



Cheshire Chatter

May / June 2022



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

Cheshire Community Association

We are happy to have accomplished our goal of painting a mural at the Route 8 rest area. With the help of volunteers and our artists we were able to turn a boring old wall into something beautiful and fun. We want to thank the Massachusetts Cultural Council for the grant that made this possible as well as the Mass DOT that gave its blessing to our project. A huge thank you also to our volunteers that showed up each day to paint. We had so much fun and the spirit of community was alive and well. (Message from Jill Reynolds)
Cheshire Proud!

Brenda's Thoughts

Despite some gloomy cool weather, Spring is finally here...for now. With it, is an increase in the number of friends attending our meals at the Center. We served 424 lunches last month which is fantastic, but we also look forward to seeing new faces with the promise of better weather ahead. In addition to enjoying warm meals, the friendships both old and new are a bonus. We are hoping that our current attendees will encourage their friends and neighbors to join them. Bingo will be starting up again and will be held the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month at 12:30pm. We hope for a good turnout, so feel free to join the fun! Don't forget the warm weather also welcomes back Pickleball, Cornhole, Shuffleboard, taking the bikes for a ride or just enjoying the beautiful flowers and vegetable gardens.

Many other activities and events that are in the works. Feel free to reach out if you have any ideas that you would like to see for events at the Center, we welcome ideas.

Police Chief Timothy Garner Retires



Tim Garner, long time Cheshire Chief of Police retires June 30. Tim announced the date of his retirement at the annual town meeting last June. While there will be aspects of the job he will miss, he's looking forward to having more time to catch up on projects at home and not being on call 24/7.



Tim's commitment to public service goes way back, even a couple of generations. Tim's dad, Fred Garner Sr., was drawn into community activities through his father-in-law, Vin Hebert, a name well known in Pittsfield public service. Fred joined the Pittsfield Park Police, a group that was part of the Parks and Recreation Department. They supervised youth activities at the various city parks, headed by Vin Hebert. That group was eventually absorbed into the Pittsfield police department.

Fred was also very involved in the Special Olympics, especially the speed skating competitions, helped out by Tim and his siblings.

Fred Garner Park in Pittsfield, at Canoe Meadows, is named in memory of Tim's dad's long-standing commitment to Pittsfield youth.

Tim's first experience in law-enforcement came when he was encouraged by his father-in-law George Cooper, Cheshire police chief at the time, to ride along on patrol with him. Tim was appointed to the Cheshire Police Department in September 1982, then succeeded Police Chief Richard Armstrong in 1997.

Tim is a familiar face at any community activity in town, well known for his efforts to make a success of any event he's a part of.

The Special Olympics has remained close to his heart as he has continued to be a part of the LETR or the Law Enforcement Torch Run involving police departments statewide to kick off the games.

Cheshire is a quiet town for the most part, Tim says, although a recent incident at Berkshire Village Trailer Park, (formerly Pine Valley) involved several state law-enforcement agencies and special tactical teams. Tim and the other responders successfully resolved the situation, after a nine-hour standoff, without injury. That was the only incident of its kind and completely out of the ordinary for our town he says.

Tim will continue his duties at his full-time job for another year before that retirement happens. The activities he has been instrumental in conducting with the police department, such as the Annual Christmas tree lighting in December, the Memorial Day parade, the Halloween decorating and party at the fire station, the annual Easter Egg Hunt will continue be conducted by the police department, but he expects to help out. Tim obtained funding for a new automated program, RYOK(Are You OK), which will contact at risk residents for a daily well-being check and is currently being put into effect by the Police Department.

A member of the Cheshire fire Department for many years, Tim currently serves as secretary.

The town is conducting a search for his successor, a full-time Police Chief will be appointed following new state regulations. That person will be will certainly have big shoes to fill as Tim steps away after 40 years in service to Cheshire. **By Patricia Gebarowski.**

Growing Up In Cheshire

Part 2.

by Patricia Gebarowski

One summer I was staying with "Grandma" Rathbun for a few days. I had known her for a couple of years at that time and would occasionally visit at her farm on West Mountain Road.

Frances, or "Fanny" Rathbun was in her late 80s but bright and spry and cheerful. She would tell me of her life growing up in Stephentown New York and how she married Norman Rathbun in 1894 and come to Cheshire to that farm in 1906. Norman or "Gramp" as she referred to him had died suddenly the year before. It was all still fresh and painful to her, and she would often tell me of how



it happened. We were sitting in the front room of the old farmhouse which had been converted to a parlor/ bedroom. Her old double bed was in one corner with upholstered armchairs on the other side of the room. We would sit there after supper was cleaned up and the chores done for the day. I would be in the chair directly across from the small black and white TV and she, off to my right. Around 8 o'clock she would come from the kitchen with two bowls of ice cream, and we would watch "Teenage Barn" on the New York station. It was a live talent show featuring...teenagers. As we watched, she would again tell me the story of how Gramp was sitting where I was, on a Friday night, eating ice cream and watching "Teenage Barn" when he had a sudden "spell" and passed away. Just like that, no time for final words or any preparation, he was just gone. She was reliving it, and so was I.

