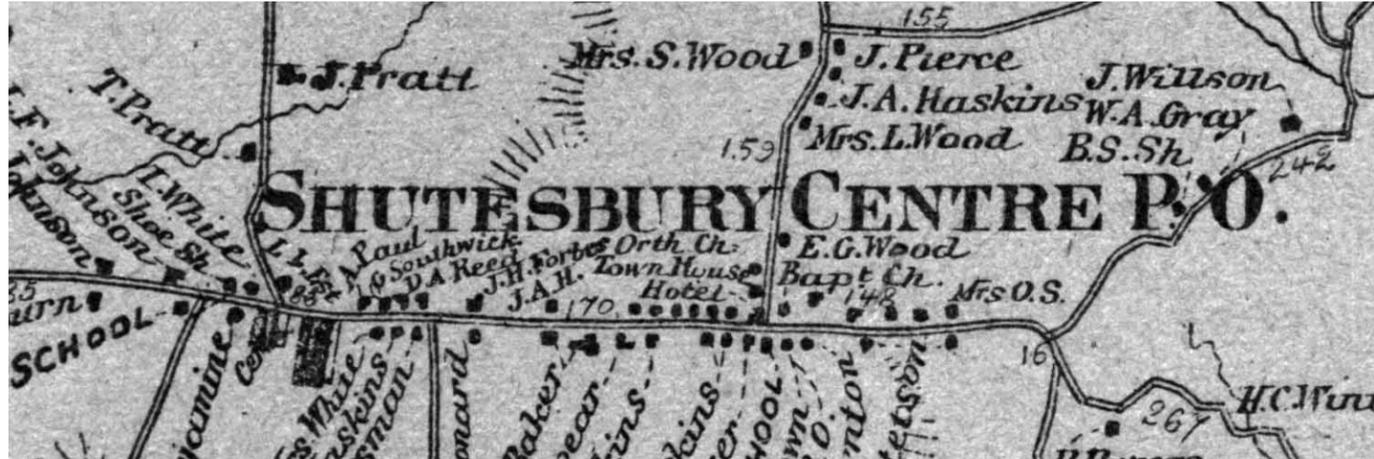




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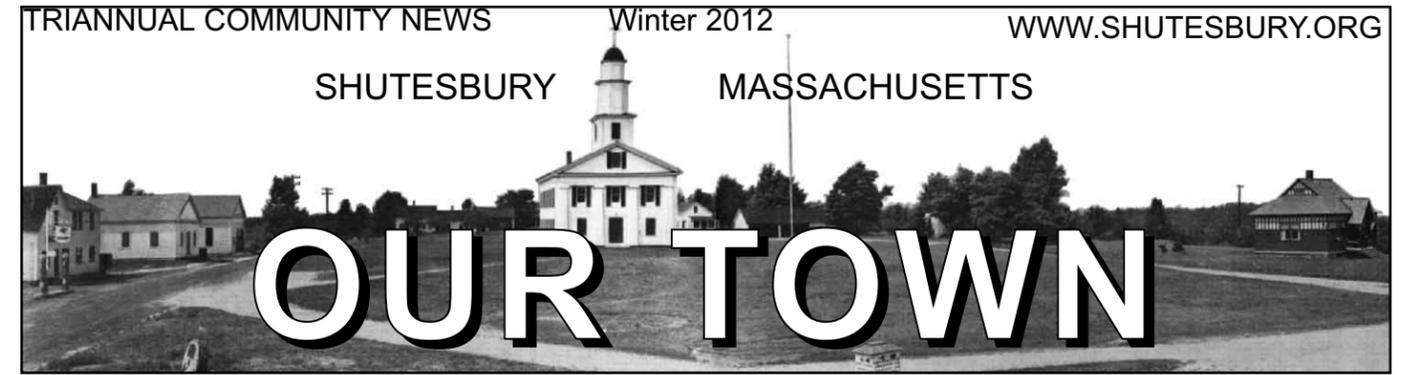


HOW TO CONTACT TOWN OFFICIALS

Go to www.shutesbury.org for email addresses, or call the phone numbers below.

