



Powder House News

May/June 2020

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 4th Tuesday of the month at 4 p.m., March 24 and April 28 at the 1870 Town Hall in Barnes Hall.

COA Members

Bob Blair, *Co-Chair*
Pat Wheeler, *Co-Chair*
Kate Bliss
Lori Fearebay
Fran M. Gill
Karen Schultz
Ruth Wheeler

Phone

978-838-2750

Medical Equipment

The COA has a supply of medical equipment available. We accept donations of equipment in good condition. We are currently short on wheelchairs and rolling walkers with seats. If you have one you are no longer using, please consider donating it so we can pass it on to someone in need. Contact Lori Fearebay at 978-804-8487, 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.

The Calling All Seniors Project

By the time you read this, thirty-one volunteer callers will have concluded their work in reaching out to all Berlin residents over 60 concerning their health and other needs during the Covid 19 pandemic that has created such turmoil in our lives. The callers included many from the boards of the Berlin Council on Aging and the Berlin Senior Citizens Association, as well as several public-spirited members of the Berlin community at large.

Not everyone for whom we had accurate phone numbers was reached, and a number did not return messages left on answering machines, probably due to people's reluctance to respond to unknown numbers that they suspect may involve scam calls. While that was disappointing, the contacts that were made were warmly received and often resulted in great conversations with Berlin seniors who, in some cases, were previously unknown to the callers. Some of those called, and particularly those who are relatively new to town, learned of opportunities to engage with others in activities and programs offered by the Council on Aging (van transportation, Meals on Wheels, yoga, Tai Chi, tax work-off opportunities, etc.), the Food Pantry, Many Hands Thrift Shoppe, Nineteen Carter (Tea Time, Soup at Noon, Community Coffee, travelogues, movies, forums, classes, etc.), and the Berlin Public Library (musical programs, improv and informational programs in conjunction with Nineteen Carter and the 1870 Town Hall).

Our callers also alerted seniors to the availability of washable cloth face masks made by a number of industrious Berlin residents, including Cheryl LaRobadiere, Beezy Bentzen, Trudy Tervo and Sondra Pendergast and her daughter. In all, 80 or more (the number was still climbing as of this writing) were delivered by volunteers like Peggy Sardell and Ron Plutnicki.

Information about our postponed annual town meeting and voting dates was also relayed at the request of Town Clerk Eloise Salls.

At a time when most are heeding the call of health professionals to shelter in place and avoid close contact, it was heartening to realize that our community, while apart, is still very much together in spirit and in a willingness to help our neighbors and new-found friends. If there's a silver lining to the dark cloud hovering over us just now, it's in discovering that there are so many great and inspiring people all around us in Berlin and that we can share the sunshine with them when the clouds part, and share good conversations with them by phone and text and Zoom while we're hunkered down.



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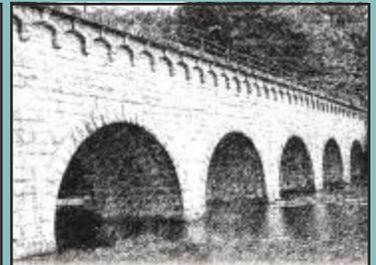
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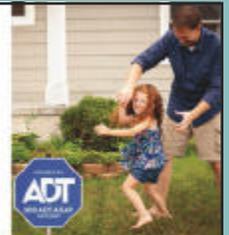
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19 Carter

It's been just about over a month since we closed down 19 Carter. We played our last concert — to celebrate Saint Patrick's Day with the Carter Street Band on March 14 to a small, but enthusiastic crowd. It felt a bit like Nero fiddling while Rome burned.

And now we're all home and missing many things about life as we knew it. Funny how quickly it all happened! As the shock of it happening is gradually wearing off, we are all looking around to see what we can do. I love all of the humor that is coming out about our quirky lives. Here's a few that might tickle your funny bone:

- Can we reinstall 2020 again? ... I think it has a virus.
- After years of wanting to thoroughly clean my house, but lacking the time, this month I realized that wasn't the problem.

I hope you all are finding humor in your lives and perhaps enjoying a few things that passed you by in the busyness of our pre-lockdown days.

We will open up again at 19 Carter as soon as we possibly can. Having a place to connect with others — whenever we want in person — has never been so appreciated!

P.S. We are still hoping to have our Garden Tour on June 20 — sponsored by the Friends of the Library and 19 Carter. Save the date for now — we'll make a final decision by June 1.

