Spring cleaning? Items to bring to Town Hall
Gary Bernhard, Recycling Coordinator

MERCURY-BEARING ITEMS: certain batteries and cell phones are hazardous waste and should not be thrown out with the trash.

Mercury is toxic for human beings, but we continue to use it in many different ways – in fluorescent lights, thermostats, some electrical switches. So, what do we do with mercury-bearing waste?

Shutesbury residents can drop mercury-bearing items off at Town Hall for recycling. When the containera at Town Hall fill up, we put the nasty stuff in the Universal Waste Shed out back. Once a year a company that processes mercury-bearing waste (by binding the mercury in inert material) picks up the waste and takes it off for processing.

The Town has to pay for this service, of course, and you can save Shutesbury money by recycling your fluorescent bulbs at Lowes, Home Depot, or Whole Foods in Hadley.

See Waste, continued on page 6

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Rabies vaccination clinic for dogs, cats April 28!

On the chance that you receive this newsletter in time, please note:

There will be a rabies vaccination clinic at the Town Hall on Saturday, April 28 from 9:30am to 12:30pm. Please have all dogs and cats on leashes or in pet carriers.

Please bring proof of previous rabies vaccination if available for your pet. The cost is $15/pet.
Messages from the Town Clerk
Leslie Bracitidge, Town Clerk
townclerk@shutesbury.org
Office Hours: Monday through Thursday 8:30 am – 2:00 pm
townclerk@shutesbury.org
Leslie Bracebridge,
the Town Clerk

Absentee ballots are available at the Town Clerk’s Office for voters who will either be absent from Shutesbury, or who have a physical disability, or a religious belief that prevents them from being present during polling hours. Applications for absentee ballots must be made in writing and include the voter’s name, voting address and 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 can also absentee vote in person at the Town Clerk’s office until noon on Monday, May 4.

The only way to vote on the Town Meeting warrant questions is to be at the meeting. We hope you will be able to attend. Key results of both the election and town meetings 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 results are prepared, they will be sent to the town website (www.shutesbury.org.)

You can re-license your dog any time now for the July 1, 2012 - June 30, 2013 period. A re-licensing form is available at www.shutesbury.org. We will send mail-in request forms for dog licenses in a June town-wide mailing also. Check now to make sure that your dog is up to date on its rabies vaccination, as is required in order to re-license. (See related story, pg. 1.)

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 time of FY12 and the Town Meeting for FY13.

My office hours are Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday from 9-10:30 and Noon to 1:00. Should you need to see me and these times are inconvenient, please call and we can arrange a better time to meet.

Apparently the US Postal Service is closing its Springfield mail sorting facility, which means we will no longer have next day mail delivery. 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.

Your fourth quarter real estate taxes are due May 1. I urge you to pay these by May 1. Should you not have a bill when you receive a demand the bill 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 not be assessed the additional interest and any collection procedures beyond the demand that will accrue should you then not pay 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 on the bill. Should a demand bill be issued on a motor vehicle excise tax, the law provides 14 days for receipt of payment before the 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 on-line system and cannot be paid on-line until the demand (for motor vehicle) or next quarter bill (for real estate and personal property) is issued.

Have a good spring.

Leslie Bracebridge, Town Hall Liaison

PRINTED ON RECYCLED STOCK
30% POST CONSUMER WASTE

Join us for these other fun-filled events to support our library

Shutesbury Celtic Fest 2012
Irish music and dance, road bowling, and more! Saturday, April 28, 1 - 8 pm, Shutesbury Athletic Club. Tickets are $13 in advance (available at the Spear Library) and $20 at the door.

Wild About Balloons with Jungle Jim
and a fabulous Puppet Show with Talking Hands Theatre! Friday, May 4, 6:30pm, Grace Episcopal Church Parish Hall, Boltwood Walk, Amherst. $5 per person

Shimmy-thon!
Belly Dancing for Your Library!
Sunday, May 13, 7:00 pm. Time to be announced. Shutesbury Athletic Club

Have you seen our video at www.youtube.com/watch?v=1UQ7vdJQWn0?

