



Cheshire Chatter

July / August 2021



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

Photo Courtesy Ella Bisellon

Carole's Thought's

Great News!!

With enthusiasm and an attitude of gratefulness I am happy to announce that the COA Cheshire For Active Living will open for hot lunches on Wednesday, July 7th at 11:30am. inside with the Grab n Go meals to continue five days a week if there is a need. In the beginning, lunches will take place on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays. Additional days will depend on attendance and need. Should an individual not be vaccinated for the Covid-19, I request that a mask be worn while in the building. The Covid-19 Virus, causing a worldwide Pandemic appears to be under control. The center has been closed to the public with the exception of staff and a minimum number of volunteers. The State enlisted senior centers to perform scheduling of the viruses and thus enlisting myself to schedule full time.

During this time, many changes have taken place at the center. Most significantly is the painting of the main room, a new use of the stage area, and an art gallery. New lighting enhances the new paint and the center is now bright, welcoming, and ready for the many activities planned.

If you have driven by, I hope you noticed the bright, colorful flowers in the front beds. The Cheshire Garden Club headed by Margy Gwozdz and Lois Nagle, weeded and planted to the delight of all who walk in the building. Carol Aubin has taken on the planting and care of the raised gardens that are flourishing! One day I looked and I could not see the plants. Now, the plants have taken off and are growing at a rapid speed! Thank you ladies!

Pickleball lessons by pro, Barry Emery, have been enjoyable and offers moderate exercise with teammates that are all beginners and looking to have fun with new friends. Lesson started on June 10th and will run for three Thursdays at 10:30am. Additional classes will be dependent on requests. Morning Exercise with Jane continues to be a favorite program on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. The hours are 9am to 10am.

Quilting is happening on the second and fourth Thursday of the month in the hours of 1pm-3pm. Betty King, our quilting pro, can answer all questions regarding quilting, design, and color coordination.

Designer senior bicycles are available. Just call the center at 9am or a day before to schedule a time. Helmets and locks are also available. There is no rental fee.

Nineteen volunteers will be receiving Certificates of Appreciation and \$25.00 gift cards to Bass Water. A minimum of 19 hours of volunteer time is required.

Bob Balawender coordinated the Formal Flag Disposal Ceremony for Sunday, June 13, 2021. This offering is in collaboration with American Legion Post 160 from Adams, MA. The weather was perfect, the program was educational, and it was a great community get together.

The Birthday Card Project continues to be a success and each month averages 91-100 cards mailed. Get Well, Sympathy, and Cheer Up cards are mailed when appropriate. Thank you Betty!

COA Cheshire Center for Active Living

The new fiscal year begins on July 1, 2021. Our material goals are to replace the dishwasher/sanitizer and to work on the bathroom floors and stall dividers. Please make suggestions should you have other thoughts.

To address the needs of Cheshire senior residents, referrals services, van rides, and meeting with individuals will be my priority for Outreach.

The Ladies Reading Club will be meeting every first and third Thursday at 1pm to 3:30pm at the center. The reading group is the oldest in existence. New members are welcome. Call: (413) 743-7919.

An interpretive play on Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg has been scheduled for September 24th. Please watch for further information.

In closing. Thank you to the many volunteers, friends, neighboring COA's for the guidance and motivation to forge ahead in these struggling times. I would like to acknowledge the passing of Bob Emerson and Mary Zimmer. Bob enjoyed our Grab and Go lunches. He always had a smile, a joke, or a funny story to tell those serving. We miss him each day. Our condolences go out to the Emerson family and to his wife, Shirley. Mary was certainly one of the favorites of our van drivers. We always looked forward to her visits at the Center where she held court with many of her friends. Join us for activities, lunch, or to volunteer, take a van ride. Become a part of the fun team in Cheshire.

The center is here for YOU!

Welcome back.