Be of good cheer!
Evy Dueck
19 Carter Manager

Massachusetts Announces State Income Tax Filing Deadline Being Extended to July 15 | Mass.gov

Council on Aging Van Service

In the interest of the safety of our clients, as well as our dedicated driver, we have cancelled van service until further notice. We apologize for any inconvenience but safety has to be our first priority. On the bright side, when the Transportation Program starts again, we should have our brand new van and you'll be traveling in style.



HOUSE NUMBERS

From the viewpoint of a driver trying to deliver cloth facemasks to Berlin seniors, MANY Berlin homeowners appear shy to clearly number their houses. It's a frustration for deliverers of masks and packages, but a serious safety issue for residents who hope emergency vehicles can find their homes in case of a fire or health emergency. But don't take our word for it. Take a drive around Berlin's streets yourself and see how many house numbers are readily seen at or from the roadside, compared with how many cannot. Include your own in your search. Berlin actually has an ordinance REQUIRING the installation of house or business numbers that are clearly visible from the road in front of them.

If you need help finding or installing 5 inch high numbers, of a color that contrasts with their backgrounds, let us know. Efforts are afoot to help residents achieve this critical safety goal. The Council on Aging phone number is: (978) 838-2750

Seniors/Youth Letter Exchange Program

Efforts are underway to facilitate a letter-writing exchange between Berlin seniors and young Berliners. Details of the project are not yet finalized (your input is always welcome), but if this sounds like something you would enjoy participating in, send us your name and contact information and we'll dial you into the program when it launches.

Call the COA at (978) 838-2750, or email your information to: townofberlin.com/council-aging

REVISED NOTICE of 2020 Annual Town Meeting and 2020 Annual Town Election

The Berlin Board of Selectmen has hereby
rescheduled the dates for the 2020:

Annual Town Meeting

Monday, June 22 at 7:30 p.m.

Berlin Memorial School, 34 South Street, Berlin, MA

Annual Town Election

Monday, June 29, 2020 from 12 Noon to 4 p.m.

Lower level, Room 114, Berlin Town Office Building
23 Linden Street, Berlin, MA

Voted unanimously on April 6, 2020 BERLIN BOARD OF SELECTMEN: Christine Keefe, Lisa Wysocki, Margaret Stone

Notes: The warrant for the 2020 Annual Town Meeting has closed (Feb. 18, 2020). Annual Town Meeting was originally scheduled for May 4, 2020. Annual Town Election was originally scheduled for May 11, 2020.

This action has been taken in light of the:

- World Health Organization's naming COVID-19 as a pandemic (Mar. 11, 2020);
- Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker's: (1) Emergency Declaration (Mar. 10, 2020) and (2) Executive Order barring gatherings in excess of ten (10) people (Mar. 23, 2020);
- Joint Declaration of Emergency for the Town of Berlin, retroactive to Mar. 10, 2020, by votes of: (1) Board of Health, Mar. 17, 2020; and (2) Board of Selectmen, Mar. 23, 2020; and
- Statutory power reserved for the Berlin Board of Selectmen to extend the date for Annual Town Meeting, but in no event later than June 30th (Mass. Gen. Law Ch. 39, Sec. 9).

Gone But Not Forgotten

Audrey Birch – December 30, 2019
Carolyn Landry – December 31, 2019
Gordon Knorr – January 26, 2020
Robert Lussier – February 15, 2020
Richard Wheeler – March 20, 2020

How Smart Is Your Right Foot?

You can't outsmart it. While sitting where you are, lift your right foot off the floor and make clockwise circles. Now, while doing this, draw the number "6" in the air with your right hand. Your foot will change directions. Happens every time.

COA Van Driver — Part-time position

Varying hours per week. Starting pay is \$14.99/hr. Submit resume to COA, 23 Linden St., Berlin, MA 01503 or email to coadirector@townofberlin.com. See job description at the town's website, under Employment Opportunities.

Reflections on Our Outgoing COA Secretary, Fran Gill

During her 56 years as a Berlin resident, Fran Gill has gained a well-deserved reputation for being there whenever anyone needed help. As she leaves her position as secretary of the Council on Aging ahead of her return to Hudson, we asked our dear friend to recount some of her activities as a Berliner. Here's her recollection:



I moved to Berlin in 1964 all the way from Hudson. Soon I will be moving back there.

During the 56 years I've lived in Berlin, 47 with my husband Bob, and more than half that time with our 3 children, it's been a safe and lovely home. I've socialized through church and town activities and met wonderful people, many who have become dear friends.

