

SHUTESBURY

MASSACHUSETTS



OUR TOWN

Broadband project moves closer to your home

Shutesbury Broadband Committee

2019 will be the year of broadband for Shutesbury! In December we had a groundbreaking of sorts when a 9'x16' area was prepared behind the Town Hall for our broadband hub building. By February a small concrete structure will be placed on the site housing the necessary electronics in a secure, climate-controlled space with generator backup.

Also in December we received the exciting and long-sought news that the utility companies – Verizon, National Grid, and Eversource – had finally finished their work on the poles to make them ready to accept our equipment. We immediately gave the green light to our construction firm to begin work. By the time you receive this mailing, we'll be seeing construction crews out on Shutesbury's roads hanging our cable.

The mainline (roadway) build will take four months; at that point we'll begin installing the fiber optic "drop lines" to each house. Once the fiber optic cable is attached to the outside of your home, electronics will be installed inside that will bring broadband to your computers, tablets, mobile phones and other devices. It will also involve switching over your landline phone and keeping your existing phone number if you choose to get phone service from the Shutesbury Network.

In order to ensure that all residents have equal access to affordable Internet through the Shutesbury Network, we have a proposal to use a portion of our town's stabilization fund to help pay for home installa-

Shutesbury Broadband Logo Contest!

Calling all artists and creative types! Our town-owned network needs a logo, and we're looking for your great ideas. Details of the contest are on our website — <http://www.shutesbury.org/broadband> — or check at the Library and Town Hall for flyers. Anyone who is a Shutesbury resident, any age, can enter.



Entry deadline February 15th

tions. This proposal was crafted by the MLP Board in partnership with the Select Board and Finance Committee. If approved at Special Town Meeting, this plan will allow all residents to get service brought to their home plus get standard inside installation (including all electronics) for \$200. No matter what your driveway distance, aerial or underground, everyone pays the same amount for the same one-time installation cost.

Please join us at the Special Town Meeting on March 6 for this. More details will be sent in a future mailing.

We are entering into contract negotiations with Crocker Communications for Network Operations and Internet Service Provider services. Crocker won the bid as the most advantageous and lowest price vendor according to the terms of our recent Request For Proposals (RFP). After negotiations have concluded and a contract is signed, we'll provide further details.

We'll also be providing full information and a template letter to get your \$49 deposit back from Wired-West, since they were not chosen as our provider. If you wish to get your deposit back now, you're welcome to

Town Buildings Committee hopes to restore historic gem

Environmental advocates rightly emphasize reuse, reduce, recycle and restore as means to a greener future. Rehabbing the Old Town Hall fits the bill.

The Shutesbury Town Hall was constructed facing the Town Common in 1829 as a meeting space for Town business and for the storage of records. The building was remodeled in 1939 and in 1968.

The Town Hall was used continuously for Selectboard meetings, Town Meetings and other like activities until the construction of the Shutesbury Elementary School on West Pelham Road in 1972. After that, the Town began to use the former Elementary School building for administrative offices and other purposes. The Old Town Hall (OTH), as it came to be known, was used more sporadically for meetings as well as for a kindergarten and record storage. Except for an occasional open house, this significant historic building sees little public use.

The Town Buildings Committee and the Shutesbury Historical

Messages from the Town Clerk

Susie Mosher, *Town Clerk*
1 Cooleyville Road

Town Hall Office Hours:

Monday 3:30 – 6pm

Tuesday - Friday 8:30 – 10:30am

Thursday 6 – 8pm

And by appointment

413-259-1204

townclerk@shutesbury.org

Census:

Happy New Year! The blue Annual Street List form has been mailed to you. The state requires towns to contact every resident to update the street list and confirm every voter. Children, non-voters and voters, everyone and anyone in your household should be listed on the form correctly. Please add any missing information.

If there is more than one household at your address, please request additional forms. If a voter has moved away, please write down an address so I can get a signature to remove them from Shutesbury's voter rolls.

Didn't receive one? Contact me and I'll get one out to you quickly. This is our annual opportunity to get the town list corrected. Please mail the form back right away.