RETIRED FLAG CEREMONY



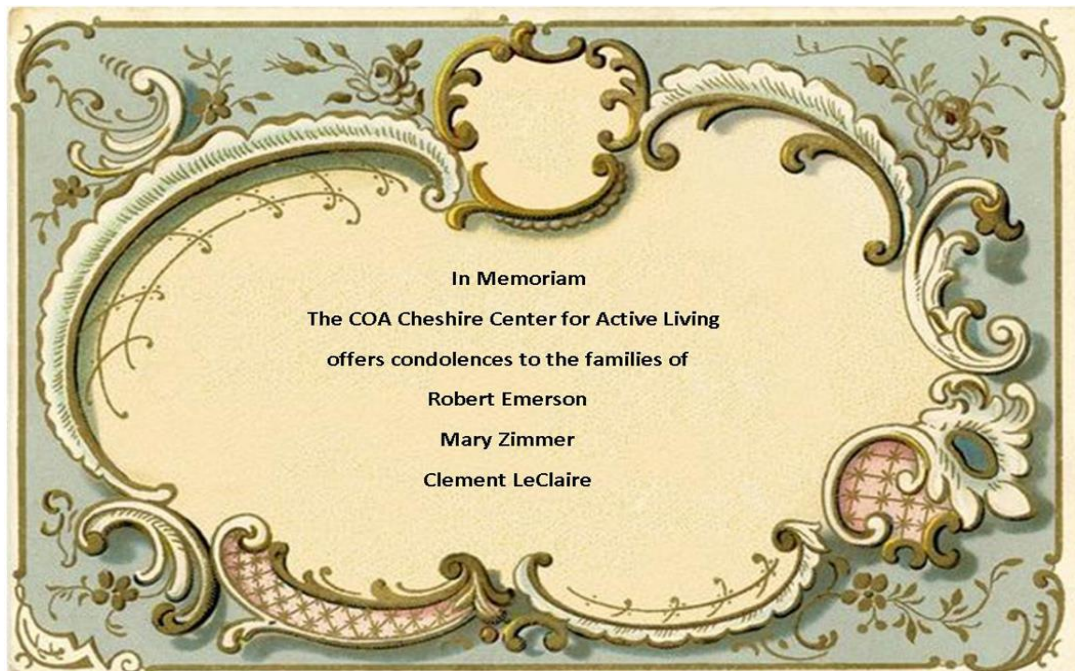
On a pleasant Sunday evening on June 13th, the Cheshire COA sponsored a Flag Day Ceremony at the CES bus circle in collaboration with the Adams American Legion Post 160 for the respectful disposal of unserviceable US flags in a dignified manner. Bob Balawender was not only the MC but also organized the event. The program commenced with

the Adams Post 160 flag disposal part of the ceremony which has been an integral part of American Legion's customs and traditions observed since 1937. This was followed by a faithful rendition of Red Skeleton's Pledge of Allegiance by a group of young Cheshire children with the help and guidance of Robin Poirot that explains the meaning of the words in the Pledge.

The children also sang the George M Cohan song You're a Grand Old Flag for the raising of the Stars



and Stripes. The COA can not begin to thank all those many many people who helped us make this such a memorable event. And a big thank you to all who came and support us in our programs and efforts.





Fourth and Final In The Series by Barry Emery

Biography

John Randolph Farnum

The three previous installments have contained articles from the 1858 newspaper that John Farnum wrote called the "Stafford Hill Independent. He was eighteen at the time and living in Cheshire on Stafford Hill. There is only one known copy and the project seems to have been done on a whim - inspired maybe by his interest in poetry and journalism which he later pursued as a career.

John was born on August 26 1839. He had an older brother and sister and two younger brothers. His father was Warner Farnum whose occupation was farming and his mother Isannah. The family lived near the intersection of Stafford Hill Road and Windsor Rd. Nothing is known of his early years prior to age eighteen, but he must have been well read because of both current and historical references he makes in various articles of his newspaper.

