



# Cheshire Chatter

January / February 2022



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

Photo contributed by Barry Emery

## *Carole's Thought's*

The year 2021 will go down in history as a challenging year worldwide. Fires, floods, pandemics, new viruses, and stresses causing anxiety. We are all being diligent in wearing masks, hand washing, and keeping our distance in an effort to keep everyone safe at the center.

Reflecting on the past year, we did not close the center but changed how we offered services. Vaccine appointments were scheduled for over 400 seniors with the CHP Medical Van continuing to offer vaccines, boosters, senior flu shots monthly. With no sit-down lunches provided, we worked with Elder Services of the Berkshires for packaged lunches to be received five days per week and we created a true Grab n Go lunch system which allowed us to address one hot meal a day to our seniors. Dan Skorcz and Don Pulver kindly continue to deliver luncheons to those without transportation.

Contact with residents continued and issues and concerns were addressed via telephone and computers. For several months we have offered back to normal services: Workshops, Exercise, sit down lunches, and guidance in seeking outside agency assistance for heat and food insecurities. A typical month for lunches is up to 452 or 100 lunches per week.

Although challenging times, the Cheshire COA Center for Active Living has grown in numbers, volunteers, and staff. To be positive, the center enjoyed a festive holiday celebration which included music and a sing along with our friendly van driver, Annemarie Furey, Santa who was played by Les Rhinemiller and surprised

each guest with a gift. A free raffle was offered, and the winners were Karen Drain and Ed Gwozdz. Woody Vaspra gifted our regular luncheon Veterans with a hat with the important word – VETERAN.

On Thursday, January 13, 2022 our foot nurse, Lynette Dukehart will be offering bimonthly services by appointment only.

Chair Yoga will take place on Fridays from 10-11 and the instructor is well known, Maryanne Kuff. Call the center to register.

Please check out our Facebook page for additional workshops and activities. (Floral Decorating and Card Making.)

Local Author, Christy Butler, will present a talk on his latest book for outdoor enthusiasts, hikers, and families on Wednesday, January 26, 2022 at 12:30 pm.

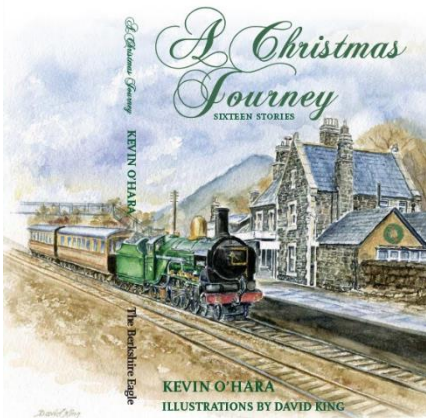
A workshop discussing Stress and Anxiety with Carole will be offered on Friday January 28<sup>th</sup> at 1pm. This will be in conjunction with Mary Lou Burdick and her publication of Rhyming Reflections and Inspired Intentions – Grace and Gratitude.

Quilting and Sewing continues with Betty King. All levels are welcomed and will be starting on Thursday, January 13, 2022 at 1pm and every other week thereafter. Betty also manages the Birthday Card Program and each month writes over 90 cards and includes a free lunch invitation.

Best wishes for the New Year-2022. Be thankful for the small things in life. Stay healthy safe. Treasure family and friends. **THANK YOU** to all the volunteers and donors of the COA –you are amazing!

