



Cheshire Chatter

January / February 2021



Cheshire Council on Aging P.O. Box 507. Cheshire. MA 01225

Carole's Thought's



I am always amazed and thankful for the many kindnesses of Cheshire folks. Although the center continues to be closed to the public, the center is thriving with means to help families and individuals to have a merrier holiday season.

The Cheshire Council on Aging has been coordinating clothing gifts for 6 families with the Cheshire Lions; 5 beautiful coats were donated by the Friends of the Cheshire COA and one more from Santa! Anonymous donors have assisted 2 families with heating oil fill ups and 4 families received four \$500 gift certificates to Target.

The Grab n Go team is ready 5 days a week every morning at 10 am to serve hot meals made by Elder Services. Maria Mondonca and Don Pulver do a great job in welcoming everyone and chatting for a few minutes. Mystery books are still available, and more books keep getting donated. It's a great service.

Betty King continues to write holiday cards and birthday cards. For December it was 84 cards with 60 holiday cards sent to those 80 to 108 years young.

Table holiday decorations are being made to distribute to 10 seniors who have participated in our lunch program for many years.

The CHP Medical Van will be offering a second COVID-19 testing opportunity. The first session assisted 15 individuals. Fortunately, they offered to return on December 16th and our goal is to advise all residents that the testing is available.

On a very positive note, I am pleased to report that the Cheshire Council on Aging van is operating! For now, it will be available on Mondays and will be driven by Les Rhinemiller. Please call the van number: (413) 446-2559 to schedule your ride. All riders must wear masks covering the nose and mouth area and will need to sign a release form of understanding of the rules and regulations of the van for health safety sake. The night before a ride, I will be calling riders and asking general questions such as, "Are you feeling ill? Have you been near anyone who has/had the virus?" Our second driver is John Bianchi. Please contact me at the center at 743-9719 should you have further questions. We will always be thankful to Ed Gwozdz and Neil Baker for their many years of dedicated service to the seniors of Cheshire.

Our deepest sympathy is extended to Clem LeClaire's family on his passing. Clem was a long time member of the Cheshire Senior Club and his wit and good humor was always on display at our Cafe' lunches.

Our deepest sympathy is also extended to the Betit family on their loss of Ed . Over the years Ed was very generous with his time and talents to a number of organizations in town. He will be missed.

Best wishes from the Cheshire Council on Aging for the New Year 2021.

Keep safe. Wear a mask over your nose and mouth. Keep your distance from others.

Carole



to Juliette Campbell – 109 years young!



It was a pleasure to celebrate the 109th birthday party with Juliette Campbell! She was born in New Bedford, MA on December 22, 1911 and there were 7 siblings in the family with her Mom living to 100.

Juliette is the only living member of her family. When asked the secret for a long life, she responded: "If I knew, I would bottle it and sell it!" "Don't do anything to excess."

Juliette lives with her niece Charlene and enjoys her TV shows, her dog Cookie, and where she lives in Cheshire. She is retired from General Electric and worked in

manufacturing. Although she is a newcomer to Cheshire, living here for six years, she loves her home and outdoor environment.



DISCOVERY OF THE STAFFORD HILL INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

By
Barry Emery

One of my many projects involving Cheshire's history was to digitize (photograph or scan) any old documents or photographs in order to help preserve them. To that end, I began the project by digitizing items held by the Cheshire Historical Commission in the dilapidated room over the police station. In an afternoon I would photograph hundreds of items, sometimes without reading or even realizing what the item was. The stash of photographs and scans now numbers over 10,000.

Recently while trying to better organize the collection I came across the 8 handwritten pages shown here.

I first noticed the date of April 1858 and the words Stafford Hill. As I began to decipher the script, which was very difficult to read, I determined it was in the form of a newspaper written by John Farnum entitled the "The Stafford Hill Independent". Some 40 hours later I had transcribed all eight pages.



Several 'articles' are poems, probably written by Farnum, some are essays about fashions of the day, a couple are meant to be humorous fiction, a few are about what he thinks of women, and there are short pieces that fill out a page with a contemporary witticisms. In this first installment I have included three articles. Future editions will include a biography of Farnum along with other articles. I will give a complete copy of the original and the transcription to the library so it will be available to view when indoor access to the library resumes.



