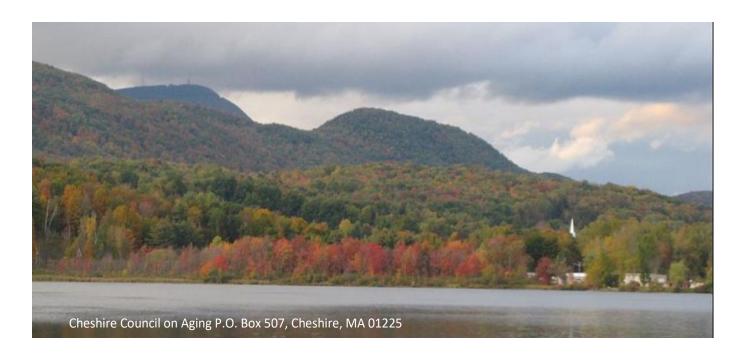


Cheshire Chatter

November / December 2021



Carole's Thought's

I thought it would be fun to share with you a busy day at the center.

Wednesdays typically are busy days for our lunches. However, last Wednesday was wonderful.

At 8:50 Jane's morning exercise group arrived for their 9am class. Fortunately, we had made plans for all participants to back in for parking. At 9:50 am the group dispersed. At 10:10 am the CHP Medical Van arrived. Gene Gebarowski and myself donned on bright orange vests and directed traffic into the center making the most of the space we had. Everyone listened to directions and parking was a breeze. Thanks to Officer Sam for directing traffic as I was assisting with filling out paperwork for attendees.

At 11:15am lunch guests started arriving. We asked those attending to take the side entrance for lunch.

At 12:30 the Cheshire Senior Club met for a half hour and then we offered a workshop on Wreath Making with Nancy from 1:30 pm on.

Numbers for the day: 80 booster/senior flu/vaccinations

40 lunch attendees

12 Wreath Making individuals

9 Volunteers

We were ready for the next Wednesday by separating the center room and the hallway with a screen. Again, lunch attendees used the side door as this allowed for the BHS nurse to offer the regular flu shot

in the front of the building. The system worked out beautifully and we served 40 for lunch and 18 for the regular flu shot. Parking was no issue as we now have experience in traffic control.

Additionally, for the month of September we served 418 lunches. We average a daily number of 10 Grab and Go lunches with some deliveries by Dan S.

I offered a Workshop on Anxiety, and it was well-attended by appreciative friends and neighbors. On Fridays there will be a half hour of Meditation for those seeking tools to use if you struggle with Anxiety. The Anxiety Workshops will continue especially during the holiday season.

Card Making with Lorraine is also a success. If you check out our Facebook page you will see photos of the finished products.

Bicycles are being used for rides on the trail and shuffleboard continues to be played. I believe they plan on playing until the snow falls. This is a rowdy group with much laughter and good times. Stop by on Mondays and Wednesdays at 4pm. It's a lot of fun. The COA Center connected with St. Mary's Church and other groups in providing a requested pickle ball court. We have the equipment that is available for use.

Presently, I am in the process of securing Christmas gifts (Lion's Club) and Thanksgiving dinners for our seniors in need. Donations are greatly appreciated.

Wellness cards, birthday cards, and guidance telephone calls continue each day. Some days are quiet with five calls or on busy days 20 calls. All outreach is confidential. Please call if you would like to be placed on our daily wellness call list. Or – call to say hi. 743-9719.

Let's continue to keep the Cheshire COA Center for Active Living community minded and older adult friendly.

Have to go – the phone is ringing!

Stay safe. Keep healthy.

Carole

CHP Mobile Clinic

80 people were given the COVID-19 booster vaccine, senior flu shot vaccine, or both, where appropriate, at a CHP mobile clinic given October 6 at the Cheshire COA.

In spite of all the ongoing activity between 10AM and 12 PM on that day, the in and out flow was smooth and the wait was not excessive. Those who could wait in line were heard to joke and laugh and enjoy the fine day and the company. Those who could not manage a line were accommodated in their vehicles and even some attendees with limited mobility at the COA/Elder



Services lunch program were seen at their seats by the extremely skilled and pleasant CHP medical staff.

