



## **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., September 27 and October 26.

## **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.

## **Volunteer Opportunities in Berlin**

The Town of Berlin prides itself on the number of volunteers who give their time to serve on a specific committee, event or board. For those wanting to become more involved in town operations, let us walk you through the steps to fulfill that inclination.

The Select Board has developed a Berlin Committee Volunteer Guide, available at: Volunteer Opportunities | Berlin MA ([townofberlin.com](http://townofberlin.com)). Look for the link on the Select Board's "Appointed Volunteer Handbook" (approved 1/11/2021) which outlines the roles, responsibilities and expectations of those serving on a committee, commission or board.

The list of vacancies can be found at "Volunteer Opportunities | Berlin MA ([townofberlin.com](http://townofberlin.com)). Once you have found a committee that might be a good fit for you, the Select Board encourages you to attend a meeting of that committee. The times, dates and locations of these meetings can be found at: Berlin, MA ([mytowngovernment.org](http://mytowngovernment.org)). Browse through the listings for the committees OR you can always watch previous meetings on YouTube. Click on the YouTube icon from the Berlin MA | ([townofberlin.com](http://townofberlin.com)) page. Once on the YouTube page, simply type in the name, at the magnifying glass, of the committee you are interested in and select from the various meetings shown to get an idea of what the committee is about, what it has accomplished and what it aims to do for the Town. The process to become a volunteer can be found at "Volunteer Opportunities | Berlin, MA ([townofberlin.com](http://townofberlin.com))". If you have questions, please reach out to the Select Board, who are always happy to assist.

A few committees and boards will be highlighted in each issue of the "Powderhouse News" going forward. In this issue, we will focus on the Historical Commission, the Cable Advisory Committee and the Cable Access Committee.

The Historical Commission is responsible for the preservation, protection and development of the historical and archeological assets of our town, including those used by native people whose communities existed here long before European settlers put down roots in the area. A current example of a project being worked on by the Commission is the restoration of the red Bullard House on Woodward Avenue, next to the 1870 Town Hall. At times in its life it was a tavern, an inn, a post office, a barbershop and a fire house. For history buffs, the Commission currently has two vacancies to help plan and take part in the Bullard House rebirth.

The Cable Advisory Committee is charged with reviewing and making recommendations on Berlin's Cable License Agreement, currently mid-way through our contract with Charter/Spectrum.

The Cable Access Committee allows its members to produce and take part in the filming - for live or delayed broadcast - of public meetings and local events, including our town meetings, Veterans' Day programs, school events and programs presented by local groups. Membership on this committee might be a great hands-on opportunity for a student in an audio-visual program at his or her high school.

This article was excerpted from a longer piece submitted to the "Clinton Item" by Select Board Chair Peg Stone.



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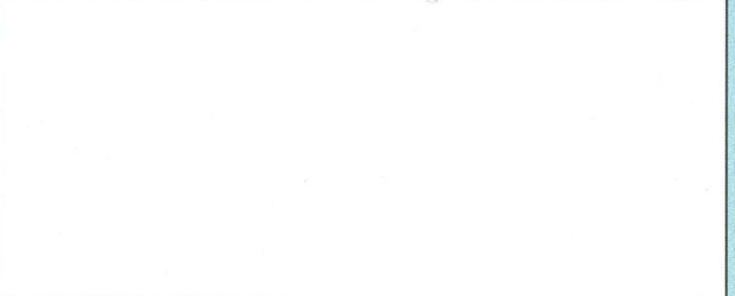


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## 19 Carter

We continue to welcome everyone to gather over coffee or tea at 19 Carter and catch up with their friends and neighbors during our open hours:

Mondays 2-4 p.m.

Wednesdays 9:30-11 a.m.

Fridays 9:30-11 a.m.

## Berlin Senior Citizens Programs

The Berlin Senior Citizens' Association, having had its monthly luncheons and programs at First Parish Church cancelled by the onslaught of the Corona virus pandemic, has paired with the Berlin Council on Aging to present a series of three outdoor programs at the South Berlin Common bandshell. All are open to the public.

On June 27, concertgoers were treated to a series of popular tunes from the 50's sung with animation and a dollop of smooth by former Platters lead singer Tony Funches.

A second concert, featuring dixieland, swing and blues served up by the Seacoast Stompers, was to have followed on July 25. Rained out, its new play date has not been settled.