It’s “gone viral” on the Internet and is bringing in donations from around the globe. It’s also drawn the attention of many popular bloggers and Internet sites. Here are just a few:

Life Lift: The Oprah Blog
Save the libraries with this one http://www.oprah.com/blogs/Saving-a-Library-Saving-a-Town

Comedian John Hodgman’s blog: That’s All (which author Neil Gaiman and 800 others then shared): http://area-of-sofmyexpertise.com/post/18930286935/the-public-library-in-shutesbury-ma-has-made-a

Boing Boing: Tiny library raises money with tiny uke and awesome video http://boingboing.net/2012/03/06/tiny-library-raises-money-with-uhl


Maria Popova’s EXPLORE: http://explore.livejournal.com/19398799821/where-would-you-be-without-your-library-charging

When Shutesbury’s Julie Steppean improvised an original song for her Monday Story Hour at the library, she had no idea it would be the soundtrack of a fund-raising video! Excerpts from “Everybody Let’s Jump (For Your Library)” as recorded in the video appear at right.

A huge THANK YOU to Emily Bloch, Lindsay Van Dyke (the film maker) See article on video below, Julie Steppean, Paul Jacobs, Michele and Erin Regan-Ladd, Jamie Donta, Alicia Duffy, Jane Urban, Sally Fairfield, Laura Walton, Sylvia Goldman, Karen Traub, Wbeecele Houle, Janis Gray, Susan Millinger, Jen Davies, Susie Mosher, Martha Favre and Natalia Jacobs for helping with fundraising efforts for the Friends of the Library and the New Shutesbury Library!

These are among the many people working on other events coming soon.
Mark your calendars and plan to attend! More details on our website, www.mnspear.org. More volunteers are always needed.

Shutesbury Library! Every Sunday, 10:30 am.

Ukulele Jam
With Joe Blumenthal and the AEIOUkes and special guest, Jim Beloff. Thursday, May 24, 7:30-9pm, The Jones Library, Amherst

Trivia Night 2.0
Back by popular demand! Saturday, June 2, 7pm. The Harp, 163 Sunderland Road, Amherst. $5 per person, includes a free buffet meal at the end of the game. Teams of three to five people compete for fun and prizes.

Form your own team or just show up and we’ll help you find a team.
New catalog: What patrons need to know

Last fall we expected a change to the library catalog. That happened soon. We hope to have online library donations online will not be migrated over from their catalog and things that will and will not be able to change to the new Evergreen system, patrons will need to be aware of some of the differences they will see in the new system. We hope to have online

* Outlining and the library catalog. That change has been delayed but it appears likely that the change will be happening soon.

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 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 Day! As the library is now 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.

The M. N. Spear Memorial Library

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

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

Paying fines and library donations online will not be possible when we come up on the new system.

The N. S. Spear Memorial Library

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

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Proposed Zoning Bylaw amendments explained

Several zoning bylaw amendments are being brought to Annual Town Meeting May 5.

All are necessary to create a new floodplain overlay district along parts of the shoreline of Lake Wyola, so that residents there may be eligible for reasonably-priced flood insurance for their properties under the National Flood Insurance Program, administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, or FEMA. The bylaw is proposed because some banks are now requiring this insurance be carried by mortgagors within the floodplain, and without the federal program in place the annual policy costs are significant.

A homeowner at Lake Wyola experienced this problem first hand. The bylaw was written to be as minimally restrictive as possible to landowners while complying with the requirements of FEMA to obtain such insurance. The articles themselves, and brief explanations are listed below.

Two flyers were included in the newsletter, Proposed Zoning Bylaw Amendments to Create Floodplain Overlay District and the Floodplain Overlay District statement of purpose, boundaries, base flood elevation, floodway data and regulatory requirements.

