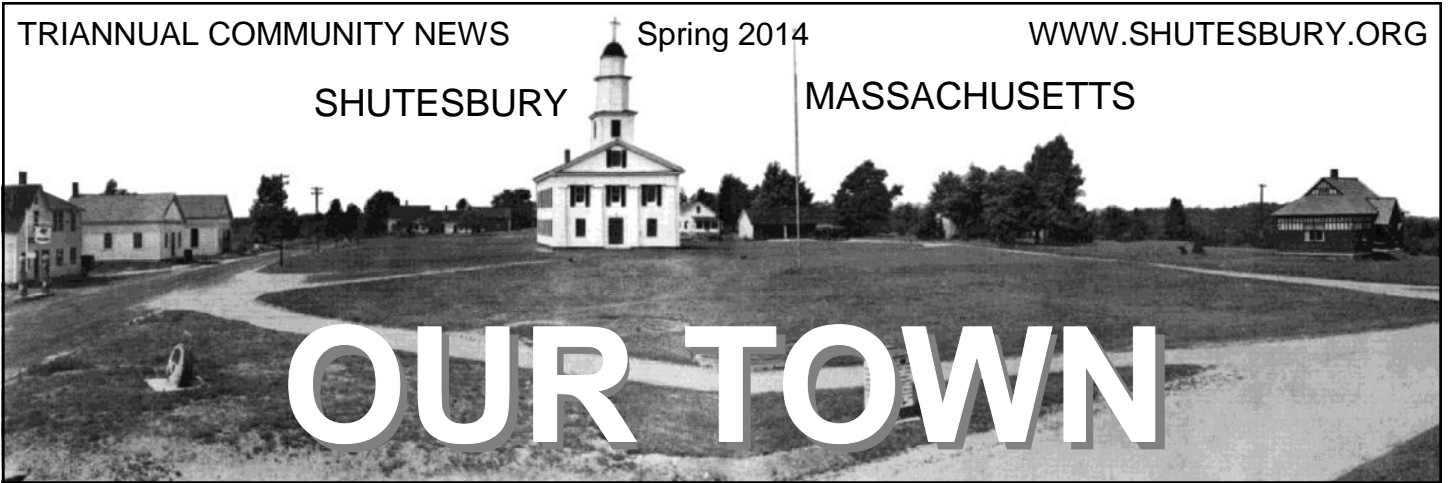


SHUTESBURY

MASSACHUSETTS



# OUR TOWN

## A 20-year Shutesbury Story of the Four Town, Amherst, Pelham, Leverett and Shutesbury Regional Assessment

*By Becky Torres, Town Administrator*

Over the last couple years it has been noted by Shutesbury town officials that the "Alternative Method" currently used by the Amherst Regional Schools to determine each town's assessment is consistently more costly for Shutesbury than the Statutory Method.

This year Shutesbury town officials have asked that the four towns sit down and review the formula, as they did in 2006. The first meeting was held at the end of March and the working group will continue to meet. This is a complicated issue and will take months to evaluate.

Some have suggested that Shutesbury should vote against the Alternative method at Annual Town Meeting in May. If Shutesbury Town Meeting were to vote down the Alternative Method, it will cause great upheaval for the Regional Schools and other towns. The resulting default assessments to the other towns would be greater than what is in their budgets. The other towns would not vote the school budget without being able to fund it. Automatic layoff notices would need to be given to teachers.

We are late in the municipal budgetary process for towns to make this kind of adjustment. Shutesbury town officials want to have a productive discussion with the four towns

about the assessment formula. We need to be thoughtful and carefully research the potential outcomes of formula changes that are proposed before making any changes.

This is a confusing topic so I would like to start with a history of how we got here.

The towns of Shutesbury, Leverett, Pelham and Amherst have been providing secondary education for grades 7-12 through the Amherst-Pelham Regional Schools since 1957.

From that time through 1993, the

**See Assessment, continued on page 7**

## Littering and dumping bylaw on Town Meeting agenda

*By the Recycling and Solid Waste Committee*

We've all seen stuff sitting by the side of the road. Sometimes it's good stuff that people put out during the week before Bulky Waste Day and is taken and used by others. Sometimes it's junk that is either put out by people moving out of town or dumped by midnight scofflaws that sits by the side of the road for weeks or longer. The Recycling and Solid Waste Committee proposes a Town Bylaw that we hope will discourage illegal dumping and help keep Shutesbury's roads clean and clear. This bylaw will be presented for a vote at Town Meeting on May 3.

**See Bylaw, continued on page 5**

## History of logging talk and hike set for April 26

*By the Shutesbury Historical Commission*

Down through the years from the October 27, 1736 Roadtown Proprietors' vote that Jonathan Burt, Bezaleel Wilder, Nathan Farrar and James Wilder have 20 acres of land at the southern branch of the Roaring Brook as an encouragement in the enterprise of building a sawmill, (taken from Josiah Holland's History of Western Massachusetts), Shutesbury has depended upon lumbering for basic building materials and income for its citizens.

On Saturday, April 26 at 9:30am, the Historical Commission will host a program by the Pioneer Valley Institute on the history of logging. Come to Town Hall to listen to historian

**See Logging, continued on page 6**

## Contact Conservation Commission before starting your project

*By Penny Jaques, Secretary, Conservation Commission*

With the arrival of warmer weather, many town residents start to think about construction or landscaping projects. New construction, tree removal, grading or excavation and almost any work done near Lake Wyola must be reviewed by the Shutesbury Conservation Commission before work begins.

