

SHUTESBURY

MASSACHUSETTS

# OUR TOWN



## Wondering about that rise in property values?

Kenneth Holmberg, *Administrative Assessor*

As required by the Department of Revenue, the Assessors have adjusted values to properties in Shutesbury to reflect the market value increase in real property in the last year.

FY05 was a year in which values increased an average of 25% from the previous year due to the Revaluation. New state regulations now require an interim adjustment (in between the three year revaluations) annually when arms-length sales exceed assessed values by greater than 110%. For the current fiscal year, FY06, adjustments were made to both land and building values.

Those persons who feel their property is overvalued may apply for an abatement with the Board of Assessors. Forms are available at the Assessors office or on the <http://www.shutesbury.org> website. Please be aware that abatements must be received by the due date of the third quarter tax bill (before Feb 1, 2006).

### Senior Citizen Exemptions

As you may be aware, on May 7, 2005, the Town of Shutesbury voted to adopt Senior Exemption Options to Clause 41C of Massachusetts General Laws 59, section 5.

For Shutesbury seniors who have owned a domicile in Massachusetts for the preceding 10 years and whose domicile has been in Shutesbury for the past five years, this new law may offer significant property tax benefits in the form of a One Thousand Dollar (\$1,000.00) annual deduction from their property tax bill. The important

changes that may affect Shutesbury's seniors are as follows:

**Age of eligibility** was reduced from 70 years to 65 years

**Combined asset limits** of home owner(s) & spouse(s) was increased:

Single homeowners increased from \$28,000.00 to \$40,000.00\*

Married homeowners increased from \$30,000.00 to \$55,000.00\*

\*These assets DO NOT INCLUDE YOUR RESIDENCE which may have up to 4 units in it (increased from 3 units).

**Combined income limits** of homeowner(s) & spouse(s) was increased:

Single homeowners increased from \$13,000.00 to \$20,000.00\*

Married homeowners increased from \$15,000.00 to \$30,000.00\*

\*Up to \$5216.00 in Social Security  
*Continued on page 2*

## Of snow, sand and great big trucks

Tim Hunting, *Highway Superintendent*

I recently saw an article in the *Greenfield Recorder* describing the functions of the Greenfield Department of Public Works involved in snow removal operations, and thought a similar article might be helpful in Shutesbury.

We are not at all similar to Greenfield or Amherst, in that our crew consists of only three full-time men and one part-timer. Typically, we run four people with three dump trucks and a one-ton truck. We do have a pickup truck with a plow that we use mostly for parking lots and small roads.

On a typical storm of 1" or more, we must give high-traffic roads priority. These roads include: Leverett/Cooleyville/Prescott, Wendell,

Lakeview, West Pelham and Pelham Hill Roads.

These roads are pre-treated with a sand/salt mixture about the time the first snow is starting. This prevents the snow from forming a bond to the road surface as traffic packs it down.

*Continued on page 7*

## Police offer R.A.D. course

The Shutesbury Police Department will offer a women's self-defense course in March. The R.A.D. program is the largest self-defense course for women in the nation, and is open to all females over age 15 at no charge.

The course covers personal safety issues and concerns, as well as a variety of self-defense techniques designed specifically for women. The course is usually 15 hours, held in three-hour blocks, over two and one-half weeks.

Any woman interested in enrolling should contact **Chief Tom Harding** for exact dates, times and location. He can be reached at 259-1279, or by e-mail via [www.shutesbury.org](http://www.shutesbury.org).

## We have big boots to fill

Walter R. Tibbetts, *Chief, Shutesbury Fire Department*

Many of you may not realize this, but the number of members on the Shutesbury Fire Department has been on the decrease. The change in the town's demographics, work and family responsibilities, and other time commitments have drastically reduced the number of people that apply to the Fire Department.

At the same time, State and Federal mandates, training requirements, increases in incident volume,

*Continued on page 4*

## Messages from the Town Clerk

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

Winners in the December 6 Special Election were **Steven H. Bressler** for Planning Board and **Matthew A. Hart** for School Committee. Thanks to the 360 voters who cast ballots.

**Massachusetts Annual Street List** forms verifying the residents on January 1 have been mailed to each Shutesbury household. State law requires these forms be completed and returned within ten days of receipt.

If your household did not receive a form, please call the Town Clerk's Office (259-1204) and one will be sent to you right away. Responding to the street list keeps one's registered voter status current, verifies eligibility for trash bags and ensures one's continued receipt of municipal mailings.

In the Town Clerk's office, we are already preparing for Shutesbury's **Annual Election** that will take place Saturday, May 6, 2006 from 8:00am - 2:00 pm at the Shutesbury Elementary School. Positions on the ballot due to term expirations follow:

- Board of Health - two 3-year terms  
one 2-year term
- Cemetery Commission - one 3-year term
- Constable position - one 1-year term
- Board of Library Trustees - two 3-year terms
- Planning Board - two 3-year terms
- School Committee - two 3-year terms
- Board of Selectmen - one 3-year term

More positions may open up, due to resignations. Some officials may decide not to re-run.

