs, including mental health needs. If you have any questions, please contact us at [coadirector@townofberlin.com](mailto:coadirector@townofberlin.com) or 978-838-2750. We will continue to work with MCPHS to help bring you some additional information regarding health and mental health wellness.



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Neighbors**

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*Introducing*  
**nashobaneighbors.org**

**Our new website is up and running!**

**Please take a look around to see who we are and how we will help older adults remain in their own homes.**

While you are there, we invite you to sign up for our email list.

*Let's stay in touch!*

[nashobaneighbors.org](http://nashobaneighbors.org)

978-218-8025

## Senior Electrical Fire Safety

### Learn how to protect your home and family from electrical fires.

Every year, people die in electrical fires in homes. Electrical fires are one of the leading causes of death for people over age 65.

### Protect your home from electrical fires

- Do not overload outlets;
- Plug heat generating appliances directly into an outlet, not into a power strip or extension cord;
- Don't put electrical cords underneath rugs or pinched behind furniture;
- Charge laptops and phones only on hard surfaces, not on beds or sofas;
- Have a licensed electrician review your home's electrical system every ten years. Small upgrades and safety checks can prevent larger problems;
- Consider installing tamper resistant (TR) outlets in homes with small children.

### Potential warning signs and hazards

**Call the Fire Department via 911 immediately if you have any of these warning signs:**

- Arcs, sparks or short circuits;
- Sizzling or buzzing sound;
- Odors, vague smell of something burning.

Firefighters use Thermal Imaging technology to see excessive heat inside walls.

**Call a professional electrician soon if you have any of these warning signs:**

- Frequently blown fuses or tripped circuit breakers;
- Dim or flickering lights, bulbs that wear out too fast;
- Overheated plugs, cords or switches;
- Shock or a mild tingle — more than normal static electricity;
- Loose plugs; or unusually warm or faulty outlets or switches.

## Meet Your Town Movers

In this edition of the "Powderhouse News" we introduce you to Dennis Fearebay, Berlin's Treasurer and Tax Collector, and James Wheeler, Berlin's Assistant Town Clerk. While their work may seldom make headlines, their

professional skills are invaluable in keeping the Town financially solvent and its citizens accurately accounted for and informed about their voting opportunities and licensure requirements.

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### Meet Dennis Fearebay, Town Treasurer and Tax Collector



It has been my pleasure to be the Town Treasurer for almost 20 years, both as an elected and now appointed employee. As Treasurer/Collector, the position includes many different responsibilities that put my staff and me in touch daily with most department heads, boards, employees and the tax payers of Berlin. I am officially a "Town Collector", so I have the ability to collect any debts owed to the town.

My wife Lorinda and I have been residents of Berlin for over 40 years. We have a son Joseph and daughter Charlotte, and a grandson named Trevor. Over the years I have been involved in many other undertakings in Berlin, including painting the lines on the soccer fields every Friday night or early Saturday mornings for a few years. I served as the Election

Warden for almost as long as being Treasurer and was one of the founding members of the then "Ad Hoc Capital Planning Committee." I am most proud of having been a long-time "24 hour per day on-call volunteer" as an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) on the Berlin Emergency Rescue Squad. I am also certified as a "Train the Trainer" and Harassment Investigator and currently serve the town as the male harassment officer, along with female Harassment Office Select Board member Peg Stone. I am also currently a member of the Administrative Finance Team (AFT) and also work with the Insurance Advisory Committee (IAC).

I have had the pleasure of working with a staff that truly love people. They are Edith Brewer (Office Support), Stephen Price (Assistant Treasurer) and Brien Devaney (Assistant Tax Collector). We are currently going through the conversion from our old Tax Collection software package to the new state of the art software package approved by voters at our recent Town Meeting (thank you!). We are also currently changing office locations at the Town Hall to better service walk in taxpayers as well as improve our own internal communication and the occasional handling of large volumes during very busy periods. Thank you staff for doing a great job!

After hours my wife and I continue work restoring a 1790 farm that at some point in time will be ready for us to start raising a few fuzzy miniature cows, fainting goats, chickens and who knows what else! This "retirement project" is bringing us both back to our childhoods having both been raised on large farms and sorely miss that type of lifestyle. My current hobbies include collecting a variety of lighting fixtures, gardening, antique collecting, and joining 8 to 10 other volunteers running the "Jones Road Mall" (also known as the TOLI (Take it or Leave it) that is an extremely popular place sorely missed during the COVID pandemic. And of course our primary hobby as grandparents is helping to raise our grandson, maybe spoiling him a little along the way. Berlin is a wonderful place, and I believe will remain a wonderful place despite all the challenges it takes to remain a small town. We were so lucky to "accidentally discover Berlin" 40 years ago when our realtor found us a house on Shady Lane in a town we had never heard of called Berlin!

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### Meet James Wheeler, Assistant Town Clerk



I have been the Assistant Town Clerk in Berlin since 2009. As the Assistant Clerk, I am involved in nearly every aspect of the Clerk's Office, ranging from dog tags to election administration. My primary focus is on vital records, processing online transactions and managing the digital records and information the office retains.