**See Projects, continued on page 7**

## Messages from the Town Clerk

Leslie Bracebridge, *Town Clerk*

Office Hours: 9am –1pm Monday through Thursday; call 413-259-1204 for special appointments.

Saturday, May 3, 2014 is the date of Shutesbury's **Annual Town Meeting and Election of officers**. The polls will be open at the Shutesbury Elementary School at 23 West Pelham RD from 8 A.M. to 2 P.M. Annual Town Meeting will begin at 9 A.M.

Saturday, April 12 was the last day for new voters to register to vote for the Annual Town Meeting and Election. Once you have registered to vote in a Massachusetts town, as long as you remain at the same address and continue to complete and return your street list form each January, your name will remain on the voter registration list.

**NEW: The Secretary of the Commonwealth has created a website where you can learn about your voter registration status, who your representatives are, links to their websites showing how to contact them, and other elections related information at the following address:**

<http://www.sec.state.ma.us/VoterRegistrationSearch/MyVoterRegStatus.aspx>

**If you have a zip code other than 01072 and your zip code doesn't work for your name, try putting in 01072.**

You may find it easier to go to the Town Clerk's page at [www.shutesbury.org](http://www.shutesbury.org) and click on the link to the Secretary's page. You may also call the Town Clerk's number above anytime, if you would like to check your voter registration status or to ask questions about registering to vote, or about elections in general.

**The following positions will appear on the ballot:**

Board of Health: two 3-year positions  
Cemetery Commission: one 3-year position  
Library Trustees: two 3-year positions

Planning Board: two 3-year positions  
School Committee: two 3-year positions

School Committee: one 1-year position

Selectmen: one 3-year position  
Town Clerk: one 3-year position

**Absentee ballots** are available at the Town Clerk's Office for any voter who will be absent from Shutesbury, or who has a physical disability or a religious belief that prevents the voter from being present during polling hours. Applications for absentee ballots must be made in writing, and include the voter's name, voting address, the address to which the ballot should be mailed, and the voter's signature. Please allow plenty of time for mail delivery of an application and the ballot back and forth. A voter may also **absentee vote in person at the Town Clerk's office** until noon on Friday, May 2.

The only way to **vote on Town Meeting warrant articles** is to be present at the meeting. We hope you will be able to attend. Key results of both the election and the town meeting will be put on the Town Clerk's answering machine (259-1204) and posted on the front door of Town Hall at the end of the day. As soon as the first draft minutes and election results are prepared, they will be sent to the town website ([www.shutesbury.org](http://www.shutesbury.org)).

You can **re-license your dog** any time now for the July 1, 2014 - June 30, 2015 period. A re-licensing form is available at the [Shutesbury.org](http://Shutesbury.org) website. I will send dog license forms in a June 2013 town-wide mailing. Check now to make sure that your dog is up to date on its rabies vaccination, as is required in order to re-license. **Thank you for licensing your dog.**

## All hail to our folding crew!

The Winter 2014 *Our Town* reached your mailbox in January thanks to volunteers **Marilyn Tibbetts, Janice Stone, Carrie Stone, Joan Hanson, Laura Walton and Susan Millinger**, who joined Administrative Secretary **Leslie Bracebridge** to stuff, fold, seal and label the newsletter.

If you would like to join a "folding party" for any future newsletters or other municipal mailings, please call Leslie Bracebridge at 413-259-1204.

## Announcement from the Town Moderator

The Town Moderator is responsible for making appointments to the Finance Committee and the Personnel Board when there are vacancies. If you are interested in serving on either, please contact **Penny Kim** at [Pen2noho@msn.com](mailto:Pen2noho@msn.com).

## Note from the Town Collector

Ellen McKay, *Town Collector*

Dear Shutesbury taxpayers,  
Happy spring! Now that the warmer weather is approaching, we are approaching the end of FY 2014 and the Town Meeting for FY 2015.

My office hours are Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday from 9 AM – Noon and Thursday from 8 – 11 AM. Should you need to see me and these times are inconvenient, please call and we can arrange a better time to meet.

With the delay in delivery due to the transfer of the mail sorting facility from Springfield to Hartford, it is imperative that you **PLAN ACCORDINGLY** when mailing your payments. Under Mass. General Law, we do NOT use the postmark for date of payment but rather the date of actual receipt. You should mail bills at least **ONE WEEK** before they are due to insure that they are received before the due date.

If you use on-line banking from

**See Taxes, continued on page 3**

*Our Town*, published three times a year in January or February, April, and August or September, is supported by tax dollars. We welcome news from Town of Shutesbury departments, boards, and committees, and from individuals and groups about local projects, activities, or special events of benefit to our community. Submissions promoting the sale of goods or services for private profit cannot be accepted.

Janis S. Gray, *Editor*  
Leslie Bracebridge, *Town Hall Liaison*



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## Statements received from candidates for contested school committee seat

A three-way race for two 3-year terms on the Shutesbury School Committee will appear on the May 3, 2014 ballot. Each candidate was invited to submit a statement of no more than 125 words to *Our Town*. Space for campaign statements is available to all candidates for contested seats, including known write-in candidates. For the purposes of this newsletter, a known write-in candidate is an individual who has notified the Town Clerk in writing that he or she is a write-in candidate for a particular office. The Town of Shutesbury does not endorse any candidate. Candidates have provided all information appearing in statements. *Our Town* does not proofread or correct these submissions.