If becoming an elected official is of interest to you, please call 259-1204 with any preliminary questions or to

request a nomination form. You need only collect 20 registered voter signatures for your name to appear on the ballot. Completed nomination forms must be returned by Monday, March 20.

If you wish to vote in the May 6 election, you must be registered by Friday, April 14. You can register to vote any time in person at the Town Clerk's office, or you can call to have a mail-in voter registration form sent to you. Once one registers to vote in a Massachusetts community, one remains registered in that community, assuming that person responds regularly to the annual January 1 street list process described above, and does not move.

If you have never registered to vote in Shutesbury, if you have moved since you last registered, or if you are at all unsure of your voter registration status, please call us to confirm your status before April 14.

## Note from the Town Collector

Ellen McKay, *Tax Collector*

Dear Shutesbury taxpayers,

With the winter upon us, the third quarter of our real estate bills and the calendar 2006 motor vehicle excise bills are rapidly approaching.

The third quarter real estate bills were mailed out the end of December and must be received by this office no later than February 1 to avoid interest. This bill will probably be a different amount than your first two quarters as it is based on your fiscal 2006 assessment and on the new tax rate. To calculate your total tax responsibility for the entire fiscal year, multiply your valuation on the third quarter bill by the new tax rate.

If you have any questions on the value of your property or if you wish to apply for an abatement or exemption, please contact the Board of Assessors at 259-3790.

The calendar 2006 motor vehicle excise tax bills on vehicles registered at the end of 2005 are usually received from the Registry of Motor Vehicles during the first quarter of the

new year. If you receive a bill on a car you have traded or on which you have changed registrations, do NOT ignore the bill. The Board of Assessors should be contacted to obtain an application for abatement.

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

Have a happy, healthy, and safe New Year.

Ellen

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*Property values, from page 1*

Benefits received may be deducted from income totals

Please note that ALL OWNERS of a residence must be included in these totals. For example, if your children are co-owners of your residence, you must include their incomes and assets in the totals to determine qualification.

Veterans or their survivors may choose to apply for senior benefits instead of veteran's benefits if they are eligible for a greater benefit in doing so.

The Shutesbury Board of Assessors reserves the right to request income tax returns, birth certificates or other documentation in order to determine eligibility.

Please feel free to contact our office if you have any questions regarding this new law and your eligibility for benefits. Our office telephone number is 413-259-3790 and our regular hours are Monday 9:00 am - 2:00 pm, Tuesday 9:00 am - 3:00 pm, Wednesday 12:00 - 4:00 pm, Thursday 10:00 am - :00 am4:00 pm.

*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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## Brace yourself for a busy budget season!

David Dann, *Town Administrator*

With the start of 2006, we are entering our busiest part of the new budget season. The conclusion occurs when Annual Town Meeting in May approves the budget that begins July 1, 2006 and goes to June 30, 2007.

While taxes and state aid often determine the services we can provide, there are other significant activities that also impact services and our quality of life in Shutesbury.

The Planning Board is working hard at overhauling our current zoning by-laws, also to be voted on at town meeting.

The Library Accessibility Committee is working to develop plans to make our Library handicap accessible and add a bathroom. (See page 9 for details.)

The Emergency Management Team is meeting regularly to discuss and plan for emergencies and possible disasters that may occur.

We have a new Energy Committee that will meet in January to plan/recommend a clean energy project for the town.

The planning for the reconstruction of Leverett, Cooleyville, and Prescott Roads is moving forward, with an anticipated start this spring.

Improvements are being discussed and considered in the Lake Wyola area, whether it is to the dam, roads, lodge, or even the possibility of a wastewater treatment facility.

This is only a partial list, but quite impressive and can only get accomplished with all the help of so many volunteers and town employees.

We have vacancies on the Personnel Board, Building Committee, Conservation Commission, ADA Committee, and Zoning Board of Appeals (alternate). If you want to join us, call me (259-1214) and we can discuss what interests you.

As we look back on 2005, I want to thank all the folks who volunteered their time to help make our town such a great place to live in.

## Meet our new Recycling Coordinator

Hi! I'm **Blaire Robey**, the new Recycling Coordinator for the Town of Shutesbury. Although I've only lived in Shutesbury the past five years, my understanding of the importance of "Recycle – Reduce – Reuse" began in the early 80's, when my family moved into a quiet little neighborhood in Lowell, MA. It abutted what turned out to be a toxic waste dumpsite. For more than five years I was an active member of a citizens' action group that worked on the cleanup of many similar sites across the state.

I now work part time at the Amherst Survival Center where we recycle clothing, housewares and furniture from area donors, and distribute usable day-old food from local stores.