The Independent (first article)

It comes with no boast of superiority over many other monthly journals of the day, nor with any promises of being the largest, cheapest, and best monthly in the country. We know the cities have facilities which we do not possess. Their position is such that they can make a larger and intrinsically a better paper for the same money, then it is possible for us to do ever locally has each individual wants which can only be reached by local agencies. The heavy ocean steamer is Herculean in its powers and fast in its resources but if a coast is to be delineated or a harbor surveyed the boats and light craft are dispatched.

We have no funds to hire correspondents. We ask for volunteers, not any of your two hour lectures, but short pointed teachings, having a beginning with the subject and ending when it is finished. We wish to make this paper very attractive to all who may read it; we ask that it may be the medium through which we shall have frequent social chats with each other. If Any one wants light on any subject let him ask for it and those who have that light let them place it where the inquirer's and a multitude of others may see it.

Ed.

Can one say why it is considered impolite for gentleman to go in the presence of ladies in their shirt sleeves, while it is considered correct for ladies themselves to appear before a gentleman without any sleeves at all? We merely ask for information

Spring fashions for ladies are not going to be so ridiculous as here to fore. The bonnets are to be worn on the back of the head instead of the back of the neck. The enormousness of hoops is also to be reduced and by Fall it is hoped that it will be no longer an excursion for a man to walk around his wife and daughter.

A woman may laugh to much it is only a comb that can afford always to show its teeth

Always laugh when you can it is a cheap medicine. Mirthfulness is a philosophy not well understood. It is the sunnyside of existence.

Man and Woman

*Man is the rugged lofty pine
The frowns o'er many a wave-beaten shore;
Woman's the slender graceful vine
Whose curling tendrils round it twine
And deck its rough bark sweetly o'er.*



FROM 1844 TO 2020 AND BEYOND: A TRADITION CONTINUES

The earliest version of H.D. Reynolds General Store was opened in 1844 by J.B. Dean, a prominent Cheshire businessman, in the Walcott building on Church Street.

Three generations of Deans went on to operate the business (1844-1920). In 1866 the first library in town was formed and was housed briefly in the store while a new building was being constructed for its use. The Deans continued to operate the general store until Mr. William Benjamin assumed it's operation (1920-1936) while the ancillary businesses of the Deans continued in the outer buildings and around Cheshire. H.D. (Harold) Reynolds worked in the store as a young man and eventually he and his wife Hilda bought the business from Mr. Benjamin in 1937, in the midst of the depression. The General Store continued under the ownership of three generations of Reynolds for the next 81 years.



Harold and Hilda worked hard long hours to meet the needs of Cheshire patrons. The store stayed open until 10 PM six days a week, and living over the store, Harold often filled late requests after a knock on the door. The second and third floor of the building had been used for furniture displays and storage, with a large pulley at one end to move heavy furniture in and out of the space. Harold had the top two floors removed and then carpenter Bob Chase added a second floor apartment for living space for the family.

Harold and his wife Hilda operated the General Store keeping it well stocked with sundry items in groceries, hardware, dry goods ,offering kerosene, candles, cloth, socks, gloves, ribbon, buttons, greeting cards, school supplies, cigars, cigarettes, chewing tobacco, always striving to meet needs of the community. The store sold doughnuts on Sundays, Kittler's sweet corn in the summer, and Anthony's apple cider in the fall. Also included, of course, the famed penny candy display case adored by generations of Cheshire children, saving a few cents of their lunch money for a stop at Reynolds' on their walk home after school. The candy case displayed Swedish fish, chewing and bubble gum, red and black Twizzlers, rock candy, candy bars, baseball cards and of course penny candy. On sunny days some Beechwood Rest residents, like Arnold and Lavender, would walk down and enliven a quiet afternoon. Appalachian Trail hikers stopped spring to fall, telling their stories while replenishing their supplies.