### Matthew Andrews

452 West Pelham Road

I've decided to run for school committee because I care about this town, the school, and our children. Our school has a rich history, and I want to help ensure that a radiant future emerges from this history by advocating for the best interests of our children and community. I'm a senior-level administrator for an international non-profit ([www.bestbuddies.org](http://www.bestbuddies.org)), and I have extensive experience achieving goals and facilitating change under complex circumstances. I believe that a school succeeds when it supports not only intellectual capacity, but the development of life skills and attributes like focus, creativity, responsibility, empathy, and resilience. I hope to work with other committee members to guarantee that our school continues to deliver in these critical areas.

### Dan Hayes

194 Wendell Road

I am seeking re-election to the School Committee. School Committee positions must be filled with motivated, concerned, and involved members who are committed to providing stability and guidance to our school. Although my children have completed their tenure at Shutesbury Elementary, my keen interest continues. I want to assist in hiring a superintendent with vision; focused on collaboration, best practices, eliminating redundancies and reducing costs, while supporting each principal with the necessary resources to enhance each school's individual culture and climate. I will oppose regionalization. Regionalizing eliminates local control in budgeting, staffing, curriculum, programs, policies and overall decision making, while increasing costs to Shutesbury. As the current vice chair to the Collaborative, I am interested in maximizing services to our school. I appreciate your support.

### Stephen Sullivan

444 Wendell Road

Hello Shutesbury,

I am very familiar with Shutesbury Elementary. I worked at the school for four years as the Afterschool Director and volunteered for six while completing my teacher licensure. My experience as a former staff member and my ten years as a childcare provider give me a unique perspective on the school's needs. I am also a parent of a recent SES grad.

I chose to run at this time because I want to help Shutesbury find a new identity while honoring its past. During this transition, we need to keep all options open and have thoughtful discussion regarding decisions for our children's future.

I am fortunate to live in this community that is so dedicated to its school.

Thank You,  
Stephen Sullivan

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### Taxes, continued from page 2

your bank (not the Town's system), please be aware that the bill will come to this office for processing from the lockbox because it is not accompanied by a copy of the bill. PLEASE make sure the memo information is correct and does not reflect information from previous payments (i.e.: listing real estate or excise bill numbers from previous years or an incorrect type of bill). Since your bill payment is NOT an automatic transfer into the Town's bank account, you must PLAN ACCORDINGLY when authorizing the payment. DO NOT set up the payment on the due date, it won't get to the Town until almost a week later which will result in fees and interest.

Your fourth quarter real estate taxes are due May 1. I urge you to pay these bills promptly as the next bill you will be receiving is a demand that will cost you an additional \$ 5.00 plus interest. If you need to set up a payment arrangement on your bill, please contact me as soon as possible. Although

interest will accrue on any overdue portion of the bill, you will avoid the additional interest and any collection procedures beyond the demand that will accrue should you leave the entire bill unpaid.

Don't forget to contact the Board of Assessors if you no longer have a vehicle on which you have received a motor vehicle excise tax bill. All bills should be paid in full before you apply for abatement. If this is not done and the bill becomes overdue with additional fees and interest before abatement, these must be paid along with any outstanding balance due on the bill after abatement.

Payment of all types of bills MUST be received on or before the due date which is clearly marked on the bill. Please make note of these dates and make your payments accordingly. Always open all envelopes you receive from this office immediately on receipt. The bill you think is a real estate bill (and paid by your bank) may be an excise tax bill for which you are responsible.

Be sure to notify this office if you change your mailing address to avoid a delay in delivery of your mail which is returned to me for forwarding. This can take as much as two weeks which reduces the time you have to pay the bill on time.

Should a demand bill be issued on a motor vehicle excise tax, the law provides 14 days for receipt of payment before a warrant for collection is issued to the Deputy Collector. This results in at least \$ 22.00 in additional fees. Upon mailing of the demand bills, payment of the original bill will NOT be accepted and checks made out in the incorrect amount WILL be returned to the sender.

Some of you have been unable to pay your bills on-line. Once a bill is overdue, it is automatically deleted from the system and can't be paid on-line until the demand is issued. If the bill is on warrant, it cannot be paid on-line except through the Deputy Collector.

Have a good spring.

## Developmental screenings offered for children ages 3, 4 and 5 in our community

In Shutesbury, developmental screening is available through the school as a first step in a process intended to find children in need of special services and to plan for meeting those needs. Screening focuses on a child's growth in a number of areas, such as large and small muscle control, speech/language development and concept development. This activity takes about 20 minutes and consists of a number of games that children typically enjoy playing. The screening gives an indication of whether or not a child's skills are developing within the typical range.

If you have any questions or concerns about your child's development, would like more information, or wish to set up an appointment, please call Grace Griecci, Shutes-

bury Elementary School's Preschool Teacher, at 413-259-1212 X140 or email her at [grieccg@shutesburyschool.org](mailto:grieccg@shutesburyschool.org)

*This service is available to all families in town, including those with a child not already enrolled in the school's preschool program.*

## Spaghetti night is coming — for the 30th time!

The Annual Spaghetti Dinner at the Shutesbury Elementary School is a big deal, but this year it is even bigger as it is the 30th anniversary of this wonderful town-wide event.

