

SHUTESBURY

MASSACHUSETTS

OUR TOWN

Good news, bad news from Finance Committee

Eric A. Stocker, *Chair*

As we enter the final stretch preceding **Annual Town Meeting May 7**, the Finance Committee has been working hard to balance the FY06 Budget. You may recall that for the past several years, we have been harping on the fact that the State and Federal governments have not lived up to their financial responsibilities to the Commonwealth's cities and towns. This is especially true with regard to the funding of education. Not surprisingly, this year is no different, as unfunded educational mandates from both of these branches of government continue to pressure local budgets. That fact, coupled with the fact that it is difficult to raise sufficient operating revenue under the constraints of Proposition 2.5, have left many local communities in perilous financial condition.

We are glad to report that Shutesbury is not yet one of those communities. The town's commitment to fiscal discipline, last year's override, and frankly some good luck, put us in good financial shape headed into FY06. That's the good news.

The bad news is that it now appears to be inevitable that we will need to dip into our cash reserves to balance the FY06 Budget. Our reserves are enviable, so we should

be able to survive *this* budget cycle without serious harm to our overall financial well being. However, in the long run, *there is no way around the fact that a strategy that balances our operating budgets using our reserves is not sustainable.*

The way things look now, we will probably need to use about \$170,000 from Free Cash to fund the FY06 Operating Budget and to fund requests from the Capital Planning Committee. Our conservative projections indicate that we will generate about \$133,000 in new Free Cash from unspent FY05 Budget lines, back tax collection, and a few other revenue sources. The resulting net loss to our cash reserves of about \$37,000 will leave us with about \$289,000 in Free Cash at the start of the FY07 Budget cycle. We also have \$406,000 in Stabilization. In other words, our reserves will be somewhat depleted but will remain sufficient.

This is our best estimate of the current situation. Between now and Annual Town Meeting, things are likely to change a bit. We may be able to tighten up the budget slightly. We are also hoping that the reserves that we are projecting from the state will increase. However, that seems unlikely because the structural deficit that has been plaguing the Commonwealth's finances remains. The Regional School Committee continues to work on ways to trim that budget. Again, a little more help from the Commonwealth with regard to the school budgets would help all of the regional towns a great deal.

There is also a potentially troublesome footnote to this analysis. Our present FY06 Budget reflects our Regional Assessment using a formula that has passed the Regional School

Committee. This assessment formula, which is more favorable to Shutesbury than some, will need to be accepted by three of the region's towns. If this does not happen, there could be serious implications for us. It is possible that our Regional Assessment could increase by as much as an additional \$50,000. Our current read is that this will not happen. If it does, our financial strength would erode that much more.

It is also clear that there will be other demands on our financial resources as time progresses. This fall we will need to repair the dam at Lake Wyola. There are building needs, most notably a new library building. There will probably be more land purchases in the future for conservation and the preservation of open space. There are ongoing capital needs in all town departments. Many of these things will be funded by grants or matching funds, but we know that we will need to fund some of these projects from the town's coffers.

We hope to see you at the Annual Town Meeting, where we can delve into these issues in more detail if so desired.

Bring your appetite to Town Meeting!

Shutesbury's First Grade is organizing a bake and lunch sale at Town Meeting to benefit the **Sylla** family.

There will be baked goods, soups and sandwiches, so even if you are just stopping in (between soccer games and other Saturday chores) to get trash bags and vote, there will be something sure to please every one. For more information please contact **Jen Davies** (259-1008) or **Dina Stander** (259-9125).

Summer Job

Shutesbury Town Hall Custodian needed for 10 weeks beginning June 13 until August 13. This is a part-time position, up to 10 hours per week. Pay is \$9.02 per hour. If interested, call Town Administrator **David C. Dann** at 259-1214 by May 7.

Messages from the Town Clerk

Leslie Bracebridge, *Town Clerk*
Joan Hanson, *Assistant Town Clerk*
Office Hours: Monday through
Thursday 9:00am - 1:00pm
Call 259-1204 for special
appointments or to leave a message.

Saturday, May 7, 2005 is the date of Shutesbury's Annual Town Meeting and Election of Officers. The polls will be open at the Shutesbury Elementary School at 23 West Pelham RD from 8:00am to 2:00 pm.

Ballots list the names of candidates who delivered nomination papers, with at least 20 signatures of registered voters, to the Board of Registrars by March 21, 2005. Ballots also contain blank lines under each position equal to the number of positions up for election. The voter can either check the name of the official candidate(s) or write in another name. For a "Write-In" candidate to be elected, he/she must receive at least 20 write-in votes, as well as a majority of votes.