ACCOUNTANT Gail Weiss 259-1108	ELEMENTARY SCHOOL Robert Mahler, Principal 259-1212	RECREATION COMMITTEE Rich Ferro 259-1361
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 Rus Wilson 259-1820	REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE Kristen Luschen 256-3303
ANIMAL INSPECTORS Denise Chiminiello 259-1020 Nancy Long 259-2123	FIRE DEPARTMENT Walter Tibbetts, Chief 259-1211 or home 259-1286	ROADS COMMITTEE Vacant Call 259-1214
ASSESSORS Kenneth Holmberg 259-3790	HEALTH AGENT David Zarozinski 549-3710	SCHOOL COMMITTEE Michael DeChiara 259-1059
BOARD OF HEALTH William Elliott 259-2122 Public health emergency 413 659-7294	HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT Tim Hunting 259-1215	UNION 28 SCHOOL SUPT. Joan Wickman 423-3337
BUILDINGS COMMITTEE Dale Houle 259-1696	HISTORICAL COMMISSION Barbara Goodhind 259-1428	SELECT BOARD Elaine Puleo, Chair 259-1979 Al Springer 259-1578 J. April Stein 259-1074
BUILDING INSPECTOR Jim Hawkins 772-2026	M.N. SPEAR MEMORIAL LIBRARY Mary Anne Antonellis, Dir. 259-1213	SHUTES.-LEV. BROADBAND COMM. Weezie Houle 259-1696
CEMETERY COMMISSION Marilyn Tibbetts 259-1976	LIBRARY TRUSTEES Karen Traub 367-9826	TAX COLLECTOR Ellen McKay 259-1615
COUNCIL ON AGING Muriel Gross 259-1371	OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE Janice Stone 259-1557	TOWN CLERK Leslie Bracebridge 259-1204
CONSERVATION COMMISSION Leave inquiries at 259-3792	OUR TOWN NEWSLETTER Janis S. Gray 259-1584	TREASURER Gabriele Voelker 259-1801
CULTURAL COUNCIL Renee A. Richard 259-9296	PERSONNEL BOARD April Stein 259-1074	TREE WARDEN Thomas Houston 259-1508
DEPT. OF VETERAN'S SERVICES Leo J. Parent, Jr. 863-3205	PLANNING BOARD Deacon Bonnar 259-1276	WEB COMMITTEE Fred Steinberg 259-9996
DOG OFFICER Nancy Long 413.658.4513	PLUMBING/GAS INSPECTOR John Letourneau 367-0017	ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS Charles J. DiMare 549-5330
ELECTRICAL INSPECTOR Maurice Gregoire 253-7505	POLICE DEPARTMENT Chief Thomas E. Harding 259-1279 Dispatch 625-8200	250th ANNIVERSARY COMMITTEE Janis S. Gray 259-1584 Maryélise Lamet 259-1551

POLICE, FIRE & RESCUE SQUAD 911



Community Preservation Committee Public Hearing Thursday, March 1

Donald Fletcher, Chair, Community Preservation Committee

The Community Preservation Committee (CPC) will hold its annual Public Hearing on March 1 at 6:00pm in the Elementary School Conference Room. The Hearing provides two opportunities:

- 1) to contribute to and to hear others' thoughts about Shutesbury's community preservation needs, possibilities and resources; and
- 2) to hear about and discuss two proposed projects by the Historic Commission and Sirius Community requesting Shutesbury's Community Preservation funds.

See CPC, continued on page 3

SES Preschool Open House Wednesday March 7, 12:00-1:00pm

This is an opportunity for families to visit the preschool at Shutesbury Elementary School, meet the teacher and hear an overview of the Early Childhood Program.

Children are welcome, but are not required to attend.

Children must be 3 by September 1, 2012 to be eligible for the pre-school. Decisions for the 2012-2013 academic year will be made by April 7, 2012.

Attending the Open House does not guarantee acceptance to the program.

Questions may be directed to **Grace Griecci**, Pre-K Teacher grieccg@shutesburyschool.org 259-1212 ext. 140

Local state aid: Up, down or stay the same?

Becky Torres, Town Administrator

What is in store for Shutesbury tomorrow? Do numbers tell the story? Or lead us astray?

A number of town departments are asking for increases and the Finance Committee is working with those increases. So not only are we confident that local state aid will not be cut this year, reports on the Massachusetts economy are still coming in strong.

We are in the fourth year, fourth fiscal cycle of the "worst" economic conditions in a lifetime. The present cycle began in the fall of 2008. This year when the Shutesbury Finance Committee started planning the town budget, it was uncertain what state aid would look like. Will aid decrease? Increase? Or stay the same?

The Finance Committee modified only slightly its Request for Budget to Town Departments. In the last three years they asked for both a 0% budget and a minus 5% budget. This year it tempered the request and asked that departments only be prepared to submit a minus 5% budget if need be.

For six quarters the Massachusetts economy is beating stronger than the rest of the country. The 2012 fourth quarter is reported to be 2.3% while the nation surged to 2.8%, the first time the growth at the national level is outpacing Massachusetts since 2010.

But even so, MassBenchmarks projects Massachusetts growth at 3.5% for the first quarter of 2012, and 4% for the second quarter of 2012. These projections signal a strong surge in the Massachusetts economy.

See Aid, continued on page 5

Update on Debt Exclusion Election for a proposed new Shutesbury Library

Becky Torres, Town Administrator

On Thursday, February 2, 2012, The Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners held a meeting in Boston. Grafton and Shutesbury both asked for extensions of time to confirm local funding for provisional grant award in the Mass Public Library Construction Program. Grafton, first on the agenda, was awarded an extension. Shutesbury was next on the agenda. Twelve people from Shutesbury were there representing "Yes" and "No" positions. At the end of a long discussion a Commissioner said they had heard both sides. The Commissioners continued:

Our sense is the legal process be completed. The one thing you all have in common is you have all said you need a library. Your responsibility is to provide a library. Come together for your children and elderly. If granted, use your time to work together to allow us to give you this money.

The Commissioners then voted unanimously to approve the extension of time until June 30, 2012.

The next step of the electoral process was the filing of a lawsuit by the Friends of the Library, *Plaintiffs vs. Board of Registrars of Voters of the Town of Shutesbury, Defendants*, on Friday, February 3, 2012.

When the provisional ballot was counted as a yes vote, the opponents hired a good lawyer and asked for a Recount. This time the proponents have hired a good lawyer and filed a Complaint.