Harold's son Frank Stanley (Stan) came home after Naval service in World War II and joined the business in 1946, convincing a skeptical father that expanding the operation to include lawnmowers would be advantageous. Stan reasoned that the two cycle rotary Lawn Boy Mowers would be better suited to the high grass, steep banks and hills of Cheshire. They were more lightweight and stayed well lubricated unlike the four cycle reel type mowers in use at the time. The 10 mowers he was allowed to stock from Troy Hardware Supply sold quickly and the business thrived, adding snow throwers in the late 1950's and became a year round business. Loyal customers enabled H D Reynolds to earn national recognition from Lawn Boy, Ariens and other manufacturers as a top performing lawn and garden equipment dealer.

In the late '40s and '50 as was common at the time, they offered home deliveries two days each week. A clerk visited customers in the morning to take orders and the orders were packed and delivered later in the day. The terms were cash weekly, with credit extended if a customer was ill or on strike. The "Order Routes" were the Little Square -Depot, Prospect, Dean, Richmond Street and South State Road. The Big Square was Church, Railroad, School, Fisk, Richardson and North Streets, West Mountain, Lanesborough Roads, Farnums plus homes and cottages around the lake.

As he became older, grandson Steve recalls working for his grandfather performing the delivery route service on school breaks, which Harold appreciated as he grew older. Gradually that part of the business got smaller as local retail habits changed and the supermarkets offered more selections.

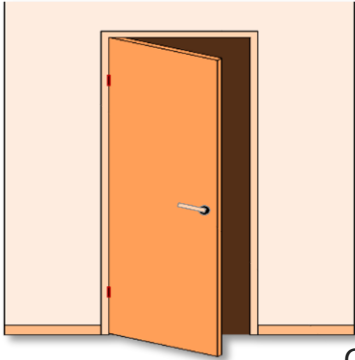
Until the early eighties, Stan's wife Evelyn continued to call on homebound customers. Harold passed on in 1969. Stan's wife Evelyn, an RN, joined Hilda at the General Store and worked with her until her death in 1991. Subsequent generations continued operating the store and the equipment business. In 1970, after a National Guard tour, Stan and Evelyn's son George joined the business. Their youngest son Jim joined the company in 1998. Grandson Edward came on in 2009. Stan died in 2006. The family continued operating the business until 2018 when the General Store closed. George, his wife Karen and Edward still work for H.D.Reynolds Sales and Service, a division of Whitney Farms since 2019.

Early in March 2020 the store was opened as Cheshire Sporting Goods by Travis Delratez and Jamie Sears. The business caters to sportsmen with a large selection of items for the many fisherman, hunters and hikers in the area.

Stan's wife Evelyn continues to perform clerical duties and answers the phone for the equipment sales and

services every day. Evelyn's second career began in 1969. Fifty one years later she still enjoys working. Times may change, the old gives way to the new, but some traditions still go on.

CLOSE YOUR DOOR !



OK, we've all heard the fire safety directives, right? Working fire alarms on every level and outside bedrooms, changing batteries when you change the clocks, having an escape plan, designating a meeting place outside your home are the ones we've been told repeatedly. It's good advice, it saves lives.

Close the door! Who among us hasn't called that command loudly after a running child who's on one side of the door or the other? For this reader, learning the importance of sleeping with the door shut was sort of an eye-opener (sorry, bad pun) but the statistics are startling.

Of the more than 1.3 million fires reported in 2018 about 499,000 were structure fires and 3655 deaths were recorded. 2720 of these deaths were in house fires.

Top causes of house fires:

- Cooking
- Heating
- Unintended and careless causes
- Electrical malfunctions

Synthetic materials in our homes burn faster than ever before. In 1978 when we had less synthetic furnishings and fewer homes had open floor plans, we had 17 minutes to escape before a fire got heavily involved. That time frame has now narrowed to 3 minutes on average.



A closed door can make a 900° difference in the temperature in the bedroom reducing the heat from a fire from a deadly 1000° to a survivable 100°.

A closed door can keep the carbon monoxide level down to 100ppm (parts per million) versus 10,000 ppm with an open door.

A closed door deprives the fire of the oxygen it needs to burn, allowing you more time to get to safety or call or wait for help.

