



# Cheshire Chatter

March / April 2021



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

## *Carole's Thought's*

Why has the telephone at the Cheshire Senior Center been ringing off the hook? Since Governor Baker announced that residents 75 years old and over, and in the case of Cheshire, residents up to 109 years old, are eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccination.

Since we have the birthday list by dates, we quickly started tracking telephone numbers. Fortunately, there are two old telephone books in my office, and we were able to track most residents. Carol F. took on the difficult task of calling residents and entering information into the computer. This task took one week as we had 348 individuals to contact. At the end of the week, we were notified that the data base with our information was being eliminated and we would have to make recalls. Thank you to volunteers Carol F., Peter T., John B., Nancy D. and Jennifer G. for assisting in the project for scheduling new appointments. We are now working on scheduling second appointments and gearing up for the next phase.

Thanks to Les R. as he arranged his schedule to accommodate the needs of those without transportation to provide door to door van vaccination services. Monday and Wednesday the van can be scheduled for general needs.

Family members and those with computer skills provided assistance to their loved ones which lessened our contacts.

Thank you to all the volunteers and staff at St. Elizabeth's in North Adams vaccination site as the process was very well organized, friendly, and compassionate. Residents reported that it was a pleasant experience.

As I write this, changes are taking place whereby if someone is a caretaker, they will be allowed to accompany an elder and can receive the appropriate vaccination. Coordinating the appointment means both have to apply for the same time, same place, and same vaccine. Second appointments have to go through the data entry process as well. Additionally, 65-74 year old seniors are currently able to sign up and Cheshire has 560 individuals eligible.

Please call the center for scheduling assistance. (413) 743-9719.

On February 2, 2021 the CHP medical van offered COVID-19 testing as well as blood pressure testing, temperature taking, and answers to medical questions. No appointment is necessary, and services are available from 10am to noon on the first Wednesday of the month.

Elder Services continues to deliver Grab N' Go daily hot meals for seniors five days per week. A \$2.00 donation is appreciated. Beautiful handmade Valentine Day cards were made by Elder Services and handed out with lunches.

Let's think spring! Slowly the raised gardens are being delivered so just envision planters filled with vegetables and flowers in full bloom. As a surprise, there will be a sitting area to relax and enjoy the company of your friends at the center. It's going to be a fun project and volunteers will be needed to make this happen. Green thumbs are not required.

Pickle board equipment has arrived and will be available to all seniors.

The bicycles are in and will be ready for trail riding once the snow piles melt. I know I want to sign up to take a daily ride. Will you join me? The bikes are senior friendly!

During the Pandemic, the safest way to be is to be isolated. However, living alone is not so easy. There is just so much TV one can watch. Eyes get tired after reading a few pages. We want to chat with someone – we miss people. Think about making a phone call to your friends, neighbor or relative. Write a note or knock on your neighbor's door with some cookies or artwork from your children. Let's make someone's day by caring. If you would enjoy a daily or weekly phone call – just let me know. Let's chat.

Betty King is busy working on writing birthday cards for March seniors.

If you are struggling with paying the bills, low on heat, or need food – please call me at

