

SHUTESBURY

MASSACHUSETTS

OUR TOWN



Our future depends on your knowledge today

David B. Ames, *Town Administrator*

The hot topic is budget and the welfare of the Town. This is a **critical** year for the Town of Shutesbury to make some very tough decisions. These tough decisions are the result of the continued erosion of state and federal aid creating burdens that the typical rural towns cannot handle. By looking in the paper, you can see that many small towns and some bigger ones are thinking override.

There are two other articles in this newsletter from the Finance and School Committees that explain the state and federal cuts. Please refer to them to better understand the past and present situations.

I want to try to explain the future by telling you what will happen if the Town of Shutesbury does not make sound financial decisions this year. Under most circumstances, you want to have enough income to pay your expenses and save some money for the future. If you have a one-time increase in your expenses, you can use your savings to make up the difference. What would happen if the additional expenses were permanent and exceeded any increases in revenue that you had? You might be able to use part of your savings for a couple of years. But eventually you would have no savings. This would leave you with the continued expense, but no way to pay for it.

The Town's savings account is called "Free Cash." Last year (FY04), we used some of our savings to balance the budget, even though the increase in expenses was not a one-time increase. That starts us off with a

deficit for FY05. In order to balance the budget in FY05, we would need to have increases in revenues that would exceed the increases in expenditure by the amount of Free Cash used in FY04. With the **state leveling funding** its revenues to the municipality, we don't have enough new revenues to even cover the increase in expenditures. This leaves us with a deficit in FY05 of FY04's Free Cash use and FY05's difference between expenditures and revenues.

We could deplete our savings account to make up the deficit, but this is financially unsound. It would cause a tremendous deficit in FY06 with no way of paying for it. About \$80,000 of our \$275,000 FY05 deficit is directly related to our use of Free Cash in FY04. We were in hopes the economy would rebound enough that the state would be able to increase state aid in FY05, helping us to make up that deficit. It does not look like that is going to happen.

So what do we do? The solution is easy, but the outcome is not. We must decrease expenses, increase revenues or combine the two.

Continued on page 3

Annual Town Meeting, elections, trash bag distribution May 1

Saturday, May 1 is a big day for Shutesbury. The polls for the Election of Officers will be open at the Shutesbury Elementary School at 23 West Pelham Road from 8:00 am - 2:00 pm. The Annual Town Meeting will begin at the same location at 9:00 am. Call the Town Clerk at 259-1204 if you would like to check your voter registration status or have any other questions about the election or town meeting process.

Typically at the Annual Town Meeting there are opportunities to pick up your household's allotment of official Town of Shutesbury trash bags, get your copy of the annual town report, buy goods from non-profit community fundraising organizations, and see maps and models of on-going town initiatives.

This year there may be a display of photos of some of the people appointed to serve Shutesbury. You can stop in for a short time or stay all day. We hope you will join us.

There is **no way to absentee vote on Town Meeting Warrant Articles**. A voter must attend the meeting and listen to the debates before voting on these questions.

Absentee ballots for the Election of Officers are available at the Town Clerk's office. For details, see page 2 of this newsletter

Candidate forum April 26

The Shutesbury School Council is sponsoring a forum on Monday, April 26 at 7:00 pm for the two candidates competing for a three-year seat on the School Committee. (See candidate statements on page 3.) Free childcare will be available for the forum, which will take place in the library of the Shutesbury Elementary School, 23 West Pelham Road.

Time to sign up your preschooler!

Preschool enrollment for the 2004-2005 school year is currently underway in the Preschool Program at Shutesbury Elementary School. Please call the school at 259-1212 for more information or to be put on the waiting list.

Messages from the Town Clerk

Leslie Bracebridge, *Town Clerk*
Joan Hanson, *Assistant Town Clerk*
Office hours: Monday through Thursday
9:00 am -1:00 pm (4513) 259-1204
P.O. Box 264, Shutesbury MA 01072

Saturday, May 1, 2004 is the date of Shutesbury's Annual Town Meeting and Election of Officers. Absentee ballots for the Election of Officers are available at the Town Clerk's Office. A voter who will be absent from Shutesbury, has a physical disability that prevents him/her from getting to the polls, or has a religious belief that prevents him/her from being present during polling hours may apply for an absentee ballot.