When not in the Clerk's Office, I can be found down at Cordelia's Farm (formerly Indian Head Farm), where I help manage the family farm as a member of the 7th generation.

## The Five W's

In this edition of the "Powderhouse News", the reporter's Five W's (Who, What, Where, When and Why) are answered by Walter Bickford's recollections about his life as an adventurous youngster in 1950's Berlin.

### BOYHOOD IN BERLIN: 1950s

In the early 1950s we Berlin boys led a Tom Sawyer/Huck Finn lifestyle, replete with numerous swimming and fishing holes — and mischief. I was extreme Huck Finn — until age 12 (1954) I went barefoot all summer. Daily dress included Levis torn off at the knee, no shirt, and a well-used straw hat. Always had a pocket full of marble-sized stones and a sling shot. I would go 'frogging' at Dudley and the Mill Pond. Ate a lot of bullfrog's legs. I also bagged grey squirrels with a sling shot. They made an excellent stew.

Berlin had several well used swimming holes. The most heavily used was Big-Hole just below the bridge on Linden Street. Today it is silted in and surrounded by impenetrable, dense growth, swampy land. Up into the 1960s it was a wide open, dry pasture. Both sides of the RR were dry, open meadow. Herman Sawyer owned the property and gave us an oak plank for a diving board. On the day a few of us graduated from the 7th and 8th grades, we went skinny dipping at Big Hole. The highway department was tarring the old wooden bridge. The tar floated on top of the water, and we ended up with it in our hair. Mom had quite a job removing it for graduation ceremony. She could sure get grumpy sometimes.

There were two south swimming holes. One was located about 200 yds. above the most southerly bridge on South Street. Another well-used hole was located just below the bridge on Whitney St. That area was open, dry pasture with dairy cows browsing. We would throw 'meadow wafers' (cow flaps) at each other. The land between Whitney St. and River Road West was wide open pasture.

One example of boyhood mischief: a couple of us once entered the center store at night. We wiggled our way under the bulkhead door. We helped ourselves to a corn cob pipe and some Kentucky Club pipe tobacco. We went up on Powder House Hill and smoked. Anyone know the statute of limitations on that?

I was fortunate to befriend Danford Tyler who owned the big red farm with the brick house at 100 River Road. Dan was born in the 1880s. He graduated from Princeton University in anthropology. He knew a lot about Native Americans and passed his passion on to me. I have a cigar box half full of arrowheads that he picked up in his fields. His theory was the Indians set up a village at the junction of North Brook and the Assabet River each year to fish for salmon. Dan had four heavy draft horses. At ten years



*David Forbes, Bob Tervo, and Walter Bickford*

old, I had to stand on box to throw the heavy harness over their backs. I remember hooking two of them, Joe and Blue, to the manure spreader, filling it up and driving them over to a field where the clover leaf of 290 and River Road West is. Dan planted corn there with a horse. The planter was too heavy for me to handle. Once the corn was a foot high, I hauled a cultivator over with Joe and a hay wagon and would cultivate all day. Dan was hospitalized from a cow kick and died soon after. He had a strong everlasting influence on my life. I named my son Benjamin 'Tyler' Bickford.

I was fortunate to befriend another older man who lived in a shack in the woods where Solomon Pond Mall now exists. Fred Seymour was born in Berlin in 1901. I spent many an evening with Fred sitting along the Assabet fishing for hornpout and eels. Our light was a kerosene lantern. Fred kept me spellbound with stories of Berlin when the electric cars ran through town and steam engines pulled trains. There were no paved roads or automobiles in the early 20th century. He had an excellent coon dog. We would hunt raccoons in the Fall evenings. Fred taught me how to skin and butcher the coons, which are excellent in stew. The coon skins were sold. I could write a book titled "The Old Man and the Boy" about the tales he told me of early 20th century Berlin my fishing, trapping, and hunting experiences with Fred.

In 1953 when we boys were ten and eleven, we decided to build a cabin in the woods where Solomon Pond Mall is today. I hooked old Joe, one of Dan Tyler's four draft horses, to a hay wagon. We went to the sawmill on lower Pleasant Street and loaded up with round edge slabs. We snuck a few square edged boards into the load for our cabin floor (Shhh). We drove Joe across the Assabet across from Dan's farm and into the woods. Our vision of a cabin in the woods soon became a reality.