See Court, continued on page 3

Messages from the Town Clerk

Leslie Bracebridge, *Town Clerk*
townclerk@shutesbury.org
Office Hours: Monday through
Thursday 9:00am –1:00pm
Call 259-1204 for special
appointments or to leave a message.

Thank you for voting in the January 10, 2012 Special Debt-Excluded Override Referendum Election.

Results of the January 25 Recount of the ballots cast on January 10 are: Yes - 522, No - 522. One challenged ballot was not counted.

An **Annual Street List** form, requesting the household census on January 1 of this year, should have been received at each Shutesbury household by the time you receive this newsletter. As required by state law, these forms should be completed and returned in the SASE within 10 days of receipt.

If your household did not receive a form, please call the Town Clerk's Office (259-1204) and one will be sent to you right away. Returning the completed street list form keeps one's voter registration active, ensures one's continued receipt of municipal mailings, and verifies eligibility for the trash bag distribution list in May!

The 2012 Presidential Primary will occur on Tuesday March 6 at the Shutesbury Town Hall, 1 Cooleyville Road. The last day to register to vote and change party enrollment for the Presidential Primary was Wednesday February 15.

You can register to vote anytime: in person at the town clerk's office or by mail. Mail-in voter registration cards are always tacked up in the outdoor bulletin board of Town Hall and inside Town Hall in the files by my door. Call if you would like a mail-in voter registration card sent to you. These cards can also be used if you have moved within the town, changed your name or if you wish to change your party affiliation.

Absentee ballots for the Presidential Primary will be available for voters who cannot come to the

Positions on the May 5 ballot due to term expirations

(More positions may open up due to resignations.)

Board of Health - 2 three-year terms
Cemetery Commission - 1 three-year term
Constable - 1 one-year term
Board of Library Trustees - 2 three-year terms and 1 one-year term
Planning Board - 2 three-year terms
School Committee - 2 three-year terms and 1 one-year term
Board of Selectmen - 1 three-year term

Should any of these positions interest you, please request a nomination form from the Town Clerk. You need only collect 20 signatures for your name to appear on the ballot. Completed nomination forms must be returned by **Saturday, March 17.**

polls on March 6, due to health concerns, religious restrictions or because they will be out of town, between the hours of 7:00am and 8:00pm.

You (or your relative on your behalf) may apply for an absentee ballot in person, or just write to the Town Clerk, P.O. Box 264, Shutesbury, MA 01072 to request an absentee ballot be mailed to you. Your request must include your residential and mailing addresses and your signature.

If you apply in person, you can choose to vote at that time or a ballot will be mailed to you.

A Primary election voter will be given a ballot for the party in which he or she is enrolled. Voters who are not enrolled in a political party may select a ballot of the party of their choice.

Shutesbury's Annual Town Meeting and Election of Officers will take place Saturday, May 5, 2012 at the Shutesbury Elementary School, 23 West Pelham Road. Polls will be open 8:00am - 2:00pm. The Town Meeting usually begins at 9:00am. Watch for the late April *Our Town* mailing with all the details.

If you are not already registered to vote, and you wish to vote on May 5, you must do so by Saturday April 14. As with the Presidential Primary, absentee ballots will be available for those who cannot come to the polls on May 5.

People sometimes ask if they can get an absentee ballot for the Town Meeting Articles. Absentee ballots are strictly for the election of officials and any ballot questions. Town Meeting

questions are voted on the floor of Town Meeting after an open exchange of information.

How do we get people to fold our newsletter?

Arrange for a power outage!

The loss of power on the afternoon of August 31, 2011 brought people to Town Hall to ask what was going on -- and a record number sat down to help Administrative Secretary **Leslie Bracebridge** fold, stuff and label 875 copies of the Fall *Our Town* newsletter. Many thanks to:

Mary Anne Antonellis, Nancy Dihlmann, Janis Gray, Maryélise Lamet, Robert Long, Susan Millinger, Richard and Joan Paczkowski, Julie Taylor, and Marilyn and Bob Tibbetts.

If you would like to join a lively "folding party" for *Our Town* or special municipal mailings in the future, please call Leslie Bracebridge at 259-1204 to be on the list of people she'll call. (You will be under no obligation if a given date or time does not work for you.)

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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new catalog and things that will and will not be migrated over from their catalog record.

In the new catalog, patrons will see some new features, such as:

All library items in one place! All C/W MARS libraries will have their items in this catalog, so patrons will not have to change catalogs to request from the other region.

Patron Dashboard. When logged into your library account, it will show all checkouts, holds, items to be picked up and fines in one place.

RSS Feeds for lists. Do you have a list of books you want to share with others? You can create a "published" list that others can see.

Outstanding Holds. Patrons who have outstanding holds at the time of migration will find them on the new catalog.

Patrons will also need to be prepared for some changes. These next items will not be able to be carried over to the new catalog, including:

ECommerce. Paying fines and library donations online will not be available when we come up on the new system. We hope to have online payments back by the end of summer 2012.

Current PIN. Patrons will be able to login to their new online catalog account using the last four digits of

their library card barcode as a password. They will be required to create a new password when they login for the first time.

Reading History and Current Wish Lists. In the case of Reading History and Wish Lists, patrons have the ability to export their lists or print from a computer. There is a button to choose "Export List" at the top of their list. We recommend that patrons choose "Brief Display" for their list; this will give you the title, author, and publishing information. These can be sent to an email address as a text file or displayed on the computer for printing.