At age 23 John is listed in a Civil War draft list. As shown below, he was a teacher in Wilbraham, MA

U.S., Civil War Draft Registrations Records, 1863-1865 for John Farnum
Massachusetts > 10th > Vol 1 of 4

CONSOLIDATED LIST		of		the		State of		Massachusetts	
7	Farnum John	28	Teacher	do	do	do	do	do	do

at the time. He was not drafted into the Cheshire regiments because he was living out of town and thus is not listed in the military rolls of Cheshire. However, he was drafted into the Mass 15th Infantry in 1863. The 15th suffered the most casualties of any Massachusetts unit. They saw action in many battles with a huge number of casualties. Then on June 22, 1864 the entire regiment save one officer and five men were taken prisoners. These along with those who returned from hospitals or from detached service were attached to another unit until July 12 when the remnant was sent home to Worcester and the men were mustered out on August 6. Fortunately, Farnum must not have been injured, or at least seriously, because a month later he enrolled in Wesleyan College in Connecticut. John Randolph Farnum graduated from Wesleyan in 1867. He must have been well liked and respected because he is listed in the graduation program as the class president. Upon graduation he went back into education, followed by a variety of jobs but he eventually and so fittingly became the editor of a newspaper!

John Farnum and his wife Augusta both died in 1911 and are buried in Cheshire.

- ❖ 1867 Principal of Academy, Franklin NH
- ❖ 1868-71 Principal of High School, Bristol, Conn.
- ❖ 1871 Admitted to the Bar
- ❖ 1872-73 Practiced Law in Newtown, Conn & Acting
Principal
- ❖ 1873-76 Editor of *The Litchfield Sentinel*
- ❖ 1876 Assistant Clerk Connecticut House of
Representatives

High Tea at Wiater Farm

The social event of the season so far was held on the sunny afternoon of June 11 at Wiater Farm at Cheshire Harbor.

Mark Bssaillon hosted a lovely tea party with approximately 20 guests for a time of sharing an array of cakes and cookies and appreciation for the beautiful flowers, plantings and antiques about the old homestead. Vintage china and serving pieces lent a genteel and anachronistic air to the gathering. Many guests were bedecked in floppy hats and flowing dresses as old and new friends chatted and reminisced.

Mark sums it up best:

“A wonderful time was had by all. Words can not describe how much fun we had this afternoon celebrating life and the lives of those who made us who we are.

The Wiater Farm was alive with friends, food and stories. A special thanks goes to Queen of parties Luann LaFogg who staged the event. My words can not describe how beautifully this event was done.”



July Activities

- Join Morning Exercise Friday @ 9:00am



every Monday, Wednesday, and

- Cheshire Pantry: Saturday, July 3, 2021 from 11am to noon

- Wreath Making



with Nancy: July 6, 2021 @ 12:30pm –

- Foot Clinic: July 15, 2021. By appointment

- Card Making



with Lorraine: July 20, 2021 @ 12:30

- IT Cell phone instruction: Saturday, July 24, 2021 10am- noon

August Activities

- Morning Exercise 9am -10am Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays
- New programs to be announced
- Cheshire Pantry August 7, 2021 11am-noon

Please call to schedule time to use the easy board bikes, pickleball or shuffleboard equipment. There is no fee. Why not enjoy a cup of coffee while relaxing in our raised gardens or volunteer at the Center.

A New Historical Landmark in Cheshire

by John Tremblay

As you may already know, Cheshire has a rich and incredibly interesting history. Whether regarding religion, politics, or varied industries such as limestone, glass, and leather, the town's founders possessed a passion and ingenuity rivalling any.

Cheshire was also long known for its thriving dairy farms. So in 1801, when religion met politics met dairy, the most profound piece of town history emerged.

In the first presidential election of the 19th century, Cheshire had a clear favorite; the Republican Thomas Jefferson. In fact, when our voters went to the polls, folklore says that his opponent, Federalist John Adams, received just one ballot (considered a mistake and thrown out). The significance of this result can't be overstated, as Jefferson lost in every other Berkshire County town.