When this opportunity to become more involved with the town presented itself, I knew it was the missing piece I was looking for. As information about the Recycling Office's hours becomes available, it will be listed on the town's web site.

I want to remind people to bring your used florescent bulbs, both long and compact, and batteries to Town Hall to be recycled.

Please call our new number, 259-3796, to report any trash/recycling pickup problems on Wednesdays as they occur.

I look forward to serving you.

## Fabric softener hazards

Ziporah Hildebrandt, *ADA Committee*

Fabric softeners may seem innocent, a friendly product to make your family comfy. In reality, they are a potent cocktail of chemicals designed to 1) make clothes feel soft, 2) reduce static from dryers, 3) cover up the smell of the chemicals that do the preceding, and 4) ensure that the chemicals that accomplish these tasks adhere and persist in the fabrics over time. Whether liquids, powders, or dryer sheets, these chemicals pose serious threats to health, especially to children and the chemically sensitive.

Children have more sensitive skin than adults. Babies' skins are super-sensitive. Skin readily absorbs chemi-

icals. This is why sunscreens carry warnings—chemicals considered acceptable for most adults are dangerous to infants.

Chemical-laden clothing contacts skin constantly. Vapors affect tissues in the lungs and airways. The exhaust from dryers carries fumes into yards, neighborhoods, and our water, soil, and food.

What are these chemicals? Alpha-terpineol, benzyl alcohol, camphor, limonene and linalool are suspected of causing central nervous system disorders such as Alzheimer's, Attention Deficit Disorder, dementia, Multiple Chemical Sensitivity, Multiple Sclerosis, Parkinson's Disease, seizures, strokes, and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

Benzyl acetate, chloroform and limonene are carcinogenic. Camphor, chloroform and ethyl acetate are on the EPA's Hazardous Waste list. Pentane is highly flammable. Ethyl alcohol and linalool are narcotics; linalool attracts bees. Chloroform is anesthetic and neurotoxic; also damaging to liver and kidneys, as is ethyl acetate. Most of these also cause headache, nausea, vomiting, dizziness, and an assortment of neurological, muscular, skin, respiratory and other problems. All are respiratory irritants, and readily absorbed through body tissues, irritating other areas as well. All carry warnings about inhalation, contact, and the danger of heating. I'm just highlighting here; for complete data, request the Material Safety Data Sheet from the manufacturer.

Ironically, most of these chemicals carry specific warnings against inhalation and skin contact. Strange stuff to cuddle our loved ones in.

You can see why fabric softeners are such a huge problem for those among us with chemical sensitivities. Chemical residues on clothing render a space hazardous or inaccessible to those with this increasingly common disability. Children's clothing affects their classmates and teachers. Dryer exhaust confines neighbors to their homes, or makes them sick, sometimes for days. These toxic molecules can carry on the air for hundreds of feet. They rub off onto upholstery or

*Continued on page 4*

## Enjoy the outdoors — but respect your neighbors' rights

Tom Harding, *Chief of Police*

Several property owners in town have asked the Police Department to remind people that posted trails and paths are off limits to any use without expressed written permission from the landowners.

We all have a right to enjoy the wonderful open spaces of Shutesbury, just as we have an obligation to respect the wishes of private landowners. Using trails and paths that clearly display signs stating, "Posted," or "No Trespassing," is a criminal offense. Disregard for these signs also increases the unlikelihood that landowners will open their land for future recreational use. Please respect the wishes of landowners in town while enjoying the great outdoors.

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*Fabric softeners, from page 3*

the coat hung next to yours. And some fragrance chemicals persist in the environment for years.

### **Thankfully, there are alternatives.**

A quarter cup of baking soda added to the wash cycle or a half cup of vinegar in the rinse cycle softens fabrics and reduces static. Even better, use a fragrance-free, natural soy-based or other non-detergent cleanser (call 259-1214 or email townadmin@shutesbury.org for a list of locally available products), and you may not need softener at all, since detergents make fabrics feel harsher. There are also natural and fragrance-free, non-toxic liquid fabric softeners. Try wearing more cotton; natural fibers don't make as much static.

You may be thinking that products have been tested for consumer safety. But sadly, no chemical on the market has been tested for all serious health risks. Few have been tested for how they affect children, and almost none for how they react in combination with each other, or for low exposure over years. Below a certain level, government and industry apparently consider

toxins an acceptable risk to consumers. Which is not the same as safety.

Your lifestyle choices are one of the most important ways you can safeguard your own and your family's health, as well as help create a healthier and more inclusive community for others.

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*Big boots, from page 1*

as well as the previously mentioned reasons, are putting more pressure on those that are now here doing the job. Some members have resigned because of the time commitment, others because they are moving out of town, still others for their own reasons. In any case, presently the Fire Department has only seven (7) members. Two of these have been on the job less than nine months. Luckily the balance of personnel all have more than 10 years' experience. The big problem is that there are not enough of us.