Elections:

2019 brings us one important election — ours! Our town government will have 12 seats on the ballot for Saturday, May 4. All seats are for a three-year term. The seats are:

- one for Board of Health
- one for Cemetery Commission
- one for Constable
- two for Board of Library Trustees
- one for Moderator
- three for Planning Board
- one for School Committee
- one for Select Board
- one for the Municipal Light Plant Board (Broadband)

Much of the town's government work is done by people who volunteer for elected or appointed positions. This saves thousands of tax dollars. Committee work provides a civic and social connection to our town. What areas are you interested in? Consider joining the force! Now is

the time to attend a committee meeting or visit its web pages to learn about the work of our town boards and committees. Scheduled meetings and agendas are on the town's website calendar and posted on the bulletin board in Town Hall.

It is simple to run for office in Shutesbury. Nomination papers can be picked up at the Town Clerk's office **beginning February 1**. The signature of 20 Shutesbury registered voters are needed, then return the papers by **Friday, March 15**.

Annual Town Meeting:

Polls are open from 8am – 2pm; Annual Town Meeting starts at 9am. Absentee ballots will be available to vote on the candidates. To vote on warrant articles at Town Meeting, you must be present.

To vote at Town Meeting and in town elections, you must be a registered voter. The voter registration period for our town election is open until Friday, April 12. You can register to vote on-line, in person, or by mail. Mail-in forms are available outside the Town Clerk's office.

Citizen Petitions:

Another way citizens can participate in the Annual Town Meeting is by a Citizen's Petition. A citizen or a group of citizens may write up a warrant article, get it signed by 10 or more registered voters and submit it to the Select Board **before March 20** to place on the Annual Town Meeting warrant. For example, a petition could ask Town Meeting to vote for adoption, amendment or repeal of a town's bylaw. Another type of petition may offer a resolution/advisory urging action at local, state or federal levels.

The process to file a Citizen Petition is multi-stepped and has deadlines. The Town Clerk and Town Moderator have prepared an information sheet to guide citizens through the steps. If you are considering such a petition, the time to start this research and process is **now**. Contact the Town Clerk for more information.

To New Shutesbury Residents:

If you are new to Shutesbury, **WELCOME!** For some, a move to Shutesbury can be a real adjustment to rural life. Stop by Town Hall (top of the hill), and I'll give you a short tour, provide you with information and

trash bags and answer your questions. If you have Internet service, (and believe me, we are working on that for everyone!) check out the town website at www.shutesbury.org If you don't have Internet service where you live, feel free to stop by Town Hall or the Town Library to get a free WiFi signal.

Town Website Changes:

The Town Clerk posts information on our Town website (www.shutesbury.org) on the home page and on the Town Clerk page. In December, Shutesbury started a new posting/calendar program for meetings. You can sign up to receive an email notifying you when a committee has scheduled a meeting. If you were receiving calendar notifications using our previous posting system, you will need to follow the steps below to sign up for these emails again.

Go to www.shutesbury.org: Use the drop-down menu on the left to pick the committee you want to follow. On the committee's page, click, "Subscribe to Email Alerts." You will need to repeat these steps for each committee separately.

Dog licensing:

Beginning April 1st new dog tags will be available from the Town Clerk. It is inefficient to print and mail out dog license applications to every household when less than 1/3 of them have dogs. Applications forms are outside my office, on the Town website and available at trash bag distributions. The licensing year is July 1 – June 30. Those who register their dogs before July 30 will not have to pay the \$5 late fee.

Help Wanted

- ☞ Americans with Disabilities Act Committee
- ☞ Appointed Constable
- ☞ Conservation Commission
- ☞ Council on Aging
- ☞ Historical Commission
- ☞ Cultural Council

For more information, contact Town Administrator Becky Torres at 413-259-2014 or townadmin@shutesbury.org. You may also want to attend a meeting or two of the committee which interests you.

Broadband project prompts Special Town Meeting Wednesday, March 6

The construction trucks from Triwire are rolling cables and soon fiber all over town.

As the Broadband Committee prepares for the second construction phase, "drops to the home," it is working with town officials to make a request for additional funds currently anticipated at a Special Town Meeting.

Save the date!

Broadband, continued from page 1 do so. Mail your request to: Wired-West, 99 Main Street, Northampton MA 01060. Because the money has been held in escrow, you have to make the request individually in writing to get your deposit back. For legal reasons it can't be done as a group request or simply transferred over to project funds.