The Annual Town Meeting will begin at the same location at 9:00 am. Call the number above if you would like to check your voter registration status or have any other questions about the election or town meeting process.

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 official application forms or just 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, May 6.

Results of the election will be left on the Town Clerk's tape recorded message at the end of the day and will be posted at the Town Hall front door and also on the website.

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

In addition to voting, typically there are opportunities to pick up trash bags and annual town reports, buy goods from non-profit community fund-raising organizations, and see displays of on-going town initiatives. You can stop in for a short time or stay for the entire meeting. We hope you will be able to join us.

July is the month to **re-license your dog** for the July 1, 2005 - June 30, 2006 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 website. 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 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 receiving a "late notice" from us.

If you have any questions about voter registration, elections, town meetings, dog tags, or municipal government generally, give us a call or stop in. We will gladly answer your questions or direct you to the appropriate person, place or thing!

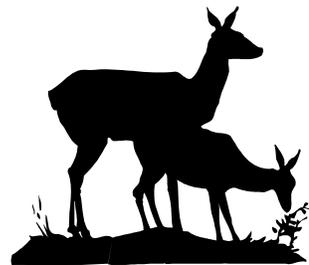
Hooray for helping hands

We appreciate the help of **Kathy Carey, Allyson Miseph, Laurie Parker, Deb Pichanick and Paul Vlach** in preparing the winter edition of *Our Town* for the mail.

Thanks also to **Penny Kim, Joseph Jacobs and Marilyn Tibbetts** in getting a special mailing from the **Board of Selectmen** ready for delivery to the Post Office in March.

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



Open Space Plan Committee is back!

It is time to write an update of the Town's Open Space & Recreation Plan. Get involved in the process, learn more about the town, and help determine our recreation and open space needs and goals!

An approved updated plan allows us to apply for State "Self-Help" grants, which have helped us purchase several conservation areas in the past. Without a current plan we could not have received \$55,544 for the South Brook Conservation Area in 2000.

We need volunteers willing to help research, discuss, and write the plan. No special expertise is required, just an interest in the Town. Our first meeting was April 14. Our next meeting will be Thursday, May 19 at 7:30pm. Join the fun!

For more information, contact **Janice Stone** at 259-1557 or jsstone@tei.umass.edu.

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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From the desk of the Town Administrator

David Dann, *Town Administrator*

It is so nice to be working in Shutesbury. Many days I walk to work. Thank you all for the wonderful welcome. I look forward to working with you and on your behalf to make our town the very best it can be. One of my many responsibilities is to help municipal government work for you in our town. If you have a question or concern on anything in our town, please feel free to call me or stop by Town Hall,

As we get ready for Town Meeting, I am amazed at how many volunteers are engaged in some capacity. In order for municipal government to work in small towns, volunteers are essential. Thank you all for your valuable time and contribution.

Shutesbury also needs engaged citizens to help make important decisions. Our Town Meeting is May 7 at the Elementary School. Please come and participate, every voice is important.

Where to find fragrance-free products

The ADA Committee

It is always heartening for those of us who have disabilities to witness the support and inclusive spirit of our neighbors and fellow Shutesbury citizens. The coming annual Town Meeting in May will mark our third year as creating a more accessible setting for those with Multiple Chemical Sensitivities. We hope those attending will continue to refrain from wearing fragranced products on this important day for democracy in action.

If you have wondered what "fragrance free" means or how to do it, you need look no further than our own town website at www.shutesbury.org. There you can find a description of "fragrance free" as well as a new list of fragrance-free products.

Volunteers worked hard for several months to create a list of laundry and personal care products that are avail-

able locally. The list is posted on the shutesbury.org website, and is available in print form at Town Hall. The list specifies products by name, brand, and which local stores carry the item.

We aim to make "being fragrance free" as easy as possible.

Those who are unable to attend Town Meeting at the elementary school because of a disability can contact David Dann, Shutesbury's ADA Coordinator (259-1214), to request accommodations. Please make your request well in advance so there is time to prepare.

Spring 2005 recycling and solid waste news

Paul Vlach, *Recycling Coordinator*
recycling@shutesbury.org

As we are about to wrap up our fifth year under the Pay As You Throw (PAYT) trash system, we want to thank each and every resident for helping to contain our costs while protecting our environment. We all recognize the importance of continuing our efforts to reduce our trash volume by choosing to buy products with minimal packaging whenever possible, reusing items when we can, and recycling all that is allowed.