Applications for absentee ballots can be on official application forms or just be a simple note that includes 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 the mail to deliver ballots back and forth. For short notice absences, an absentee voter can vote "over the counter" at the Town Clerk's office through noon on Friday, April 30. July is the month to **re-license your dog** for the July 1, 2004 - June 30, 2005 period. We will send mail-in request forms for dog licenses in the end-of-June newsletter. A form is also available at the Shutesbury.org Web site. Check now, to make sure that your dog is up to date on its rabies vaccination, as is required in order to re-license. If your dog has been moved to another town or died in the previous year, you can call to let us know, or put a note on the form and mail it back. By doing so, you will avoid a "late notice" from us. Shutesbury had a 36% turnout of voters for the March 2 **Presidential Preference Primary**. Of the 480 ballots cast, 458 were Democratic, 11 Republican, 10 Green-Rainbow and 1 Libertarian.

Of the candidates still running on the Democratic ballot, Kerry got 220 votes, Kucinich got 156, Edwards got 49, Sharpton got 3 and Clark got 2.

Candidates elected to the six-member Democratic Town Committee were: **J. Tuttle, N. Dihlmann, M. Pill, P. Callahan, L. Lawton-Jacobson and J. Plaza.**

Of the candidates running on the Republican ballot, Bush got 8 votes. Of the Green-Rainbow ballots Salzman got 4 votes, Mesplay got 1, and Cobb got 1. Of the Libertarian candidates Nolan got 1 vote. Thank you to those who came out to vote; we look forward to seeing you at the September 14 state primary and the November 2 election.

Conservation Commission needs new member

If you are interested in having a direct impact on the future of our town's environment, consider joining the Conservation Commission!

The Conservation Commission's official charge is to administer the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act and its Regulations, but it also works to protect our town's natural resources, preserve open space and is the town's environmental voice.

It currently has a vacancy on the five-member board and seeks someone who can participate in bi-monthly meetings on Thursdays (only once a month in the winter), and weekend site visits following Thursday meetings. The commission would especially welcome someone with expertise in wetland issues.

For more information, contact **Penny Jaques** (259-1928).

ZBA seeks alternate members

The Shutesbury Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) is seeking two interested volunteers for alternate member positions. The ZBA hears and decides cases where property owners are seeking relief from our zoning bylaws. Contact **Ande Nazar**, Chairman, 259-1439 for an explanation of duties.

Roads Committee news

The Shutesbury Roads Committee welcomes members of the community to regular monthly (fragrance-free)

meetings on the second Wednesday of the month at 7:00 pm at Town Hall. The current members of the committee are **Diane Jacoby** (Chair), **Carole Mizaur** (Clerk), **Jim Aaron** and **Scott LaBonte**. It is interested in adding new members.

To place an issue on the agenda, please state your concerns in a letter to Shutesbury Roads Committee, 1 Cooleyville Rd., P.O. Box 276, Shutesbury, MA 01072. Or, put your letter in the mail box marked "Roads Committee" at Town Hall, or e-mail RoadTownRoadsCom@aol.com

All such communication will be evaluated. You may be contacted with the date of the meeting at which your concern will be discussed. Please make clear how you wish to be contacted and leave the appropriate address and/or phone number.

Thank you all!

We appreciate the volunteers who came out to fold the last edition of *Our Town*: **David Dann, Sandra Olken, Carrie Stone, Ellen Kalt, Betsy Fitzpatrick, Joan Hanson and Leslie Bracebridge**. Special thanks to an anonymous folder from Newton, MA, who was waiting for a friend in Town Hall. When she saw Leslie start to fold a special mailing to residents from the Selectboard, she pitched right in!

If you'd like to join a future "folding party" for *Our Town* or other mailings, please call the Town Clerk's office (259-1204).

We welcome help whenever or wherever it suits you best: daytime, nighttime, at home or at Town Hall.