We know everyone is anxious to get connected and we'll be releasing sign-up and more installation details following the Special Town Meeting. Our goal will be to make sure that all residents know exactly what to do in order to sign up and get service. As always, the best resource for full project updates and information is our website <http://www.shutesbury.org/broadband>.

Thanks to all of the hardworking volunteers who have stuck with the project and have given countless hours to make sure that broadband comes to Shutesbury this year!

Old Town Hall, continued from page 1 Commission hope to change that. We have recently co-sponsored an application to the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) for a Determination of Eligibility for funding. The CPC has affirmed the project as eligible. We hope to rehabilitate the Old Town Hall using CPC reserves and make it more useful as a meeting place for town business and other events. These events could include things like lectures, performances, films and other recreational and cultural activities.

There are issues that need to be addressed: accessibility, toilet facilities, mechanical systems and more. These must be investigated but we believe they are not very difficult to resolve.

The Old Town Hall is an architectural gem. It was built as a public building and should remain so. In addition to being a beautiful and useful building, it is a teaching tool which links our generation to those of the past.

There will be meetings of the CPC and Town Buildings Committee to discuss this potential project. Please watch the town calendar for dates and times.



Shutesbury's Old Town Hall

Updates from your Select Board

Hello neighbors!

As of July 1, 2018, the Town of Shutesbury has what is most likely it's first all-women Select Board. Since the dust settled after Annual Town Meeting, we have been busy with town business. Here are some highlights.

We were able to come to an agreement in our contract negotiations with our Fire Chief Walter Tibbets. We appreciate the way all sides were able to come together to work through this.

For Celebrate Shutesbury in September, we continued the annual tradition of donuts on a string (no hands). We invited Fire Chief Walter Tibbets and then Officer-in-Charge Dan Fernandes to the contest to see who could eat a doughnut fastest. At this point, the win goes to Chief Tibbets, with the opportunity for a rematch next September. It was fun, and we were grateful for the good heartedness from both contestants.

We hired a new Police Chief, Dan Fernandes. Thank you for your patience as we made our way through the process. We believe that Chief Fernandes is a great choice for our community. His attitude towards community policing is exactly what this town needs. If you haven't had the chance already, please be sure to make a

point of meeting him.

During the summer/fall of 2018, we were significantly stretched with respect to our police department.

Luckily during this past month, we have been able to hire a new full-time officer. Officer Thomas Hudock will be patrolling in town by the time you read this mailing. Once again, stop by to say hello when you see him. We thank the whole department for meeting the needs of our community during this time.

We sadly said goodbye to our Town Treasurer, Gabe Voelker. Gabe has been a great asset to Shutesbury, and we appreciate her work and dedication for so many years. We hired Ryan Mailloux as our new Treasurer. He is a great addition to our Financial team. Gabe has been mentoring Ryan as he becomes familiar with our town practices. This has been a good transition, thank you, Gabe! Stop by and say hello to Ryan.

Along the way, we've been helping many different committees navigate some major topics, from Broadband to solar to dog issues and more. We are staying up to date on the Broadband project. We worked with the company that is running the solar project and the amount of the PILOT (Payment In Lieu of Taxes) to the town.

We received a grant to have the Conway School of Design look at town-owned Lot O-32 to see whether it is feasible to consider the parcel for any long-term projects.

Together with our School Committee and Finance Committee, the Select Board attended a four-town meeting with the towns of our Regional School district to hear a presentation on the first draft of the Regional Schools budget with a discussion.

Also included in this discussion was the assessment method that determines how much each town pays for their students to attend, how to support

Select Board, continued on page 4

Our Town, published three times a year in January or February, April and August or September, is supported by tax dollars. We welcome news from Town of Shutesbury departments, boards, and committees, and from individuals and groups about local projects, activities, or special events of benefit to our community. Submissions promoting the sale of goods or services for private profit cannot be accepted.

Janis S. Gray, *Editor*
Linda Avis Scott, *Town Hall Liaison*

Select Board, continued from page 3 sec 11:

the needs of the region and the individual towns' ability to pay. There will be another meeting in early spring.

We are always looking for people who are interested in volunteering for our various town committees. Please consider joining one that interests you.