I don't believe it was a story I was afraid of hearing, but I did understand that she needed to talk about it, and I was the one who was there to listen.

After she got through all that and our program ended, I would go to the small bedroom off that sitting room to sleep. It was a curious place to me, that little room. On the walls were colorful wooden framed prints of children and young women, barefoot and happy, with farm animals or puppies in their arms. Against the wall, across from my bed was a strange wooden chair. It had a high carved back and curved arms. There was a hinged part of the seat that lifted up. Inside was a very large ceramic pot which she told me was a "chamber pot". It was there to be used in the night. I considered this good information since there was no indoor plumbing and the "loo" was attached to the far opposite end of the rambling old structure. I remember it being at the end of a long pine paneled hallway, behind each door was with a plank bench with a hole in it. I did not consider making that trip during the night much of an option.

The window next to the bed in my room was close to the ground and overlooked the wide meadow and the tree line beyond. On Saturday morning I woke up quite early. The sun was up, and it was warm and soft on the meadow, the tall grass glistening. I wanted to be outside. I crept to the door of my room to see if my hostess had already gotten up. In the dim light I could see she was lying very still on her bed far across the living room. I watched to see her chest rise and fall but I could not tell if that was happening. There was no way I was going to creep out that way through the house. I did not try to wake her, fearfully dreading the possible answer.

I dressed and opened the window sash, no screen impeded me as I slid out. I was in my happiest place, outside, free to roam and explore. I was joined by the old white dog of a non-determined breed and together we ran through the field and along the tree line to the river. We jumped over stones, found some wild berries, and drank from the cold water. I was careful to keep an eye on the house as my companion and I joyously ran and climbed and explored the wondrous place, the mountains across the valley waking up as the sun rose higher. Keeping an eye on the house, after what seemed like an hour, I spotted a plume of smoke from the chimney in the kitchen. Then I knew all was well and I could go back and have some breakfast. As I entered the kitchen, Mrs. Rathbun stood at the old wood stove and a delicious smell of bacon and toast reminded me of how hungry I was. Before we could eat, she asked me to go out to the well in front of the kitchen and draw fresh water for her coffee and washing up. The water needed to heat up on the stove while we ate.

Meals were taken at the dining room table which fit quite snugly into an alcove between the kitchen and living room. The used china would be washed and placed back on the table after the meal. Six chairs, three on either side and built-in glass cabinet doors flanked the table. China was always set at all six places, a white tablecloth covering them between meals. As we sat down to eat, I slid into a seat on the opposite side of Grandma. She said, very gently, "Oh no dear, you need to move, that's Gramp's place." I quickly slid over, feeling the unseen presence that I knew was very real to her.

THE HONORABLE JUDGE JOAN MCMENEMY



A program throughout the Commonwealth which engages sitting court judges in community outreach during the month of March, brought Judge Joan Mc Menemy to meet with the Cheshire seniors gathered on Wednesday March 16 after lunch at the Community Center.

Now the First Justice of the Berkshire Juvenile Court, she was appointed 12 years ago to a lifetime appointment by Governor Deval Patrick. She succeeded Judge Paul Perachi who retired at the mandatory age of 70. Having worked in the District Attorney's office after coming to the area in 1994, she says she was involved in many juvenile cases and came to consider Judge Perachi as a mentor and a role model. He was the promoter of innovative parole programs for juveniles. Shakespeare In the Court required young offenders to

participate in sessions performing with Shakespeare And Company. While they were usually not receptive at first, that progressed to pride and enthusiasm as they gained increased self-esteem with the development of communication skills and an appropriate outlet for aggression. Judge Perachi also promoted other mentorship programs at Williams College and Clark Art Institute.

Judge McMenemy comes through as a very warm and compassionate person. She talked about her Worcester upbringing in a non affluent but stable home with her two siblings and not really appreciating the security she had until she worked in the juvenile court system.

She notes that most child abuse happens because of addiction. Parents are unable to adequately care for their kids. She has learned that most kids prefer to remain in their homes even if it is imperfect in some ways. When that is not possible, placement with other family or foster care becomes necessary. Families come to the court with the need for referral to counseling and support services to help deal with addiction or for assistance in coping with their juveniles. Funding for these services is perennially inadequate.