Patrons who wish to export their Reading History or Wish Lists should do so prior to the conversion.

Why we buy books and other materials for the library

Someone asked why we buy new books for the library. Can't we just get books through inter-library loan?

We buy new books for a number of reasons.

First, Spear Library patrons read a lot. In FY11 Library users borrowed 16,384 books, audiobooks and magazines from the library.

Second, all libraries are required to

meet a set of minimum requirements in order to maintain certification in the State Aid to Public Libraries Program.

If we do not meet the certification requirements then we will become a decertified community.

Decertified communities do not receive inter-library loan services.

Also, libraries in surrounding communities are not required to serve residents of decertified communities. In other words, if we lose our certification, we lose access to many library services throughout the state.

A complete list of requirements for certification can be found at the MBLC website.

http://mblc.state.ma.us/grants/state_aid/laws.php

One requirement is that all towns must expend a reasonable portion of the library's total budget on library materials.

The requirement for towns Shutesbury's size (under 2,000) is that we spend 20 percent of our appropriated budget on materials.

Our appropriated budget for FY12 is \$50,400, 20% is about \$10,000. The Friends of the Library and State Aid to Public Libraries supplement our budget and we are able to meet this materials expenditure and maintain our certification.

DID YOU KNOW THERE IS A "LOST AND FOUND" BOX AT TOWN HALL?

It's in the upstairs hallway on the floor at the end of the long bookcase.

As of February 22, it contained:

A bandana/scarf -- white with red and blue pattern

Size XXL men's black thermal shirt

Chrome travel mug imprinted with "Salfio Group"

Two children's winter gloves (not from the same pair!)

Lost and found in Roadtown!

Missing a pet?

Town Clerk Leslie Bracebridge is now posting a link to missing (or found) pet notices at the bottom of the Town Clerk's web page at www.shutesbury.org. To add or remove a notice, call her at 259-1204 or send an email to townclerk@shutesbury.org

Left behind at the library:

A large "Nerf sword" carried in by a trick-or-treater last Halloween. Call the library at 259-1213 to describe this must-have costume accessory!

The M. N. Spear Memorial Library

10 Cooleyville Road
259-1213; www.mnspear.org
Mary Anne Antonellis, *Director*

New Expanded Hours!

We are open five extra hours each week!

Our new hours are:

Monday and Wednesday: 11-1,
3- 7:30

Tuesday and Thursday: 3-7:30

Friday: Closed

Saturday: 10-1

Sunday: 3-6

Extension granted ~ Fundraising continues

On Thursday, February 2, the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) voted to give the Town of Shutesbury more time to confirm local funding for the new Shutesbury Library.

The Town now has until June 30, 2012 to secure the necessary local funding required to match the \$2.1 million dollar grant.

The Friends of the Library and the New Shutesbury Library Capital Fundraising Committee remain committed to raising as much money as possible to reduce the tax impact of this project.

On January 11 a generous donor offered the Friends of the Library a \$150,000 challenge gift. If the \$3.5 million Library Project, as approved and awarded by the MBLC in July 2011, goes forward, the foundation is committed to supporting the project up to the \$150,000 (1:1) level. If the Library Project does not go forward, the entire pledge would be declared void.

Donations and pledges for the new library continue to arrive. In addition to the challenge gift, the Friends and the NSLCFC have now collected more than \$180,000 for the new Shutesbury Library.

Donations and pledges can be made online by visiting www.mnspear.org and clicking on the Friends of the Library donation button.



The Friends of the Library executive committee meets monthly, usually the third Tuesday of the month at 7:30pm. Most meetings are at the Library.

The NSLCFC's next meeting is February 28th, 7:00 pm, at Town Hall. If you would like to help with fundraising for the new library contact **Julie Stepanek** at juliestepanek@mindspring.com.

New catalog: What patrons need to know

Software change delayed.

The migration to Evergreen has been delayed. Development continues and C/W MARS anticipates that the software will be ready by spring, 2012.

As C/W MARS prepares to move to the new Evergreen system, patrons will need to be aware of some of the differences they will see in the new



Lights, camera, action! On February 20, these children were among the many volunteers who turned out to appear in a fundraising video for the Friends of the Library. Here they hold signs that say "Please help! Donate" and spell out "www.mnspear.org."

Note from the Town Collector

Ellen McKay, *Town Collector*

Dear Shutesbury taxpayers,

With the winter upon us, the third quarter of our real estate bills have become due and the calendar 2012 motor vehicle excise bills for many vehicles registered on January 1 have been mailed. Additionally, excise bills on vehicles registered late in 2011 are billed during 2012. The year for which the bill is issued is found in the upper right hand corner of the bill.

If you receive a bill on a car you have traded or on which you have changed registrations, do NOT ignore the bill. The Board of Assessors should be contacted to obtain an application for abatement. The forms are also available on the Assessors' section of the Town's website. The mailing address for the Assessors is PO Box 264, Shutesbury.

Our **on-line bill paying** feature allows you to pay your tax bills either directly from your checking or savings account with no fee, or with a credit card for a fee based on the amount of your transaction. To use this service, click on the Town's website and then on the announcement on the Home page. For Real Estate and Personal Property taxes, you should enter 2012 for the year and just the bill number WITHOUT the RE or PP to enter the program. For motor vehicle payments, enter the year and bill number which is found on the top, right side of your bill.