This year, with the help of grant money awarded by the MA Department of Environmental Protection, the Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) Advisory Board, our volunteered time, and some of our own education funds, the Recycling and Solid Waste Committee (RSWC) has produced a new booklet to help everyone understand our system and fully use all options. Called the **Shutesbury Recycling Almanac**, this booklet will be given out along with your 2005 Town trash bag allotment. If you don't plan to pick up a bag supply this year, you should still stop by one of our bag distribution events, just to get an Almanac. We expect this to be a valuable resource for every household, answering those questions which arise throughout the year. We hope you'll keep it handy for the next several years, only recycling it 'when an updated version comes out.

In the meantime, we ask that everyone continue to focus on recycling everything possible; minimize your trash, and "close the loop" by shopping for products which reuse recycled materials. This important step helps to create a market for our recycled material, and is one of the reasons that the Town has adopted a policy encouraging such purchases for each department. Now, more than ever, whatever we can recycle, instead of throwing into the trash, puts money in our pockets. Firstly, because we don't have to pay to get rid of it as trash. But for the next ten years, under a new contract we just signed with the MRF, we will be PAID \$15.67 per ton of recyclables we deliver to the MRF. On top of that, we will receive revenue sharing funds above that amount, when the market is strong, as it is now. Recycling all that we can not only makes sense, it makes CENTS, too... lots of them!

2005 Trash Bags will be distributed beginning the day of Town Meeting, May 7. The other 2005 bag distribution dates and locations are listed below. Again this year, at the direction of the Select Board, annual bag allotments are only available during the distribution period at the scheduled events staffed by the RSWC volunteers. You cannot get your annual supply from the Town Hall staff during this period. Repeated interruptions in years past, by people picking up trash bags, made it very difficult for Town Hall staff to complete their regular job duties. Therefore, as we did last year, we are asking all residents to plan on stopping by one of the events listed below, to pick up their bag supply built into the tax base. If you are interested in assisting the committee and staffing an event, so we can cover more sessions, please contact the Recycling Coordinator.

Many households use less than the 50 "free" bags available, and choose to only take 30 or 40 bags per year, reserving their right to get the additional bags if their needs change before the next "bag year" begins. Heavier users of the system, requiring

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than 50 bags per year, must purchase them from the Town Hall, Village Co-op in Leverett, or the Pelham General Store, in packs of ten for \$20. Again, we want to thank the stores for helping out the Town, providing this service at no cost. Larger volume users must cover their own disposal costs, which is the basis of the Pay As You Throw system. They may recycle less, or have larger families, which means more food, more clothing, and more expense to get rid of their trash.

Recycling all that you can is the best alternative, of course. If you need bags before you can pick up your 2005 annual allotment, you'll need to purchase them from one of those three places. Please plan ahead, and have a household member get to one of our scheduled events.

Other upcoming events:

May 28 through June 4 – Roadside Swap Week. Put out your usable but unwanted items at the roadside, with a "free" sign, and give them a continued lifespan with another Shutesbury family.

June 4, 2005: Bulky Waste Day

10:00 am to 2:00pm (note the later start time than past years) This is your annual opportunity to drive just within town, and dispose of your pickup-truck load or less of oversized trash items, appliances, electronics, or items to donate to the Amherst Survival Center. We serve hundreds of households, so capacity is limited. Contact recycling@shutesbury.org if you have a large load or a question not answered at www.shutesbury.org/recycling/bulky.htm

2005 Bag Distribution Schedule:

Please take time now to read the schedule for pickup of your annual bag allotment. Town Hall staff will not give out annual allotments until after this distribution period is done. We ask that you make every effort to attend one of the dates below, staffed by the Recycling and Solid Waste Committee members, so the paid Town Hall staff can focus on their pri-

mary responsibilities. Here is the schedule – the hours are firm.

May 7 (Saturday) Town Meeting at the Elementary School, 9:00am – 12:00pm

May 10 (Tuesday) At the Town Hall in the Senior Center, 6:00pm – 8:00pm

May 21(Saturday) At the Town Hall in the Senior Center, 10:00am – 12:00pm

June 4 (Saturday) Bulky Waste Day at the Highway Department yard, 10:00am – 2:00pm

June 11(Saturday) At the Lake Wyola Assoc. Building, Shore Drive, 10:00am-12:00pm

June 21(Tuesday) At the Town Hall in the Senior Center, 6:00pm – 8:00pm

July 2 (Saturday) At the Town Hall in the Senior Center, 10:00am – 12:00pm

July 12 (Tuesday) At the Town Hall in the Senior Center, 6:00pm – 8:00pm

Note: May 7 - July 12, Town Hall staff cannot give out the annual bag allotments. They must be picked up at a date and location above.