Our Town, published four times a year, 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
Gordon Kimball, Designer
Leslie Bracebridge, Town Hall Liaison



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Statements from candidates for School Committee

Lisa Olszewski and Michael Silverstone filed nomination papers in March for one three-year position on the School Committee. Barring unforeseen write-in votes, these are the only candidates for this position in this Annual Town Election.

Each candidate was invited to submit a statement of no more than 125 words to this newsletter.

Space in Our Town 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 is not responsible for proofreading or correcting submissions.

Lisa Olszewski 174 Locks Pond Road

I am a mother of three beautiful and intelligent boys, two of which currently attend S.E.S. and the third to start next fall. I am running for School Committee for several reasons. The three above reasons extended to their friends and our neighbors, ensure that I am committed to seeking only the best for all our children.

I am a volunteer in the classrooms, P.T.O, Science Alliance, and Spear Memorial Library. I am fortunate to have a very positive professional relationship with the staff, students, and parents in our unique school, advocating open communication.

As a former L.A.P.D. Officer, I specialized in crimes against children and youth advocacy programs within the Los Angeles and surrounding areas.

Please vote for Lisa Olszewski, School Committee.367-9210

Michael Silverstone 50 Leverett Road

My candidacy is based on my core belief that our school's in-depth project-based learning by children, and the long-standing natural interconnectedness between the school and community should be preserved and strengthened.

Our town has an inspiring tradition of good local government and of neighbors working together for the common good. I would like to do my part to continue this. I ask for your vote at Town Meeting on May 1st. Thank you,

Michael Silverstone
259-1031
Michaels@crocker.com

- * Father of 8th grader who attended Shutesbury Elementary K-6
- * Parent Representative to Shutesbury School Council (1995-6)
- * Elementary teacher in Amherst since 1998
- * Faculty Representative to Wildwood School Council (2001-03)
- * Shutebury Firefighter/First Responder (1996-99)

Family Network reaches out to little ones

Since 1998, the Erving School Union #28 has been funded by a grant from the Massachusetts Department of Education/MA Family Network to provide outreach, education and support services for families with children under four years of age living in the towns of Shutesbury, Leverett, Erving, New Salem and Wendell.

We offer weekly/biweekly story hours and play groups in the local libraries and churches; Parent Council meetings; workshops based on assessed families' needs; field trips



and frequent fun events for the entire family. We also make Home Visits with our Baby Gift Bags to families with newborns to welcome them into our program.

If you have just moved into Shutesbury, have a child under four years of age, are pregnant or have a newborn, please call Naz Mohamed-Ahamed at 413-423-3337 or email mohamed@erving.com to be put on our mailing list. This is a wonderful way to meet other Family Network families with young children in your and neighboring towns.

Continued from page 1

Decreasing expenses means cuts in services in school and local government. To decrease the expenses by the full \$275,000 deficit, we would need to make major cuts in personnel and services. The local government, elementary school and regional school are all trying to cut into the deficit. I honestly believe that they all feel that they have done their best to trim their budgets. Any cuts from this point will have a cause and effect impact on services.

Increasing revenues on the backs of the taxpayers without help from the state will result in increased local taxes. This would require an override. The severity of the override would be dependent upon the size of the deficit. The override will allow your government to continue to provide the services that you are used to.

Hindsight is a tremendous tool. Looking back, we know that using Free Cash in FY04 and relying on the state to make up lost revenues in FY05 was a calculated risk that did not pay off. I do not feel the Town of Shutesbury can afford to make that mistake in planning the FY05 budget.

In closing, I need to remind you that the Town's fiscal woes are the result of state fiscal issues. Get involved, learn the facts and let your Representative, Senator and Governor know the impact of their decisions on local government. Feel free to contact members of the Finance Committee, Elementary School Committee, Regional School Committee, Selectboard or me to get more information.

Good news – and bad

Eric A. Stocker, *Chair, Finance Committee*

As we approach the Annual Town Meeting, Shutesbury's finances are relatively healthy. The key word here is relatively. Compared to many neighboring towns, and other cities and towns across the Commonwealth, our reserves are enviable. One of the goals of the Finance Committee is to hold on to a reasonable amount of these reserves for future use. We have, after our financial commitment to the Leverett-Cooleyville-Prescott Road Project, \$ 228,892.00 in Free Cash and \$449,370.00 in Stabilization. In other words, our combined total reserves of \$678,262.00 equal about 14.8% of our current proposed FY05 Budget. Unfortunately, the good news stops here.