On Friday, May 9, parents of graduating 6th grade students will



cook a fabulous spaghetti meal with all the fixings. Live music will create a fun atmosphere

and our children in the sixth grade will be taking the orders. There are two seatings — 6:pm and 7:30pm — and tickets can be purchased through a fifth or sixth grader or through the school office. Ticket prices are \$8 for adults and \$6 for children and seniors. All money raised will be used for the 5/6 field trip to Boston and the 6th Grade White Water Rafting Trip. Hope to see you there!

## Help wanted at elementary school

Shutesbury Elementary School is seeking an additional person (or two) to join the list of those able to substitute for our custodial staff as needed.

We currently have one very reliable and hard-working substitute custodian, but thought it wise to have others to supplement that list.

Please contact either Principal Maureen Ryan or Head Custodian Matt Foster at the school, 413-259-1212.

## Shutesbury Early Childhood Program

The Shutesbury Elementary School Community (SES) believes that opportunities for early childhood education are essential components of a good education system. Early experiences in an environment rich in hands-on materials and activities provide children various opportunities to grow emotionally, physically, socially and cognitively. We believe that a trans-disciplinary team approach, in which all adults working with children are responsible for a child's learning, is the most effective way of teaching and we also believe that parents are the most important teachers of their children and that their involvement in their child's education is essential.

**Our Early Childhood Program is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), which is a mark of a high quality program for young children.**

## PRESCHOOL AND KINDERGARTEN ENROLLMENT FOR THE FALL OF 2014

**Our Preschool serves 3 and 4 year old children.**

**Your child must be 3 years old on or before Sept. 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014.**

**Please get in touch with us as soon as possible.**

**If you have a child who will be 5 years old on or before Sept. 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014,**

**please get in touch with us as soon as possible for**

**Fall 2014 kindergarten enrollment.**

For more information, please call

Jessica Carlson-Belanger at the Main Office of SES  
413-259-1212 x10  
[carlson-belangerj@shutesburyschool.org](mailto:carlson-belangerj@shutesburyschool.org)

Grace Griecci  
413-259-1212 x140  
[grieccg@shutesburyschool.org](mailto:grieccg@shutesburyschool.org)

## From the Recycling Committee

### Shutesbury Bulky Waste Day Saturday June 7!

Saturday June 7, is Bulky Waste Day at the Highway Department from 10:00am to 2:00pm for Shutesbury residents.

Bring items that are too large for the trash, such as construction waste, mattresses, electronics, etc. We do charge enough to cover the cost of disposing of these items, so bring some cash or your check book with you.

Hint: Unloading goes a lot faster if you separate trash, metals, and electronics. **DO NOT** bring hazardous waste to Bulky Waste Day.

We will have to begin charging again this year for old TVs and computer monitors (CRTs) at the rate of \$10 each. The Salvation Army no longer picks up electronics. Electronics can be recycled at Best Buy in Hadley.

The Salvation Army will also **Not** be picking up textiles at Shutesbury Bulky Waste Day. Textiles, old clothing, and leather goods can be dropped off at recycling bins in the Valley or taken to the Salvation Army Thrift Store on Rt. 9 in Hadley. Please make sure that all textiles are dry and clean.

### We need Bulky Waste Day volunteers!

Please give us a hand that day if you can. We had several terrific volunteers for BWD in October, and their help made a huge difference. We really moved trash that day! Many hands make light work.

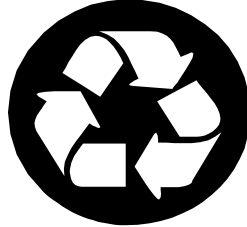
If you would like to volunteer, contact **Gary Bernhard** at 413-259-1235 or [bernhard@www.umass.edu](mailto:bernhard@www.umass.edu).

### Free by the Side of the Road

The week before each Bulky Waste Day is "Free By the Side of the Road Week." If you have items that you no longer need but might be useful to others, place them on the roadside during the week beginning Saturday, May 31.

**NOTE: Items placed on the roadside that are NOT picked up**

**before Bulky Waste Day can be brought to Bulky Waste Day. Please see the "Littering and Dumping Bylaw" draft starting on page 1 in this issue of *Our Town*, and continued below. The Recycling and Solid Waste Committee will be presenting this bylaw for a vote at Town Meeting on May 3.**



**Bylaw, continued from page 1**

#### **1. Disposal of refuse, rubbish, etc. on public roads and rights of way, private property or in inland waters (Mass. G.L. c. 270, § 16 and G.L. c. 131, § 1).**

No person may place, throw, deposit or discharge, or cause to be placed, thrown, deposited or discharged, trash, bottles or cans, refuse, rubbish, garbage, debris, scrap, waste or other material of any kind on a public road or public right of way, or any other public land, or in or upon inland waters, or within 100 feet of such waters, or on property of another.

#### **2. Free by the side of the road items.**

Usable items placed by residents beside Shutesbury roads for others to take must be properly disposed of by the resident or property owner if said items have not been taken two weeks after they have been placed on the roadside. The property owner is responsible for proper disposal of these items.