Article 17. To see if the Town will vote to amend Article XII, Section 13.2 of the Town of Shutesbury Zoning Bylaw by adding the following words to the end of the definition of Structure: ‘For floodplain management purposes, structure means a walled and roofed building, including a gas or liquid storage tank, that is principally above ground, as well as a manufactured home. Structure, for insurance coverage purposes, means a walled and roofed building, other than a gas or liquid storage tank, that is principally above ground and affixed to a permanent site, as well as a manufactured home on foundation. For the latter purpose, the term includes a building in the course of construction, alteration, or repair, but does not include building materials or supplies intended for use in such construction, alteration, or repair, unless such materials or supplies are within an enclosed building on the premises,’ or take any other action relative thereto. (Sponsor: Select Board and Planning Board) Requires 2/3 vote

Explanation: This amendment inserts the body of the proposed new bylaw text into the current Town of Shutesbury Zoning Bylaw.

Article 19. To see if the Town will vote to amend Article XIII, Section 13.2 of the Town of Shutesbury Zoning Bylaw by adding new floodplain overlay district related definitions (See text attached to warrant), or take any other action relative thereto. (Sponsor: Select Board and Planning Board) Requires 2/3 vote

Explanation: This amendment adds new definitions to the zoning bylaw that clarify the meaning of new terms used in the proposed Floodplain Overlay District Bylaw.

Article 20. To see if the Town will vote to amend Article XIII, Section 13.2 of the Town of Shutesbury Zoning Bylaw by adding the following words to the end of the definition of Structure: ‘For floodplain management purposes, structure means a walled and roofed building, including a gas or liquid storage tank, that is principally above ground, as well as a manufactured home. Structure, for insurance coverage purposes, means a walled and roofed building, other than a gas or liquid storage tank, that is principally above ground and affixed to a permanent site, as well as a manufactured home on foundation. For the latter purpose, the term includes a building in the course of construction, alteration, or repair, but does not include building materials or supplies intended for use in such construction, alteration, or repair, unless such materials or supplies are within an enclosed building on the premises,’ or take any other action relative thereto. (Sponsor: Select Board and Planning Board) Requires 2/3 vote

Explanation: This amendment elaborates on the existing definition of Structure for the purposes of the Floodplain Overlay District Bylaw.

‘Citizens United’ to come to Town Meeting floor

Graeme Sephton and Joanne Sunshow

Shutesbury’s Annual Town Meeting will discuss a citizens’ petition for the Massachusetts legislature to pass MA Senate Resolution 772, calling for the Congress to pass a Constitutional Amendment affirming that the rights of citizens found in the Constitution and Bill of Rights belong to natural born persons, not artificial entities like corporations.

Many towns in New England and across the US will be discussing the same issue. Resolutions have already been passed by Hawaii, New Mexico, and Vermont. Eleven State Attorneys General— including Martha Coakley of Massachusetts—sent a joint letter to Congress calling for such an amendment. The issue is not new: Massachusetts Law (Ch.55,§8) bans corporate contributions to political committees or elections, and other states have equivalent laws.

In 1919, the US Supreme Court recognized corporations as having the same rights as natural persons for the purpose of entering into contracts. Since then, corporate lawyers have argued to expand this original limited definition to mean that corporations should have all the rights of people that reside in the Constitution and Bill of Rights. In 2010, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that corporations are entitled to spend unlimited funds in our elections, based on the argument that money is speech.

This allows corporations to channel billions of dollars into both elections and ballot questions. In a nationwide survey, 80% of people believe that corporations should have all the rights of people that reside in the Constitution and Bill of Rights. In 2010, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that corporations are entitled to spend unlimited funds in our elections, based on the argument that money is speech.

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The Community Network for Children (CNC), funded by a grant from the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care, supports all families with children from birth through 3rd grade in our school union. Programs include weekly play groups and story hours, parent/guardian workshops and opportunities, to meet other families, support in accessing child care or assistance in paying for child care, newborn baby gift bags and home visits, and newsletters with current programs and events.

Playgroups and story hours are intended for children 0-5 years of age.