A third program sees actor and author Ted Zalewski bring to life the words and mannerisms of one of our most interesting and adventurous presidents, Teddy Roosevelt. Sunday, September 26, at 2 p.m., has been set for that presentation.

Attendees should bring their own lawn chairs, sun hats, water bottles and masks. Grants from the Massachusetts and Berlin Cultural Councils, and further support from the Berlin Council on Aging have enabled the performances to be presented free of charge.

Suggestions for future programs are always welcome. Contact Berlin Senior Citizens' President Judy Mills at (978) 838-0403.

## Mass General coming to Westborough

The COA recently interviewed Victoria Nadel and Lindsay Gainer to discuss plans regarding the upcoming Westborough Mass General location. This multipurpose building is set for completion in 2023. Once completed, Mass General will be able to provide services to Berliners. This 9.4 acre facility in West Park Drive will house doctor's offices as well as 4 surgical sites. Services at this Westborough facility will also provide services such as physical therapy, lab services including MRI/CT scans, behavioral health care, nutrition services, primary care services and day surgery. Lindsay states that these services will be "lower cost" since they are not being conducted in a hospital setting.

Mass General Westborough is able to incorporate the care of the famed Boston hospital close to home. Patients will have access to doctors either in person or virtually, depending on the situation. Doctors can collaborate with each other to help provide multidisciplinary care to their patients. This will help to bring "less fragmented care" with a focus on preventative, specialty care and treatment. Lindsay states that while your care will involve many potential disciplines, HIPAA compliance will still be enforced.

In healthcare, it can be difficult at times to get needs met while all being treated as a person and not just a bunch of symptoms. Mass General Westborough is aiming to help with navigating the difficult healthcare system while providing quality care. Mass General Westborough is hoping to team up with patients to make sure they are getting what they want and need with their healthcare. The goal of Mass General Westborough is having a lifelong relationship centered care for all patients and their families. Lindsay stated that Mass General Westborough may be offering more services, depending on the needs of our community.

Once the facility is open, the COA van will be able to offer transportation to the facility. You can watch the entire interview on our YouTube page or through Berlin Cable Access.

## Answering the Call; The Recollections of Berlin Veterans

For Veterans' Day, 2020, Brittany Blaney-Anderson, of Berlin Cable, recorded and produced a narrative by Berlin resident Ron Plutnicki in which he recounted the World War II experiences of his neighbor, Allan Johnson, who was a crew member on an Army Air Force bomber that crashed in Budapest, Hungary, close to the Danube River, between German forces on the west side of the river and Russian forces on the east side. He survived and lived to relate his memories of the incident to Ron in 2015, when both men were residents of the Brook Lane senior community. Ron also included information about the service experiences of three of his own relatives, all Navy men on different ships that were involved in the battle for Okinawa. One of those relatives went down with his ship.

The video that resulted from Ron's telling of these experiences and Brittany's work in adding images of events and military units related to them was so compelling and successful that it stimulated an interest in broadening the scope of military storytelling to include the stories of other Berlin veterans and their reasons for answering the call to military service, and hearing whether those experiences matched their expectations as enlistees.

Consequently, we are launching an invitation to all Berlin veterans to participate in recording their own experiences in the military. The stories collected in this project will be aired on and around Veterans' Day 2021 on Berlin Cable Channel. We think it will be a very interesting and informative look into the military experiences of Berlin's men and women who have "answered the call".

If you are a Berlin veteran from any era and from any area of service and would like to participate in this Veterans' Day project, please call Bob Blair at (978) 838-2985.

## Meet Your Town Movers

Berlin's Town Clerk, Eloise Salls is the official keeper of vital records for the Town. Eloise has served as Berlin's Town Clerk for the past 25 years. She is assisted in her duties by Assistant Town Clerk James Wheeler, whose bio appeared in the last edition of the "Powderhouse News".

Berlin's Town Accountant, June Poland, has filled the essential role of keeping accurate tabs on all Town spending since her appointment as the Town's first Accountant in 1988. She is supported in her duties by Amy Grenier, Assistant to the Accountant.