Carole

## Kevin O'Hara Christmas Story Book Evening

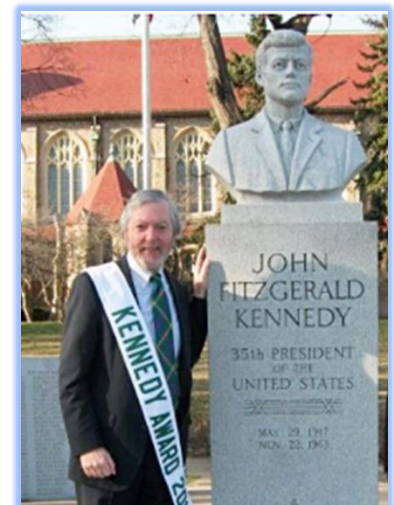


On December 3rd, the Cheshire COA was pleased to host a return visit by famous local author and Berkshire Eagle columnist Kevin O'Hara. The evening started with the serving of salad and pizza followed by a choice of desserts. Kevin read stories from his latest book *A Christmas Journey: Sixteen Stories* that is beautifully illustrated by David King. The book is divided into 3 sections, Boyhood Christmas, Hospital Christmas and Home for Christmas. Kevin swept us back in his memory with readings of his boyhood stories of his first love and a Paperboy's Loaves and Fishes, then onto his hospital career with a story about Mr. Keane and the Widow Wren and then a

story of Christmas Night at Rattigan's Pub.

Kevin O'Hara has authored two other acclaimed books, *Last of the Donkey Pilgrims* and *A Lucky Irish Lad*. This upcoming March he will release another book titled *The Ins and Outs of a Locked Ward*. In 2021 Kevin was the proud recipient of the John F Kennedy Award for being "an outstanding American of Irish descent".

We would like to thank the Friends of the Cheshire Council on Aging for underwriting this event.





## SENIOR'S CHRISTMAS PARTY



The Cheshire Senior Christmas party was held at the Center on December 22nd. The well attended event started with a hearty soup and hot food, plenty of desserts, bottomless cups of coffee, endless conversations and laughter, free prize raffles, live music with Christmas carol sing alongs and even a surprise visit from Santa who had gifts for all of our guests. Thank you to all who helped us in any way to make this a very special day for our senior community.



## When George Met Genevieve



When she walks into the room, her smile lights up the place. She greets everyone with a comment, "It's so good to see you", "You look so nice today." "I love to come here and see everybody, they're always so friendly".

Genevieve Beckwith's entrance usually precedes her husband George's. He walks a little slow these days but he also flashes a big smile. They sit together at lunch talking to their fellow diners. There's a frequent look or a smile between them and they will get up and dance, even now, though it's only in **place, whenever some music comes on.**

In 1954, George had just returned home to Adams, from a Navy hitch having traveled the world to places like Korea, Japan and Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. George met Genevieve Melito on Main Street in North Adams, her hometown. She was with a friend who George was thinking of dating. When he met Genevieve, a former Drury High School cheerleader, there was no one else. After three months of courtship they were married in St. Anthony's church in North Adams on September 25, 1954. They honeymooned at the Mount Airy Lodge in the Poconos and then settled back home in Adams, where they raised their two sons and daughter.

George worked at GE until his retirement. He was involved in civic groups and coaching sports, such as PAL and Pee Wee youngsters. Genevieve supported him by coaching the pint-size cheerleaders. In 2006 they moved from Adams and have devoted much time to improving their new Cheshire home and being able to travel to far flung places such as Aruba, France, Germany, Rome, Venice and Hawaii.

George stopped driving last year, feeling his reflexes weren't as good as he would like. They remain in their beloved home supported by their children and getting out to socialize as much as they can. Married 67 years and going strong.

# World War II Veteran Award



On November 17th, the Cheshire COA Center for Active Living was privileged to host a full house for lunch and have the opportunity to honor one of Cheshire's true heroes. Cheeso Massaconi, now 99 years old, was present as he is on many Wednesdays for our lunches. Woody Vaspra was master of ceremonies on that day and spoke glowingly of Cheeso and all the veterans. Woody awarded Cheeso a plaque which reads " Presented to Charles Narchesso Massaconi in honor of your courageous service in the United States Army during World War II including duty on Iwo Jima and Saipan 1942 - 1945."