UPCOMING SPECIAL PROGRAMS!
Friday, May 4 - Dinosaurs after Dark PJ Story Hour at the New Salem Library
Sunday, May 6 - Lola’s Fandango Story Hour at the Shutesbury Elementary School
Tuesday, May 15 - CNC Council Meeting at Swift River School, New Salem
Wednesday, May 16 - Parent Support Group for Families with Children with Special Needs. Polluck 5:30pm, discussion 6:00-7:30pm at Erving Elementary School

Welcome Baby Gift Bag

Every baby born in Shutesbury this year will receive a 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 Budine, CNC Coordinator, (978) 544-5157, budine@erving.com. You can also find information at http://sites.google.com/site/communitynetworkforchildren/
Schools, continued from page 1

to and throughout the economic hard times, the school has repeatedly faced 0% budgets – just holding things together while costs rose around us.

While our dedicated staff has found ways to go the extra mile and parents and community members have stepped up with donations of time and money, we knew that eventually this would need to change; making do can only go on for so long before the impact becomes significant enough that action is needed. The action we need to take is in fiscal year 2013 which starts in July.

Most significantly, the school faces the elimination of essential federal stimulus funds – funds specifically intended to keep local education intact, mostly directed at paying and retaining needed staff that otherwise would have been laid off. For the coming year, Shutesbury Elementary School will lose $43,000 in stimulus funds and will need to fill the hole to keep our programs intact.

Shutesbury is also part of Union #28 – a network of five towns. The shared costs of administration of Union #28 are allocated annually based on the relative enrollment (who has higher percentage of kids enrolled). In the coming year, Shutesbury will pay $7,000 more simply because our percentage of enrollment went up in relation to the other towns; nothing else changed.

The other drivers which will increase the elementary budget this year include a modest re-investment in professional development and programming; and salaries – both contracted increases and staffing addition that is needed to meet the unique needs of students.

While the school committee continues to be fiscally responsible and works closely with the town leadership, this year we face challenges that leave us with little choice but to seek an increase in the budget; again the first time in four years.

At the Regional Schools, the budget is also going up given increased costs of operation. The increases to the town assessments are being held in check by several strategies including the expansion of school choice slots, modest programmatic cuts, and one-time internal transfers from the excess and deficiency (E&D) account.

Among the four towns, Shutesbury is seeing the lowest increase in our annual assessment – approximately $29,000 or 2.07% (as of February). Again, because Shutesbury has the least growth in enrollment in relationship to the other towns in the region, we are assessed a lesser percentage.

Comprehensive budget documentation regarding the various elements of the regional budget can be found at the arps.org website.

One significant educational development that has occurred since the winter edition of Our Town is the formal coming together of the towns of Amherst, Pelham, Leverett and Shutesbury to explore ideas about how to reconfigure our local education delivery.

Since the Regional School District was created in the 1950’s, this four-town exploration has occurred every 10-15 years – literally in the 60’s, 70’s, 90’s and a few years ago.

Since all four towns send their 7-12 graders to the same middle and high schools, it begs the question, “Are there ways to change how education is organized on the elementary level to advance our town’s educational goals (including expanding capacity and increasing cohesion), finances, or governance?”

Previously, every time the four towns came together, huge volunteer time and effort were expended, yet the status quo remained.

With a changing world and new educational, financial and governance pressures being imposed, it seems responsible to ask the question again and to explore all options. Our ultimate goal is to see if we can better serve Shutesbury’s children and Shutesbury’s residents.

This time, unlike previous efforts by the four towns, each town has created three-person Regional School District Planning Committees (RSDPCs) per state law. These committees enable each town to officially “talk” to each other about reconfiguration.

Together all four towns sought a state grant to hire consultants to look at the available data and understand the educational, governance and financial impacts of any possible changes. Unfortunately, we did not get the grant but all four towns remain committed to finding ways to get this information so that informed decisions can be made. To be clear, these exploratory discussions do not commit Shutesbury to anything.

Right now we are just talking.

The bottom line is that these issues are complex and solutions are not straightforward. If they were, something might have been done in the last 50+ years.