### Meet Eloise Salls, Town Clerk

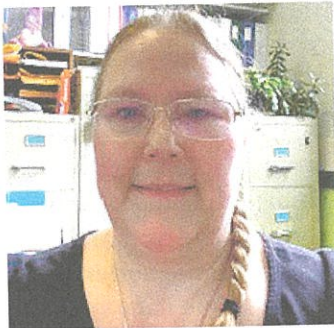
I am the official keeper of vital records for the Town of Berlin. The Clerk's office also oversees or administers voter registration, elections, the annual state census, issues business certificates, dog licenses, marriage licenses, posts all meetings of Town boards, commissions and committees under the Open Meeting Law and records Town Meeting minutes and proceedings. I have served as Berlin's Town Clerk since 1996, succeeding the three Clerks shown in the photo accompanying this article. Previously I served four years as the Assistant Town Clerk.

My meditation is crocheting afghans and for fun I sew aprons. Come late summer, zucchini relish in a jar is my way to preserve summer.

*Front: Priscilla Jewett, first woman elected Town Clerk, 1956–1965 (Priscilla went on to serve as first woman Selectman from 1967–1970). Back: Mary Ellen Matthew 1990–1996; Willard H. Wheeler 1965–1985 (Bill also served as a Selectman 1986–1990, later a School Committee member); and Eloise Salls 1996–present.*



### Meet June Poland, Town Accountant



I've lived all but a few months of my life in Berlin. I started out with an office in the 1870 Town Hall which we shared with the Police Department in 1988, as Berlin's first Town Accountant. So much has changed in 33 years. We went from having all our yearly records in one file drawer to having 11-12 drawers per year.

With the help of Amy Grenier, assistant to the accountant, we calculate payroll for warrant processing; verify all expenses to be true, lawful and not in excess before processing and printing checks which are turned over to the Treasurer for signing. The town warrants are processed weekly and turned over to the Town Administrator to review for final approval. We maintain and keep the books and financial records for the Town. Monthly appropriation

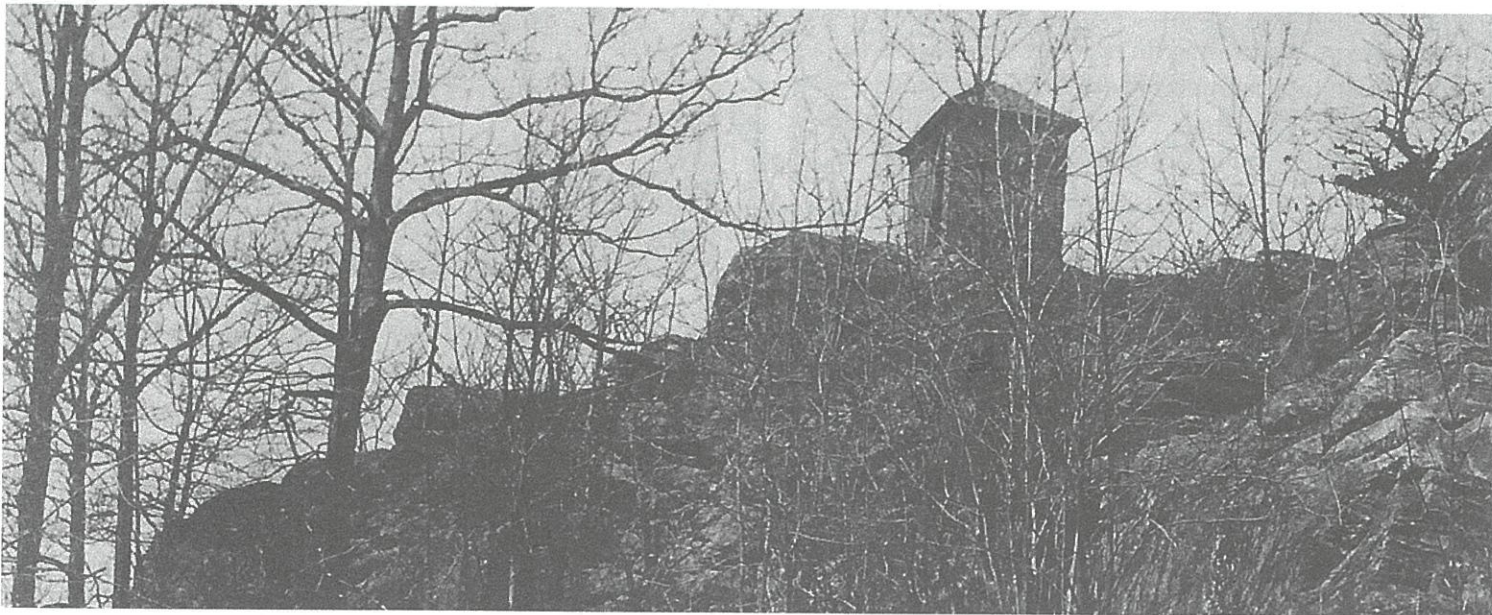
statements are sent to all departments, boards and committees for reconciliation. We reconcile with the Treasurer/Tax Collector on a monthly basis. We record and oversee receivable tracking such as ambulance billing, police details and insurance withholdings. Accounting assists with the Recap Sheet (tax setting), budget preparation with TA and Finance Committee. We also keep a copy of all contracts and records of town assets over \$5,000. We report yearly to the Department of Revenue with the balance sheet and supporting documents, schedule A — recap of the Town's financial activities for the year, which are available (or will be) on the accountant's web page. The accountant's annual town report can also be found there.