### **WE NEED HELP.**

If you are over the age of 18 with a high school diploma or equivalent, and a valid Massachusetts drivers licence, you are eligible. Other requirements are:

Certifications for First Responder and Health Care Provider level CPR. (This training will be provided by the department.)

EMT and Semi-Automatic External Defibrillator certification (desirable).

The ability to do prolonged and arduous work under hazardous, adverse emergency conditions.

The ability to react quickly and calmly in an emergency.

An aptitude for mechanical work.

The ability to work as a member of a team and to understand and follow oral and written instructions quickly in a crisis situation.

I will be the first to tell you, being a member of the Shutesbury Fire Department is a bit of a challenge. Members are on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Fire fighters are committed to being as available as possible, but it is also understood that work, travel, and home and other commitments may prevent them from

responding.

Training is conducted every Thursday night from 7:00 till 10:30 pm. There is other training available from the Massachusetts Fire Academy, Meadowood County Area training facility, as well as the Tri-State recruit training course.

While the job is challenging, it is also rewarding. Some of the benefits of being a member are:

The experience of being of service to the members of your community.

Valuable training in how to handle and respond to emergencies.

Being part of a skilled, well-trained, close-knit team.

### **It takes a certain kind of person to fill these boots. Are you one of them?**

This is *your* department. Your neighbors need you. We need you. Please join us.

For more information, call the Shutesbury Fire Department at 259-1211 or the Chief at home at 259-1286, or stop by the Fire Station on Thursday night. You may also stop by the Fire Station on Mondays and Tuesdays during the day.

Thank you all so much for the support you have given us in the past. I and all the members of the department appreciate it. Hope to see some of you here for an application.

### **They put out the word!**

Thanks to all who joined **Leslie Bracebridge** and **Joan Hanson** in getting the autumn edition of *Our Town* ready for the mail. Some also stepped up to help with later mailings from the Planning Board and Selectboard.

The helping hands belonged to **Deacon Bonnar, Tom Harding, Ken Hartwright, Carole Mizaur, Debra Pichanick, Al Springer** and **Marilyn Tibbetts**.

If you would like to join the fun at a future "folding party" for Town 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.

# A few things the Board of Health would like you to know ....

## ... about emergency planning

The town's Emergency Management Team is working with a number of state and local agencies to provide effective response in the event of emergencies both natural and human-made. An important focus of this planning is the establishment of a local Emergency Dispensing Site, where treatment or vaccination can be provided to Shutesbury residents, and a plan for transporting our citizens to that site.

Nevertheless, if and when such an emergency arises, we hope to be able to call on volunteers to assist with notification, transportation, and logistics at the site. Medically trained personnel would be most helpful, but we urge anyone willing to assist in any way to call 259 2122 or send a postcard to the Board of Health at P.O. Box 216.

Even if you feel you can't volunteer, there is a way you can help. In April, you will receive a questionnaire asking you to detail any special needs-involving, for instance, mobility or communication-of anyone in your household. These questionnaires will be used only for the purpose of emergency response. Please fill it out to help the Emergency Management Team help you when you need it.

## ... about the proper care of your septic system

Be careful about what you put into your septic tank! Here is a partial list of things that should never, ever go down the drain:

In the kitchen:

- \* food scraps or leftovers, especially fats (wipe greasy dishes with a rubber spatula or paper towel before washing)

In the bathroom:

- \* sanitary pads and tampons
- \* condoms
- \* diapers and wipes

- \* cotton balls
- \* commercial septic tank "cleaners"

In the laundry:

- \* powdered detergent
- \* chlorine bleach (or use very sparingly)

In the garage:

- \* paint of any kind
- \* paint thinner
- \* motor oil
- \* other chemicals

For proper disposal of waste of all kinds, please refer to *The Shutesbury Recycling Almanac*, which is distributed with your trash bags, or the town web site (click on Recycling and Trash).

## ... about woodsmoke pollution

Did you know that woodsmoke can be a major source of air pollution?

Smoke from the incomplete combustion of wood contains carbon monoxide (CO), oxides of nitrogen (Nox), and volatile organic compounds (VOCs), all of which have adverse effects on human health.

Such smoke also contains particulate matter less than 10 microns in diameter (PM10)-these particulates are too small for the body's natural defenses to handle. They contain wood tars and gases, which can aggravate pre-existing respiratory illnesses. Worse yet, PM10s include the still tinier PM2.5s, which can lodge deep in the lungs, contributing to lung diseases and cancers, and making heart and lung diseases worse.

The effects of these particulates include possible lung injury, asthma, lowered resistance to lung infections in children, and reduction in the blood's ability to supply oxygen to body tissues, including the heart.