If an agreed-upon solution is identified, no change will happen quickly or without residents knowing. A change in the regional agreement, for example, requires both a Town Meeting vote and approval by the State Commissioner of Education.

So far the process has been transparent, involving two Town Meeting votes, a public forum and a public website.

As official representatives of the town, the RSDPC asks that you continue to follow developments, so that when feedback is sought, residents can engage in informed discussion. (Note: see the town website for links to this information). All meetings of the RSDPC are open to the public and you are welcome.

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

Members of the community are always welcome to attend Shutesbury School Committee meetings, usually on 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.
Here’s how to recycle mercury-bearing waste at Town Hall:

Fluorescent lamps of all kinds – do not tape long fluorescent lamps together. Please no packaging, bubble wrap, cardboard, etc.

Thermostats, thermometers, barometers – again, no packaging, please.

Elemental mercury – if you break a thermometer or have some other kind of mercury spill, here’s what to do:

1. Ventilate the room and put tape around the area so no one will walk through the spill.
2. Get some disposable gloves, then use a note card or other stiff cardboard to push the mercury globules together.
3. Place the mercury in a Zip-lock bag along with the disposable gloves, place the bag in a glass jar with a tight lid, label the jar “elemental mercury,” and bring it to Town Hall.

Do not bring non-rechargeable (alkaline) batteries to Town Hall. They are not hazardous waste and can be thrown out with the trash.

Cell phones. Take the batteries out of them (hitting them with a hammer does the trick) first, then bring the batteries to Town Hall.

“Elemental mercury,” and bring it to a glass jar with a tight lid, label the jar “elemental mercury,” and bring it to Town Hall.

Some batteries are hazardous waste. Cell phones are also classified as hazardous waste because of the lead, copper, nickel, and antimony in them. There are a number of mail-back programs that are free for recycling batteries, cell phones and other items. A list of these programs is at this web site: http://earth911.com/recycling/mail-back-programs-recycling-from-home/#. Again, you can save the Town money if you participate in one of these programs.

Do not bring items with rechargeable batteries in them (such as electric toothbrushes, beard trimmers, etc.) to Town Hall. Take the rechargeable batteries out of these items (hitting them with a hammer does the trick) first, then bring the batteries to Town Hall.

Here’s how to recycle batteries and cell phones at Town Hall:

1. Place the batteries in baggies and then in the battery box. Put the cell phone in the cell phone box, also under the table in the copy room.
2. Take the rechargeable batteries out of these items (hitting them with a hammer does the trick) first, then bring the batteries to Town Hall.

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Speeding Our Town on its way to you

Each time she hears that the printer has finished running off the latest issue of this newsletter, Administrative Secretary Leslie Bracebridge reaches for a valuable document: her list of “folding party” volunteers.

“Johanna Hall gets the blue ribbon this time!” she wrote last month, when asked who’d helped fold, seal and stuff the 875 copies of the Winter 2012 edition for mailing. Leslie noted that Joanna arrived at Town Hall within 20 minutes of receiving her call, and the two of them worked together for four hours.

“Then Marilyn and Walter Tibbetts walked in from an evening event,” Leslie added, “rolled up their sleeves and got to work. Becky Torres came in after a meeting. And we were done and out the door.”

If you would like to join a “folding party” for Our Town or special municipal mailings in the future, please call Leslie at 259-1204. (You will be under no obligation if a given date or time does not work for you.)

The town reserves the right not to award an item.

Public Auction Corner: Town-owned equipment

Please submit your bid in a sealed envelope if you are interested in the following item to Becky Torres, Town Administrator, 1 Cooleyville Rd., Shutesbury, MA 01072. Bids will be opened at noon on May 11, 2012. Equipment will go to highest bidder. Thank you for your interest.

Dell Optiplex PC tower good condition. Purchased in 2005. Pentium 4 processor 2.26 GHz 1.5 gigs RAM, 40 GB HD + 80 GGB HD, CDRW Windows XP PRO clean install w restore CD 17” CRT monitor w/ speakers Keyboard and mouse

The town reserves the right not to award an item.