When asked what we could do to help the court, she asked us to contact our representatives to encourage more funding for specific programs such as Courtroom Services and counseling through the Family Resource Program. **By Patricia Gebarowski.**

Maria Ibach

Thirty-seven years ago, Maria and Vernon Ibach walked on a building site high on a hill with a wide vista of the mountains and the valley in between.

They had moved to Adams from Philadelphia several years earlier to Vernon's family home after his mother passed away, but they wanted to create a place of their own. Maria loved the Cheshire building site because it brought back memories of her native Czechoslovakia.

Born in Bohemia, amidst wartime upheaval, Maria was the third of six children. Life was hard. Her mother had become ill with a lung ailment, thought perhaps to be tuberculosis, so she had to be isolated from the children. Maria's father was conscripted into the army, so too, three of her mother's brothers who would be killed in battles in Africa and Russia. After their mother was isolated, the children were left on their own. Her 8 year old sister was in charge of tending to the remaining younger siblings. Maria was next oldest at age 6, and on down, ages 4, 2 and six months. With no father or mother to provide for them, the children were left to keep the farm animals cared for and to keep each other as safe as possible.

Maria recalls lying awake, hearing the distant sound of relentless bombing, the night sky lit purple colored from it. Her village, Hirschbergen, was situated between Dresden and Munich, German cities several hundred miles each way. Her mother died in 1943 of pleurisy. Her father returned from the war but when Maria was 10, the family was forced to leave when the farm was seized by the government. At age 19, Maria was a live-in nursing caregiver in Munich, but she had dreams of being independent. Alone, she went to Philadelphia after seeing an advertisement for workers needed in a sweater factory. She became a skilled seamstress, making dresses for high end garment designers and popular labels such as Ladybug among others. She met her husband Vernon, who owned a garage, when he worked on her car.

Over time, Maria was homesick and missed her family, but Vernon could not leave his business to travel. She was able to return a number of times, traveling alone with her young son to Germany and Switzerland to visit. In later years she traveled widely with Vernon, to Hawaii, California, Paris, London and many other destinations.



She maintains this house they built, as well as the grounds, herself, energetically trimming and pruning the plantings on the terraced property. Trees and shrubs are everywhere, as well as extensive stonework edging along the driveway which Maria did herself. She proudly shows off her other artistic contributions: a stone façade over the chimney in the kitchen, a small village she and Vernon made and decorated together, an exquisite bedspread in the master bedroom that she designed and sewed herself are just some of the many handcrafted objects on display throughout the house.

In the living room there is a mural covering an entire wall. It depicts a cove in Maine where they once vacationed. Maria designed and painted it as Vernon, sick and failing, sat in a chair by the window watching and adding ideas. Vernon died five years ago. Maria kept him home through his illness and cared for him, and although she mourns his passing, he remains vividly present in her memory as she talks of the life they shared. **By Patricia Gebarowski.**

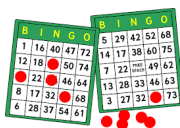


Special Events in May and June

May 3rd at 12:15 is Ukrainian Bracelet making with Stephanie Bordeau. All proceeds will be donated to Ukrainian refugees. Suggested donation is \$3



May 10th at 12:30 we will start having Bingo. Tuesday of every month.



And going forward the second and 4th

May 14th at 9-3 is a Hazard Mitigation Workshop. The Cheshire Hazard Mitigation Plan will lay out a strategy to help the Town lessen the impacts that natural disasters and changing weather patterns are predicted to have on residents and the natural world.

June 10th at 6:30 ***Sherl Faye Presents Ruth Bader Ginsburg – “I Dissent”***

There will be sandwiches, salad, and a desert at 5:30 p.m. Tickets are \$5. Tickets are available from Brenda. Ruth Bader Ginsburg was an American lawyer and jurist who served as an associate justice of the Supreme Court of the United States from 1993 until her death in September 2020. She was the second woman and the first Jewish woman ever appointed to the Court and became the longest serving Jewish Justice.

She championed fairness and equality and objected to different expectations for men and women, prejudice against minority groups in places like hotels and restaurants, and women having fewer job opportunities than men. Ruth served on the national board of the ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union) and launched The Women’s Rights Project, she continued to be a leading voice for gender equality, women’s interests, and civil rights and liberties.

Ruth Bader Ginsburg’s life continues to be one of achievement: as a lawyer, professor of law, a judge, and then a Supreme Court justice, she stands out because she was not afraid to dissent, disapprove, and disagree with conditions of unfairness and inequality. This show is the inspiring story of how she changed her life—and ours. *“Fight for the things that you care about, but do it in a way that will lead others to join you.” ~ Ruth Bader Ginsburg*



June 14th at 6pm there will be a Flag



Burning ceremony at Cheshire Elementary School.