The next clinic will be November 3 at the COA between 10a.m.and 12 p.m., 119 School St., Cheshire. All are welcome.

When We Were Kids in Cheshire

Back in the 1930s when the Lyons family moved from Lee to Cheshire, kids made their own entertainment as money was very short for Depression era families.

The family, Mom, Dad and six kids originally lived on the second floor of the Graziani house on Main Street. In time they moved across the yard to a home on East Main Street built in the 1700s. Helen and her husband Bob eventually lived there and raised their family. The house still stands today and has been carefully maintained by the current owners.

Helen Lyons Dargie was three when the flood of 1938 caused them to be evacuated to higher ground. Helen and sister Anna Lyons Farnam, age ten at the time, remember being carried through waist deep water from their home in the arms of townsmen who came to their rescue.



Helen, their brother Phil, Ann and father Tomas

There was plenty to keep them and the neighborhood kids occupied. In the summer the Scrabbletown kids would swim in the Hoosac River in a dammed-up swimming hole where the river curves behind Graziani's Store. There was also hopscotch, stick ball, and hide and seek. They went home quickly when a loud whistle from their dad summoned them. Picking strawberries for two cents a quart would provide spending money for a trip uptown to Cummings Market, (later Butch's Red and White Market) for cookies from the Clark Biscuit Company in North Adams, maybe penny candy, or possibly a visit to Leo Willett's store on the corner of Depot and Dean Street for ice cream with Jeanette Willett at the counter to scoop it.

It was a treat to stop Mr. Boyer, the farmer, as he drove his horse and hay wagon up Main Street back to his farm near where Pine Valley Mobile Home Park is today. He would let the kids ride on the wagon until he turned off to his farm and then they would walk home. In the winter, there was skating on the frozen Hoosac River or sliding on Keegan's hill off of Furnace Hill on cardboard boxes. Occasional trips to the movies in Adams for 10 cents fare on the train, departing from the town Depot, now Chicks Auto Repair Shop. Movies cost 10 cents admission to see heartthrobs of the era like Clark Gable, Jimmy Stewart, Gene Kelly or glamorous leading ladies like Joan Crawford, Loretta Young and Veronica Lake.

Friday nights would find them at the Bondini home on Main Street watching shows on the only television in the neighborhood. As they got older there were free square dances at the Grange on School Street on Saturday nights with Clyde Horton calling the dances.

That's where Helen met future husband Bob, a handsome Adams boy, and Anna met her husband Herb who worked at Wineberg's Market in Adams, on a blind date set up by her sister.

Helen and her two closest friends, Elodie Tracy Gaylord and Joan Bondini Massaconi never missed a dance, sometimes afterwards going for sodas and fries with friends, the Piekos boys, to the Blue Saucer Restaurant by Cheshire Lake (located where the boat launch dock is now). One time Helen had borrowed a ring from her older sister and John teasingly took it and went home forgetting he had it. That night, the Piekos farmhouse burned down. When Helen next saw John, he returned her sister's ring. It was the only thing he had salvaged from the fire.

As history has a way of rhyming, if not repeating, Helen and Anna's father Thomas Lyons, as a young man, would come up to Cheshire for a weekend dances held on the second floor of the Bianchi house on Main St. The house remains, located on the left, a couple of houses down from the former Graziani's Store, which is now a private residence. That's where Thomas met Norah O'Brien, the daughter of Patrick and Mary O'Brien. They would marry, live in Lee for a time, then move back to Cheshire. Helen and Bob went on to have nine children. Bob died in 2004 and Helen, missing him every day, still lives in town. Anna married Herbie Farnam and he died in 1998. Anna, now 93, lives off of Main Street, only a stone's throw from the old family home



It was three weeks before Christmas and Miss Bridget Driscoll's first grade classroom was looking very festive. We had completed pasting strips of red and green construction paper into chains to loop over the blackboards and had cut out dozens of snowflakes for the windows. Each day brought more excitement. Even our spelling words reflected the season – North Pole, snowman, tinsel, jingle bells.