If you have purchased your property after January 1, 2011, Massachusetts General Law requires that the previous owner's name remain on the real estate tax bill. Hence, your name will appear with an "in care of". There is nothing we can do to put the bill solely in your name.

Before venturing out to pay a bill in person, please call this office at 259-1615 to check the answering machine to determine if I will be here.

Have a happy, healthy, and safe New Year.

Ellen

Work on Flood Plain Overlay District flows on

The Planning Board is working on the drafting of a flood plain overlay district bylaw for consideration at the May Annual Town Meeting. Its purpose would be to enable flood plain residents to purchase federally subsidized flood insurance, without creating new restrictions on property use.

Pat Smith, planner for the Franklin Regional Council of Governments, presented a new bylaw draft to the Planning Board at a meeting in early February. Comments are welcomed and encouraged. The next Planning Board meeting is Wednesday, March 14 at 7:00pm., or contact **Deacon Bonnar**, Chair, at 259-1276.

CPC, continued from page 1

The Historic Commission is requesting an additional \$8,000 to repair / replace the sills of the historic West Schoolhouse. This request is in addition to the \$15,000 recommended by the Community Preservation Committee and approved by the May 2011 Town Meeting.

The additional funds are needed because multiple bid cycles have indicated that the project will cost more than originally estimated.

The Sirius Community's request is for \$13,500 to restore and repair the existing foundation and to replace the sills of the historic South School. This is the initial work to preserve the school to provide a teaching and workshop facility for Sirius.

The Community Preservation Committee decision making will be guided by Shutesbury's Community Preservation Plan. This plan describes the Town's current profile, goals, and evaluation criteria for Historic Preservation, Open Space, Recreation, and Community Housing, the categories defined in the Community Preservation Act. They were developed with input from the relevant Town boards, committees and residents at-large.

This input, along with other Town plans, informed the CPC's study of Shutesbury's needs, possibilities, and resources regarding community preservation. Overall our goal is to ensure these funds are spent to help

the Town make the "highest and best use". These funds come from a 1.5% surcharge on real estate taxes, with exceptions for the 1st \$100,000 of valuation and for low income residents, and a state match that was 100% for a few years but has declined to 25%.

The Community Preservation Committee (CPC) encourages Shutesbury residents, town committee volunteers and officials to attend the Public Hearing to learn the details of and answers to questions about the proposed projects.

Shutesbury's CPC will vote in April whether to recommend funding for each project. If recommended, the funding decision will be made in May by the Annual Town Meeting. Only proposals recommended by the CPC and approved at a Town Meeting can be funded.

Interested in reading the details? Just go to the What's New section at www.shutesbury.org and click on "Community Preservation Plan" to read about Shutesbury's Application and Approval Process, Application for Funding, and Evaluation Criteria.

For special accommodations contact **Rebecca Torres** at 413.259.1214 by February 29. For weather-related emergency rescheduling please call the town clerk's office at 259-1204, or check the online calendar at www.Shutesbury.org.

Court, continued from page 1

At each step the Town is paying money for Town Counsel. The Town paid for the election workers, (although many volunteered their time) at the Recount as well as for Town Counsel.

In court on February 14 Town Counsel made a request for Attorney Alan Seewald that 7 additional days be given for the opposition to determine if they will hire Attorney Seewald to intervene in the case. The extra time was granted.

A court date of April 23 in Greenfield is set. The issue is now in the Court's hands.

A month ago, Town Counsel said, "Clearly, you are headed towards court no matter which way the provisional ballot or Recount goes. With a tie, it is inevitable."

From the Shutesbury School Committee

Michael DeChiara, *Chair*

There continues to be much happening in the world of education — locally at Shutesbury Elementary School and at Amherst-Pelham Regional Schools. Some developments are bright spots, others are challenges.

Without a doubt, Shutesbury Elementary School (SES) continues to provide high-quality education to the children of residents; this despite the on-going challenges from the economy.

The ability to continue to offer strong educational opportunities to all our children is the direct result of two inspiring facts: we have a committed and highly skilled staff that goes the extra mile for our kids, and we are a community that values and funds education. Without these, our school could not excel as it does. Thank you!

While there is a variety of strong, age-appropriate learning going on at SES, the most notable development so far this year was the annual school-wide performance.

Introduced by Principal **Bob Mahler** as a way of bringing art and music into all the students' lives, the December 2011 performance celebrated Shutesbury's 250th anniversary. "A Shutesbury Sampler" was written locally by **Jane Urban** and **Emily Samuels**, and directed by **Court Dorsey**.

Through art, music and acting, the school's 151 students from Pre-K to 6th entertained and educated parents, relatives and community members. Impressively, the entire production was paid for by outside financial assistance from the PTO, and grants from the Shutesbury Cultural Council, New Salem Academy, and the Shutesbury 250th Anniversary Steering Committee.

While this and other high-quality day-to-day programming is certainly occurring, the continued stress of funding constraints is ever more present. SES has faced four years of 0% or close to 0% budgets — longer than any other

school in Union #28 or in the Amherst region. Over the past few years, cuts and reductions have occurred to items like field trips, supplies, books and materials, professional development, technology, and subsidies for instruments.

Despite this, the school staff has worked hard to protect the children from experiencing any reduction in quality of the educational experience. But this protection from the ongoing budget constraints is weakening.