The Finance Committee has been working diligently to get the town's FY05 Budget balanced. As of this writing, we have only managed to reduce our deficit to a staggering \$275,000.00. We will probably end up somewhere below this number, but we doubt that the change will be enough to alter our recommended course of action. It is also possible that House revisions to the Governor's proposed budget will reduce our problem somewhat. It seems unlikely that anything short of an override will make it go away.

Without going into the complicated details, it is fair to say that the majority of this deficit results from increased assessments from the Amherst-Pelham Regional School District. The increases in assessments are for the most part the result of unfunded, or at least underfunded, state and federal mandates. *Even with these increased assessments, cuts in the programs and services provided by the Regional School are inevitable.* We have had meetings with the Regional Administration and School Committee, as well as with representatives from the Selectboards, Finance Committees, and Town Administrators from the Region's towns. All of the above-mentioned officials are struggling together to find a way to cope with the situation. It is too

early in the process to know our final assessment, but it is clear that whatever the number is, it will have a grave impact on Shutesbury's FY05 Budget. (Please see related article from the School Committee re: impact of reduced funding for the schools.)

As the Finance Committee has stated repeatedly, what has really happened over the last several years is that the burden of taxation has shifted to the cities and towns. We are the tax body of last resort. Since 1990 the Commonwealth has cut taxes 45 times. The federal government has also cut taxes significantly. In theory, we are all beneficiaries of these reduced taxes. However, resultant state and federal deficits have forced cutbacks in local aid. Massachusetts has cut aid to education *more than any other state in the nation* since FY02. President Bush's proposed FY05 budget could cut as much as an estimated \$1.2 billion from Massachusetts. Over \$68 million of that would be in Title I education assistance.

Where does all this leave us? While not definite, it appears at this point that the Selectboard and Finance Committee will be advocating an override at the Annual Town Meeting. Like most towns around us, we have run out of options if the citizens of the town want to maintain the approximate level of services that we currently provide to the members of our community. To balance the FY04 Budget we used \$80,000.00 in Free Cash. This year there are increased pressures on our Free Cash to fund projects that are likely to be recommended by the Capital Planning Committee. It is too early to tell what the Finance Committee will recommend for FY05, but we will most likely advocate use of some Free Cash coupled with an override. Sooner or later, and better sooner than later, the town needs to adjust its revenue generating capacity to equal its ongoing operating expenses. In short, if the state and federal governments are no longer adequately funding the services that we feel we need, we will need to do it locally. While it might be mathematically possible to balance the FY05 budget using only our reserves,

this would put us in an impossible financial position as we head into FY06. (See related article by David Ames re: use of Free Cash to fund operating expenses.)

If you have any thoughts or questions about the budget, please feel free to come to a Finance Committee meeting. We will present more information to you as the numbers become clearer and Annual Town Meeting approaches.

We are still seeking two more members for our committee. If nothing else, being on the Finance Committee in these lean times is a challenge! Please give me a call if you are interested.

If you would like more details about how state and federal tax cuts affect us all, I would suggest that you check out www.massbudget.org and www.nationalpriorities.org.

Police vehicles now safe from the elements

Folks driving along Cooleyville Road in recent weeks may have wondered about the blue gable discreetly peeking over the dropoff on the east side of Town Hall.

They're seeing the top of a prefabricated, portable shelter acquired by the town through a federal grant.

After September 11, 2001, the new Department of Homeland Security advised police departments to have their vehicles "always at the ready," according to Shutesbury Chief of Police **Charles Bray**.

Shutesbury's finest understood that concern. In the past, they've worried that the need to remove heavy snow and ice from vehicles could critically delay their response to emergencies.

Bray met with the Selectboard more than a year ago to talk about getting a grant to address the problem.

"It didn't cost the town a dime," he said of the shelter, which arrived in late March. Its color was chosen to blend in with the blue of Town Hall.