#### **3. Vacating a Residence.**

People vacating a residence in Shutesbury may not leave trash, bottles or cans, refuse, rubbish, garbage, debris, scrap, bulky or hazardous waste or other waste materials of any kind on the side of Shutesbury roads with the exception of trash disposed of in official Shutesbury trash bags or trash scheduled for pick up

within a week by a private hauler. In the case of rental properties, the property owner is responsible for any necessary disposal or roadside clean-up.

#### **4. Enforcement**

The provisions of this bylaw shall be enforced by the Police Officers of the Town of Shutesbury by any available means in law or equity, including but not limited to enforcement by noncriminal disposition. Instances of hazardous waste dumping shall be enforced according to applicable state law. Non-hazardous waste (trash, refuse, rubbish, garbage, debris, scrap, bulky or other non-hazardous waste materials of any kind), enforced through noncriminal disposition, will be handled in the following manner:

a. The Shutesbury Police shall investigate ownership or origin of the non-hazardous waste. **Reports of illegal dumping initiated by a resident shall be reported via telephone or email to the Shutesbury Recycling Coordinator. The Recycling Coordinator shall follow up with the Police.** For a first offense, the Police shall issue a written notice and direct the violator to remove the items immediately. The notice shall include notification that the property owner will be charged for the cost of removal if the non-hazardous materials are not removed within two weeks from receipt of the written notice.

b. If materials are not removed within the two week period after notification, a fine of \$25.00 in addition to all costs of disposal, including waste removal and disposal costs, Shutesbury departmental, administrative and hired staff time to handle the disposal, and any other relevant costs incurred, shall be charged to the violator.

c. If the originator of the non-hazardous waste cannot be identified, the Town Administrator shall determine how vendors will be paid.

## Quabbin – Memorial Day observances

By The Shutesbury Historical Commission

On April 28, 1938, the four towns to the east of Shutesbury, Dana, Enfield, Greenwich and Prescott were discontinued in the process of creating the Quabbin Reservoir.

This caused significant disruption to the lives of the residents of those towns. Less often remembered, residents in towns surrounding the Reservoir also experienced disruption, but not the total loss of their communities. Almost a third of Shutesbury's land

mass is dedicated to the watershed and many, many Shutesbury families were forced to leave their homes and farms and start over somewhere else.

People faced complete change and loss, right down to the cemeteries of their loved ones. The Quabbin Park Cemetery was built as part of the Quabbin Reservoir project by the Metropolitan District Water Supply Commission to receive the remains of graves removed from the Swift River Valley. Today's descendants are able to access their ancestors' gravesites at this site just outside of the flooded valley.

On Sunday, May 25, we invite members of our community to join the

Historical Commission in representing Shutesbury at the annual Quabbin Memorial Day Observance at the Quabbin Park Cemetery.

This event draws a growing number of participants and observers with a wide range of interest in to the Park each year. The Commission appreciates the opportunity to participate.

To reach the cemetery, take Rte 9 east for six miles from its intersection with Rte 202 in Belchertown.

The observance starts at 11am. Arrive early to take some time to read the program, partake of refreshments, and explore the cemetery.

For more information on either event, please call 259-1204.

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### Logging, continued from page 1

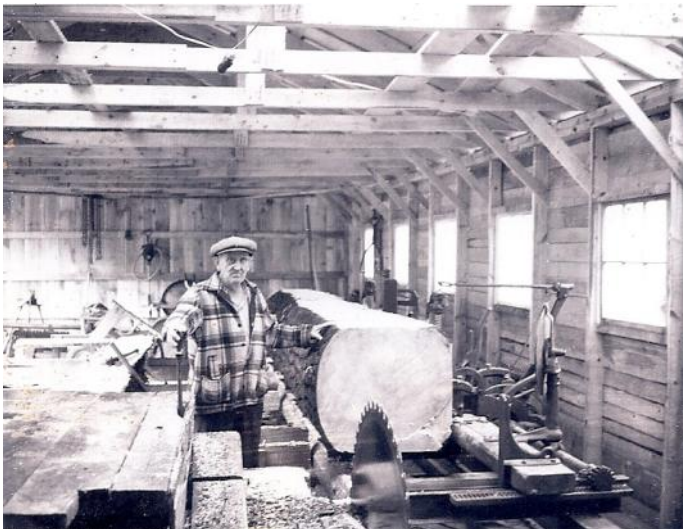
Harry Proudly, of Ashuelot, NH, and logger **Steve Puffer**, of Shutesbury.

Mr. Proudly will discuss historic logging tools, focusing on the period from 1920-1950, and he will show a short video of those tools being used.

Mr. Puffer will discuss the Puffer family's experiences with these tools during their logging operations in Shutesbury.

After a short break for lunch (bring your own) we will take a hike in the Paul C. Jones working forest in Shutesbury MA, a large tract of conserved forest land. The projected end time is 2:30pm.