Air quality at Town Hall gets a boost

Ziporah Hildebrandt

After years of complaints about the "musty," "moldy," "bad" smells in the basement rooms of Town Hall, the end may finally be in sight. Mike Feeney of the Mass Dept. of Health did a top-to-bottom assessment of the building in March. He pronounced the top floor in good shape, but found several problems in the basement with the venting and heating. His complete report has not been received at the time of this writing, but the prognosis looks good for a fix.

By rerouting the venting from a storage room, cleaning and rehabilitating the ancient heating units, and changing a few other things, it looks like the Selectboard meeting room and senior lounge will get a better supply of fresh air, and eliminate the influx of poor air. So those of you who found somewhere else to hold your event, avoided public meetings, or left because you couldn't breathe, stay posted. The patient is on the mend!

Note from the Town Collector

Ellen McKay, *Tax Collector*

Dear Shutesbury taxpayers,

Happy spring! Now that the warmer weather is approaching, we are approaching the end of fiscal 2005 and the Town Meeting for fiscal 2006.

Please remember to make an appointment if you wish to pay a bill or meet with me on Tuesday evenings by calling the office number at 413-259-1615 and leaving a message with your telephone number. I will return the call and acknowledge your appointment.

Your fourth quarter real estate taxes are due May 2. I urge you to pay these bills promptly as the next bill you will be receiving on these bills is a demand that will cost you an additional \$ 5.00 plus interest. If you need to set up a payment arrangement on your bill, please contact me as soon as possible. Although interest will accrue on any overdue portion of the bill, you will avoid the demand fee and the additional interest that would accrue should you leave the entire bill unpaid.

Don't forget to contact the Board of Assessors if you no longer have a vehicle on which you have received a motor vehicle excise tax bill. This should be done as soon as you receive the bill so the bill can be adjusted through abatement before the bill becomes due. You will need to supply the Assessors with a bill of sale and a copy of a plate return receipt from the Registry of Motor Vehicles, receipt from a junkyard, or a copy of a new registration for the same license plate to obtain the abatement.

Have a good spring.

Assessor's Office Hours

Monday 9:00am - 2:00pm

Tuesday 9:00am-3:00pm

Wednesday 12:00pm - 4:00pm

Thursday 10:00am - 4:00pm

Friday by appointment only.

259-3790

Report from the Shutesbury-Leverett Broadband Committee

Aron Goldman, *SLBC Chair*

The Shutesbury-Leverett Broadband Committee (SLBC) was formed to bring high-speed Internet access to Shutesbury and Leverett. Surrounding towns like Pelham, Montague, Orange, and Amherst have been served by Comcast (formerly AT&T) cable and/or Verizon DSL for years, but we still remain un-served, except for one small patch of Shutesbury which was recently hooked up.

But first, let us remind everyone that we are founded on, and guided by, several deeply held values:

- Universal access

- Better services for our schools, libraries, town halls, police and fire departments

- New services for seniors, disabled residents, and other home-bound and special needs populations

- Economic development, particularly for small businesses, home businesses, and telecommuting

- Protecting the rural character and pristine natural resources of our community

- Local control

- Affordability and options

- Financially self-supporting solutions

Creating new ways to help home-bound or less mobile residents to actively participate in public activities.

Today, the SBLC continues to work (simultaneously) on three types of solutions for our towns: (1) convincing one of the regional providers to extend their service to us; (2) doing it ourselves; (3) something in between:

1. Bringing in the Big Guys

By far, the simplest solution is to convince Verizon or Comcast to extend their infrastructure into our towns. About a year ago, we went through an interesting process with Comcast. They conducted drive-around surveys, analyzed maps and homes-per-mile data, did construction estimates, and sent out a mail-in survey to Shutes-

bury residents (the responses were to be considered valid for Leverett, too). In the end, even though the results seemed favorable, they decided not to go ahead. We were told it was “a dollar and cents issue,” but believe there were other factors involved, too.