In the afterglow of victory, Jefferson's friend Rev. John Leland endeavored to send him a "mammoth" gift, resulting in the now famous Cheshire Cheese which was formed from the milk of 900 local cows, weighed 1235lbs, and spent a month in transit to the White House.

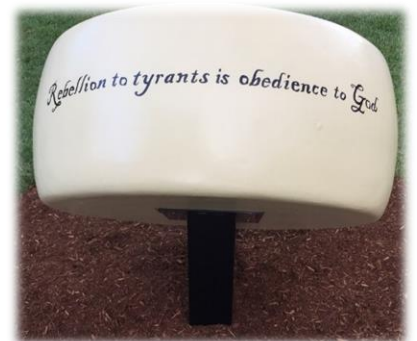
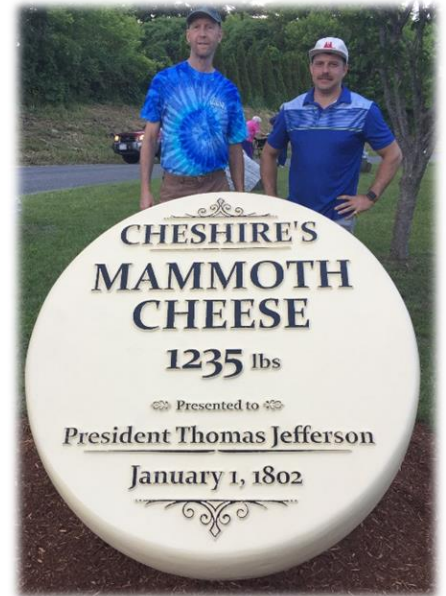
This historic event is the inspiration for the third Cheshire Community Association (CCA) Art on the Trail installation. Thanks to a grant from the Northern Berkshire Cultural Council, and many hours of donated labor, and materials, a full-size replica of the Mammoth Cheshire Cheese – 4 feet in diameter and 18 inches thick - now resides seasonally at the intersection of Church St. and the Ashuwillticook Trail.

The genesis of this recently unveiled sculpture was a casual meeting held at a picnic table on the Diane's Twist property (home to the first two art installs). Local Artist, Sign Maker & Fabricator, Brent Whitney, floated the idea, which at first seemed outrageous on a shoestring budget and narrow time window. But, in the spirit of "what would John Leland do"?.....we dove in.

So, how do you build a Mammoth Cheese? One curd at a time..... 😊

The intensive work included: cutting of foam to build the core; gluing & initial shaping; the addition of High-Density Urethane foam to the face; text design & machining of the HD foam; fiberglass & resin application for rigidity; and finally sanding & painting. All this in honor of our forefathers.

The photos below highlight the project phases along with Brent's impressive craftsmanship. Similar to our predecessors, enough cannot be said about his passion, dedication and countless hours offered without compensation.





We would also like to recognize the incredible generosity of the following businesses: LP Adams, RIBCO Supply, Berkshire Custom Coating, East Coast Refinishing, Home Depot, Whitney's, GRIMCO & DUNA Group, & Sherwin Williams.

This tribute is offered in the hope that it will further the legacy of our amazing community and inform visitors from all walks of life how special Cheshire truly is.

Be sure to stop by and check it out.

COLLECTORS

What is the definition of "collectables?" The Merriam-Webster Dictionary says, for example, stamps. Nowadays, "Collecting" is the new word for "Hoarding." If the collecting creates an unsafe and or unhealthy environment, the local Board of Health may have to step in to assist the Collector in finding an agency, family member, or friend to assist in a non-intrusive clean up.



If you watch the TV show, "Hoarding" you get the opportunity to view homes that definitely have excess collectables. These homes often resemble the environment that people experienced as children and taken over to adulthood, or they respond to a life experience that was shattering to the individual, so they are just overwhelmed and thus their living environment becomes too much to organize and keep in order. To give up control of what they do with their "Treasures" can be monumental to some people. Mental health is also a part of "Collecting" and it is ideal if the collector is willing to work with an expert in the field of the letting go of their possessions. When you listen to different stories, each person has their own reasons for collecting, and each seems understandable.