When we returned from afternoon recess, we found a piece of paper on each desk. It was about 4 by 6 with a line across the center. Miss D. explained that we were to write our name on the paper and then demonstrated how we should fold it twice. This accomplished, she asked Mary Ann to collect the names in a small cardboard box. Then the box was again passed around the room and we each took one. We were to buy a small present for the person whose name we had chosen. She asked that we keep the name a secret so that it would be a surprise at our class party on the last day of school before Christmas vacation.

I was delighted to find that I had drawn Mike's name. I knew exactly what I wanted to buy for him.

For some unknown reason I found Mike fascinating although he certainly had never gone out of his way to be charming. He was a boy's boy and avoided all girls. He was tall for his age, usually a bit rumpled and he rarely smiled. Maybe that was the attraction. I wanted him to be happier and less scruffy.

I ran most of the way home after school let out that day and immediately told my mother about the gift I wanted her to buy for Mike.

"Those things to hold up his pants."

"A belt?" she asked.

"No. The things that go up around here and down the back" I explained, running my hands over my shoulders.

"Suspenders?"

"Yes. He keeps pulling his pants up. And a harmonica too." I sensed that I should add some fun to the practical. For a girl who could take five minutes deciding how to spend a penny on penny candy (Tootsie roll? licorice whip? root beer barrel?) this quick and unwavering decision was unusual. My mother didn't indicate that she found my choices odd and agreed to buy both items.

THE day arrived. We first joined the other classes in the auditorium for a General Assembly to sing Christmas carols.

At last, our party. Miss Driscoll had brought cookies and a Christmas card for each of us. Finally, time to distribute the presents which were piled in a box covered with red crepe paper. Our whispering stopped.

As she called out a name, the student went to the front of the room to receive a present, then back to his or her desk to open it. Six or seven names then mine was called. My gift was from Florence – a dozen glass marbles in a drawstring bag! Very nice. I said thank you, but my mind was on Mike and what he would think of my present. I was beginning to worry. It wasn't like any of the others --- crayons, a slingshot, a jump rope, a ball. Maybe he wouldn't like it.

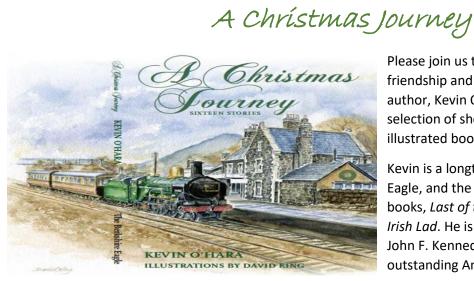
"Michael Massaconi" she called out. He brought the package back to his desk at the back of the room and began to open it. I held my breath. First, the navy and maroon suspenders. Then the harmonica. He read the card, looked at me and grinned. He did realize that he had received the very best present of all.

Did Michael and I become friends? No. He continued to be a man of few words, polite but aloof. However.... one day in January as I was walking home a "big" boy, probably 8 years old, hit me with a snowball. I tried to retaliate but mine came nowhere near him. Then, before I could toss another, the boy was pushed into a snowbank and pelted. My protector, Mike, had come to my rescue. I felt a jolt of joy. My hero.

++++++++++++++++++++

A Thursday morning in winter after a heavy snowstorm. I had an appointment with the senior van to go grocery shopping at Price Chopper. The Cheshire Highway Department had, as usual, done a fine job of clearing our roads, but I didn't want to tackle my driveway or the parking lot at the market. Michael's older sister, Rose Graziani, nee Massaconi, was on the van on her way to her weekly appointment at the Hair Express in the Allendale center. We had met a few times over the years. I was nearer in age to her sister Emma. I asked about Emma and Mike. They had both died several years before. I told her that I had written a piece about Mike that I would mail to her. After she received it, she asked the van driver to call and request that I take the van on the next Thursday. Rose had two pictures to show me -- one was of Mike and his bride. Her lovely wedding dress had been made from the silk of his parachute! And one of Mike in his World War II Air Force uniform. She insisted that I take the one of Mike. She said, "He was once your hero. He would want you to have it".