Unlike Comcast, Verizon has remained relatively uncommunicative. We continue to make every attempt to engage them about our situation, but Verizon decision-making is very centralized, and they don't seem to know or care much about what's going on here. Like Comcast, Verizon also claims there just isn't enough business to justify the investment but, again, we think there are other factors. It's bewildering that, while Verizon is still unable (or unwilling) to deploy DSL in our two towns, they have already begun building the *next* generation of technology—fiber-to-the-home—in many places around the country. One visible indication that there's a lot of broadband demand in our two towns is that signs saying things like “VERIZON: SERVE US!” and “DSL PLEASE!” are being taped to Verizon wire equipment and telephone poles!

2. Doing it Ourselves

If the regional players won't help us, the obvious alternative is to do it ourselves. We continue to evaluate several ways to do this. Since our committee began, we've continually monitored industry research and talked to providers and other communities who have built their own infrastructure.

The first option is building our own Fiber-to-the-Home community network, or FTTH. This is the most expensive solution (\$4-6 million for universal service in Shutesbury and Leverett). But FTTH also provides the best service and the most assurance of not becoming obsolete. One strand of fiber has enough capacity to provide Internet, cable TV, *and* telephone service. Furthermore, those services would be superior to what is available anywhere in this region, and less expensive as well.

A second option is building our own DSL network. This solution would be much less expensive, but the services would not be as good (Internet

only), and we would have to rent some lines from Verizon (which would not be easy).

The third technology we are considering is setting up a wireless municipal network. This would be the easiest do-it-yourself approach, but despite all the lofty claims, we have not found a wireless system that can reliably penetrate our numerous hills and majestic trees.

3. Something in between

A compromise approach might be to work collaboratively with a trusted regional telecom services provider. Matt Crocker of Crocker Communications—perhaps the most visible of the local private telephone, network, and Internet service companies—has been enormously generous with his time and encouragement. He knows the business, understands small towns, and cares about the Valley. No commitments have been made by anybody, and specific discussions haven't even taken place, but the Committee is nonetheless quite interested in exploring what we can do to enable Crocker to invest in our towns.

How you can get involved

No matter which approach we eventually recommend to the two towns' Select Boards, we are going to need your support. Please come to our monthly meetings, sign up for our e-mail list, contact your local, state, and federal representatives, and support our efforts at town meetings. We always have a need for volunteers (no technology background needed!). Most questions you might have can be answered by visiting the committee's web site (<http://slbc.western-mass.us>) or by calling its chair, Aron Goldman (549-1193). From our e-mail list and website, you can find links to many articles and resources on the subject of broadband in general, and regional broadband access in specific. We are as frustrated as are many of you—with our painfully slow modems at home—but also feel that the time has arrived for our towns to take a pro-active stance on obtaining universal broadband service. Please join us!

Regional School Budget update

Marianne Jorgensen, *Shutesbury Representative, Regional School Committee*

The regional school committee recently voted a budget of \$25,726,404, which represented an 8.03% increase over last year's budget. The budget represents a level of funding necessary to accommodate the "core" programs at the schools and some basic improvements needed to address several problem areas deemed as high priorities, in particular, class size. In general, the guideline for school expenses was a 3% inflationary adjustment. Included in the budget was an additional three teaching positions at the high school which would decrease class sizes there from 25 students per class to 22-23 students per class and an additional team at the Middle School in the seventh grade, reducing class size there from 25 per class to 20.

Charter tuition payment increased by 18% and vocational tuition increased by 19% as an increasing number of students are choosing these schools. Other areas such as health insurance and utilities have increased by 18% and 13% respectively. Many of these expenses are beyond our control. These predictable expenditures leave little room for increases to meet special education requirements and additional staffing necessary to improve class size, district administration and programs. The list of necessary expenditures not included in the budget far exceeded those that were included.

The regional school committee voted to use an assessment formula that was based on an equalized assessment but modified with \$100,000 more going towards Amherst's assessment. This resulted in assessment increases to the towns as follows: Amherst – 11.65%, Shutesbury – 7.58%, Leverett – 7.63% and Pelham – 7.19%. Shutesbury, Amherst and Pelham felt that these assessment increases were too high and asked that the regional budget be cut further. At the last

meeting, the regional school committee cut \$213,803 out of the budget resulting in assessment increases of: Amherst, 10%, Shutesbury, 5.93%, Leverett, 5.98% and Pelham 5.54%. Two of the teaching positions that were to be added at the high school and two teaching positions at the Middle School were eliminated from the budget.