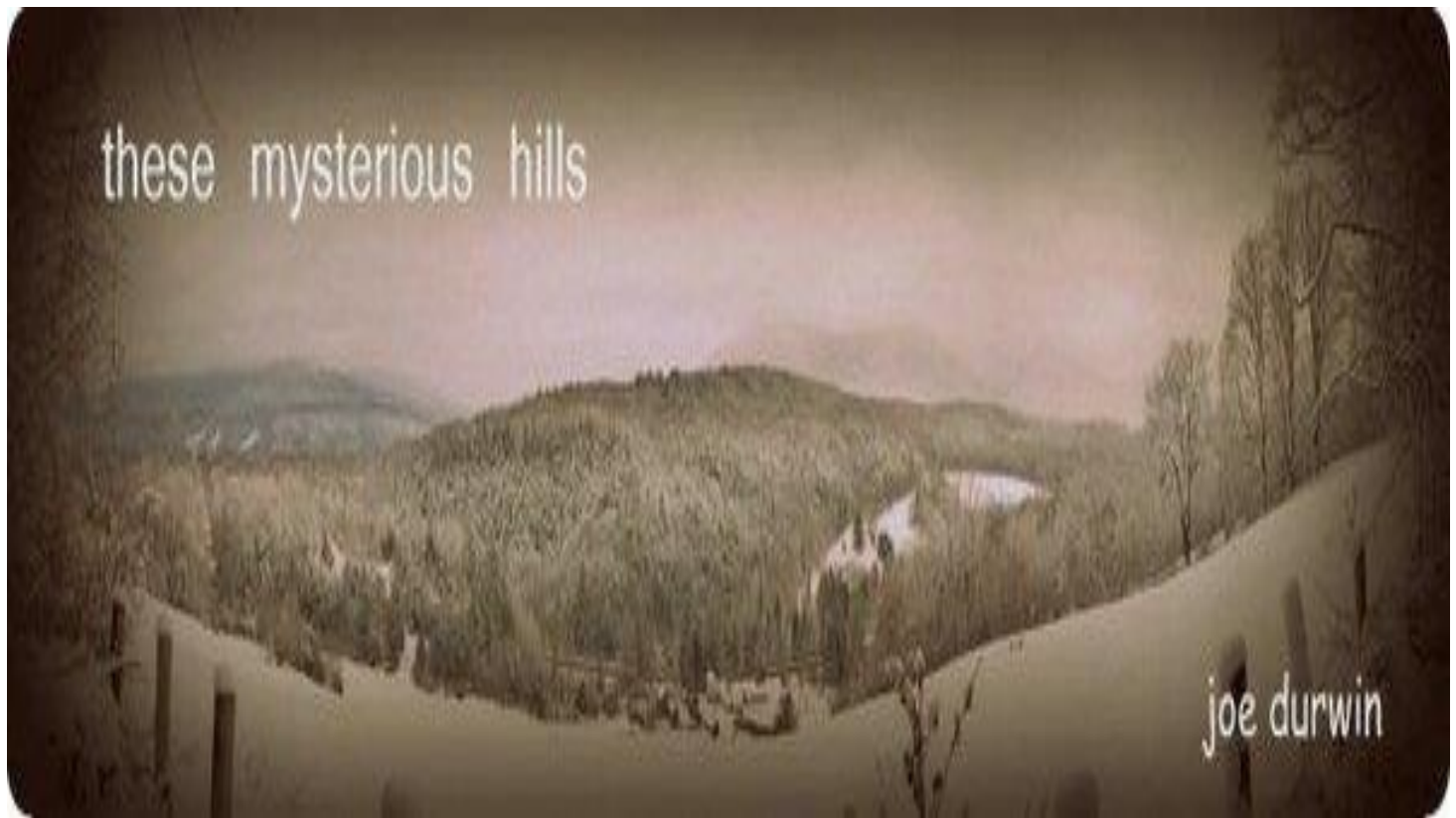
(413) 743-9719.

Emergency food is always available. Just call or stop by. The Cheshire Pantry assisted 94 families with pantry bags on February 6<sup>th</sup>. The Pantry will operate on March 6<sup>th</sup> and April 3<sup>rd</sup> from 11 am to noon.

This too shall pass.

Thank you to our many Cheshire volunteers!!!!

*Carole*



## These Mysterious Hills: The Passion of Elder Leland

By Joe Durwin... *Or Historic Cheshire Resident Tangled With the Mysterious?*

CHESHIRE, Mass. — Ghost stories are by no means a new occurrence to the Berkshires, begun when such historic venues as The Mount and Ventfort Hall began opening their doors to tech-toting paranormalists from the SyFy channel. Even in its earliest histories and records, there is a liberal peppering of references to preoccupations with witchcraft, apparitions and mysteries.

One of its most distinguished early citizens, Elder John Leland, is worth noting for his impact on the vast folklore of the Berkshires. Leland, who served as baptist minister in Cheshire from 1791 to 1841, was an influential abolitionist and friend to Presidents Jefferson, Madison and Monroe, but is best remembered as the man behind the creation of the Mammoth Cheese.

Most locals are probably at least passingly familiar with the story of how Cheshire gained some measure of fame in 1802 with its presentation of a massive block of locally made cheese to Thomas Jefferson, commemorated today by the Cheshire Cheese Press monument in its small downtown area, and even a couple of children's books.

Less well known, perhaps, is the deeply political aspects of the process, and just how controversial the Mammoth Cheese actually was, both locally and in Washington. Similarly less well known today is a longtime local legend, in which is told the historically uncertain events surrounding the temporary disappearance of the ton-weighting cheese wheel.