It seems obvious that you shouldn't be breathing smoke, and you should make every effort to make sure your neighbors don't have to breathe it either.

The worst offenders are fireplaces and older woodstoves. Since 1990, the Environmental Protection Agency has had standards limiting the emission of PM10s from woodstoves to 7.5 grams per hour-before 1990, the emissions of woodstoves were as much as 60 grams per hour!

If your stove is not EPA certified, it is almost certainly pumping large amounts of dangerous particulates into the air. Most likely it is also inefficient and expensive to use.

The best thing to do if you have such a stove is to replace it with a more efficient and cleaner EPA-certified woodstove or another heating device, such as a pellet or propane stove.

How you can burn cleaner in your woodstove:

- \* Use a catalytic converter to reduce unburned gases; keep it in good working order and replace it when necessary.
- \* Make sure your stove is EPA certified.
- \* Build a hot fire
- \* Use clean, dry, seasoned (but not kiln dried) firewood.
- \* Start your fire with softwood kindling, then switch to hard wood.
- \* Adjust the airflow so that a thin wisp of steam, not a big plume of smoke, comes out your chimney.
- \* If you keep your stove burning overnight, don't damp it down so it smolders.
- \* Have the chimney swept annually.
- \* Use insulation, caulking, weather stripping, and other methods to minimize heat loss from the home: close the damper when the stove or fireplace is not in use; close off unused rooms.

If you have a fireplace, consider purchasing an EPA certified fireplace insert to increase efficiency.

## School Committee work: People, policies and budget planning

Anne Lundberg, *Chair, Shutesbury School Committee*

In the tail-end of summer, **Michael Silverstone** and family moved from town. This created an opening on our committee that was filled by **Matthew Hart** in the town's December special election.

We welcomed Matt at our December meeting and he jumped right into work -- becoming our third Union #28 Representative and our Liaison to the Early Childhood Program.

Our many thanks to Michael for his thoughtful and consistent work -- most especially in organizing, with Supt. Linda Driscoll, the enormous multi-year task of policy revision, as well as his spirit and facilitation with our community Forums.

It is great to have a five member committee again -- **Marianne Jorgensen, Dan Hayes, Michael DeChiara, Matt Hart, and Anne Lundberg** -- and we look forward to this new year.

In summer of 2004 at our working retreat meeting, our committee decided to take on the arduous task of revising our Policy Book: updating, deleting, rewriting old policies, while inserting new necessary policies too. Setting policy is one of our major community responsibilities as a school committee, yet one that often is placed on the back-burner-of-work. Linda Driscoll has been our guide in this work and we are well into our second year. I mention it here, for those of you interested in joining in with our discussions are most welcome to do so. We have been doing 2 - 3 a meeting, usually in the last half of the evening.

You can view our agenda on the town web site, the week before our meetings -- which are at SES at 6:15 pm on the third Wednesday of the month -- to see which policies will be discussed. If you cannot attend a meeting, yet have advice or input to pass along, please call or e-mail any of us. [Contact information on web-

site also!]

We are continuously working on some portion of the annual school Budgets -- Union #28, the Elementary School, and the Regional schools -- which require year-round monitoring, adjusting, and controlling. I know the Finance Committee will be writing the details about new supports that the four towns have been working on this fall.

However, I would like to acknowledge the enormous amount of time that Marianne Jorgensen has spent at meetings on all our behalf. Marianne has been our rep. to the Regional School Committee for several years now and currently serves as its Chair. Working with Supt. Jere Hochman and leadership from all four towns, the Regional School Committee has put together a plan concerning equity issues in funding the educational needs of our children in middle and high school programs. Our thanks to her, to our Select Board and Finance Committee members who together have contributed much to this process.

## Think twice about that ice

Walter R. Tibbetts, *Chief, Shutesbury Fire Department*

A word about ice safety. There are many factors that affect the strength of ice, so it is hard to set any hard and fast rules about how thick it should be to be considered safe. Areas that have moving water or strong currents will have considerably thinner ice. Objects located below the surface, such as stumps and rocks, can affect the strength.

Also, the structure of the ice greatly affects the strength. Clear or black ice is the strongest. Snow or frazzle ice is the weakest. One inch of clear ice can be as strong as six to eight inches of frazzle ice. Snow and contaminates on the surface can also greatly effect the strength. One generally agreed-on formula for determining strength in clear, solid lake ice is  $P = (50) T^2$ , where P = the load-bearing capacity of the ice in pounds, and T = the ice thickness in inches. Example: If the ice is 8 inches thick,  $50 \times (8 \times 8) = 3200$  lbs. This is the

maximum short-term load in motion.

Maximum Load Table	
Ice thickness	Maximum Load
2 inches	One person
4 inches	One person fishing or a small group walking
5 inches	A snowmobile
8 inches	A car
10-12 inches	A light truck

Remember, this is for clear, solid lake ice; all factors that weaken the ice must be factored in for safety. Use caution especially early and late in the season. At the time this is being written there has already been one death in the area due to falling through the ice.