I became a Certified Governmental Accountant in 2008 when finances allowed as this requires training in Amherst on a regular basis to maintain certification. I am currently a member of the Administrative Financial Team and Insurance Advisory Committee. I am also a member of the Finance Committee at the Nashoba Valley Regional Dispatch District.

Earlier in my career I was involved with Cable Access doing the bulletin board and some filming. I helped as an election worker when needed and also a Police Matron. I may have assisted some of you as a volunteer Emergency Medical Technician on the Berlin Rescue Squad. I went on to become an EMT-B and CPR instructor.

In my down time, I enjoy reading, making jewelry, going to yard sales & estate auctions to flip on Ebay (which I'm hoping to make into my retirement job) as well as an occasional cruise with my husband.

### BERLIN'S POWDER HOUSE



*A century-old view of the Powder House on its rocky hilltop.*

In Colonial Massachusetts, each town maintained a local militia company, consisting of male citizens from sixteen to sixty. They would occasionally meet and practice marching, military discipline and marksmanship. Some supplies and uniform items would be provided by the Town, but much would be provided by the men themselves. Gunpowder was purchased and stored by the Town for their use. In Berlin, from the time we separated from Bolton in 1784, the gunpowder was stored "above the plaister" in the attic of the Meeting House, the one place where the whole town gathered each week. In those days there was no heat in the building, so it was apparently not seen as a danger.

The Massachusetts General Court passed an act in 1812 which required that a safe place be provided for the militia to keep the gunpowder. A fireproof building was to be provided and placed at a distance from any dwelling houses. A rocky ledge was preferred to further keep the public safe from a possible explosion. Many towns immediately built such a building, our neighboring towns of Bolton and Harvard among them. Berlin took a couple of years to comply with this unfunded mandate from the state. (We had those back then, too.) Our Powder House was built of brick and placed on a rocky prominence near the Meeting House Common in 1814. That location is near the present corner of Linden and West Streets.

The building served its original purpose until about the time of the Civil War. After that, military units were organized under the state, as we now know the National Guard.

In 1882, Rev. William A. Houghton acquired the land around the Powder House and transferred it to the Town. Clearly this was already an icon of local history. In 1913, just before the building's centennial, the Town acquired other adjacent land and developed a path and steps to make the Powder House site more accessible for public use.

The Town placed a fire siren on the hill in the early 20th Century. A new, more powerful siren was provided in the mid-1950s. At that time, fuses and other electric equipment was placed in the old Powder House in support of the siren. Until about twenty years ago, the old building was again part of the Town's protection of its people and property.

In 1984 a new town seal was created and approved by Town Meeting which included a picture of our iconic Powder House. The final design was executed by the late Mim Ewing of South Berlin. The Council on Aging subsequently chose this local symbol when it named this newsletter

#### St. Joseph's 68th Annual Fall Fair

St. Joseph the Good Provider's 68th annual Fall Fair will be held on Sunday, October 3, from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. on the church grounds. A cornucopia of delicious food offerings, topped by a chicken barbecue dinner, will appeal to fairgoers' taste buds. Games, face painting, harvest food and flower sales, a raffle, craft and flea market tables complete a list of offerings that will appeal to many tastes and ages. Save the date and bring the family.

## CORDELIA'S FARM

### formerly Indian Head Farm

We want to share with you some exciting news. After several years of thought and research, we have decided to change the name of our farm. We will now be known as Cordelia's Farm, named in recognition of one of our ancestors, Cordelia Bigelow Hastings. Over the course of this season, we will introduce you to Cordelia and the significant role she played in shaping the farm as we know it.