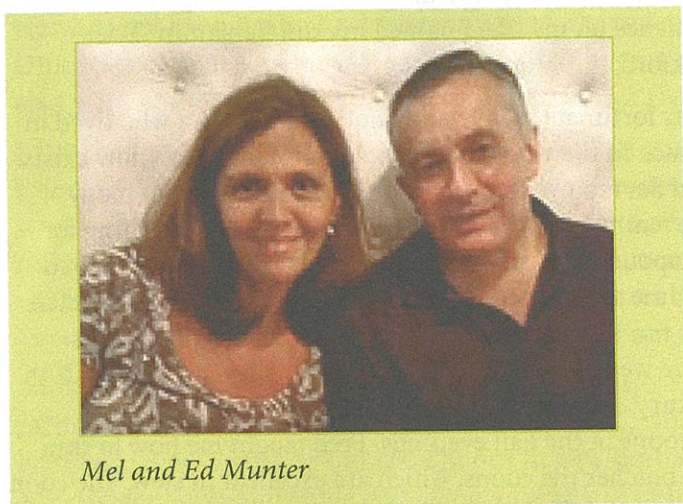
In 1955 there were 23 operating dairy farms thought Berlin. I milked and shoveled manure at different times at Dan Tyler's, Indian Head, and Balance Rock Farms. I loved the smell of the cows and the barn. Each of these farms is a story in its own. Perhaps another time.

## CHANGES ARE AT HAND AT THE BERLIN GENERAL STORE AND EATERY

The operation and management of the Berlin General Store & Eatery is changing hands as of July 1. Currently run by Melissa Sargent and her mother, Holly, the new hands on the spatula will be those of Ed Munter, who grew up in Berlin and is retiring from a 39 year career with the Marriott International organization.

Melissa Sargent will be taking on a new role as Outreach Coordinator for the busy Clinton Senior Center, helping seniors find help with housing issues, caregiver services, contact with the V.A., hospice care and technology challenges. Her cheery demeanor will be missed at 15 Central Street here in town, but will undoubtedly delight her new friends in Clinton.

Ed Munter's new role at the Berlin General Store is very much a homecoming, best told in his own words as he responded to our questions about his professional experiences and thoughts about his operation of the store in the center of town.



*Mel and Ed Munter*

Following is our email conversation, with the interviewer identified as PHN.

**PHN:** Someone told me that you have an extensive background as an executive chef and hotel manager with Marriott International. Could you fill out that picture a bit and indicate how that experience informs or inspires your plans for what we Berliners might anticipate seeing on the menu board at Berlin General?

**ED:** Basically, I'm retiring from Marriott after looking forward to enjoying a challenge that's walking distance from my home in the place where I grew up. I grew up in Berlin, used to deliver the "Daily Item" all over town. I know the families; they know mine. The General Store has always been the unofficial town hub and news center.

My neighbor across the street from me now, Mr. Arthur P. Lange, ran that store for many years when I was growing up there back in the 60's. In those days, before the internet, before the smart phone, before the mails, when the Post Office was there, it was the one-stop shop for everything unless you were willing to drive out of town. While there may be some changes in the menu, the focus will remain on old-time, traditional, New England Yankee comfort foods. Nothing contrived or complicated. Simple food, local high-quality ingredients, prepared simply. New England has great food!

**PHN:** Will the interior layout and exterior remain the same or change?

**ED:** Interesting you should ask as I just completed the floor plans yesterday (from I-phone pics!). We have nothing planned right now for the exterior and will need to put some thought into any changes inside as well. The Sargents have put a lot of time and effort into the store, making many improvements over the time they managed it. One thing I have learned over the years is to understand the way something works before making any changes, so no major changes right away. I'm literally starting out without having stepped foot in the building in a very long time, but we (Ed and his wife Mel) have a few ideas that we're working on already.

**PHN:** Will the hours be roughly the same or will there be a dinner hour component added?

**ED:** The hours will remain the same for the time being until we get settled in. We will definitely look at expanded hours in the future.

**PHN:** Will outdoor dining be added out back at some point?

**ED:** We are looking into this possibility as well. However, before we are able to make a decision, we need to better understand the impact this may have on the town center and particularly how this might affect business licenses.

**PHN:** Will it remain a community gathering spot for discussion of pithy matters over tea, coffee and muffins, scones or doughnuts?

**ED:** Absolutely! No one goes there for any other reason! This is an old New England (and Berlin) tradition! The General Store is almost as entertaining as the Town meeting used to be in the old (1870) Town Hall — just without a moderator!

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# Powder House News

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## COA Van

We are currently hiring for a van driver. If you know of anyone who would be interested, please have them reach out to [coadirector@townofberlin.com](mailto:coadirector@townofberlin.com) or 978-838-2750.

Due to us having one van driver, we may not be able to offer van service every weekday. We are also looking to have multiple people ride the van at the same time while WEARING MASKS and being distant. If you have any questions, please contact us at [coadirector@townofberlin.com](mailto:coadirector@townofberlin.com) or 978-838-2750.



## Gone But Not Forgotten

Peter Gaba.....	April 27
Joanne Schiding.....	April 29
Pamela Hurley.....	April 30
Amy Beaudet.....	May 02
Donald Potas.....	May 19
Phyllis Hoy.....	May 31
Patricia Renzoni.....	May 31
Jeannette Dilling.....	June 03

## Tai-Chi and Yoga

Tai-chi and yoga classes are resuming in person. Yoga is being held at 1870 on Saturday mornings at 9 a.m., while Tai-chi classes are being held at the COA office on Tuesdays at 1 p.m.

**Berlin Food Pantry**  
774-245-8320

PHOTO COURTESY OF TOWN OF BERLIN