If you see someone fall through the ice, act quickly. Call 911 immediately. Give the dispatcher as much information as you can as to the location, number of people involved, best access for rescue personnel, etc. Do not go out on the ice. Many times would-be rescuers become victims themselves. Remember, someone already fell through this season.

This holds true for rescuing pets also. If the ice would not support a 45-50 pound dog, it will not support a full-grown person. Call 911. The Shutesbury Fire Department has special equipment and training to safely deal with these situations.

## Open your home to a neighbor in need

Anna Viadero, *Franklin County Home Care Corp.*

Our Adult Family Care program provides family homes and 24-hour care for elders and people with disabilities who no longer feel safe living alone.

Participants receive family-style support and are able to stay in their own community for as long or as short a time as they need.

Adult Family Care is always in need of care providers. Care providers are trained, have access to assistance from FCHCC professionals, and receive a stipend.

If you or someone you know would like to open your home, please call FCHCC 413-773-5555 or 978-544-2259, or email [info@fchcc.org](mailto:info@fchcc.org).

## Space heater safety

Walter R. Tibbetts, *Chief, Shutesbury Fire Department*

With the cold weather and with rising fuel costs, some people may be using more **portable space heaters**. When buying a space heater, look for one that has been tested and approved by a recognized testing company. Keep the heater at least 36 inches away from drapes, furniture and other flammable materials. Seventy percent (70%) of fires caused by portable space heaters involved combustible materials such as bedding, rubbish or furniture that were too close to the heater.

Place the heater on a level surface in an area where it will not get bumped into or knocked over. If you have to use an extension cord, make sure it is a heavy duty cord rated at least as high as the amperage rating on the heater itself. Fifteen percent (15%) of fires from portable heaters were caused by over-loaded extension cords. Also, you should not leave the unit running while unattended, or while you are sleeping.

## Attention parents of children under four!

Naz Mohamed-Ahamed, *Family Network Coordinator*

The Massachusetts Family Network (MFN) is a state-wide universal access program for families with pre-school age children.

Come join us for free playgroups, story hours, field trips, workshops and more! Meet other families of young children and babies in your town and the neighboring towns! The Family Network families look forward to meeting you and sharing the fun!



The goal of MFN is to provide support services for families with young children and to create a network of social and educational opportunities. Since 1998, the School Union #28 Family Network has been funded by an annual grant from the Massachusetts Department of Early Education & Care. The Network offers a wide range of weekly, monthly and special events and activities for families to choose from for their children and the whole family. We also make home visits with our new baby gift bags.

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, the Family Network Coordinator, at 413-423-3337 or email [mohamed@erving.com](mailto:mohamed@erving.com) to get information and to receive our monthly calendar of events.

## Save energy, save money and stay warm

The largest portion of any utility bill for a typical house is heating and cooling. These tips from the Center for Ecological Technology (CET) will help you save energy and money.

Install a programmable thermostat. Turning down the heat for long periods, such as at night or while at work, can make a difference in your overall energy consumption. Every one-degree setback for eight hours saves 1%. That adds up to significant savings.

Perform regular maintenance. Oil-fired systems should be tuned and cleaned every year, gas-fired systems every two years. This increases the efficiency and lifetime of the system and reduces repair costs.

Insulate your home. Adding insulation is often the best investment to save energy. Make sure your walls are insulated. With energy prices on the rise, increasing attic insulation may be a 10% return on your investment.

Plug leaks and holes. Another easy step is to caulk and weather strip. Seal cool air around windows, electrical receptacles and pipe and wire entry points.

Your electric company provides rebates to help you make home ener-

gy improvements. If you are a Massachusetts Electric Company customer and need additional insulation in your attic or walls, call CET 413-445-4556 ext 11. CET can conduct a free energy survey to help you determine what is needed and the cost. Western Massachusetts Electric Company customers, call 866-527-7283. For other ideas about saving money and energy this winter, visit [www.cetonline.org](http://www.cetonline.org) and click on For Your Home.

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### *Snow plows, from page 1*

Typically, we let traffic work this mixture in to get it melting before we plow, which is why you may see us going to another road with our plows up.

It has been suggested that we plow more and use less material; however, there are other factors to consider. Most of the blacktop roads are not perfectly smooth, they have wheel ruts and other imperfections, so the plows will not scrape them off clean. Also, temperature plays a big part — the warmer it is, the better the plows will scrape off the road. When it's cold it is necessary to sand as we plow, or we will make the road more slippery (especially on the hills).

When we have made our rounds on the blacktop roads, we start on the gravel roads, with high-traffic roads a priority. We have three different routes for the dump trucks, and the one-ton will help a driver with intersections or do small roads. We also plow the elementary school, the fire station, the town hall, and the library. When this is accomplished, we send two trucks to Lake Wyola to sand the roads around the lake that **Bill Clark's** crew has plowed.