We are still the same farm, family and friendly staff you have come to know over the years. All that is changing is the name, a change that will allow us to share with you our family's story here in Berlin.

Cordelia Bigelow was born on June 10, 1817, the fourth of fourteen children. Her parents, Levi and Nancy Bigelow, of Marlborough, Massachusetts, lived on a farm on Robin Hill Road. As the crow flies, the distance is slightly more than a mile from where our farm store is located today.

Like all young women of her day, she learned the skills of sewing, cooking, laundering, gardening, harvesting and preserving, childcare, animal care, caring for the sick and assisting in childbirth. Through Cordelia's letters and diaries, we've learned a great deal about her participation in community activities, the home industries the family pursued, the entertaining of countless visitors with tea or a meal, the hosting of an ever changing cast of farm workers and relatives that lived and worked on the farm, and the time she set aside to read and pursue artistic endeavors.

Cordelia's mother and father were farmers, but her father also taught in the district school not far from her home for nearly thirty years. Their children each actively participated in the towns they lived in and made significant contributions to the region.

On January 1, 1840, Cordelia married Christopher Sawyer Hastings, of Berlin, Massachusetts, and moved to his farm on Pleasant Street in Berlin. Their family, which included daughter Ellen and sons Ruthven, Arthur and Leslie, grew



and thrived by farming the fields, running a store, managing real estate and loans and harvesting their woodlot.

When the Civil War broke out in 1861, Cordelia and Christopher, who was known as C.S., were in their forties and their children in their teens. C.S. had been involved with the local militia for many years so it was not surprising that he joined the U.S. Army as a captain, leading a company of soldiers from Berlin and neighboring towns, and leaving Cordelia and the family to manage the farm and businesses. Her letters to C.S. during the War reflect her involvement in maintaining and managing the home front.

While serving in Mississippi, C.S. fell victim to smallpox, and, sadly, he died in September of 1863 in Cairo, Illinois. Cordelia took the reins and shared in the management of the farm and other family affairs until her death in 1903.

We are drawn to Cordelia, because it is through her eyes that we are able to see her world and the lives of her family and community here in Berlin. Tucked away in the attic are her quilts, diaries, school notebooks, letters, books, and accounts that have made Cordelia and the farm's history come to life to be passed on from generation to generation. Cordelia is the great, great, great grandmother of James and Nathaniel, the youngest generation to be farming here. We are inspired by having the farm bear Cordelia's name and represent all those who have come before us and steadfastly worked this land for seven generations. — The Wheelers

### COMMUNITY EVENTS CALENDAR

A number of people have asked us to include a calendar of coming community events in the "Powder House News".

With that goal in mind for the next edition of this publication, you are invited to submit listings of events you are involved with to the Council on Aging Calendar.

Our phone number is: (978) 838-2750.

Our email address is: [coadirector@townofberlin.com](mailto:coadirector@townofberlin.com)

Please include your name and contact information with your submissions.

**Tuesdays at 1 p.m.:** Tai Chi with Jeff Cote in COA room

**Saturdays from 9–11 a.m.:** Senior Yoga with Sharon Santello through Zoom (or in COA room/1870 Town Hall)

**September 5 at 11 a.m.:** Health screening with Nashoba Board of Health in COA room (Room 118, Town Offices)

**September 21 at 10:30 a.m.:** Sharon Nolli from Fallon Health — Summit ElderCare will present on *How to Destress Your Life*. She will go over being thankful, taking care of yourself, stop worrying, laughter is important, exercise is vital, socializing, meditation and forgiveness. There will also be bread and coffee.

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# Powder House News

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## Gone But Not Forgotten

Robert Casasanto	June 27
Sidney Debello	July 4
Harold Lohr	July 4
Barbara Tatarunas	July 4
James Barry	July 9
Clair Gillespie	July 29
Douglas Coldwell	August 1

## 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

*The Berlin  
Historical Commission  
Invites you to an  
Open House at the  
1870 Town Hall*

12 Woodward Avenue  
Saturday, October 16, 2021  
2 to 4 p.m.



Please join us for an afternoon of informal sharing ...

- artifacts and photographs that inform our local history
- a slide show documenting local renovation/restoration efforts
- a slide show of the Berlin Art & Historical Society's programs
- remembering our neighbors who contributed their time and talent
- resources for your own family's collection

... and have some fun browsing a collectibles and flea market sale.

Questions? Please call June Miller 978-838-0044.