June 24th at 6pm – 8 pm 3rd Annual A.T. Community Celebration & Dedication of the Father Tom Campsite

Town of Cheshire Appalachian Trail Committee

3rd Annual A.T. Community Celebration & Dedication of the Father Tom Campsite

When: Friday June 24, 2022 6pm – 8 pm

Where: Father Tom Campsite - 6 Main St.

Music by: Massachusetts Walking Tour

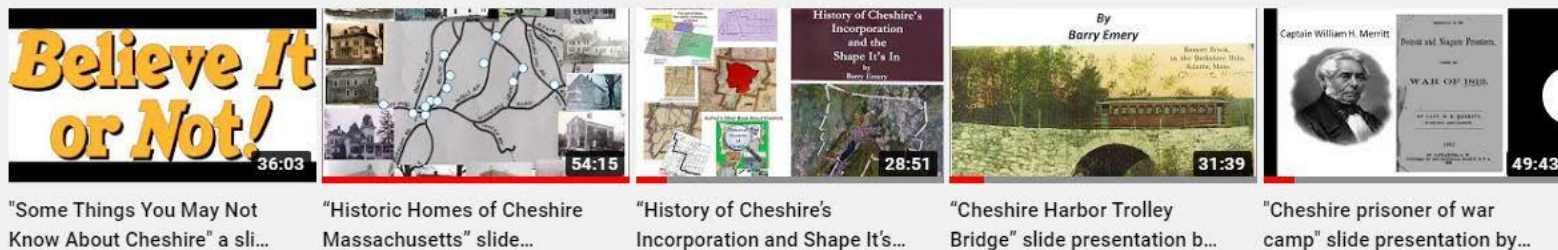
- **Honored Guests & Speakers**
 - **State and Local Officials**
 - **Ribbon Cutting**

Light Appetizers Provided

Please Join Us!



To help us prepare, please rsvp to Eileen Quinn: emdquinn@gmail.com



<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvdhsdZrmRU8VFU3eD410Bw>

Cheshire's own prolific historian, **Barry Emery**, now has a You Tube Channel, where he has recorded five of the live presentations he has done and plans to continue posting more. Barry shares what he has discovered about Cheshire's rich past and the events that shaped it including numerous photos and maps. Barry has published other books focused on specific Cheshire historical subjects as well. Some of these include:

History of Cheshire's Incorporation and the Shape It's In, published in 2013,

Historical Mysteries of Cheshire

The Mammoth Cheese

Cheshire's Industrial History

Brooklyn Comes to Cheshire, a historical novel

What Is and What Was a Historic Virtual Tour of Cheshire which has many photos showing sites in town as they were in the past and what's there now.

These books and others can be seen at emery395.wixsite.com/books and can be purchased from the author by emailing him at emery395@gmail.com. By Patricia Gebarowski.

Community Notes

Town Clerk- The 2022 Cheshire Dog Licenses are due beginning April 1st. Dogs not licensed by June 1st will have a Late Fee of \$15 added to the cost of the licenses.

Cheshire Annual Town Meeting is Monday, June 13th, 2022.

Cheshire Library - 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.

Cheshire Ladies' Reading Club - For information about our club please call Pat at 743-2177.

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 Lions Club – 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.



Cheshire COA Center for Active Living (Senior / Community Center)

CHP Mobile Health Van - The CHP medical van is scheduled for Cheshire on May 18th from 10-12. 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 Brenda 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 \$3.00 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**, May 27th and **Friday**, June 24th between 1 and 2 pm. Contact Brenda to sign up.

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

Chair Yoga – 10am – 11am Fridays

Foot Clinic - The Foot Clinic will be scheduled for May 19th 8:30am – 1pm. Sorry, no walk-ins - appointments only. Held inside the Center. Call Brenda @ 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.

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 for further information.

COA Board Members

Robert Balawender	413-743-3356
John Bianchi	413-743-5723
Carol Francesconi	413-743-5028
Mal Gwozdz	413-743-9356
Liseann Karandisecky	413-743-7244
Barbara Proper	413-743-4945
Peter Traub	413-743-3496

Alternative COA Board Members

Susanne Boyle	413-743-5187
Val Tyska	413-743-3802

Resources and Contacts

Interim Coordinator

Brenda Caufield 413-743-9719

Van 413-446-2559

Car, Adams COA

Medical Appointments 413-743-8333

Friends of Cheshire COA

Ed and Pam St. John

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