The Superintendent and the Regional School Committee aspire to address the needs of the system: professional development and quality evaluation, authentic assessments; accurate and efficient personnel and student information systems; transformational curricular issues such as global awareness, continued efforts in multiculturalism, upgrading the science and math curriculum, increasing the offerings in fine arts – all of these initiatives require quality time and people. Without three components: an efficient core budget, supportive regional assessments and sufficient state and federal support, the regional system will return to a one-size-fits-all system with some students falling through the cracks, standardized curriculum and programs, and only federally mandated standardized assessments. We need as a town to understand what we want in our regional schools and what is required to maintain our high quality programs there.

Notes from the School Committee

Anne Lundberg, *Chairperson*

I would primarily like to use this space to share the work that we undertook for this year, with much of the action(s) beginning last July. While the vast majority of our time is spent in long, focused meetings, I fully appreciate and enjoy the camaraderie and cooperative nature of the group. We could not have accomplished as much as we have – for our schools and community – without a good working group and environment.

[*Note: Current members are Marianne Jorgensen, Stephen Bannasch, Daniel Hayes, Michael Silverstone, and myself.*]

Although these may sound like

housekeeping tasks, I'd like to start with two important management things we are doing now. We started the year using a new tool – our **Perpetual Annual Work Calendar**. These were mailed out to you all in the Summer '04 *Our Town*. It has provided stability, focus, and reminders for us... making our pacing much better for tasks we co-ordinate with town officials and our Superintendents. We are continuing to use smaller **task-focused groups** to assist us in moving forward more quickly with specific items. We have found these smaller groups — with one or two Shutesbury School Committee members working with community members and other school groups – keep topics alive, while also allowing for working solutions to be created collectively.

Community outreach and Communication have been major in all our work. We sponsored a **Community Forum** in October – which was quickly followed by another in November, with a couple of parents' meetings along the way! Topics, ideas, comments, concerns, and praises from these forums have been used by ourselves, by both our Union #28 and our Amherst Regional Superintendents, and of course by the Shutesbury Elementary School Principal, Tari Thomas.

We also began the long overdue task of **Policy Review & Revision** – everyone's favorite topic! Seriously, as one major responsibility of our committee is policy, it has made for most interesting discussion delving into the archives. We have removed outdated policies —such as Tobacco & Smoking on Campus – while implementing necessary ones to cover Sexual Harassment, E-mail, and Bullying. We have managed to move through two-four per meeting, with much support from Linda Driscoll and the Union #28 office staff!

On the horizon... I will finish up and leave you pondering if you might like to participate in any (or all) of three upcoming **task-focused groups: (1) Implementing our Mission Statement, (2) Supporting and Communicating with our**

Middle School and High School Families, and creating a **(3) SES Fields and Grounds** group. All three of these topics have needed attention for some time; all will require volunteers from many parts of our town's community to succeed. Think about how you can help. Watch for more information via the school's web site, the [Roadtown News](#), and at Town Meeting.

Statements from candidates for School Committee

Stephen Bannasch, Michael DeChiara and Dan Hayes filed nomination papers in March for two 3-year positions on the School Committee for Shutesbury Elementary School. Barring unforeseen write-in votes, these are the only candidates for these positions in the 2005 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 these submissions.

Stephen Bannasch
106 Sand Hill Road
259-9125
stephen@deanbrook.org

My name is **Stephen Bannasch**, I am running for re-election to the School Committee and I'd like your vote. Three years ago I ran for School Committee because I saw the progressive approach to education I value disappearing. Our school must do the best job possible to prepare



Photos by Sergeant Tom Burger, Shutesbury Police Department.

Shutesbury Firefighters practice at a "controlled burn" at 66 Leverett Road on April 16. The colonial house, set on land purchased by a Special Town Meeting last fall, was set ablaze after the town decided repairs would be too costly.

our children to lead successful lives of personal and social meaning. This means more than a narrow focus on high-stakes tests and State curriculum frameworks, it means making certain that students are involved with their hearts **and** their minds in projects that are meaningful. The School Committee can best accomplish this by making sure the values in our new Mission statement are realized. I encourage you to continue the conversation with me in person or at <http://www.deanbrook.org>.

Michael DeChiara
56 Pratt Corner Road
259-1059
michael@gertzdechiara.com

Shutesbury Elementary developed a wonderful mission statement in recent years - it reflects everything positive that a school should be and do. My family moved to Shutesbury because of the school and the values embraced by the mission statement. Making these values real in our children's education can be a challenge. I am running for the school committee because I believe we all want a high quality education for our children that helps them blossom into people who: love learning; know the educational basics; have the ability to problem-solve, integrate creativity into their lives, and engage respectfully in soci-

ety. School committee has a responsibility to provide leadership that actively promotes this vision and to serve as a conduit for productive communication. Learn more at: www.michaeldechiara.com.