## The Incognito Vietnam Veteran

**When Vietnam Veterans including myself returned from Vietnam, there were no tributes, recognition, speeches, parades, even handshakes for us. It was an obscure re-entry into society. Many of the Veterans came back either physically, mentally, emotionally or spiritually broken or a combination thereof. Some of them came back as POWs, who suffered many indignities while in captivity. It was not a pleasant return for many of us who served in Vietnam.**

**However, I was one of the fortunate Veterans. We were able to reenter society, go back to school, find a job and raise a family, but the Vietnam experience never went away. Then there were others that were not able to do those normal things, because they were not able to fit back into society. Many of them were the outcasts, committed suicide, became drug addicts and/or turned out to be the "forgotten ones". Some of us to this day still remain somewhat Incognito, but are slowly coming out finding their brothers and sisters who served in Vietnam, so a healing process can begin.**

**It is time now time to pay tribute to all the Veterans, our brothers and sisters that served in Vietnam or the "nightmare" for many that served there. Many of our Veterans were drafted or joined the military thinking they could do something for their country or for economic or social reasons. They went to Vietnam with some innocence, but mostly acute fear as to the potential outcome. While there, our brothers & sisters experienced hell, which would stay with them for the rest of their lives. The experience of battle does not go away, you just have to learn how to live with it for the rest of your life.**

**This tribute is about remembering what the Vietnam Veteran, our brothers and sisters, did for this country. They gave their lives whether they died in battle or came home and died later. They paid the ultimate price. At present, there are 58,281 names of our brothers and sisters on the Vietnam Memorial Wall and more are being added every year. There were 2,709,918 men and women, who served in Vietnam. Their experience is forever. The remembering of our Brothers and Sisters must go on.**

**"Our Fellow Veterans will never be forgotten & will always remain in our hearts."**

Woody Vaspra, Major, USAFR (Ret)  
Vietnam Veterans Organization, Chapter 65; American Legion, Post 68



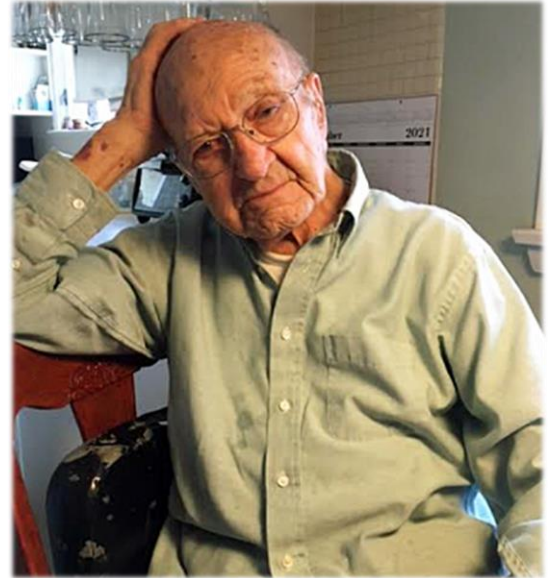
# Growing Up In Cheshire

Michael Berti, known to many as “Mickey” was born April 20, 1927 at home on the kitchen table, delivered by town doctor Harry N. Archibald.

Mike grew up in Scrabbletown, a close knit, largely Italian working class neighborhood over the tracks, enclosed by rivers on either end.

Mike’s dad, Mario Enrique Berti, worked at GE.

Mom, Nina Lancia Berti, was a homemaker, very active in her later years along with her friend Mary Pergiovanni in the Green Thumb Organization, which was, and still is in some areas, a government employment program for retired seniors. It is designed to improve and beautify the environment. Mike’s only sibling, Antoinette, came along when he was 15. The Berti’s lived in a house on the corner of Main Street and Flaherty Road which was taken by the flood of 1938.



Mike and his buddies in the neighborhood did the usual things growing up, swimming in the wide curve of the Hoosac River, playing baseball in the summer, spear fishing in McDonald Brook, strawberry picking on Keegan’s Knoll off of Furnace Hill, eating as much as they could and bringing the rest of their pickings home to their moms to make pies. Mike’s son Steve now is the owner of the Keegan Farm.

The mischievous boys would go down to Phil Boyer’s farm located where Pine Valley Mobile Home Park is now. One favorite activity was climbing on the silo filled with corn. Sometimes they might get a little tipsy breathing in the fumes from the fermentation process going on in there.