In the future, the shelter may be moved behind Town Hall. But for now, it stands to one side to take advantage of an existing concrete slab.

Major changes predicted in our three schools' educational programs

Anne Lundberg, *Chair, Shutesbury School Committee* and Marianne Jorgensen, *Representative, Regional School Committee*

You may be well aware that during February, March, and into this month, members of our town's Selectboard, Finance Committee, and School Committee have attended numerous meetings with committees from the three towns—Pelham, Leverett, and Amherst—regarding the dilemma of the Regional School Budget. Although the current pressing issue is the Amherst-Pelham Regional School District FY05 budget and how to fund it [Amherst's override vote for \$2 million passed on March 30; a vote for \$2.5 million was defeated]. It is clear, in listening to the voices of leadership from each town, that the issues are large, complex, and dire.

The regional budget presented by Supt. Jere Hochman was "very lean" and added some cuts, although the bottom line was an increase. The increases reflect the actual rising costs of mandatory items. So the FY05 budget does not reinstate the huge cuts made to our middle and high schools over the past two years, nor does it provide for the new changes that parents, teachers, staff and school leadership have asked for. So why—with a lean educational budget presented—did the Town of Amherst require a \$2-2.5 million override? Why is our town facing the same situation? It is NOT that the schools' budgets are out of whack. **The problem is that funding and programs and grants once paid for by state and federal monies are not being paid to the 351 towns in our state anymore!** This requires every town to pay for more of the schools'

budgets. There have been huge shifts both in types and percentages of funds paid to towns for education.

As individuals, we know that both our state and federal income taxes have been lowered over the past few years. At the same time, we have seen our property taxes rise. Although there is not a direct dollar-for-dollar ratio, the thinking behind these shifts is connected. Those who control the *big picture on revenues* tell us that one household pays about the same in *overall* taxes into this three-tax-arena—via two income taxes and property tax. As we *individually* pay lower income taxes, we *collectively* become responsible for higher local taxes and assessments. Our towns cannot afford these cuts.

So why is the School Committee writing about taxes and monies and funding?!?! Because the school budget is the largest part of the local annual town budget.

If our town is receiving less funding from the state for education spending, then even if the school budget "stood still," the town would have to pay more! These funding shifts are complex. We encourage you to speak to someone on our Selectboard or Finance Committee for more specific information. **You should become informed about what the consequences are for the schools if we do not pass the overrides.** We also encourage you to attend meetings as they are posted or announced concerning town budgets—there will may be special meetings held as the spring progresses. We all know that our schools' budgets are the bulk of the town's spending. The situation now exists that if our four towns do not pass and fund their budgets, the schools will look extremely different next fall. The Shutesbury School Committee held its budget hearing for FY05 on March 17. At that date we presented the budget we had passed for the elementary school in February, as well the regional budget situation. Things may have changed since then! Keep yourself informed. Check the town and school web sites. Talk to people. It is clear that if we do not want to continue to pay higher property taxes AND do not

want to cut education, we will need to push our representatives in the State House. The money has to come from somewhere. **If you like having good schools, you need to educate yourself about the \$\$\$ issues now.**

As Anne's farmer dad used to say, "Looks like we're caught between a rock and a hard place."

News from the lake!

Mark these dates for the Lake Wyola Association events this summer. All are welcome as these events are full of good food, good company and good fun!

Sunday, June 20: Father's Day Pancake Breakfast 8:30-11:00 am. \$4.50 adults/\$2 children

Sunday, June 27: Lake Wyola Road Race, 9:30 am walkers, 10:00 am runners

Saturday, July 3: Steak Roast and Dancing! Dinner 5:50-7:30 pm, \$13. Dancing, Live Band, 8:00 pm-midnight, \$2, Cash Bar

Saturday, July 17: Tag and Bake Sale, 9:00 am.-3:00 pm

Saturday, August 7: Chicken and Pasta Barbeque Dinner, 5:50-7:30 pm, \$10. Dancing, Live Band, 8:00 pm-midnight, \$2, Cash Bar

All events will be held at the Association Hall on Shore Rd. Tickets for meals can be purchased from any LWA Director or by calling Carol at 367-0189. The dinners sell out, so please order your tickets early to assure a spot. To reserve a table at the Tag Sale, call Donna at 367-0388 or 413-785-1496. Road Race registration forms are enclosed in the newsletter.