Two specific reasons are a significant reduction in revenue for the upcoming budget year FY13: **Federal stimulus money that had prevented deeper cuts for the past two years will be gone, and state reimbursement for special education is dropping** for the coming year. Meanwhile, SES continues to face notable expenses for unfunded or under-funded state mandated services and activities.

As a result, the School Committee is considering a FY13 budget that for the first time in five years will include an increase in funding, to address emerging needs and to shore up the quality education that our town expects.

At the secondary level, the budget will still require cuts to the middle school and high school programming, but overall the situation is better than last year. Assuming a 2% increase in state education funding is received (as opposed to reductions in recent years), only modest cuts to programs will be made. Compared to the multi-million dollar cuts to programs and staff over the past five years, this is relatively welcome news. Meanwhile, while revenue is modest, expenses to operate the region continue to increase, resulting in increases to the four member towns, an estimated average of 3%. Among the four towns, **Shutesbury will again have the lowest increase** in the annual regional assessment.

Two other significant developments are worth highlighting regarding the **regional schools and our relation to our neighboring towns**. One involves continued developments with respect to our governance/administra-

tive affiliation for elementary education. The other involves later start times for middle and high school students.

For the past two years, Shutesbury has taken a leadership role in **exploring beneficial ways to reconfigure our elementary school affiliation** — whether to stay with Union #28 or join/create a region.

The town-appointed Shutesbury Educational Study Committee has been meeting throughout this time, interviewing people and doing research on several options. At the October 2011 Special Town Meeting a new body — the Regional School District Planning Committee (RSDPC) — was created in compliance with state law to more officially engage with other towns regarding these various options.

While Shutesbury, along with Leverett, Pelham and Amherst, has repeatedly explored the issue of reconfiguration every 10-15 years since the 1950s, this time might be different.

The challenge is that the finances, governance and educational issues regarding any change are very complex and often there was not enough detailed information to guide a recommendation.

However, in January, Shutesbury's RSDPC, in conjunction with those of Amherst, Leverett and Pelham, applied for a **state grant to pay for consultants** to dig into the details and provide the information needed to inform a sound recommendation. This is a huge breakthrough, so cross your fingers about the grant and look for more information this spring.

Finally, the Amherst-Pelham Regional Schools are seriously looking at changing when the school day starts. There is compelling national evidence that **later start times provide unequivocal educational benefit to teenagers**.

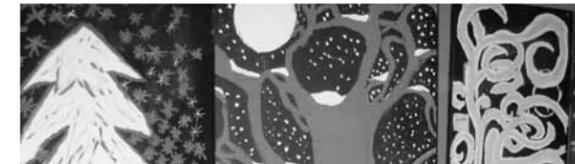
While the educational benefit is clear, the logistics and finances are usually the challenge.

The Shutesbury School Committee has had two briefings on the region's research and planning to date; the latest presentation was in January.

See School, *continued on page 5*



Fifth and sixth graders in a rousing opening number



"The stars bring a light, a glorious sight, that can leave you feeling quite small . . ."



Gray Dooley as Ephraim Pratt, who died in Shutesbury in 1804 —and who claimed to have been born in 1687.



Dancing at Palm Gardens, the place to be on an evening in the 1930s!

Photos courtesy of B. Z. Reilly and Clif Read



The Spectacular Grand Finale of Our Anniversary Year:

“A Shutesbury Sampler”

An insider reports on “A Shutesbury Sampler”

Izzy Williams, 5th Grade, Shutesbury Elementary School

Shutesbury Elementary School students were excited to celebrate the town's 250th anniversary with a play about Shutesbury's past and present on December 20, 2011.

We were proud to have the whole school come together to present a play about the history of our town and for the people of our town. This production was funded with grants from

The New Salem Academy, the local Cultural Council, the 250th Anniversary Steering Committee, and the S.E.S. PTO.

The play's director was **Court Dorsey**. Court did a great job helping us all figure out what we should do in the play and he helped make it a great play for the whole town.

We practiced our lines and the movements and he told us to try to "become the characters" that we were playing. He also reminded us to speak up a lot.

Our costume director, **Rory Valentine**, was really good too. She made us the perfect costumes for our characters in a way I don't think anyone else could have done. The costumes fit many different periods of time.

The script and songs were written by **Jane Urban** and **Emily Samuels**. [The exception: Emily Samuels wrote both the words and music to "Shutesbury Night," repro-

duced here with permission.— Editor] **Daphne Bye** was the musical director, **B. Z. Reily** was the artistic director (sets, props, costume design), and **Bob Mahler** was the lighting director. The Shutesbury Sampler Band (**Brian Bender, Rob Hayes** and **Geoff Rogers**) accompanied us with great music.

Every student in the whole school participated in the production. The kindergarteners were "spring peepers," or frogs that danced, the first graders were mosquitoes that buzzed around and bothered many of the characters, and the second graders

did the boat scene and the ice storm dance. The third graders did the school dance and the fourth graders did the fireworks scene. The fifth and sixth graders had the main speaking and singing parts.

The play presented a lot of old and new things about Shutesbury, from the recent ice storm to Amelia Bernard, who originally named the town. I liked how we captured the essence of every period from Shutesbury's beginnings to today. I am really proud of all our hard work and what we accomplished.