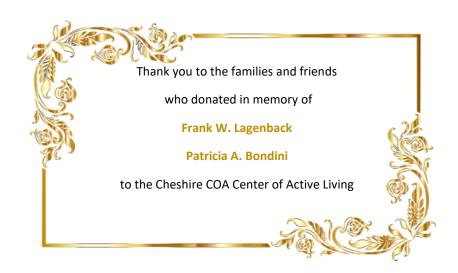


Please join us this December for an evening of friendship and nostalgia during which acclaimed author, Kevin O'Hara, of Pittsfield will read a selection of short stories from his new illustrated book, A Christmas Journey.

Kevin is a longtime contributor to The Berkshire Eagle, and the author of two renowned books, Last of the Donkey Pilgrims, and A Lucky *Irish Lad.* He is the proud recipient of the 2012 John F. Kennedy National Award, for being " an outstanding American of Irish descent".

This event will take place on Friday, December 3rd, 6:30pm at Cheshire COA, Center for Active Living at 119 School Street in Cheshire and will include a dinner featuring salad, pizza and a dessert served at 6 pm. Ticket prices are \$8 per person, including dinner with discounted tickets for members of the Friends of the Council on Aging for only \$5.

Seating is limited and there will be no ticket sales at the door. Please register early by calling Carole @ 743-9719 as this event will sell out quickly. This is a family friendly program, and the general public is invited to attend.



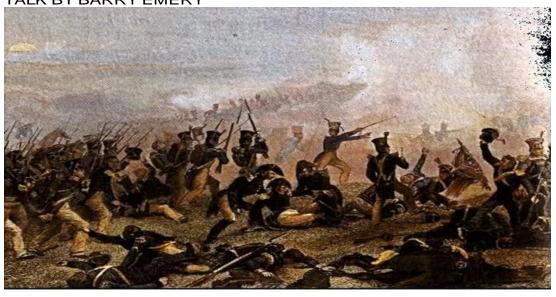


Did you know there are several options to possibly help reduce your real estate tax bill in Cheshire? You may call the Assessor's Office @ 743-3929 to inquire about programs which might be of benefit to you. There are specific qualifications for each program. A call or visit to the Assessor's office will guide you on your way.

Among them are, exemptions for the blind, Senior exemptions under Clauses 41C and 17D, Senior Statutory Exemption, and Veteran Statutory Exemption. There is also a State mandated tax deferral program.

At the Annual Town Meeting in 2019 the Town of Cheshire approved a Senior Citizens Work Off Program. The Senior Citizens Work off program in general would allow you to perform a service for the town in exchange for a credit on your following years real estate taxes. This program has yet to be implemented as town officials are still working out the final details and feasibility of the programs.

CHESHIRE'S PRISONER OF WAR CAMP TALK BY BARRY EMERY



Sorry you missed it? You can now see and listen to it from our Facebook page! Or just copy and paste into your internet browser (Chrome, Edge, or Safari) or click on the link below if you are now reading this online.

Mr. Emery's primary source for his talk was a diary kept by Captain William H. Merritt while he was held prisoner in Cheshire. The talk was accompanied by a Power Point presentation that you will see in the recorded video.

The video is 50 minutes long and can be watched using any device with internet access to YouTube such as a computer or smart phone or tv. The talk is appropriate for all ages.

This is the link to the talk video: https://youtu.be/dyoTaGYMH0s

Help Us



Help the Berkshire Humane Society

On October 22nd, Stephanie offered the first of a series of free workshops to create catnip toys that will be donated to the Berkshire Humane Society. If you are a cat person why not join this ongoing project at the Cheshire COA Center for Active Living. The Berkshire Humane Society receives no state or federal funding and is dependent on the generosity of people like you. They use every donation for what matters most, caring for homeless animals and promoting the general welfare of animals everywhere. A small amount of your time will go a long way in helping with their cause. Call Carole @ 743-9719 for information on the next meeting.