*Top photo: Edward Puffer unloads logs by hand with a cant-hook in 1966. Below: Charles Frost at the 118 Baker Road sawmill, 1967. Right: At Gate 17, Atkinson Hollow, 1973.*



## **Projects, continued from page 1**

Keep in mind that the Conservation Commission must sign off on all Building Permit Applications whenever digging is required. At the minimum, a site visit is required prior to signing off. If wetlands are nearby, the process is more complex and can take several weeks. Don't wait till the last minute to contact us. A link to our wetlands brochure can be downloaded from the Commission's page on the town website:

[www.shutesbury.org/concom](http://www.shutesbury.org/concom)

Our knowledgeable clerk, **Linda Avis Scott**, is there to help you through the process. She can help you determine what you need to do and how to go about it. Here's how to start:

- 1) Leave a message on our answering machine at 413-259-3792.
- 2) Visit Town Hall during Scott's office hours:  
Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10am to 12 noon.
- 3) Come to one of our meetings (from March to October, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursdays at 7pm and from November to February, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday). It's best to call first to get onto our agenda.

The Commission wants to help property owners proceed with their projects while simultaneously protecting the valuable wetland resources that benefit all of us.

NOTE: We seek an additional member. If you think you might be interested, come to one of our meetings to find out more. We would especially welcome someone with an engineering background.

## **Civil Communication is Key**

*By The Group for Civil  
Communication*

Huddled near the fire at the Shutesbury Athletic Club (SAC) on a night between February storms, with background noise of the Olympics, a TV

hockey match, and a lone billiards player, six Shutesbury residents got together to talk.

These residents — **Meryl Mandell, Paul Lyons, Jeff Lacy, Mike Vinskey** and **Sharon and Bob Raymond** — are members of The Group for Civil Communication, a group with very different viewpoints on the library issue of 2012, but very similar ideas about HOW we as a town should be able to discuss such matters. Our goal is to explore ways of creating better understanding, and more respectful and productive dialogue in the town, especially when future controversial topics like the library issue arise.

Since some at the gathering reported feeling uncomfortable at various recent town and town committee meetings, the group wanted to better understand the protocol for Town Meeting, and discuss ways in which we might all experience less tension and improved civility at Town Meeting and other committee meetings and community events.

There was a lively discussion as we considered whether it was best to have town committee members whose perspectives are usually harmonious, versus having members with different perspectives.

Our group will be seeking answers to our specific questions, and looks forward to future meetings, at times with town officials, to explore ways of connecting Shutesbury's diverse population. We also look forward to widening the discussion with other town residents about these important topics, so stay tuned.

For further information about the group, contact Sharon Raymond at [sharon@simpleshoemaking.com](mailto:sharon@simpleshoemaking.com), or Meryl Mandell at [merylm@crocker.com](mailto:merylm@crocker.com).

## **Assessment, continued from page 1**

the towns were assessed for the cost of providing this education using an agreed-upon formula based on the idea that the cost of educating every child should be equal.

Education Reform (Ed Reform) was legislated in Massachusetts in 1994. By 1996, the Amherst Pelham Regional Schools changed the

method for assessing the towns, using the state ed reform formula, adopting the method identified in statute (commonly referred to as the "Statutory" formula) for regional assessment. At that time Shutesbury's elementary school population was booming. The Regional School population was mushrooming as well.

Under the "Statutory Method" assessed by the Amherst Region, Shutesbury's assessment went from \$500,000 in 1995, to \$600,000 in 1996, and \$722,266 in 1997. Shutesbury did not have the money to pay the assessment increase in 1997. By 1997 we had only \$8,000 in Stabilization funds. We would have gone into the red if we paid the 1997 assessment.

Desperate after six months of pleading our case and politicking, we received \$65,000 in pothole money from the Department of Education to pay our Regional assessment. We must thank State Sen. Stan Rosenberg for helping make that happen.

Continuing to use the default (statutory) method, in 1998 Shutesbury paid a regional assessment of \$735,000. In 1999 we paid a regional assessment of \$820,000. In 2000 we paid a regional assessment of \$910,000. In 2001 we paid a regional assessment of \$990,000. In 2002 we paid a regional assessment of \$1,060,000. In 2003 we paid a regional assessment of \$1,110,000. In 2004 under a modified agreement we paid a regional assessment of \$1,205,000 and in 2004 we paid a regional assessment of \$1,350,000, again, under a modified agreement. During 2006 and 2007 the four towns came together, achieving modified agreements.

These year-to-year agreements exhausted everyone and filled the Regional School Administration with uncertainty. The four towns decided, in an effort to solve this problem, to negotiate a longer-term agreement that would be predictable and fair, and smooth dramatic changes year to year.

Since the agreement was reached, Shutesbury's assessment has been relatively flat. In 2006

**See Assessment,  
continued on page 8**

**Assessment,  
continued from page 7**

Shutesbury hit an assessment of \$1,420,000. Between 2007 and 2014 our assessment has hovered at \$1.4 million, not moving to \$1.5 million until this year with an assessment of \$1,570,000 for 2015.

Shutesbury's growth in student enrollment plateaued in relationship to the other towns during that period. Shutesbury experienced eight years of little growth under the alternative method. Now the assessment is increasing again. The alternative method we have been using during these years has a smoothing effect created by a five year rolling average. This helps us to prepare for changes such as rapid increase in enrollment. The rolling average smooths out the increased cost of the assessment.

The assessment history shows us that if Shutesbury had used the Statutory Method over the last 11 of 20 years, 2004 through 2015, Shutesbury would have benefitted. It would have been a greater struggle for some of the other towns. But we did not benefit from the Statutory Method in the early years. So if we had used the Statutory Method for 20 years the impact would be close to neutral.