Healthy Lawns Workshop

open to Shutesbury residents

Place: Greenfield Community Television at 393 Main Street, Greenfield MA

Tuesday, May 18, 2004

6:30-8:30 p.m.

Call 772-1528, extension 106 to register - No fee. Funded through a grant from the Department of Environmental Protection.

Senior lunch program aids and entertains

The Council on Aging receives funds to provide weekly luncheons to seniors (age 60 and older) on Tuesdays downstairs at Town Hall.

Sometimes these noontime luncheons include informational programs.

Other times, the luncheon provides an opportunity to get together, have a good meal and get caught up with others. Other than age, there are no restrictions to participate; however, you must call Council on Aging Chair **Muriel Gross** (259-1371 or 259-1246) for a reservation.

These weekly meals were suspended during the construction work at Town Hall. Now that the project is over, they are up and running again.

Come meet with other Shutesbury seniors and enjoy the luncheon!

High-speed Internet comes to Locks Village

Residents around Lake Wyola will soon surf the Web with a speed the rest of Roadtown might envy.

High-speed services such as DSL or cable modems aren't available in Shutesbury. Wyola.net is a local, interim solution for the lake area while the Shutesbury/Leverett Broadband Committee works to bring a modern, fiber-optic network to homes throughout town.

Built using wireless devices which communicate over the lake, Wyola.net will link village computers to the Internet via a single high-speed line, providing an always-on connection that's faster than dial-up, without tying up the phone line.

The project is a volunteer effort led by **Paul Borneo**, a home-based software developer and year-round resident. Paul purchased the high-speed line, designed the network, and is organizing neighbors to participate.

Households contributing \$150 towards the build-out of the network can use Wyola.net's 768 kbps high speed line at a cost of \$50 per three months. And everyone's welcome to connect and use a portion of the bandwidth for free. All it takes is a \$42 (after rebate) access device for your

computer.

"If you live around the lake and use the Internet, please consider joining us," says Borneo.

For more information, visit <http://wyola.net/>

Forest Stewardship Program helps landowners protect ecosystem

If you are a woodland owner and would like to know more about your woodland and how to manage it, the Department of Environmental Management's Forest Stewardship Program can help you. This educational non-regulatory program is designed to help landowners protect the inherent ecosystem values of their forest.

Recognizing the public benefits of good stewardship on private forest land, the Massachusetts Forest Stewardship Program (MFSP) supports and encourages private forest landowners' efforts to manage, enjoy, and care for their land using a long-term approach.

To enroll in the Stewardship Program, you will engage a licensed consulting forester to develop a 10-year forest management plan based on your goals.

This Forest Stewardship Plan will help you understand the potential of your woodlands. It documents management options and practices designed to maintain the land in a productive and healthy condition for the next generation. Soil and water quality, wildlife and fish habitat, timber and other wood products, and outdoor recreation are among the many factors taken into account. It recommends actions that will protect or increase the environmental values of the land while yielding desired social or economic benefits. The benefits of your wise decisions and actions will extend far beyond the borders of your property!

The finished Stewardship Plan is presented to you in a three-ring binder that contains a variety of supporting materials on pertinent topics (e.g. wildlife habitat management, timber harvesting regulations, websites for landowners, and estate planning).

Who is eligible to participate?

Individuals, joint owners, groups and associations, non-profits, and corporations without publicly traded stock are all eligible. There is no minimum acreage, except that properties of less than 10 acres are not eligible for Forest Stewardship Plan preparation cost-sharing.

Participating landowners may own a maximum of 1,000 acres (or up to 5,000 acres with a special waiver). Municipal governments are encouraged to develop Stewardship Plans for their Town Forests or Conservation Commission woodlands, but are not eligible for cost-sharing.

Is Financial Assistance Available?