Fall Centerpiece Project



Twelve of our friends gathered on Wednesday, October 6 at the COA to create a fall centerpiece basket. The event was sponsored by the Cheshire Council on Aging and coordinated by Director Carole Hilderbrand. Unique to the crafter's taste and style, each basket represented warm fall colors and was complete with complementary accessories put together in a pleasing arrangement with the experience and eye for design that the instructor, Nancy Boyer, shared with us.

A Cheshire resident, Nancy, also known as "the flower lady" helped with questions, ideas, made suggestions and fashioned a beautifully coordinated bow for each one to bring home for the Thanksgiving table.

Nancy's expertise and eye for design was cultivated over years of floral arranging both in her own business and her association with local florists. This was a fun event for all, and we look forward to our next project, making a Christmas themed decoration. Details to be announced.



Follow us on Facebook at Cheshire Council on Aging so you don't miss out on another fun, creative and festive event.

What's So Special about Being Special



Do you have a special someone or two that you would like to send a unique greeting card to? If you are creative, you might enjoy Card Making with Lorraine at the Cheshire COA Center for Active Living. For the \$5.00 class fee you get enough materials and instruction to complete 3 cards. Handmade cards are more special and extra special when they come from you. Call Carole @ 743-9719 to sign up for the next session happening on Thursday Nov 4th

Cheshire COA Center for Active Living

(Senior / Community Center)

NOVEMBER



ACTIVITIES

| | 4 | |
|-------------|---------------------------|------------|
| November 3 | CHP Fallon | 10am -Noon |
| November 4 | Card Making | 1:30pm |
| November 4 | Delivery of printer | 2pm |
| November 6 | Cheshire Pantry | 11am-Noon |
| November 8 | Jill/ Cheshire Glassworks | 12:15 pm |
| November 10 | Art Singing Oldies | 1pm |
| | Jennifer Morse/TA visit | lunchtime |
| November 11 | Closed for Veteran's Day | |
| November 15 | Stephanie/Cat Toys | 1pm |
| November 16 | Christmas Decorations | 12:30pm |
| November 17 | COA Meeting | 1:30pm |
| November 18 | Line Dancing | 1pm |
| November 18 | Senior Club Zucco's | 1pm |
| November 22 | Brown Bag | 1pm – 2pm |
| November 25 | Closed for Thanksgiving | |
| | MA SA | |

December



Activities



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 <u>Monday</u>, November 22nd and <u>Monday</u>, December 20th 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 November 18th. 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

Cheshire Library - The Cheshire Library is again open to the public. The new hours are Monday 9:30 am to 2:30 pm; Tuesday, Story Time at 11:00am to 12:00pm, 12:00 pm to 7:00 pm and Wednesday 11:00am to 3:00 pm.

The Annual Cookie Decorating Program will be in December. Please check the Town website and Cheshire Library on Facebook for the date and time. Cheshire Library 743-4746.

Historical Commission - As per the wishes of our late member, Gus Martin, we will be awarding (symbolically) the historic, hand-hewn "Martin Family Cane" to the person who has(according to town records) lived for the longest time in Cheshire. This is now being researched. We will keep you informed.

Cheshire Community Association - The annual Town Clean-up Day organized by the Cheshire Community Association was held on Saturday, Sept. 25th. It was a perfect fall day with lots of sun and temperatures in the 70's.

Volunteers arrived at 9am for coffee, juice, donuts and time to socialize. Participants ranged from toddlers to seniors. Big thanks to Lois Nangle and Carole Hilderbrand for registering attendees and issuing safety vests & pick-up tools.



Areas cleaned include the former Elementary School grounds, all streets in the downtown area, West Mtn Rd, Main, East Main, Flaherty Rd, Notch Rd, Windsor Rd, Wells Rd, Stafford Hill & Monument, Sandmill Rd, and the Lake Causeway & Boat Ramp.

Following their return volunteers were provided lunch, including subs, chips, Whitney's cookies and Jaeschke's apples. They also enjoyed the music of local singer / songwriter Linda Worster along with much more time to connect with each other.

Thank you's for donations go to our primary sponsor Adams Community Bank (financial support); Greylock Grounds Coffee/ Mantiques (coffee & donuts); Cheshire Liquors (bottled water), and Whitney's (cookies). These events would not be possible without the generosity of our local businesses.