A fresh snowfall was a time for epic sliding runs. The gang would walk up Windsor Road through “the Dugway” to the top of the hill by Martin’s farm. From there they would slide gloriously fast down the hills and around the curves all the way to the railroad bridge where the tracks ran.

The train tracks have now given way to the Ashuwillticook Rail Trail.

A good sled ride could also be had by hitching on to the horse-drawn drays pulling logs down Wells Road to the Farnum’s Lime kilns where they were used to fuel the furnaces.

The boys would let go before the bridge so they wouldn’t get in trouble with the policeman on patrol. Joe Hitchcock had a whistle, a hat, a badge and a cap gun to keep traffic safely flowing over the bridge according to Mike.

The dray was a flat platform mounted on runners for hauling logs or heavy cargo over the snow covered road.

The bridge over the river by the tracks was the line of demarcation for the Scrabbletown kids. They were not always welcomed in the “better” parts of town, as Mike puts it and sometimes could get into fights with the uptown kids. On Sundays there was a regular fight scheduled after church behind the school and was usually a faceoff between Farnum’s kids and one of the downtown kids. Venturing up to the Cheshire School was an attraction though, especially the lure of the huge World War 1 cannons in front of the school that seemed to be made for young boys to climb on in peaceful times.

Sometimes neighborhood mischief was the result of the kids believing they were treated poorly by a grownup. One cranky elderly man on the street was unfortunately caught in his outhouse a few times when it was tipped over on its door and he had to crawl out through the bottom, Mike recalls with glee.

The guys, Mike, Paul Tracy, Norman Dean, Wesley Kelson, and Bernie Maroni could earn pocket money mowing lawns at the cemetery or for some of the larger homes up the hill on the main road. Mike remembers one customer, Mrs. Wells, who would inspect the shorn lawn by getting down at eye level saying “that’s not even, you missed a spot” and make them redo it. They laboriously pushed the heavy mower over it once again before they could collect their pay.

Sometimes the boys could make some money shoveling pea-coal into Nick Graziani’s truck at Bowen’s grist mill located then on Railroad Street at the end of Richardson Street, now a neighborhood of postwar houses. The mill foreman could often be slow to pay them, making them come back a few times for their money.

One time, the friends arranged to talk to the foreman under the chute that was used to load the grain into trucks. When he was positioned just right underneath the chute, one of the guys sneaked up to the second floor and sent a big scoop of grain down the chute into his shirt and down his neck, covering him.

Mike attended Cheshire school and remembers the strict discipline in force there by the teachers and the principal Bessie Driscoll. One time Mike was running in the hall and bumped into his math teacher, Miss Contois. As punishment for that infraction Mike was kept after school and couldn’t go home that day until he learned the entire multiplication tables. He’s able to recite them accurately to this day.

In 1944 at age 17, Mike enlisted in the service following his older cousins Victor and Paul Berti into the Navy.

He served his 2 year hitch in California, part of the time guarding a Japanese internment camp.

Returning home, he met Priscilla Barthe of Adams at a dance at the Polish Hall on the corner of North Summer Street. “Pat” as she was known, loved to dance. They were married April 22, 1950. They were married 66 years.

Mike then worked at a quarry in Cheshire known as Pettino's New England Inc. located just off Route 8 past Bedard’s Auto, whose original structure was on the west side of the highway. The quarry, on the east side of the highway known as Sand Mill Hill, was mined for fine grade silica sand which was shipped to Israel to be made into false teeth, as Mike recalls. It was used for the manufacture of steel, glass, abrasives, and filtration as well. The small stone building remains, once serving as the business office for the mining operation. You can still see an old steam shovel similar to the one that was used at the quarry on Route 8, in the sand bank on the left a little after the old Country Charm restaurant site near the cord wood operation. That steam shovel is a Lorain and is about twice the size of the shovel that was used at Pettino's. The original shovel used at Pettino's was an Erie last owned by Bruno Budda at his operation off East View Drive in Cheshire. The Erie machine was sent to the scrap yard about a decade ago. There was also a tunnel that went under Route 8 to haul the sand, via a little train, to be processed and loaded on to rail cars waiting on sidings by the lake. The tunnel has since been filled in but you can still feel a slight bump as you go up the hill past Bedard's after the second telephone pole. The men were taught to drill openings and insert dynamite, detonating it in order to quarry the sand. Some scary things could happen. Once an explosion caused a wall to collapse at the Pfister house some quarter mile away. The house stood at the bottom of the hill near where Bedard’s Honda and Volvo showrooms are today.