Landowners of 10 acres or more who do not already have some type of management plan in place for their property are eligible to receive cost-sharing to help pay for the plan development. The cost-sharing is based on the acreage you own. Once enrolled, landowners are eligible to apply for further cost-sharing for practices to implement their plans, when funding is available. Funding is variable, but practices eligible for cost sharing in the past have included trail building, wildlife clearings, pruning, woodland thinning, abandoned field reclamation, and invasive species control.

For more information see: <http://www.state.ma.us/dem/programs/forestry/service/steward.htm>.

Share your heart and home with foster felines

The Pioneer Valley Humane Society in Greenfield is looking for people who could like to foster a cat or kitten until it is ready to be adopted.

The shelter provides litter, litter boxes, bedding and food. Foster "parents" are asked to provide a separate room for the cat or kitten to live in to keep it safe and out of trouble. If they have other pets, they must be in good health and up to date on vaccinations.

Spending time with the foster pets helps socialize them, making it easier for them to find permanent homes.

Fostering cats or kittens can last from two weeks to two months.

For more information, contact the Pioneer Valley Humane Society at 773-3148.

From the M. N. Spear Memorial Library

Judith Seelig, *Library Director*

Hours

Monday and Wednesday 10:00 am - 12:00 pm and 2:00 - 5:00 pm
Tuesday and Thursday 3:00 - 7:30 pm
Sunday 3:30 - 5:30 pm

Letter from the Director

As of July 29, after five years on the job, I will leave my position as Library Director. It has been a privilege to serve the people of Shutesbury, and now it is time for me to move on and find a new project.

Working right here Shutesbury and getting to know so many people has been a delight. I've described the job as "part storekeeper, part therapist, part bartender." Serving up books and movies and remembering people's "usual" inclinations is a lot of fun. Seeing families week after week and watching kids get older has been deeper fun; though sometimes the human dramas have been painful, also a part of small town involvement.

Looking back, I am most proud of our program of kid volunteers. About 40 fifth and sixth graders have made a contribution to their town by doing real library work. And they've been a lot fun to work with. These kids have manners and confidence that reflect the caring of their parents, and work habits that reflect the standard of excellence demonstrated by their teachers.

Our adult and teenage volunteers have been a gift for which I'm grateful every day. The library could not function without them, and I think they truly enjoy volunteering because they keep showing up.

Shutesbury is truly fortunate in our town employees. My colleagues in Town Hall are a dedicated, professional, effective group of public servants, who have been a pleasure to work with and have always been ready to help me. I also want to thank the police department and the highway department. Men from both have been my heroes at moments that may have seemed minor to them, but have meant a lot to me.

Ziggy says thanks for all the pats and hugs and treats. He'll miss every one, too, especially the kids. [Run photo of dog by the library window—I have it]

I look forward to handing over the key to someone who will have the patience and fortitude to see that a new library gets built. More than a dedicated library director, this work requires a few farsighted citizens who believe that Shutesbury deserves a full-service library such as Leverett, Sunderland, and Pelham have built, and who will do the noble work to make it happen. I encourage all of you to visit the INSIDES of those facilities. If you think that the library we have now is good enough, you will be surprised by what you find. Financially, this is a perfectly good time: the state continues to fund library construction and the USDA still gives out 40-year loans at under 4% for rural municipal projects. Consider combining a new police station with the library. Shared facilities are cheaper to build, and the police are just as crowded and deserving of space. Think creatively, look at the positives. The best time to build a new library was five years ago; the next best time is tomorrow.

Judith Seelig

From the Friends of the Library

THANK YOU to the fifth and sixth graders for their contribution to the library. Every year they choose "charities" to receive their profits from the apple-picking and bake sale. We are honored to be one of these.

THANK YOU to everyone who helped with the Egg Hunt, most especially **Jen Gerber-Dolan** and **MaryAnne Antonellis**, who really know how to create a great event.

THANK YOU to all the bakers of cookies and brownies. MaryAnne has been coordinating the baking for books, and the library has had goodies to sell every Tuesday

THANK YOU to **Emily Bayard**, who

made a generous contribution to buy some special books in memory of her late mother.

THANK YOU to **Ellen Kalt** for organizing the Pampered Chef benefit event, to **Kristine Dion** for hosting it, and to **Walter Turati** for making the school kitchen and gym available for us.