The average storm of 6" takes about eight-10 hours to clean up, and more than 6" means we will plow the same roads two or three times. Storms that drag on all day mean we'll be out all night.

I hope this helps clarify how we do things and why we do them the way we do.

Please use caution driving during storms, especially around intersections where we do a lot of backing up. Our crew will do our best to keep the roads clear and safe. Thank you.

## News from Lake Wyola

Carol Samuels, *Clerk, Lake Wyola Association*

The Lake Wyola Association Board of Directors and Officers will come out of hibernation in January to begin planning the events of Summer '06! Our committees never sleep and report the following:

### Lake Wyola Preservation Committee Report

In August, the Natural Resources Conservation Service prepared a report after evaluating the erosion along Fiske Brook and sediment entering Lake Wyola through the North Cove. The group consisted of a soil conservationist, a student trainee, a geologist, and a civil engineer. They were shown around the watershed by LWA representative **Lauretta Gass**.

The evaluation reported the following findings:

The sediment accumulation in the North Cove appears to have come from two major sources: 1) road sand and road runoff and, 2) erosion from the banks and streambed of Fiske Brook, which is accelerated by intermittent breaching of beaver dams or the outlet spillway of Fiske Pond. During high flows, the finer grained sand and silt are carried all the way to Lake Wyola and deposited in the North Cove.

The shallow water in the Cove, resulting from sediment accumulation, promotes the growth of aquatic vegetation.

Coordination between the Towns of Wendell and Shutesbury is needed to control erosion problems. The following are some of the recommendations that were made:

The towns of Shutesbury and Wendell should coordinate activities and develop agreements for installing protection measures and conducting maintenance at Lake Wyola, Fiske Pond and along Fiske Brook.

Minimize the amount of sand applied to the road around the lake during winter months

Remove existing sand along the shoulders of Lakeview Road

Install curbs or berms along the road edges to direct runoff into con-

structed sediment basins

Remove accumulated sediment and aquatic weeds from the lake area during the draw-down period

Install shoreline protection measures along exposed and eroding shoreline areas to control wave action from boats and reduce the amount of sand washing into the lake.

Minimize the amount of sand used for beach replenishment.

The Town Administrator, Select Board and Board of Health will review this report. A cooperative effort is needed to maintain the fine water quality that Lake Wyola is known for. Protect the watershed by using low phosphate detergents, limiting fertilizer on your lawn, picking up after your dogs and keeping other pollutants, such as motor oil, out of the watershed.

The rains over the Columbus Day weekend caused the failure of a culvert on Lake Drive and subsequent washout of part of the road. Two new, larger pipes were put under the road and the road was repaired. The Road Committee will continue to work with the Town to alleviate some of the runoff from Locks Pond Road. Improved drainage and sediment basins would divert water and debris and reduce the amount of run-off from the pavement headed directly into the lake.

### The Non-Profit Committee

Non Profit Status - The Non Profit Committee has met several times to gather information for the 501(c)(3) application, has located an experienced attorney (pro bono) and will begin interviewing accountants in the next month or so. The committee's goal is to have a complete package to present at the first Annual LWA Meeting of 2006.

### Education Committee

Safety Cards were printed up and distributed at LWA events. They included boating rules and regulations and rules regarding LWA beaches. Cards were also placed on windshields of boaters in the boat ramp parking area. There are three concerns when it comes to water safety:

1) Unaccompanied swimmers outside of the 150 yard limit.

2) Boaters going over the speed limit of 30 mph on the lake and 5 mph in the coves.

3) Boaters going over the speed limit of 5 mph after sundown.

Enjoy winter activities around Lake Wyola. Remember that the lake and surrounding trails are multi-use recreation areas, so watch for snowmobiles, xc skiers, snowshoeing, skating and ice fishing. Also, anything left on the ice surface will find its way into the lake come spring. Please pack out trash and debris.

## Shutesbury Education Foundation update

Our 6th annual Celebrate Shutesbury was a wonderful event on the common in September. We had great weather and a fabulous turnout. Many folks commented on the success of the gathering. It was a great day to visit with friends and neighbors, enjoy food, music, entertainment, and fun.

The fun began with a bike parade from the school to the common. A special part of the day was recognizing **Bill and Polly Clark** for their service to our town over many decades. Look for information about Celebrate Shutesbury in September 2006 in upcoming issues of *Our Town*. Plan now to be part of this community get-together.

\* \* \*

Thanks from Bill and Polly Clark  
We extend our heartfelt thanks to all who shared in our special memorable day, September 24, 2005, at Celebrate Shutesbury. Special thanks to the Shutesbury Education Foundation who chose us for this honor. We received a beautiful plaque, which is hanging in our office, and many very useful gifts. We also received a document from the Massachusetts House of Representatives for our contributions to Shutesbury over the years.