Mike worked at the quarry with Tom Curtin, the foreman, whose family had owned and operated the mining operation known as the Berkshire Sand and Glass Company for 71 years, transferring ownership to Pettino’s who then operated it from 1950 to 1959.



Mike also worked with Ezio Sondrini, Norman Richardson, Jules Rosier, and Walt Kozak, among others at the quarry. After about eight years he left because he felt breathing in the dust was not good for his lungs.

Mike went to work for Jacob Weinberg, the founder of the Adams Supermarket chain, the original store was opened on Summer Street in Adams. He stayed there for 35 years, becoming a supervisor for all the stores reaching from North Adams to Great Barrington.

In retirement, Mike began refinishing furniture and caning chairs. A number of pieces adorn his comfortable ranch style home on Railroad Street.

At 94 Mike, now widowed, keeps active still and walks on the rail trail just across from his house every day that he can. It's just a short walk to Scrabbletown from there.

## Wreath Making



Back in November there was lots of fun at the Cheshire Senior Center for Active Living. 12 ladies enjoyed the afternoon making Christmas wreaths or centerpieces to take with them and adorn their homes. Thank you to Pat and Nancy for all their efforts in making the event possible. Nancy Boyer's years of experience and eye for design helped each person make something very special. Watch our Facebook page for future updates on events such as this.



## The Annual Town Tree Lighting

The hayrides started out from the Cheshire Senior / Community Center at 5:30 pm on the night of December 5th and traveled to the Town Hall. There the tree was lit and Christmas Carols sung. Then back to the Center for cookies and hot chocolate provided and served by volunteers of the Cheshire Council on Aging. While some of the children spoke shyly to Santa about what was on their wish list, others were helped by one of the elves to write Santa a letter which was placed in the "official" Santa mailbox supplied to us by the Cheshire library.



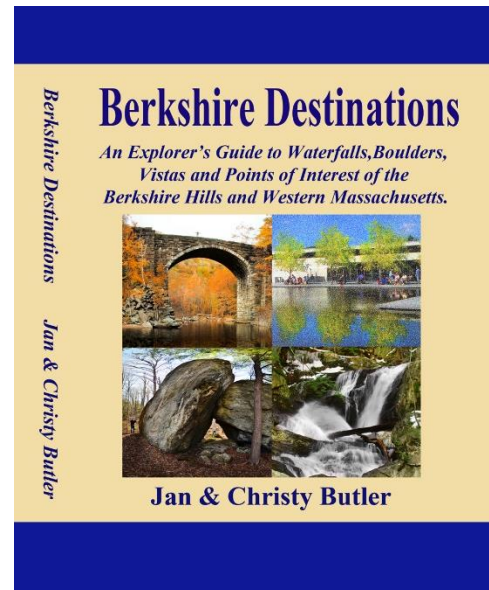


# Upcoming January Event at the Center with Christy Butler

On Wednesday, January 26th at 12:30 Christy Butler will be at the Cheshire COA Center for Active Living on 119 School Street with his powerpoint presentation of his most recent book *Berkshire Destinations*. Even if you are not a walker or hiker you will be entertained as Chris shows and tells of many points of interest here locally to visit. The event is open to everyone. Books and posters will be available from the author for purchase at the conclusion. We hope to offer this event again some evening later in the spring. Please call the Center @ 743-9719 if you need further information.