The COA wanted a list of the activities I have been part of. Here they are; celebrating and teaching at St. Josephs the Good Provider church, enjoying the company of other peoples children as a SOAR reader/listener at Berlin Memorial School, a member of the Berlin Housing Partnership, a Friend of the Berlin Public Library, a member of the Art and Historic Society, a volunteer at 19 Carter, a

member of the Berlin Council on Aging, and upon the advise of our Town Clerk, Eloise, a co-founder of the Berlin Family Food Pantry. I'm also a life time member of WIIC; the Worcester Intertribal Indian Center and UNACC; the United Native American Cultural Center in Ayer, and a volunteer at the Worcester County House of Correction; bringing Communion and the Word of God to men in the Early Release Unit. I have a full life and look forward to continuing many of those activities as a resident of the Meadowbrook Mobile Home Association, just over the town line in Hudson. Now, if only I could sell my house!

Thanks for your decades of caring, active contribution to the uplifting of those around you, Fran. And please, don't be a stranger. Your company is treasured.

Berlin Council on Aging

The Berlin Council on Aging is reaching out to all our seniors to assure you that you are not forgotten in the midst of the Corona virus health emergency. Here are numbers to call for needs you may have:

- 1) All Emergencies** (health, fire, accident) **Dial 911**. This reaches a dispatcher who will connect you to Berlin Police, Fire Department or Emergency Medical Services, as needed.
- 2) Nashoba Associated Boards of Health**, fact-and-science-based information on health issues, including Corona virus. **Dial (978) 772-3338**. Berlin's public health nurse, Tammy Bedard, can be reached at ext. 340.
- 3) Help Getting to Medical Appointments** — Berlin's Council on Aging van is available, by appointment, for a ride to and from medical appointments. **Dial (978) 838-2750**.
- 4) Help Getting Groceries** from area food stores, for those who can't drive themselves. Council on Aging Van Transportation: **Call (978) 838-2750**.
- 5) Berlin Food Pantry** — If financial hardship keeps you from buying adequate amounts of food, call Berlin Food Pantry's Fran Gill at **(978) 838-2508**.
- 6) For inclusion in the Meals On Wheels** program, which delivers packaged meals twice weekly to residents who need help with preparing regular meals, **call the Council on Aging at (978) 838-2750**.
- 7) We are not sure how this Corona virus pandemic will ultimately play out, but we ARE sure that we, at the Berlin Council on Aging, will be here for you during and long after the immediate crisis. Don't hesitate to call us for any of the needs mentioned above, or simply if you are stressed and lonely and want to engage in friendly, reassuring conversation. We'll get through this together. We're at (978) 838-2750.**

Meet Karen Schultz, Berlin Council on Aging

I've resided in Berlin for 16 years. I am married with two children (15 and 13). I have served as a volunteer on Berlin COA since 2014. I was asked to join the COA due to my background working with elderly. I am a social worker with most of my career working in nursing homes and assisted living facilities. I currently work part-time as a Social Worker in a short-time rehab facility. I enjoy time with my family, watching my kids play sports, walking my dog (yellow lab), biking, and travel.



Meet Kate Bliss, Berlin Council on Aging



I moved to Berlin in April of 2009 with my husband Dan, who is a teacher at Framingham High School. We have since grown our family to include daughters Norah (8) and Sarah (4) and our dog Grace. I work as a Realtor helping people buy and sell properties in town as well as in the surrounding area. I enjoy the beach, gardening with my husband, playing Legos with our kids and relaxing with friends. I take pride in giving back to the local community by baking for library events, volunteering with the Berlin Lions Club and serving as a member of the Council on Aging. My time on the COA has been a great way to meet the folks who have helped shape our town!



Further Extensions Implemented for Expiring Licenses, Permits, Motor Vehicle Inspection Stickers, and Passenger Plate Registrations

While 60-day extensions had already been implemented for most credentials, passenger plate registrations, and inspection stickers expired or expiring in March and April, this new action will apply the same 60-day extension to those expiring in May. Additionally, credentials expiring in March 2020 that previously were extended by 60 days will have an additional 60-day extension applied.

Notice To Berlin Taxpayers

Extended due dates for Real Estate, Personal Property and Excise Taxes

Due to financial impacts on taxpayers as a result of COVID-19 declared health emergency, Governor Baker signed legislation allowing local municipalities to extend due dates for tax payments. The Town of Berlin, by unanimous vote of its Board of Selectmen on Tuesday, April 21, adopted certain sections of this legislation to extend due dates for real estate and personal property tax payments, and excise tax payments, specifically as follows.