When we were using the Statutory Method in the early days, it turns out it would have been to our advantage to use the current Alternative Method. But the current Alternative Method did not have statutory authority at that time. It

was not available to use. It took the battles, the politicking and campaigning through the years of being victimized by the unpredictable consequences of the state ed reform statutory formula to create the alternative option.

Each year under the statutory method the towns are at the will of the unintended, unknown consequence of legislated policy changes to the ed reform formula. This year the formula has changed again, adding additional weight to property valuations (EQV) over income. What the consequences are in the long term we do not know. Each factor is reevaluated every year, but there is a lag time so things do not change immediately.

Today the Amherst Region is again at a point where the four towns have decided to review the assessment formula. We currently are utilizing the method originally defined in the Amherst Pelham Regional agreement in the 1950s, with the ed reform base, called the "Alternative Method."

This "alternative" assessment distribution has recently been criticized for favoring other towns over Shutesbury. This method was adopted in 2007 because it distributes the costs of education for children in all four towns equally. The towns pay the same for a child sitting in one desk compared to a child sitting at the next desk no matter which town they come from. Many feel this is fair.

The 2007 assessment committee found it to be the fairest method of the

dozens studied and established it in 2007. Roger Hatch, the Department of Education's reform formula specialist, was brought in to help the regional assessment formula committee consider and create alternative methods. The committee presented its work to officials from the four towns and the proposal was accepted. The officials from four towns took the Alternative Method to their communities and it has passed all four towns; annual town meetings every year since 2007.

When first adopted in 2007, it meant Amherst had to pay more, \$250,000 more. The first year Shutesbury and Leverett volunteered funds, \$62,000 each to Amherst to help bridge the transition, to help Amherst pay more. Both towns paid less under the new Alternative Method. Amherst is the only community to not have benefitted from any formula since the start of ed reform, until now.

This budget year, 2015, if the Alternative Method is adopted, Amherst will be in the plus column in regards to the Statutory Method for the first time. And this year as in the recent past the Alternative Method for Shutesbury is higher than the statutory.

The key in all of this is to work together for the regional schools to come together and support a budget for our children's schools at a level each town is able to afford, and which in the long term is fair. We need to work together with all the towns in the Amherst region, Amherst, Leverett, Pelham and Shutesbury, to achieve this goal.

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## Union #28 Community Network for Children

The *Community Network for Children (CNC)* program is funded through the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care Coordinated Family and Community Engagement (CFCE) grant.

The CNC supports all families with children from birth through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade in our school union.

Some programs for families include: weekly playgroups and story hours; parent/guardian workshops and events; opportunities to meet other families in our community; support in accessing child care and information regarding assistance paying for child care; information about children's development; new baby gift bags and

home visits; and newsletters with current programs and events. Our local CNC council assists in the oversight of the grant funds.

If you are interested in being on our mailing list to receive the newsletters, please call or email **Gillian Budine**,

Coordinator, 978-544-5157 or [Budine@erving.com](mailto:Budine@erving.com).

See our newsletter here: <https://sites.google.com/site/communitynetworkforchildren/newsletters> to get more information.

### Redeem coupon for a Welcome Baby Gift Bag!

The Union #28 Community Network for Children (CNC) would like to extend a welcome to your new baby with a free Welcome Baby Gift Bag. Your bag will contain books, health and safety items and valuable information about local services for you and your new baby.

Please call or email Gillian, CNC Coordinator, to arrange for a drop off at your home or to pick up your welcome baby gift bag at one of our local story hours or playgroups!

978-544-5157 or [Budine@erving.com](mailto:Budine@erving.com)!



# The M. N. Spear Memorial Library

10 Cooleyville Road  
259-1213; [www.mnspear.org](http://www.mnspear.org)  
Mary Anne Antonellis, *Director*

## Hours:

Monday and Wednesday:  
11am -1pm and 3-7:30pm  
Tuesday and Thursday: 3-7:30pm  
Friday: Closed  
Saturday: 10am-1pm  
Sunday: 3-6pm

## Library survey! We need your feedback

Included in this newsletter is a survey about library services. Every five years the library undergoes a long-range planning process and community input if needed to plan changes and improvements to the services we offer. Please take a few minutes to tell us how we are doing. Fill in the paper survey included in this newsletter or complete the survey online.

There is a link to the survey on the homepage of our website, [www.mnspear.org](http://www.mnspear.org), on our Facebook page, and on the homepage of [www.shutesbury.org](http://www.shutesbury.org). Hardcopies of the survey can be returned to the library by mail or in person or can be left in a completed survey return box at Town Hall. The Trustees look forward to sharing survey results with the community.

## C/W MARS

Our C/W MARS membership gives Shutesbury residents access to the collections of 145 libraries in Central and Western Massachusetts, including nearly nine million items.

Shutesbury library patrons can search the online catalog and request items from other libraries which will be delivered to the M.N. Spear Memorial Library for pick-up, usually in a week or less. We receive deliveries every Monday, Tuesday and Thursday.

In most cases an automatic email notice is sent when an item arrives at the Library. Patrons now have the option of choosing to receive a text message and if you don't use email or receive texts we can still call you on the telephone.



One new online feature in the C/W MARS catalog that I like is "See New Items at your library." This handy link can be found just above the search box of the online catalog page. It takes you to a screen where you will need to choose M. N. Spear Memorial Library. All of the items added in the last 14 days will be listed.