Walkers, Hikers and Explorers will experience many delightful afternoons of adventure and discovery within the many nooks and crannies found throughout Berkshires County or Western Massachusetts. Waterfalls, expansive vistas, along with immense glacial erratics or boulders, are destinations to be found in the 4<sup>th</sup> of a series of guide books by Jan & Christy Butler who live right here in Cheshire. Their most recent guide "*Berkshire Destinations*" is richly illustrated with photographs, maps, plus details such as GPS and written directions to insure everyone will find their way. Previous guides, "*Connecticut Waterfalls*" published by Countryman Press, then their self-published books "*Rockachusetts*" along with "*Erratic Wandering*" focused strictly on waterfalls or glacial erratics/boulders. This guide "*Berkshire Destinations*" has expanded to encompass all of the interests from waterfalls, erratics, vistas, points of interest and even some of the wonderful statues from the many renowned sculptors that have resided here. More information can be found, along with a **Look-Inside-The-Book** through our web site [www.berkshirephotos.com](http://www.berkshirephotos.com) or at [www.berkshire-destinations.com](http://www.berkshire-destinations.com).

**Christy Butler** is a visual artist with an Associate Degree in Liberal Studies-Majoring in Design and a Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration majoring in Marketing and Management. Other related studies include Mass Communications, Filmmaking and Photography. After being published in variety of Literary and Specialty Magazines, along with other Audio-Visual endeavors, Butler, a Vietnam Veteran, created and directed a grant-funded and web-based archive of veteran's personal photos from their military experiences: [www.shoeboxphotos.net](http://www.shoeboxphotos.net). This was followed by a series of New England State Waterfall posters created with Jan Butler: [www.berkshirephotos.com](http://www.berkshirephotos.com).



## Wilder Moments at the Senior Center this Summer

Laura Ingalls Wilder will visit the Cheshire COA Center for Active Living this summer by way of a one - woman production of reminiscences of her life as a pioneer woman and writer.

The new play draws on her personal history, books and letters to create a full, true-to-life portrait of one of America's most beloved and best known writers.

In the play written by former Cheshire resident Jim Johnson, the title character recalls scenes from the Little House books, as well as her experiences as a young wife and mother. It also portrays her life as an adult on the farm she and her husband Manley founded in Mansfield, Missouri. Also depicted is her life as a farm journalist leading up to the first of the Little House books "Little House in the Big Woods", and the creation of the other 10 books in the series.

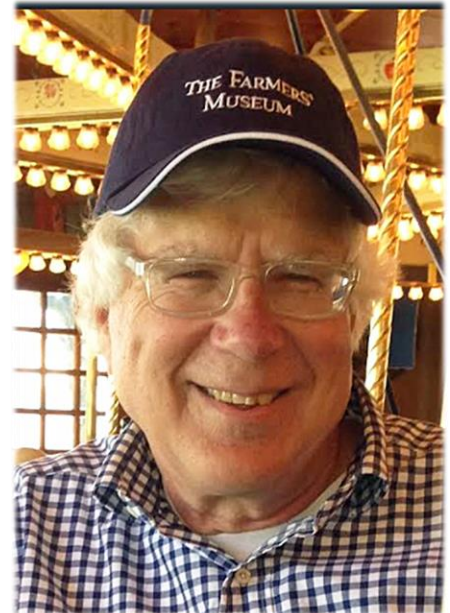
As the play begins, Laura is on the front porch of the family farmhouse in Missouri in 1938 where she reminisces about her life in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Nebraska and South Dakota which concludes the first part of the play. The second part brings Laura back home to Missouri where she faces new challenges in her young married life. and ends with reconciliation and contentment.

"We know her mostly from the "Little House" books, Johnson says, "but there is so much more to her story, including her life as wife and mother, and as an advocate for farming families, passionately interested in people and improving the life of farm women. Johnson says one of the less well-known aspects of her life is that she did not start writing her famous children's books until she was 68. "She was a classic late-bloomer" he says. The books were initially published between 1932 and 1943 .Since then, more than 60 million copies of the "Little House" books have been sold, and they have been published in 26 languages. The new play was first produced at the historic Swart Wilcox house in Oneonta, New York last summer. The Cheshire COA Center for Active Living is happy to be one of the first places in Massachusetts and New York to host the production this summer. Laura will be depicted by Maureen Broekman, a New York actress who Johnson describes as an upbeat, engaging presence and "the very essence of Laura herself."