As the story goes, there lived on Mount Greylock an old Indian medicine man by the name of Hokaposset. This old shaman was viewed with much trepidation by locals, who attributed vast powers to him, including the power



**Pastor John Leland reportedly had brushes with the mysterious during his years in Cheshire.**

to kill a stag merely by pointing an unloaded rifle at it, and to cause mysterious deaths to befall his enemies.

The old native sorcerer had but one living relative, his granddaughter, Shonoma, also known as "Humming Bird." Humming Bird was much in love with, and loved by, a local boy by the name of Ichabod Rannolds. Pastor Leland, it was said, advised the boy's mother to forbid the match. When Ichabod, a dutiful son, broke the bad news to Humming Bird, she became furious. She warned him of her grandfather's powers, and that he would cause suffering to those who caused pain to his only granddaughter. Ichabod did not relent, and the next day, Pastor Leland was shocked when one of his deacons brought him the news that the entire cheese wheel — which had been stored in the barn of one Captain Brown — had disappeared.

Ichabod, suspecting the culprit to be the old shaman, went with some other men to the mountain to confront him, but when they arrived, Humming Bird said her grandfather was very ill and was indeed near death. She begged him to leave and let him die in peace. Hokaposset, who was indeed quite sick, died that very night. That morning, when Captain Brown opened the door of his cider mill, he was shocked to see that the cheese wheel, completely intact, had mysteriously reappeared.



**The 'Big Cheese' mysteriously disappeared one night and then reappeared the next, according to one story.**

This was not to be Elder Leland's final brush with These Mysterious Hills. Tucked away in the vault of the Berkshire Athenaeum, an obscure little 1838 manuscript tells in the Baptist clergyman's own words of unexplained occurrences in his own home. For months, writes Leland, his house was plagued by the sound of a strange unearthly voice, which would moan and groan throughout the nights, causing he and his family great consternation. Leland consulted colleagues, and at one point removed all of the cupboard doors throughout the house, but could find no logical answers to its source or to ridding himself of these sporadic miserable groans.

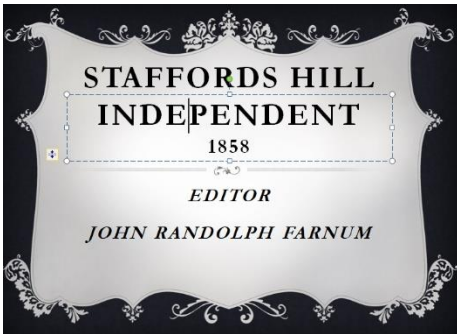
One night, the sound began to slowly move from where it was usually confined and move toward the pastor and his wife's bedroom. Elder Leland, struck by fear, began to pray "as never before."

"I asked the Lord," he writes, "to deliver me and my family from this annoyance, and that it might be explained to us, and then depart."

At this point, Leland writes, his prayer was half answered. The noise grew at first exceedingly loud, and then receded. He never heard it again, nor found any satisfactory explanation as to what had happened.

He concluded, simply: "I have given you a simple and true history of the facts and you may form your opinion. I have none."

*These Mysterious Hills is a production of writer Joe Durwin and columnist for iBerkshires. This October 21, 2012 article is republished here with permission.*



## Second In The Series by Barry Emery

Below are the transcriptions of several articles from this hand written 1858 document.

### Riddle

I am the ornament of the young, the crown of the old, a name for all the moral graces which adorn humanity. I am found in the vale and I illuminate the mountain. I cheer the cottager at his toil and inspire the sage at his meditation. I mingle in the crowd of cities and bless the hermit in his cell. I have a temple in every heart that owns my influence and to him that wishes for me I am already present. Science may raise thee to eminence and I alone can guide thee to felicity.

---

I will all be right

There's happiness within this world,  
if we have friends to love us.

If we have one who's golden smiles  
been like the hopes above us.