## Place holds for new items

Most new items will spend very little time sitting on the library shelf. Placing holds is easy and will reduce your wait time for new items. We have bookmarks available at the library with step-by-step instructions for placing holds. Please take one. We are happy to demonstrate how to place a hold on the public computers and we are happy to place holds for you. Just ask!

## Historic maps of Shutesbury

Thanks to a grant from the Shutesbury Cultural Council and funding from the Friends of the Library, we have a collection of Historic Maps of Shutesbury. The oldest map is from 1751! Ask to see the maps when you visit the library.

## What's happening at the library!

Library programs are promoted using a variety of local sources. Flyers are posted at the Library, Post Office, Town Hall and the Bulletin Board on the corner of Locks Pond Road. They are also included in the School newsletter, the *RoadTown News*.

Announcements are sent via the Town email announce list. Programs are listed on Nextdoor Shutesbury, the ECricket, and on the Library Facebook Page. Programs are also listed at [mnspear.org](http://mnspear.org).

Lists of upcoming programs are also included in Town-wide mailings, such as this *Our Town Newsletter*.

## Spring Spruce-Up! A fundraiser for a new Shutesbury library!

For a \$100 donation to the New Library Fund, a team of four library loving adults does one hour of energetic yard work, sprucing up your yard.

To join a team of yard workers or to schedule a spruce-up, call the Library, 259-1213, or email [mnspearlibrary@verizon.net](mailto:mnspearlibrary@verizon.net).



TOWN OF SHUTESBURY  
 P.O. BOX 276  
 SHUTESBURY MA 01072

PRSR  
 U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
 PERMIT #305  
 AMHERST MA 01002

Return Service Requested

**OUR TOWN**

*Enclosed: An Invitation to  
 Tea and Dessert on April 29!*

Resident  
 Shutesbury MA 01072

### HOW TO CONTACT TOWN OFFICIALS

Go to [www.shutesbury.org](http://www.shutesbury.org) to find email addresses, or call the appropriate number below.

ACCOUNTANT Gail Weiss	259-1108	ELEMENTARY SCHOOL Maureen Ryan, Principal	259-1212	RECREATION COMMITTEE Vacant	259-1214
ADA COMMITTEE Martina Carroll	259-1110	EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIRECTOR Walter Tibbetts	259-1211	RECYCLING COORDINATOR Gary Bernhard	259-1235
TOWN ADMINISTRATOR Rebecca Torres	259-1214	FINANCE COMMITTEE Lori Tuominen	259-1765	REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE Michael DeChiara, contact	259-1509
ANIMAL INSPECTORS Denise Chiminiello	259-1020	Rus Wilson	259-1820	ROADS COMMITTEE Vacant	259-1214
Nancy Long	345-8796	FIRE DEPARTMENT Walter Tibbetts, Chief	259-1211	SHUTESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE Michael DeChiara	259-1509
ASSESSORS Kenneth Holmberg	259-3790	or at home	259-1286	UNION #28 SCHOOL SUPT. Bob Mahler	423-3337
BOARD OF HEALTH Catherine Hilton, Clerk	259-2122	HEALTH AGENT David Zarozinski	549-3710	SELECT BOARD Elaine Puleo, Chair	259-1979
Public health emergency	659-7294	HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT Tim Hunting	259-1215	Al Springer	259-1578
BUILDINGS COMMITTEE Dale Houle	259-1696	HISTORICAL COMMISSION Barbara Goodhind	259-1428	J. April Stein	259-1074
BUILDING INSPECTOR Jim Hawkins	774-3167 x. 113	M.N. SPEAR MEMORIAL LIBRARY Mary Anne Antonellis, Dir.	259-1213	SHUTESBURY BROADBAND COMMITTEE Vacant	259-1214
CEMETERY COMMISSION Marilyn Tibbetts	259-1976	LIBRARY TRUSTEES Karen Traub	367-9826	TAX COLLECTOR Ellen McKay	259-1615
COUNCIL ON AGING Med-Ride Program	259-2123	OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE Janice Stone	259-1557	TOWN CLERK Leslie Bracebridge	259-1204
Muriel Gross, Chair	259-1371	OUR TOWN NEWSLETTER Janis S. Gray	259-1584	TREASURER Gabriele Voelker	259-1801
CONSERVATION COMMISSION Leave inquiries at	259-3792	PERSONNEL BOARD J. April Stein	259-1074	TREE WARDEN Thomas Houston	259-1508
CULTURAL COUNCIL Julie Stepanek, contact	387-5670	PLANNING BOARD Deacon Bonnar	259-1276	WEB COMMITTEE Fred Steinberg	259-9996
DEPT. OF VETERAN'S SERVICES Leo J. Parent, Jr.	863-3205	PLUMBING/GAS INSPECTOR John Letourneau	367-0017	ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS Charles J. DiMare	549-5330
DOG OFFICER Nancy Long	345-8796	POLICE DEPARTMENT Chief Thomas E. Harding	259-1279	250th ANNIVERSARY COMMITTEE Janis S. Gray	259-1584
ELECTRICAL INSPECTOR Maurice Gregoire	253-7505	Dispatch	625-8200	Maryélise Lamet	259-1551
		<b>POLICE, FIRE &amp; RESCUE SQUAD</b>	<b>911</b>		