He says there couldn't be a more fitting time to think about Laura Ingalls Wilder than in the midst of the global pandemic and domestic uncertainty.

Johnson grew up in Minnesota, and has visited most of the Wilder homesites and other historic locations on the "Wilder Trail". He said more than 30,000 people make similar visits each year. Johnson wrote the play after teaching a class in Laura Ingalls Wilder last year. He has also written or co-written 6 books on colonial history, the Shakers, and early rural life in Minnesota and Iowa. Johnson, who now lives in upstate New York, says he is very happy for the chance to be back in Cheshire among old friends this summer and to see the changes since he has left.

This production will be one of several special events at the Cheshire COA Center for Active Living this summer. Watch our Facebook page for future announcements and tickets for these events.



"Home is the nicest word there is."

LAURA INGALLS WILDER

# Cheshire COA Center for Active Living (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 Elder

Services lunches will be served Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays inside at 11:30am 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**, January 28<sup>th</sup> and **Friday**, February 25<sup>th</sup> between 1 and 2 pm. Contact Carole to sign up.

**Morning Exercise** - 9am -10am Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays

**Foot Clinic** - The Foot Clinic will be scheduled for January 13<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.

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

**Cheshire Senior Club** - Club meets every Wednesday at 12:30 pm and has resumed its monthly restaurant outings.

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



# Community Notes

**Town Clerk-** 2022 Annual Town Census will be mailed in January. Returns can either be mailed back or use the “drop-box” at the Church Street entrance to Town Hall.

2022 Annual Election - Nomination Papers will be available beginning February 1<sup>st</sup>. Offices on the ballot - One Moderator for a term of three years; Two Selectmen for terms of three years each; One Assessor for term of three years; One Assessor for a term of two years; Board of Health Member for a term of three years; One Water Commissioner for a term of three years; One Cemetery Commissioner for a term of three years; One Planning Board Member for a term of five years; One Planning Board Member for a term of four years; One Planning Board member for a term of one year; Three Constables for terms of three years each; One Hoosac Valley Regional School District School Committee Member from Cheshire for a term of three years and One Northern Berkshire Regional Vocational School District School Committee Member from Cheshire for a term of three years.

2022 Dog Licenses begin April 1<sup>st</sup>. A dog license renewal form will be included in the Census.

**Cheshire Fire Department** - Cheshire Fire Department's 5th Annual Ice Fishing Derby.

Sunday, February 13<sup>th</sup> 2022.

Registration 6:00am-12:00pm

Derby Hours: 7:00am-4:00pm

Award Ceremony at 4:30 at Bass Water Grill

Registration Fee: \$15.00 for adults, youths 12- free with an adult.

Prizes for the three largest fish of any species for both adult and youth age groups. Additional prize for the largest bass of the day.

Registration fee automatically enters you in for thousands of dollars worth of raffles to be drawn throughout the day!

50/50 raffle will also be available.

All proceeds from this derby go to directly benefit the Cheshire Volunteer Fire Department for things like training, equipment, vehicle maintenance, etc.

Call or text Cj with any questions. 413-281-5020

**Cheshire Library** - A winter reading program is coming!

Curious? Call the Library 743-4746 or stop in.

Story Hour is every Tuesday from 11:00 am to 12:00pm, stories and a craft each week.

Library hours: Monday 9:30 to 2:30; Tuesday 12:00 to 7:00 and Wednesday 11:00 to 3:00.

**Historical Commission** - The Cheshire Historical Commission is again accepting donations of items or documents relating to our town's history.

Please call 743-5423 for details.

**Cheshire Community Association** - Cheshire's Mammoth Cheese Goes International!

Earlier this year, a Dutch National Cheese organization reached out to Cheshire explaining that they hold important annual cheese competitions in the Netherlands; they've been in operation for sixty- one years! One contest evaluates how well Dutch cheese professionals (about 600 contestants)



know the smell, taste and quality of Dutch cheese, and another allows consumers, through taste and smell, to determine which is Holland's most delicious cheese.