Finally, much appreciation goes to all the folks that offered their Saturday morning to help beautify this amazing town.

CHESHIRE PROUD!

Cheshire Ladies' Reading Club – The Cheshire Ladies Reading Club has resumed our fall/winter schedule, meeting every two weeks remotely via Google. This format enables us to meet safely and enjoy the learning and camaraderie and not risk bad weather or problems with accessibility. This reading club is the oldest of its kind in the United States, in existence continually since 1879.

We are currently reading "Two Old Women" by Velma Willis. It is an Alaskan legend of betrayal, courage, and survival. At each meeting we also share poetry and include a historical reading of mutual or local interest. If you are interested in joining us, please contact our president Harriet Teichert at 743-1518

Cheshire Lions Club - INTERESTED IN GIVING BACK TO YOUR COMMUNITY? The Cheshire Lions Club is seeking new members. We are a service organization that gives back to the community. We meet the second Wednesday of the month at the Bass Water Grill in Cheshire at 6 p.m. If you are interested in further information or joining us for a meeting, please contact Ed St. John at 743-5603 or 743-0990 or email Ed at estjohn1@roadrunner.com.

Susan B. Anthony Outing

Sponsored by Friends of the Cheshire COA



Susan B. Anthony was born February 15,1820 in Adams Massachusetts in the home her father built, and Susan left at age 6. Now it stands proudly restored to its 19th century origin and complemented with artifacts and furniture of the era. Susan would go on to be a pioneer in the women's suffrage struggle and join other dedicated women and men in the monumental campaign that led to a woman's right to vote in 1920.

On Friday, October 22 a group of members of the Friends of the Cheshire COA were treated to an outing that was both a delight and a privilege. The Friends of the COA arranged for a guided tour of the Anthony birthplace on East Road in Adams followed by a stop at the recently dedicated sculpture of Susan depicted as she gave a forceful speech, given in 1873 defending her right to vote after being arrested and convicted for voting in New York State. The sculpture also portrays a six-year-old Susan sitting at the feet of her older self-reading. Young Susan was famously able to read at age 3, taught by her grandmother who lived locally.

The group learned of the formation of the Adams Suffrage Centennial

Celebration Committee who conceived the idea of a commemorative statue in the newly renovated Adams Town Common. They conducted many fundraisers and outreach efforts to secure funding. The effort culminated in the dedication of the sculpture on June 24 of this year with Lieutenant Governor Karen Polito as the speaker at the event.

The group then proceeded to the Quaker meeting House at the top of Maple Street cemetery, just off the Friend Street entrance. Susan's Quaker father brought his family to services there when they lived in Adams. The building, simplistic in its design, was integral to the friends community for many years after its construction in 1782. It has been preserved in its original unrestored condition. Thanks to the chairman of the Adams Historical Society Eugene Michalenko, who opened the building for the Friends of the COA and conducted a tour of the original structure. Gene pointed out aspects of the meeting house design preserved from its earliest use. Little quirks also have been preserved such as graffiti from 1832 and others which were more modern.



The outing concluded with lunch for the participants at the Bass Water Grill in Cheshire. The size of the group was limited to 12 due to the need to preserve the displays and the smaller size of the rooms in the Anthony birthplace.

The learned tour guide who was introduced as Marty, held the group's rapt attention as he went from room to room describing the life of the Anthony's, their Quaker lifestyle, and tumultuous civil and social climate during Susan's life. The many historical figures she touched in her life and the events they represented are well portrayed at the Anthony home.

The friends of the Cheshire COA have indicated that another outing of this type may happen if there is enough interest among their membership.

Become a Friend of the Cheshire COA

You might have heard of the Friends but wondered 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 purchased additional tickets for seniors to go to a play at Barrington Stage beyond what a grant had paid for. 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

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 Biancchi 413-743-5723 Carol Francesconi 413-743-5028 Mal Gwozdz 413-743-9356 Barbara Proper 413-743-4945 Peter Traub 413-743-3496

Van

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Car, Adams COA

Medical Appointments 413-743-8333

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