Score **Shutesbury Night** Samuels

Chords: C, F, C, C, G7, G7, F, C, C, F, G7, dm, C, F, G7

Lyrics:
 Noth-ing is as dark as a Shutes-bur-y night, be it
 As the sea-sons change in Shues-bur-y town, From
 win-ter, spring, sum-mer, or fall, But the
 sum-mer, fall, win-ter, to spring, There is
 em am F C
 stars bring a light, a glo-ri-ous sight that can
 qui-et and peace like no oth-er place That
 13
 leave you in feel-ing quite small.
 liv-ing in this town can bring.

School, continued from page 4

The option with the greatest likelihood for consideration would have secondary school start at 9:00am and elementary school (including SES if our School Com-mittee votes to support it) start at 8:15am. Notably, it is estimated that this would not cost Shutesbury any additional money.

Research is still under way regarding the impact on athletics and lower-income families at the region.

The Shutesbury School Committee is planning an informational forum in late February to share information and get feedback about shifting our start time to coincide with a regional decision. If a change is voted by the various school committees, it is not clear whether the changes would begin in fall 2012 or 2013. Stay tuned.

To find out more about the elementary school, I encourage residents to visit the school website at: www.shutesburyschool.org.

For the secondary school, please visit www.arps.org. Members of the community are always welcome to attend Shutesbury School Committee meetings; these are usually the 3rd Thursday of each month.

On behalf of our teachers and staff, the parents and guardians, and of course the children, thank you for your continued support of quality education for our Shutesbury children.

Aid, continued from page 1

Can we look forward to a brighter tomorrow? Can the strength of the Massachusetts economy make up for the struggles with the federal budget? The Governor's and House's budgets both project increased revenue of 4.5%.

But for three years the pent-up demand for funding has been building. State pension costs, education aid to cities and towns, health care costs, and contractual obligations alone are more than the 4.5% in revenue growth. So while things are improving financially, we expect no increases in local aid for Shutesbury. But like the state, we continue to have increased demand on the town budget.

Draft of new Open Space & Recreation Plan to be topic of public forum on March 15

The Open Space Committee invites all to find out about the special outdoor places in town during a public forum on Thursday, March 15 at 7:30pm in Town Hall.

Copies of the draft Plan are available at the Library and Town Hall and on the town website, www.shutesbury.org.

At the forum, committee members will briefly summarize important

aspects of the draft of the new plan and answer questions. They are interested in your comments!

Examples of the maps and a paper copy of the plan will be available for viewing. Refreshments will be served.

Can't come to this forum, but still have comments? Send them to the Open Space Committee at Town Hall by March 31.

Where is Shutesbury in the tax debate? The average Shutesbury home is valued at \$247,104, with an annual tax bill of \$4833 and ranked 104th in the state.

While our tax rate is high, there is a direct relationship to our property values and high sale values. It is lower than Pelham and Amherst. And our property values are less than Leverett, Pelham and Amherst. We have negligible commercial base to offset the demands of our budget. Federal and state grant money is decreasing, putting pressure on municipal budgets to fund basic services.

We are looking forward to one of the most stable budget cycles that municipalities have experienced in many years.

Town officials are pursuing ways to rethink how we do things. Region-wide, the number of children in the schools is declining. Towns are coming together to evaluate sustainability. The Education Study Committee and newly formed Regional School District Planning Committee are searching for strategies, structures to preserve quality education and address shrinking numbers of students and financial strain. The Committees want to

engage the public in conversation as consultants put together reports on what the impacts might be for each of the towns.

Questions remain. Will this economic surge be dulled by shrinking federal budgets, or not? Governor Deval Patrick is working with Legislators to advance a variety of Local Aid funding levels that the House and Senate support. We are looking forward to one of the most stable budget cycles that municipalities have experienced in many years. Local finance committees are projecting level-funded state revenue figures in February with confidence.

But where do we go now? December 2011 economic stats slowed just as we listened with confidence to our leaders speaking of economic strength.

Unemployment figures are dropping. And the Governor is working on employment initiatives through our Community College and State College system. They are hoping to put half of our unemployed workers into existing unfilled jobs here in Massachusetts.

We need to support an agile, adjustable workforce that can adapt to changing requirements of a global workplace.

SHUTESBURY FISCAL 2012 TAX RATE SET

The new tax rate has been set at \$19.56/1000 valuation for FY12. This is an increase of .98% (less than 1%) from last year's (FY11) tax rate of \$19.37/1000 valuation. Below is the new Average Home Value, Annual Property Tax Bill on Average Home and Tax Rate/Thousand:

2012	\$247,104.00	\$4,833.00	\$19.56
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The increase for the average home valued at \$247,104.00 is \$46.93 a year.

Energy Committee News

Shutesbury awarded Green Communities grant monies

On December 15, 2011, **Becky Torres**, Town Administrator, and **Clark Sylvester**, Energy Committee Chair, represented the town when Shutesbury was recognized for receiving a grant to finance energy savings and alternate energy projects.

Shutesbury received the award from Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Richard Sullivan, Jr., along with four other communities, Buckland, Deerfield, Granby, and Middlefield.

Shutesbury's total grant is \$142,275 and will be used to complete several much-needed projects in town. These include:

- 1) A new more energy efficient furnace for town hall.
- 2) A more efficient furnace, air handling improvements, and hot water heating in the fire station.

Are your heating dollars blowing away on chilly winter winds?