Take collecting newspapers, for example. The individual will stack them and save them until they get around to reading them. Since actual reading rarely occurs, the stack grows and grows to a point where there may be no space in the room to walk except for perhaps a narrow walkway to get through. As the collection grows, each room is taken over and eventually all rooms are filled from floor to ceiling. The kitchen may be stacked with dirty dishes, old food containers, and what someone else might consider garbage. However, the Collector sees these things as stuff that they might need in the future, and they do not want to part with anything until they personally check it out.

In some cases, the basic needs of a person's house are not in working condition such as the toilet, or water for taking a shower or bath. Unfortunately for some, not using a toilet causes health issues and the person may possibly face eviction from their home. Some people live without electricity or heat, which is a dangerous living condition, which in turn causes health issues – even death.

In addition to their collection, many people will also keep animals such as birds, cats, dogs, rabbits, and reptiles. When animal urine and feces accumulate and are never cleaned up, this too causes possible health issues and it attracts vermin. This neglect of a house causes structural damage, rotted floors, holes in walls and

in the ceilings. This situation can also affect neighbors as the vermin multiply and can travel to neighboring homes causing extra expenses for exterminator charges.

While dealing with “Collectors” can be a struggle, there is help to make changes. Should you, a family member, or a friend be in this situation, and you think it might be helpful if my having a friendly talk with the collector and to advise them of the agencies helping specifically in this field, please do not hesitate to call me. All calls are confidential. Our goal is to seek help so each individual can live safely. I have been working with the Cheshire Board of Health and have found the member to be most cooperative in guiding individuals to healthy living. All information is kept private and confidential. Please call: Carole Hilderbrand, Director, Cheshire Center for Active Living. (413) 743-9719

Senior / Community Center

CHP Mobile Health Van

The CHP medical van is scheduled for Cheshire once a month. Please follow our Facebook page for dates and times. If you need any non-emergency medical attention or have medical questions stop by and ask the CHP Mobile Health Unit staff. No appointments needed and open to anyone. You may also call Carole with any questions at the COA office @ 413-743-9719



Cheshire COA Van

The COA Cheshire Center for Active Living van is available Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays. Please call 24 hours before to schedule a ride. A \$2.00 donation is appreciated. Call: (413) 446-2559.



The Café at 119 School Street, Cheshire - Hot Lunch for Seniors - The Cafe will open on Wednesday, July 7th at 11:30am. The Elder Services lunches will be served

Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays inside with the Grab n Go meals to continue five days a week if there is a need. 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 1 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.

Brown Bag – Free paper bag of food available on Friday, July 23rd and Friday August 27th between 1 and 2 pm. Contact Carole to sign up.

Foot Clinic - The Foot Clinic will be scheduled for July 15th. 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.

Quilting - Quilting is on the second and fourth Thursday of the month, 1pm-3pm led by Betty King.

The **Cheshire Senior Club**, the **Blood Pressure Readings**, and the **Community Book Club** are on hold.

Community Notes

Town of Cheshire - Town of Cheshire Special Election Debt Exclusion, Tuesday, August 24, 2021. Polls open 9:00 am to 7:00 pm. Absentee/Early Voting ballots will be available for this election. Please call the Town Clerk's Office to make arrangements for these ballots, 743-1690 ext. 22.

PLEASE LICENSE YOUR DOG! August 1st a fine and late fee will add \$40 to the cost of the license. A current rabies vaccination slip must be provided. This year the dogs are licensed totally through the mail. The "drop-box" at the Church Street entrance to Town Hall may be used to put the envelope containing the vet's slip for rabies, a check for the correct amount and a stamped (2 stamps) self-addressed envelope. Male/females intact \$20 and Neutered/Spayed \$10.