It was a very enjoyable day, visiting with old and new friends, and we were fortunate to have our children there, and some of our grandchildren and great-grandchildren. We are usually away at our place in the North Country on weekends and had not attended this event in the past, but it will be on our calendar next year.

THANKS AGAIN!



# The M. N. Spear Memorial Library

10 Cooleyville Road  
259-1213

Jane Buchanan, *Director*

Hours:

Sundays 3:30 - 5:30 pm; Mondays  
and Wednesdays, 10:00 am - noon  
and 2:00 - 5:00 pm; Tuesdays and  
Thursdays, 3:00 - 7:30 pm

**As the new year begins**, the library is looking forward to a few changes. Big among them are plans for a composting toilet as well as a ramp and handicap parking space. A committee has been meeting for several months to work on the plan, which will put the Town in compliance with ADA regulations, and give us a much-needed restroom.

Town approval is still needed for the project, and we hope you'll come out and give the plan your support at upcoming town meetings. While this is not a solution to our space problems, it will make the building more user-friendly in the meantime, and will allow access for patrons who have previously been unable to mount our steps.

In addition to structural changes, the library is working hard to make our card catalog available to you online. This involves a rather tedious inventory process before we can order (and affix!) new barcodes for our books that will work with the C/WMars system. We hope to get this project done by spring, and we'll surely be seeking volunteers. If you can help out, let us know!

**The Friends of the Library** had a great 2005, and we're looking forward to even more from them in the coming year.

If you missed their holiday sale and book signing in the Town Hall in December, you missed a fun time—not to mention great books by area authors, and lots of good food. More such events are being planned, though, so keep your calendar open! If you'd like to be part of the planning process, the Friends welcome new members.



Contact the library for more information on how you can participate.

**Thanks to the generous donation** of a friend of the library, we've added a number of **new picture books** to our collection recently.

Included are old favorites, such as works by William Steig, as well as newer books like Alice Provinsen's heartwarming dog tale, *A Day in the Life of Murphy*, Doreen Cronin's *Diary of a Spider*, and Alison McGhee's *Mrs. Watson Wants Your Teeth*.

Shel Silverstein's *Runny Babbit* is also new in the children's collection, as is Mo Williams's *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus*, Neil Gaiman's *The Day I Swapped My Dad for Two Goldfish*, and Leda Schubert's delightful Booksense Pick, *Here Comes Darrell*, about a Vermont truck driver, with gorgeous woodcut illustrations by Mary Azarian.

Among **our new DVDs** are: *Osama*, about the Taliban in Afghanistan; *Horatio's Drive*, a Ken Burns documentary; *Mad Hot Ballroom*, about children learning to dance; *No Direction Home*, about Bob Dylan; *Born Into Brothels*, about children of prostitutes in Thailand. In the family section we've got *Garfield the Movie*; *Cheaper by the Dozen*; *Madagascar*; *Millions* and *Polar Express*.

**New and forthcoming fiction titles**

include: *S is for Silence* by Sue Grafton; George Martin's *A Feast for Crows*, the fourth in his bestselling Song of Ice and Fire fantasy sequence; David Maine's *Fallen*, a fascinating novel of Cain and Abel; Philippa Gregory's historical novel, *The Constant Princess*; *Accidental* by Ali Smith; *Cell*, by Stephen King; Julian Barnes's Booker Prize nominee *Arthur and George*; *Interlude in Death* by J.D. Robb; *Brooklyn Follies* by Paul Auster; the Booker Prize-winning *The Sea* by John Banville; *Son of a Witch*, the long-awaited sequel to Gregory Maguire's *Wicked*; and Neil Gaiman's fabulous *Anansi Boys*.

**In nonfiction**, there's *The Assassin's Gate: America in Iraq*; *The Tender Bar*, J. R. Hoehringer's memoir of coming of age in the corner bar; *A Million Little Pieces*, James Frey's memoir of his battle with drug addiction, and the companion book *My Friend Leonard*; *Lost Painting* by Jonathan Harr; Joan Didion's National Book Award-winning *The Year of Magical Thinking*; and *1491: New Revelations of the Americas Before Columbus* by Charles Mann.

Come in and check out these and many other new selections for all ages.

# 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>Walter Tibbetts</i>	259-1211	RECYCLING COORDINATOR <i>Blaire Robey</i>	259-3796
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>Vacant</i>	Call 259-1214
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>Richard Woodbury</i>	548-9478	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>Joseph Jacobs</i>	259-1269
CEMETERY COMMISSION <i>Marilyn Tibbetts</i>	259-1976	LIBRARY TRUSTEES <i>David Cormier</i>	259-1572	<i>Debra Pichanick</i>	367-9550
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>Chief Thomas E. Harding</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



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