Let's sorrow mark us with its blight  
if we are loved t'will all be right

There's much of comfort in this life

---

Every heart has a secret drawer the  
spring of which is only known to the  
owner

Cheshire April 30, 1858

Dear friend Almon

I have not quite forgotten you yet, we have been very busy this Spring we have got our Springs work all done but finishing have plowed between one and twenty acres. Sowed and planted some so & so. I have not been down to see Daniel but once since he took his seat in the presidential chair. Oh I mean Post office chair. I thought he worked well for a colt only he was a little affraid of the mares but I rather think he has got over that by this time. I should have gone down since but I have been lame with a "biler" on my walking sticks, and lame in one arm and can't do nothing with the other. I was down to meeting Sabbath and see Morton he said that he and Jane M. got a long finely. When you receive this keep it shy do not let any one see it for I am almost a good mind not to send it the writing looks so much like crows tracks that I doubt whether you can read it or not. you must not be offended at one of the foregoing articles which is signed "Mount Saddle Correspondence" it is only intended for fun you know. And if you are thus afflicted you must try the cure that is recomended in the second article of the second page of this paper. 9 o clock at night it is very warm & cloudy been rather rainy to day and I feel rather heavy. Have not got the book quite all posted so I cannot let you know all the particulars this time in relation to the sisters with respect to the old folks and misses to the old maids not over sixteen. I remain truly yours  
John Farnum

## *Fashion*

*Time was when girls wear bonnets wore  
projecting half a yard before  
When beauty was just hidden deep  
Twas something even to get a peep  
But now a woman's fickle mind  
While men there features hide with hair  
The ladies go with laces bare*

## *Poetry*

### *The wife*

*A virtuous woman who can find,  
Of priceless value, good and kind,  
Whose presence in this vale of tears  
Man's lovely pathology cheers?*

*In her benevolent and just  
Her husband's heart doth safely trust  
Like a discreet and faithful wife  
She'll do him good through all his life*

*Her hands oft putting to the yarn  
A heap of stockings she will darn  
The children's clothes she fixes so  
That she is not afraid of snow  
The good man's callars free from dirt  
The buttons always on his shirt  
With grateful heart he loves to praise  
The one who guides her household ways*

## *A pretty woman*

*"A pretty woman is one of the institutions  
of the country - an angel in dry goods  
and glory. She makes sunshine blue sky,  
Fourth of July, and happiness wherever  
she goes. Her path is one of delicious  
roses, perfume and beauty. She is a sweet  
poem, written in rare curls and choice  
calico, and good principles. Men stand  
up before her as so many admiration  
points to melt into cream and then butter.  
Her words float round the ear like music,  
birds of paradise, or chimes of Sabbath  
bells. Without her society would lose its  
truest attraction, the church it's firmest  
reliance, and young men the very best of  
comfort and company. Her influence and  
generosity restrain the vicious, strengthen  
the weak, raise the lowly flannel-shirt the  
heathen, and strengthen the faint hearted.  
Wherever you find the virtuous woman,  
you also find pleasant fire side bouquets,  
clean clothes, order, good living, gentle  
hearts, music, light and model  
"institutions" generally. She is the flower  
of humanity a very Venus in dimit and her  
inspiration is the breath of heaven*

*[The exchange]*

*Cure for palpitation of the heart*

*A chap out west, who had been severely  
affected with palpitation of the heart,  
says he found instant relief by the  
application of another palpating heart  
to the part affected. Quite another  
triumph of homeopathy, "like cures  
like".*

*Indemnity for the past - pay up*

*Security for the future - pay down*

## RIDDLE

Solve the riddle in the Stafford Hill Independent newsletter. Call Carole with the correct answer at 743-9719. First caller with the correct answer wins their Grab n Go lunch for a week, 2nd correct caller wins their Grab n Go lunch for 3 days and 3rd correct caller wins their Grab n Go lunch for 2 days. Put your thinking cap on.

## Double mask for more protection



By now we know wearing a mask is an essential part of COVID-19 precautions to prevent the spread of the virus. Now we hear of more transmissible variants of the virus are rapidly spreading through the US and even more vigilance is necessary.

Based on a research study, the CDC (Center for Disease Control) has issued new guidelines as of February 10, 2021. They recommend the use of two masks to ensure a tighter fit and less chance of droplet spread. The research found that wearing either a multilayer fabric mask or a disposable surgical mask blocked about 40% of the particles coming at you when you're breathing in. When a cloth mask was worn over the disposable surgical mask exposure decreased by about 95%.

The fit is important:

- the mask must fit snugly over the nose and chin.
- The metal nose piece must be pinched to confirm to the nose. If it fits well you should see the mask material move in and out with your breathing
- No gaps on the sides. When wearing a disposable (commonly comes in a blue color) surgical mask, pinch the mask length-wise and tie a knot on either side as close to the mask as possible. Tuck the excess material inside the mask so there is no gap alongside the cheeks.(see illustration)

Add layers of material by wearing a cloth mask over the disposable mask to secure the fit.