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259-2102
esp1993@msn.com

As a parent and current school committee member, I advocate for students and their diverse learning needs. I support a curriculum plan which incorporates art, culture, music and addresses the physical and emotional needs of all children. I believe in our School Mission statement. I'm committed to the implementation of the school improvement plan, developed by the School Council yet designed by the community. I support project based and hands on learning models, while differentiating instruction so every child is engaged and excited.

My business and management background prepare me with the skills needed to effectively manage tasks in budgeting, finance, personnel and policy. I serve on the Union 28 committee, and have experience on an educational advisory board at Smith Vocational High School.

Looking ahead

The Friends of the Historical Commission have received a generous contribution from **Nathalie** and **Richard Woodbury** for the purpose of painting the 1837 directional guide-board that sits on the northeast corner of the Wendell, Leverett and Cooleyville Roads intersection.

To accomplish this, the Commission envisions temporarily moving the structure into the 1829 Old Town Hall for safekeeping, painting and repair during the up-coming reconstruction of Leverett, Cooleyville and Prescott Roads.

The Historical Commission welcomes all interested parties to either send written comments to them at P.O. Box 264, Shutesbury, or to join their June 8, 2005, 1:00 pm discussion of the practical details of the proposed project.



Help is here for difficult times

Franklin County Home Care offers programs and services (many are low or no cost) to help elders and caregivers live better lives. Call 413-773-5555 or go online at www.fchcc.org.

Hospice of Franklin County, a new community-owned and staffed hospice, is now taking patients and offering support to friends, family and neighbors. Call 413-774-2400 for more information.

Computer class another sign of spring

Carol Holzberg

Once again, I will be teaching my annual four-class "Introduction to Macintosh and Windows Computers" come May.

The class is sponsored by the Shutesbury Education Foundation

While the title suggests "Introduction," participants' skills range from Novice to Intermediate. Carol adjusts both pace and content to individual learning needs. She also encourages participants to bring in questions they may have from work they do at home or on the job. Lots of hand-holding, great work, individual attention, and chocolate!



When: Tuesdays in May 2005

Dates: May 3, 10, 17, and 24

Time: 7:30-9:00pm

Where: Shutesbury Elementary Computer Lab

Fee:

\$25 (thanks, Shutesbury Education Foundation!)

\$50 (Out-of-towners)

\$15 SES Teachers and Staff

Friends, family, partners, mates, parents, grandparents—everyone welcome! Bring your laptops if you're so inclined. Or, use the computers in the lab.

Topic Schedule:

May 3-Microsoft Word

May 10-Microsoft Excel

May 17-Digital Imaging

May 24-Getting the Most from Web-based Email

I will modify these topics if there's an interest.

RSVP: 259.1303

carolh@anthro.umass.edu

Class size limited to first 10 registrations! I look forward to having you join us.

givers live better lives. Call 413-773-

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 4 years of age living in the towns of Shutesbury, Leverett, Erving, New Salem and Wendell.

We offer weekly story hours at the Shutesbury library and play groups at the school gym; 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, then 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.



The M. N. Spear Memorial Library

10 Cooleyville Road
259-1213

Jane Buchanan, *Director*

Hours through Memorial Day:

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

Planning is under way for the Library's annual Summer Reading Program. We're gearing up now for an exciting summer of activities on the theme, "Going Places @Your Library." Stay tuned for additional announcements!

Check your shelves!

Please take a few moments to check your shelves (and under your car seats!) for Library materials. There are numerous overdue materials that we'd like to get back so that others may enjoy them. Remember, you may return materials any time in our new Return Box!

Surf with speed!

This spring, our library became one of the few places in town with a DSL Internet connection. Dial-up got you down? Come on up!

What's new?

Here's a sampling of some of the new materials at the library.

Fiction:

The Year of Pleasures by perennial favorite Elizabeth Berg

Ya-Ya's in Bloom, by Rebecca Wells. Sequel to the *Divine Secrets of the Ya Ya Sisterhood*



The Mermaid Chair, by Sue Monk Kidd, author of *The Secret Life of Bees*.

Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close by Jonathan Safran Foer, author of *Everything is Illuminated*

In the Company of Cheerful Ladies by Alexander McCall Smith, the latest in the #1 Ladies Detective Agency series.