Close the door before you doze. Only 20% of us sleep with the door closed. 50% of house fires occur between 11 PM and 7 AM.

Learn more at:

closeyourdoor.org

(Informative and hair raising videos can be viewed.)

UL Firefighter Safety Research Institute on

Youtube: Close before You Doze Demonstration Event

(Highly recommend)

U.S.Fire Administration(USFA) Report on 20017 causes of fires.(awesome breakdown of statistics for all you geeks.)

Senior / Community Center

While the town buildings have been officially closed to the public since March of last year, the COA has taken advantage of this opportunity to paint the walls of the restrooms, halls, and offices with the help of two volunteers. The walls are now a lighter color and cheerfully decorated. Along with our new tables and chairs, we hope that you find the atmosphere bright, cheerful, and welcoming. We at the COA are looking forward to the day we can have you back into the building and hear the buzz and laughter once again. It's lonely here without you.



CHP Mobile Health Van



The Mobile Health Van Unit will be at the Cheshire Senior / Community Center at 119 School Street on January 6th the first Wednesday of January and February 3rd the first Wednesday of February from 10 am until noon. They will be offering Covid-19 testing and flu shots among other medical services. No appointments needed. Check our Facebook page for any additional visits or changes in dates. Call Carole with any questions at the COA office @ 413-743-9719.

Cheshire COA Van Schedule

The Cheshire COA van was put back into service on Monday December 7, 2020. Les Rhinemiller will be your Monday driver and John Bianchi will be your Wednesday driver. As ridership indicates the COA will review and hopefully expand the schedule in the coming year. John and Les are trained, courteous and ready to take you to your appointments. The van is cleaned and sanitized before being put into service for the day and between passengers. At present we can give rides to no more than two people in the van plus the driver for social distancing purposes. Masks are required at all times while riding in the van and you will be asked a few health questions when your ride is booked. To schedule a ride, call 446-2559 . Or call Carole with any questions at 743-9719



The Café at 119 School Street, Cheshire - Hot Lunch for Seniors - The Center is offering grab and go lunches provided by Elder Services on Monday through Friday from 10:30-noon. When driving through, there is usually time to have a quick chat to check in on how everyone is doing. To reserve your meal, call 743-9719 at least 24 hours in advance. Suggested Meal Donation of \$2.00 for those 60 and over.

Cheshire Pantry In collaboration with the Cheshire Fire Department- The Pantry is located at the Cheshire Community / Senior Center and is open to Cheshire residents of any age on the first Saturday of the month from 11am to noon. Emergency food is also available by calling the Center at 743-9719. Monetary donations and nonperishable food, toiletries and paper goods may be left at the Center any Monday through Thursday 9 till 2 PM. I Love Cheshire t shirts with the Food Pantry logo are being sold as a fund raiser.

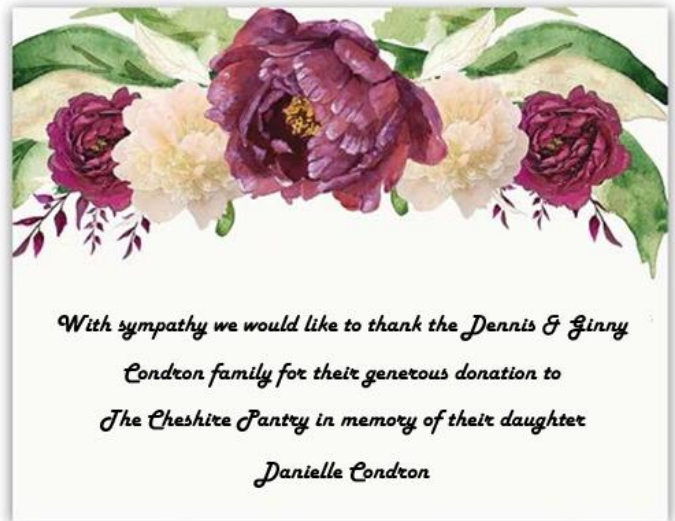
When notified of a need, a hearty food bag is delivered. This is available by calling 413-743-9719. If emergency assistance is needed call 413-329-2212.