Call Mass Save® (866-527-7283) today for your Free Home Energy Assessment!

The audit will assess your home and provide recommendations for improving its efficiency, comfort, safety, and discuss your options with you.

Currently, the Mass Save® program will pay for 75% of the cost of weatherization measures, namely air sealing and insulation, recommended by your audit, up to \$2,000.

Franklin County Home Care Corporation may have funding to help people age 60 and older to pay their



3) Added I-beam insulation, sealing, and motor control improvement at the elementary school.

4) A new 10-15 kW photovoltaic system to be installed behind the fire station.

As part of being awarded the designation of a Green Community, initially announced last July, Shutesbury agreed to reduce energy use by a total of 20% over a five year period.

We are already well on our way

share (the 25%) of insulation work performed by Mass Save®.

Call 413-773-5555 for more information on this program.

If you find that your heating equipment is inefficient and in need of an upgrade, Mass Save® offers substantial rebates for this type of investment as well.

Rebates are also available to replace older appliances with new Energy Star® rated appliances.

More information can be found on www.masssave.com. The Shutesbury Energy Committee endorses this program.

If you have any energy related questions please contact any Energy Committee member: **Clark Sylvester**

(255-1819), **Bruce Davidson**, **Larry Hunter** (259-1455), **Steve Rice** (253-4485) or **Craig Marden**.

due to previous improvements. These additional improvements will help Shutesbury save even more money (from your tax dollars) in fuel and electric bills over the coming years. The addition of another solar renewable energy credit (SREC) eligible municipal photovoltaic system will generate approximately \$5,000 a year in revenue.

These projects are scheduled to begin this spring.

Brush burning permits available online

"Burning season" runs from January 15 through May 1. The hours for burning are from 10:00am to 4:00pm.

Fires are to be located at least 75 feet from any building, and are to be attended at all times by a person 18 years or older. Permits are good for one day; you must get a permit for each day that you want to burn.

The Franklin County Fire Chiefs Association has an on-line brush burning permit web site. The online permits are available from 8:30am to 1:00pm on any day that burning will be allowed.

If burning is not being allowed on any particular day, the website will inform you of this.

The website is:

www.fcburnpermits.com

If you do not have Internet access, the Franklin County Dispatcher (Shelburne Control) can also issue burning permits. Call the dispatcher at (413) 625-8200.

Shutesbury Athletic Club begins membership year; back room and pavilion available for events

The Board of Directors of the Shutesbury Athletic Club would like to thank Shutesbury citizens and town officials who support this vibrant community gathering place.

The Shutesbury "AC" is a non-profit group which promotes social and recreational opportunities for its members and hosts a range of community events.

The membership year starts March 1, 2012. Stop by the club at 282 Wendell Road to join or renew your membership. Doors open at 1:00pm Sunday, 5:00pm Mondays - Thursday, 4:00pm Friday, and noon Saturday.

The club's renovated back room and outdoor pavilion are available for public or private functions, such as birthday or anniversary parties, work functions, or other types of celebrations. Contact **Sean Meyer** at seanbmeyer@yahoo.com to inquire about available dates.



250th Anniversary Steering Committee seeks photos

Thank you to everyone who contributed to a wonderful anniversary year that exceeded all our expectations!

Our committee is preparing a collection of photographs of the many events held in 2011, and we realize there are gaps in our collection. We are looking for pictures from:

The June Farm and Garden Tour (we have photos, but they're of plants, not people! We want to see faces as well as flowers!).

The Lake Wyola Association's Art Show and Boat Tour in July

The September Farm and Garden Tour

The wonderful **landscaping project at the Highway Department**

Union #28 Community Network for Children

The Community Network for Children (CNC) is a program that is funded by a grant from the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care. We are hosting some programs in Shutesbury! Hope you can join us!

Shutesbury Creative Movement

Series: Fridays, March 2nd, 9th for children aged 2-5 years old. Anna Hendricks will lead a creative movement series in the Shutesbury Elementary School gym from 9:00-9:45am. Playgroup will also be happening at this time.

Shutesbury Playgroup for children

0-5 years of age: Fridays, 9:00 - 10:30am, Shutesbury Elementary School, 23 West Pelham Road

Shutesbury Story Hour for children

0-5 years of age: Mondays, 10:00-11:00am, M.N. Spear Memorial Library

Come and enjoy time with your

child(ren) and other families and caregivers from your community!

The CNC supports all families with children from birth through age 8 and the early education and care and school-age providers that care for them 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 or assistance in paying for child care, new baby gift bags and home visits, and newsletters

that beautified the berm.

If you have digital photos you're willing to share, please email them to **Janis Gray** at jsgray@crocker.com. If you have printed photos that you want returned, she can scan them. Call her at 259-1584 to make arrangements. Thank you!

Business and Resource Directory is now online!

Remember! A very important way to support our town is by supporting each other.

One grassroots project that grew out of our 250th Anniversary year was the creation of a new *Business and Resource Directory* (BARD).

Check out the approximately 200 listings and you will see what a wealth of skills, talents and services we can provide to each other.

It's easy to add your local business, skill or service if you aren't yet included.

Visit www.shutesburybard.org

Hard copies are still available at the library, Town Hall and the Shutesbury Athletic Club.

Redeem coupon for a Welcome Baby Gift Bag!

We 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!