Once a year they also publish a glossy magazine "KAAS!" (Cheese! in Dutch) with stories about the industry, competition, and awards ceremony. The magazine is spread among practically everyone in the entire Dutch cheese sector. This year they chose to include an article about Cheshire's Mammoth Cheese including photos of both the Cheese Press Monument and the recently unveiled Mammoth Cheese Replica.

You can read the magazine at [www.nnkc.nl](http://www.nnkc.nl) (homepage, scroll down). We are very excited that Cheshire has gone Global!

**Cheshire Ladies' Reading Club** – A December 1979 article in the North Adams Transcript reported the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Cheshire Ladies Reading Club. The article, written by Virginia Duval of the Transcript staff, reported on a special dinner celebration held by members of the club for the milestone anniversary.

The first paragraph of the 1979 article reads: " Evenings in front of the fire, listening to the head of the family read aloud the latest monthly installment of a novel by Charles Dickens is an image from long ago.

This cozy image has been replaced by television and radio. Nowadays most reading out loud is done by parents for their small children, but in Cheshire the Ladies Reading Club has maintained the age-old tradition since 1879."

Emma Petitclerc, who co-authored "A History of Cheshire", envisioned giving Cheshire women the opportunity to partake in some intellectual activity. The group she formed still follows the original charter format. Meetings consist of a business session, two reading segments by appointed members, a poetry reading and a brief discussion of current events or historical topics.

The article also quotes then club vice president Hope Negus who said the intent of the club is social as well as intellectual.

The current day members are carrying on the 142 year tradition. Still meeting every two weeks, the format has altered during Covid. We have arranged to meet remotely via Google so we can avoid unnecessary risk to our members. We think our founding mothers would approve.

New Cheshire members are always welcome. Contact President Harriet Teichert at 413-743-1518 for more information.



First President - Ladies Reading Club  
Mrs. Emma Cole Petitclerc

**Cheshire Lions Club** – How the Cheshire Lions Club Benefits Our Town



The Cheshire Lions Club remains an active contributor to our community during these trying times. We are always looking for new members. Among our contributions, we support ongoing eye research efforts. We have also supported numerous local organizations such as the Youth Center, the Friends of the Cheshire Council on Aging, the Cheshire Fire Department and various charitable organizations and athletic teams. We donate annual scholarships to Cheshire graduates from Hoosac Valley High School, McCann Technical School and BART. Every year, during the Christmas season, we conduct our Give A Gift program to

provide those in need, local families and seniors, with Christmas gifts. Our club also installs and cares for the American flags located throughout the town. If you are interested in joining or would like more information or have any questions, please contact Ed St. John at 413-743-5603 or [estjohn1@roadrunner.com](mailto:estjohn1@roadrunner.com)

## Become a Friend of the Cheshire Council on Aging



The Friends of the Cheshire Council on Aging 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.

All non-profits are receiving less money from the government so the need to provide financial support from other sources has become critical. The "Friends" support activities that the Town is unable to finance. Among the activities the "Friends" have financially supported this past year are:

- \* A presentation by local author, Kevin O'Hara.
- \* Financial support for the monthly birthday lunches.
- \* The annual nonagenarian birthday party.
- \* Financial support of the Cheshire Food Pantry.
- \* Cultural events such as a play at Barrington Stage and the performance of "White Christmas" at the Colonial Theatre.
- \* Museum trips such as one to the Susan B. Anthony Birthplace Museum, the Quaker Meeting House, and the Susan B. Anthony Statue followed by lunch at Basswater Grill.
- \* The purchase of ice cream certificates in support of the flag ceremony.



Any support which you are able to provide would be most appreciated. Please contact Ed or Pam St. John at 4 Edmunds Street, Unit N101, Adams, MA 01220 or call at 743-5603 or email to [estjohn1@roadrunner.com](mailto:estjohn1@roadrunner.com) for further information.

### Resources and Contacts

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

#### 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

#### 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)



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