Computer classes return with the sun



Back by popular demand—maple syrup, spring peepers, daffodils . . . and **Carol Holzberg's** fabulous computer classes, thanks to generous and continued sponsorship by the Shutesbury Education Foundation.

"Introduction to Macintosh and Windows Computers" (For Beginners and Intermediate Users) will be offered Wednesdays in May 2004, 7:30-9:00 pm, in the Shutesbury Elementary School Computer Lab.

Fee: \$20 (for Shutesbury residents, thanks to support from the Shutesbury Education Foundation) and \$50 (for out-of-towners)

Schedule:

May 5: Microsoft Word
May 12: Microsoft Excel
May 19: Digital Images (scanners, cameras & email)
May 26: Web Page Design

Says Carol, "I'm flexible about topics and will certainly tailor classes to individual computing needs. We can modify these topics if participants have an interest in another area. By May 2004, computers in the Shutesbury Elementary School lab should be hooked up to a fast Internet connection. We can do Web work without the hassles of slow access. You can bring in your laptops if you want. We will have two PCs in the lab for those who want to work on them. Others can use Macintosh. The programs I teach "look" the same on both Macs and PCs."

Sign Up: 259-1303 or carolh@anthro.umass.edu Class size limited to first 10 registrations!

HOW TO CONTACT TOWN OFFICIALS

ACCOUNTANT <i>David Kielson</i> 259-1108	ELECTRICAL INSPECTOR <i>Maurice Gregoire</i> 367-9988	POLICE DEPARTMENT <i>Charles Bray, Office</i> 259-1279 <i>Dispatch</i> 625-8200
ADA COMMITTEE <i>Ziporah Hildebrandt</i> 259-1874	ELEMENTARY SCHOOL <i>Tari Thomas</i> 259-1212	RECREATION & OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE <i>Elizabethann Lacy</i> 259-1764
TOWN ADMINISTRATOR <i>David Ames</i> 259-1214	EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIRECTOR <i>L. Mark Watkins</i> 259-1751	RECYCLING COORDINATOR <i>Paul Vlach</i> 259-1543
ANIMAL INSPECTOR <i>Denise Chiminiello</i> 259-1020	FINANCE COMMITTEE <i>Eric Stocker</i> 259-1478	REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE <i>Marianne Jorgensen</i> 259-1842
ASSESSORS <i>Kenneth Holmberg</i> 259-3790	FIRE DEPARTMENT <i>Walter Tibbetts</i> or 259-1286	ROADS ADVISORY COMMITTEE <i>Diane Jacoby</i> 259-1317
BOARD OF HEALTH <i>William Elliott</i> 259-2122	HEALTH AGENT <i>David Zarozinski</i> 549-3710	SCHOOL COMMITTEE <i>Anne Lundberg</i> 367-7504
BUILDINGS COMMITTEE 259-1214	HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT <i>Tim Hunting</i> 259-1215	UNION 28 SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT <i>Linda Driscoll</i> 423-3337
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CULTURAL COUNCIL <i>Renee A. Richard</i> 259-9296	OUR TOWN NEWSLETTER <i>Janis S. Gray</i> 259-1584	TREASURER <i>Gabriele Voelker</i> 259-1801
CONSERVATION COMMISSION <i>Leave inquiries at</i> 259-2123	PERSONNEL BOARD <i>Penelope Kim</i> 259-1326	TREE WARDEN <i>Thomas Houston</i> 259-1508
DEPT. OF VETERAN'S SERVICES <i>Leo J. Parent, Jr.</i> 863-3205	PLANNING BOARD <i>Deacon Bonnar</i> 259-1276	ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS <i>Ande Nazar</i> 259-1439
DOG OFFICER <i>Nancy Long</i> 259-2123	PLUMBING/GAS INSPECTOR <i>Andrew French</i> 253-2228	
	Police, Fire, Rescue Squad 911	



SELECT BOARD
P.O. BOX 276
SHUTESBURY, MA 01072

PRSR
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SHUTESBURY MA 01072

Town meeting warrant and
recycling schedule enclosed

Resident
Shutesbury, MA 01072