Delivery is available for those isolated or without transportation. The pantry is always held on the first Saturday of the month at the center from 11 AM to noon.

Brown Bag – Free paper bag of food available on Friday, January 22nd and Friday February 26th between 1 and 2 pm. Contact Carole to sign up.

Foot Clinic - The Foot Clinic returns on the 21st of January. Sorry, no walk-ins - appointments only. Held inside the Center. Call Carole @ 413-743-9719 to schedule an appointment and for protocol. There is a fee for this clinic.

Exercise, Coffee Club Thursdays, Quilting, the Cheshire Senior Club, the Blood Pressure Readings, and the Community Book Club are on hold.



Community Notes

Town of Cheshire - Town Hall remains closed to the public at this time. Business for offices at Town Hall, please call 743-1690. The "drop box" may be used for payments.

Historical Commission - In this 228th year of Cheshire's incorporation as a town, the Cheshire Historical Commission recalls our proud history, growing with Massachusetts and America.

May this year bring health, hope and happiness to all.

Cheshire Library - The Library remains closed to the public.

The Library is distributing Inter-library Loans usually on Mondays. If the patron uses the CWMARS catalog to place a book on hold, it will be delivered to Cheshire. We then call you and give you a time for pick up. Patrons may also call 743-4748 and leave a request for book from the Cheshire Library holdings by title and author.

Cheshire Ladies' Reading Club – The club continues to meet virtually on a biweekly schedule. New members are always welcome.

Contact Harriet Teichert at 743-1518 if interested.

As I write this we are mourning the loss of one of our cherished "honorary" male members.

Edward "Ed" Betit passed away December 12, 2020.

Ed was a good friend to our group, gracious in offering his home as needed when we had in-person meetings. As an avid reader, he was always interested and engaged in the readings and the topics under discussion. Ed

had many diverse experiences over his lifetime and was always ready to share an anecdote when meeting with the group. Ed was long involved in volunteering for many roles for the Cheshire community. He was a dedicated and very active member of Saint Mary of the Assumption Parish, now called Assumption. A love of music and his wonderful singing voice was shared with all in the church choir for many years and he cooked and volunteered for church events for many years .

Ed was gregarious, friendly and always managed to enliven any group he was part of. Ed lived 92 years, sharing 60 of those years with his beloved wife Zelia who passed away in 2012.

Ed will be missed greatly by his four children Diane

(Ponti), Michael, Peter and John Betit, grandchildren and many friends. Ed was generous in sharing his time, his singing talent and the good humor one could always expect in a lively conversation with him.

Rest in Peace Ed, you will always be missed.



Anyone wishing to join us for an online meeting please call Pat at 743-2177 for information.

Become a Friend of the Cheshire COA

Greetings, 2020 has been a very challenging year for us all. Hopefully, 2021 will bring an end to the pandemic. The Friends continue to support the Cheshire Council on Aging although we were not able to have any social, educational or cultural events this year. During this last year, we amended our bylaws to permit us to donate to organizations such as the Food Pantry which provide vital services to our seniors. The Friends also purchased and donated five winter coats to deserving seniors. In the year ahead, we will make a substantial donation to the Food Pantry and we hope to resume funding social, educational and cultural activities once it is safe to do so. Please consider joining the Friends this year. Dues are \$10 per person and payable to the Friends of the CCOA, c/o Ed St. John, 4 Edmunds Street, N101, Adams, MA 01220. Thank you and stay healthy.

Resources and Contacts

COA Board Members

Gene Gebarowski, Chair 413-743-2177

Robert Balawender 413-743-3356

John Bianchi 413-743-5723

Carol Francesconi 413-743-5028

Mal Gwozdz 413-743-9356

Barbara Proper 413-743-4945

Peter Traub 413-743-3496

Program Coordinator

Carole Hilderbrand 413-743-9719 or 413-329- 2212

Van

413-446-2559

Car, Adams COA

Medical Appointments 413-743-8333

Friends of Cheshire COA

Ed and Pam St. John estjohn1@roadrunner.com

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