But double masking is not recommended for all types of masks. Disposable masks are not designed to fit tightly and wearing more than one will not improve the fit.

Don't layer another mask over the N95 or the KN95 type either. That mask should be used alone since they are designed to fit closely. The CDC says cloth masks that have an exhalation valve or vents are not recommended either as they can allow droplets in or out when breathing.

(Go to [CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov), choose Your Guide To Masks on front page for more info)

The vaccines are coming and many of us have gotten at least the first one. We've come this far, let's take this extra step to get through this so hopefully we can be together and hug freely again soon.

## Senior / Community Center

The Council on Aging has purchased pickleball equipment for use by Cheshire residents. These include portable nets which may be used at the school. Also available are pickleball paddles and balls. During the late spring and summer instruction will be given at the Center for beginners who would like to start to play the game.

Pickleball is a very interesting game especially since no pickles are used. Pickleball is a paddle sport that combines elements of tennis, badminton and ping pong using a paddle and a plastic ball with holes. It's a game that is appropriate for players of any age and skill levels. Rules of pickleball are quite simple. Pickleball is played on a small court so you are close enough to have conversations making it fun to play with family or friends. Playing pickleball can boost your



mood and overall mental health, you burn calories, and fewer injuries occur due to the low impact nature of the game. Pickleball specifically works on your balance and agility while it also offers the same benefits of other regular exercise. If you are looking for some great exercise for your mind and body, pickleball can't be beat. The game is addictive because you seldom get the same shot twice. The ball is always coming back to you at a different height, speed, and angle. It requires practice which yields exercise and all while you are having fun adds to the allure of the game.

Watch our Facebook page for updates on pickleball or call Carole @ 743-9719.

Have you always thought how nice it would be to take a short bike ride on the trail, but you don't have a bike? Or because of physical limitations you find it difficult to get on a bike?

Well later this spring stop by the COA and check out our new Biria Easy Boarding 7 speed bikes. They have a very low profile, so you only have to lift your leg 6 inches to get onto the bike. It is also made of aluminum, so they are lightweight and easy to handle. The COA also has on order an adult tricycle that you will be able take out. Helmets will be available to you so that you can ride safely. So, stop by and take the bikes out for a spin in our big parking lot. When you're comfortable, the bike trail is just a short distance away. Don't like to ride alone? Not a problem we have three of the Biria Easy Board bikes, so bring a friend or two.



Biking is a great low impact, low stress exercise that is good for your heart and your memory. Your memory you say? Yes, you have to remember to bring the bike back to the Center so others can have a chance to ride them.



Nothing says spring like being able to plant flowers or vegetables and admire them as they grow. Later in April at the Center the COA will be installing a new garden and social area. The elevated raised bed cedar gardens will be easy to tend and admire. They will be set in a grouping with benches and seats that will invite you to stop over and sit with a book or enjoy a conversation or lunch with a friend. We also of course invite you to share in the planting and upkeep of the gardens. And with a little luck we will have a few flowers and vegetables to share.



## CHP Mobile Health Van



The CHP Mobile Health Van Unit is scheduled to be at the Cheshire Senior / Community Center at 119 School Street on the first Wednesdays of the month, March 3rd and April 7th from 10 am until noon. They will be offering Covid-19 testing and flu shots among other medical services. 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. Watch our Facebook page for any additional visits or changes in dates. You may also call Carole with any questions at the COA office @ 413-743-9719



## Cheshire COA Van Schedule

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.

**Brown Bag** – Free paper bag of food available on Friday, March 22<sup>nd</sup> and Friday April 23<sup>rd</sup> between 1 and 2 pm. Contact Carole to sign up.

**Foot Clinic** - The Foot Clinic will be on March 18<sup>th</sup>. 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** - Historical Commission

The Cheshire Historical Commission recently enjoyed (virtual) presentation by Barry Emery on "Epitaphs in Local Cemeteries". The clear images of the tombstones, on Zoom, made the event even more interesting.