Gilead by Marilyn Robinson, winner of this year's Pen Faulkner award

The Runaway, a collection of short stories by Alice Munro

Never Let Me Go, the latest by Kazuo Ishiguro

Ice Queen, by Alice Hoffman

Nonfiction:

Rarest of the Rare: Stories Behind the Treasures at the Harvard Museum of Natural History by Nancy Pick.

Among Flowers: A Walk in the Himalaya by Jamaica Kincaid

Animals in Translation by Temple Grandin

Plan B: Further Thoughts on Faith by Anne Lamott

Emperors and Idiots: The hundred-Year Rivalry Between the Yankees and Red Sox from the Very Beginning to the End of the Curse by Mike Vaccaro

Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed by Jared Diamond

Movies:

Finding Neverland

Closer

Ray

Being Julia

Vera Drake

Spongebob Squarepants the Movie

The Incredibles

Garden State

HOW TO CONTACT TOWN OFFICIALS

ACCOUNTANT <i>David Kielson</i>	259-1108	ELEMENTARY SCHOOL <i>Tari Thomas</i>	259-1212	RECREATION & OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE <i>Elizabethann Lacy</i>	259-1764
ADA COMMITTEE <i>Martina Carroll</i>	259-1110	EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIR. <i>L. Mark Watkins</i>	259-1751	RECYCLING COORDINATOR <i>Paul Vlach</i>	259-1543
TOWN ADMINISTRATOR <i>David C. Dann</i>	259-1214	FINANCE COMMITTEE <i>Eric Stocker</i>	259-1478	REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE <i>Marianne Jorgensen</i>	259-1842
ANIMAL INSPECTOR <i>Denise Chiminiello</i>	259-1020	FIRE DEPARTMENT <i>Walter Tibbetts, Chief</i>	259-1211 259-1286	ROADS COMMITTEE <i>P.O. Box 276</i>	
ASSESSORS <i>Kenneth Holmberg</i>	259-3790	HEALTH AGENT <i>David Zarozinski</i>	549-3710	SCHOOL COMMITTEE <i>Anne Lundberg</i>	367-7504
BOARD OF HEALTH <i>William Elliott, Chair</i>	259-2122	HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT <i>Tim Hunting</i>	259-1215	UNION 28 SCHOOL SUPT. <i>Linda Driscoll</i>	423-3337
BUILDINGS COMMITTEE <i>Tom Fields</i>	259-1970	HISTORICAL COMMISSION <i>Barbara Goodhind</i>	259-1428	SELECT BOARD <i>Becky Torres, Chair</i>	259-1618
BUILDING INSPECTOR <i>Jim Hawkins</i>	772-2026	M.N. SPEAR MEMORIAL LIBRARY <i>Jane Buchanan, Director</i>	259-1213	<i>Ralph Armstrong</i>	259-1021
CEMETERY COMMISSION <i>Marilyn Tibbetts</i>	259-1976	LIBRARY TRUSTEES <i>David Cormier</i>	259-1572	<i>Joseph Jacobs</i>	259-1269
COUNCIL ON AGING <i>Muriel Gross</i>	259-1371	OUR TOWN NEWSLETTER <i>Janis S. Gray</i>	259-1584	SHUTES.-LEV. BROADBAND COMMITTEE <i>Aron P. Goldman</i>	549-1193
CONSERVATION COMMISSION <i>Leave inquiries at</i>	259-2123	PERSONNEL BOARD <i>Penelope Kim</i>	259-1326	TAX COLLECTOR <i>Ellen McKay</i>	259-1615
CULTURAL COUNCIL <i>Renee A. Richard</i>	259-9296	PLANNING BOARD <i>Deacon Bonnar</i>	259-1276	TOWN CLERK <i>Leslie Bracebridge</i>	259-1204
DEPT. OF VETERAN'S SERVICES <i>Leo J. Parent, Jr.</i>	863-3205	PLUMBING/GAS INSPECTOR <i>John Letourneau</i>	367-0017	TREASURER <i>Gabriele Voelker</i>	259-1801
DOG OFFICER <i>Nancy Long</i>	259-2123	POLICE DEPARTMENT <i>Gary Thomann</i>	259-1279	TREE WARDEN <i>Thomas Houston</i>	259-1508
ELECTRICAL INSPECTOR <i>Maurice Gregoire</i>	367-9988	<i>Dispatch</i>	625-8200	WEB COMMITTEE <i>Fred Steinberg</i>	259-9996
		POLICE, FIRE & RESCUE SQUAD	911	ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS <i>Ande Nazar</i>	259-1439



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

**Candidates'
Statements on
Page 7**

Resident
Shutesbury, MA 01072

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