1. Real Estate and Personal Property Taxes — The due date of your real and personal property tax bill has been extended to Monday, June 1, 2020. June 1, 2020 is the new due date even though the due date for payment on your previously mailed tax bill shows May 1, 2020.

Late payments received after office hours close at 4:30 p.m. on Monday, June 1, 2020 will not be honored and will be subject to retro interest and a \$15.00 demand fee. Physical payments must be in the Treasurer/Collector's office by 4:30 p.m. on Monday, June 1, 2020 if made by mail or dropped off in the secured drop-off box in the Town Offices lobby. We will not accept the post marked date if payments are not received by 4:30 p.m. on June 1, 2020. Online payments can also be made online at the Town's website www.townofberlin.com and must be made by 4:30 p.m. on Monday, June 1, 2020.

2. Automobile Excise Tax — Interest and other penalties have been waived for late payment of any excise with a due date on or after March 10, 2020 where payment is made late but no later than the close of office hours at 4:30 a.m. on Monday, June 29, 2020.

Late payments received after office hours close at 4:30 p.m. on Monday, June 29, 2020 will not be honored and will be subject to retro interest and a \$15.00 demand fee. Physical payments

must be in the Treasurer/Collector's office by 4:30 p.m. on Monday, June 29, 2020 if made by mail or dropped off in the secured drop-off box in the Town Offices lobby. We will not accept the post marked date if payments are not received by 4:30 p.m. June 29, 2020. Online payments can also be made online at the Town's website www.townofberlin.com and must be made by 4:30 p.m. on Monday, June 29, 2020.

This Notice to Taxpayers has been posted by the Treasurer/Collector on the Town's official website (www.townofberlin.com) as directed by

the Board of Selectmen, and in compliance with Commonwealth of Massachusetts Division of Local Services Bulletins 2020-2 and Addendum 2020-3. An abbreviated Notice to Taxpayers has been posted on Town of Berlin's official Facebook page, and through Berlin's CodeRED reverse-911 call system.

Contact the Treasurer/Collector's office at (978) 310-5906, or email taxcollector@townofberlin.com with any questions.

Spring Word Search

Find the words in the grid. When you are done, the unused letters in the grid will spell out a hidden message. Pick them out from left to right, top line to bottom line. Words can go horizontally, vertically and diagonally in all eight directions. *By Evelyn Johnson, www.gets.com*

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Medicare and the Coronavirus

Medicare Part B (Medical Insurance) covers medically necessary clinical diagnostic laboratory tests, when your doctor or practitioner orders them. This includes a test to see if you have coronavirus (officially called 2019-novel coronavirus or COVID-19).

Original Medicare: You usually pay nothing for Medicare-covered clinical diagnostic laboratory tests.

Medicare Advantage Plans: Check with your plan's Explanation of Benefits or call them to see if there is a co-pay.

MassHealth Eligibility Guidelines Have Increased

Income and asset guidelines change every year. MassHealth has increased the income limits for several programs you may be eligible for. The monthly gross monthly income to be eligible for MassHealth Standard has increased from \$1,041 for a single person to \$1,064, with assets no more than \$2,000, for a married couple it has gone up to from \$1,410 to \$1,437, with assets no more than \$3,000.

The MassHealth Buy-in Programs, also called Medicare Savings Program, pay for the Part B monthly premium, \$144.60 in 2020. The gross monthly income eligibility for a single person is now \$1,755, with assets no higher than \$15,720; and for a couple \$2,371, with assets no higher than \$23,600. These increases also apply to Full Extra Help for Massachusetts residents. This program from Social Security helps to pay for your medications.

If you feel you may be eligible under these new income guidelines feel free to call the SHINE Program for more information, 1-800-243-4636, press 4.

Thank You, Thank You!

To all of you who volunteered:

- Those who participated in our telephone campaign
- Those who donated supplies to keep our van sanitized
- Those who donated to the Berlin Food Pantry
- Those who sewed and donated face masks for distribution
- Our van driver, Ginny, for her dedicated service
- All of you who are following guidelines regarding social distancing and wearing face masks
- All of our Town officials for their continued support and guidance.

TAI CHI

Jeff Cote, our Tai Chi instructor, has created live streams and videos for seniors who would like to continue to practice during this Time. Go to: www.facebook.com/OccidentalTaoist.