**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 oldest continually existing reading group in the United States is alive and well right here Cheshire! We have valiantly carried on since 1879 when Emma Petticlerc (author of the 1885 History Of The Town Of Cheshire, along with Ellen Raynor ) and friends formed it, meeting on Friday evenings at members' homes. We are a *reading club*. We are not a Book Club- not that there's anything wrong with that. We *read* during the meetings so there is no pressure to finish a book or give a presentation. We also share poems we love, and learn some history, usually with a local connection. We would normally not be meeting during the winter, as our foremothers also suspended the group for the winter months. However pandemic times call for pandemic measures. We meet every two weeks, online, adhering to the prescribed format by reading but also enjoying camaraderie and a welcome friendship in this time of enforced isolation.

If you wish to join us call Pat at 413-743-2177.



## How's this for the "Can Do Cheshire Spirit" ?



This picture was taken February 19, 2018 of Bob Rathbun cleaning out a fire hydrant near his home . For those who did not know Bob,

he owned his own excavating business for over 60 years. He was also a volunteer fireman

and the Cheshire Water Department's superintendent for 35 years. Bob passed in October of 2019



# Become a Friend of the Cheshire COA

We invite you to join us and do your part by becoming a Friend of the Cheshire COA. The Friends of the COA provide financial and other support serving the needs of the senior population of Cheshire. By becoming a "Friend" and paying a ten-dollar annual membership fee, you will be supporting the activities of our seniors. The Friends have this past year made a substantial donation to the Cheshire Pantry, provided warm jackets to individuals through the COA and hope to resume their funding for social, educational, and cultural activities as the pandemic eases and makes these activities possible. Any support which you can provide would be most appreciated! Please join today and send your donation check 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

### 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](mailto:estjohn1@roadrunner.com)

**HOPING WE'LL BE**



**MEETING AGAIN SOON AT THE**

**CENTER LAUGHING**

**AND HUGGING AGAIN**

*Thank you to our advertisers. Please let them know you appreciate their support of the Cheshire Council on Aging when you patronize their establishment.*

The Cheshire Chatter is published in part with funding from the Executive Office of Elder Affairs

[www.harrysautosales.com](http://www.harrysautosales.com)

## Harry's Auto Automotive Sales and Service

239 North St (Route 8) Harry, Josie, Bill, Al, and Nick  
Cheshire, MA 01225  
(413) 743-2789

Ask about our  
**Guaranteed** ✓  
Credit Approval™

## WATERMAN EXCAVATING INC.

**BIGS WATERMAN  
PRESIDENT**

95 Main Street Tel 413 743-4913  
Cheshire, MA 01225 Fax 413 743-9075  
bigs@watermanexcavating.com Cell 413 441-9310



**H.D. REYNOLDS**  
Equipment Sales & Service

(413) 743-9512  
52 CHURCH STREET | CHESHIRE, MA 01225  
[WWW.REYNOLDSLAWNMOWER.COM](http://WWW.REYNOLDSLAWNMOWER.COM)

Broken power equipment?  
We can fix it, bring it in  
today!



**Whitney's Farm Equipment Sales**  
1775 S. State Rd. Rt.8 • Cheshire, MA  
413-442-4749

## Jay's Modern Bends

General Automotive Mechanics

912 South State Rd. Cheshire, MA (413) 443-7743

St. John Law Office   
*attorneys at law*

**413-743-0990**  
2 Center Street, Suite 6  
PO Box 228  
Adams, MA 01220

*The St. John Law Office represents a more than 70 year old  
tradition of legal excellence in Berkshire County.*

Mon	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat & Sun	413-743-1911
11:30	-	9	8	to 9	Cheshire, MA

"It's Hard to Beat Bedard!"



Rte 8 Cheshire, MA 01225 (413) 743-0014  
[www.bedardbros.com](http://www.bedardbros.com)

## SHEDS STUFF

Matt and Steve Mott, Owners  
Phone: 413-743-9964  
[www.berkshiresheds.com](http://www.berkshiresheds.com)  
Find us on Facebook

Sheds  
Garages  
Kids Swing Sets

Outdoor Furniture  
Horse Barns  
Gazebos  
Chicken Coops

Building Lifts  
Building Moves  
Pergolas



*Advertise on the Chatter*



For information on adding your advertisement to this  
page, contact Carole Hilderbrand at 413-743-9719

## Becks Printing

"We Are Your Printer"

16 Protection Avenue, North Adams, MA 01247

413-664-7411

[CustomerService@BecksPrinting.com](mailto:CustomerService@BecksPrinting.com)

Available 24/7 at

[www.BecksPrinting.com](http://www.BecksPrinting.com)