The Fire Departments annual Cruz-Nite and Fireworks is returning on August 14th, Saturday from 4 to 10 pm. The Berkshire County Nite Cruzers cars will be on display, plenty of food and ice cream, rock wall, bounce house, raffles and live band will be there. Fireworks will be at 9:30.

Historical Commission - The Cheshire Historical Commission is eager to move into our new headquarters on the ground floor of Town Hall. This area will provide space and accessibility for all visitors to our upcoming displays.

Cheshire Library - Summer Reading Program "Tales & Tails" runs for 8 weeks. Participants keep a reading log of the books read during this period. Certificates and Gift Certificates will be awarded at the end of the program.

Children and young adults participating in the program are welcome to come to the Library on most Mondays between 10 am and 2 pm to choose and check out books. Call 743-4746 on Mondays to make sure the Library is open.

The Library is still doing Inter Library Loan pick-ups on Mondays.

If you have a request for a certain title, please call, leave your name, phone number and the title of the requested book or books.

Cheshire Ladies' Reading Club – We have continued our meetings despite the tribulations of the past year, maintaining our attendance via computer. Our in-person meetings will now be held at the Cheshire Senior Center for Active Living for the coming months. This spring we planted the flowers in the Watering Trough in the center of town and members take turns maintaining it throughout the growing season. This has been an ongoing tradition of our group for many decades. We would like to thank long standing member Pauline Bell who gave a generous donation for our flower purchase in memory of her mother Jeannette Willett, who loved to read and enjoyed the trough plantings every year and was also a member of the Reading Club. Our fond thoughts and best wishes go out to member Evelyn Reynolds who has been unable to attend our meetings.

If you're interested in becoming a member, contact Pat Gebarowski at 743-2177 for more information.

Cheshire Community Association (CCA) - We are pleased to announce that the CCA will be presenting its 6th Annual Block Party.

6th Annual Block Party

When : Friday, July 23rd, from 6pm - 8pm.

Where: In front of Town Hall with Church Street closed to traffic

Music: Local favorite Bobby Sweet & his band

Admission: Free

We hope you can join us!

Become a Friend of the Cheshire COA

You might have heard of the Friends but wondered just what they do for us.

Through the COA, the Friends support our programs and activities financially in areas where the town or available grants do not.

In the past few months they have made a generous gift to the Cheshire Pantry, underwrote the cost of the ice cream vouchers given to children who participated at the Flag Day Ceremony, were instrumental in deferring part of the cost of the many gift cards for Volunteer Appreciation Month, purchased winter coats for children and adults and will be buying the pizza, desserts and beverages for the upcoming Sheryl Faye presentation of Ruth Bader Ginsburg show in September. The Friends also supply support in the planning and financial aid for other social, educational, cultural activities as well as transportation to some of these events as the need arises.

Please consider becoming a member of the Friends by sending a \$10 check made out to the Friends of the Cheshire COA for the annual dues to Ed St John, 4 Edmunds Street Unit N101, Adams, MA 01220

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

Director

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

Van

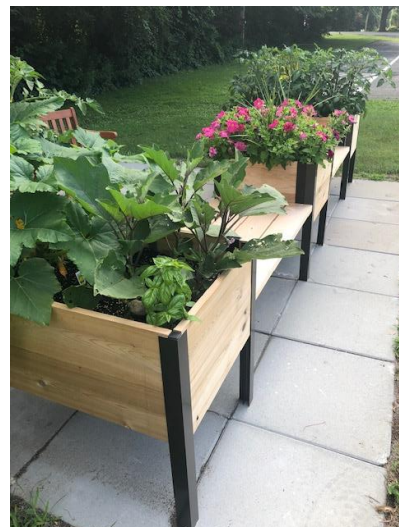
413-446-2559

Car, Adams COA

Medical Appointments 413-743-8333

Friends of Cheshire COA

Ed and Pam St. John estjohn1@roadrunner.com



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