The Select Board welcomes you to our meetings. We have lively discussions and interesting topics. We welcome your thoughts and comments on our agenda items during our meetings and also during our public comment time at the beginning of each meeting for anything you like to share with us.

Happy New Year,

Elaine Puleo
April Stein
Melissa Makepeace-O'Neil

Report from the Annual Mass Municipal Association Conference and the status of school finance

Becky Torres, *Town Administrator*

The annual gathering of representatives from cities and towns across the Commonwealth happens in January. Our Senators in Washington reported continued key funding in areas Massachusetts depends on, despite battles with the President.

The Governor gave an update on the state of the Commonwealth. The struggles we face with climate change, housing, opioids, socio-economic policy, infrastructure, and transportation continue. The Governor is working on rail development.

Typically, the Governor unveils House 1, the Governor's budget, at the opening meeting. This year, the meeting was early and House 1 was not released for another week. The Governor spoke about strong growth in revenue of 2.7% that will be shared with a matching percentage increase in UGGA local aid for Shutesbury. This amounts to an additional \$5,000 in revenue for Shutesbury. Education aid was acknowledged but not detailed, the grand opening of the new initiatives to come.

The Selectmen's Annual Meeting featured a workshop on school finance. It started with a slide like this:

The Mass Constitution, part II, c. V,

In words unchanged since 1780, the education clause states in part that "[i]t shall be the duty of legislatures and magistrates, in all future periods of this commonwealth, to cherish... the public schools and grammar schools in the towns." Mass. Const., pt. II, ch. V, § II.

During this week, the media touted the grand opening of "[An Act to Promote Equity and Excellence in Education](#)," a comprehensive school finance bill being filed by the Baker-Polito Administration. The bill implements the major recommendations of the Foundation Budget Review Commission (FBRC)."

The Governor compared the changes in school finance that are being rolled out to the education reform of the early 1990s.

In the early 1990s, Shutesbury received ZERO education aid; with education reform, Shutesbury saw half a million dollars in education aid by 2000. And now, our education aid does not keep up to inflation and the reliance on property tax to pay for education is growing every year.

State officials are comfortable with a goal of towns paying 59% of the education tax bill. But many pay much more. Changes in the Act to Promote Equity and Excellence in Education do not address the shift of the state's reliance on property tax to pay the bulk of the costs for education.

Charter tuition will continue to be a major burden on cities and towns even if 100% relief is given for one year. This year Shutesbury's charter tuition assessment soared to \$79,704, increasing our tax rate.

The Governor's bill has a handful of innovative initiatives that will take aid dollars away from core and SPED programs. The issues raised by the bill do make improvements to the foundation budget, but they do not attempt to address the fundamental continued shift of the burden of education to the property tax, to the home owner. Adjusting the property tax burden to a 50:50 split between property tax and state aid would shift the tax burden to a more progressive system.

The state needs an infusion of over \$2 billion annually to make this happen. This can be achieved by raising tax revenue at the state level, state income tax, sales tax or our newest tax revenue from marijuana sales. Once marijuana annual sales hit \$11.8 bil-

lion, they will generate \$2 billion at the 17% tax rate.

The Governor is proposing an additional \$1.13 billion in funding for his new school finance bill. The kicker is that is over seven years, equaling about a \$200 million increase statewide this year. What that means for Shutesbury is \$3,000 more dollars in c. 70 education aid this year. \$200 million sounds like a lot of money, a big increase. It is a 4 per cent increase in state education aid. The elementary school lost \$60,000 in grant money this year. The \$3,000 is not going to go very far in plugging the hole in the school budget. The Finance Committee is struggling to close the gap.

In 1999 the Shutesbury elementary budget was \$1,163,711, and state aid was \$470,427. Today the elementary budget is \$2,038,000 and state aid is \$626,876. While the elementary budget has increased 75% in the last 20 years, state aid funding has increased only 33%. In 1999, state education aid amounted to 40% of the school budget and has been declining steadily. State education aid now is 30% of the elementary school budget. The decline of 10% education aid amounts to a loss of \$188,324 in annual town revenue.

What is the best way for cities and towns and the state to share the tax burden? To pay for education?

Thank you very much!

As Administrative Secretary, it is my responsibility to act as liaison with our dauntless newsletter editor, **Janis Gray**, and to shepherd the newsletter through folding, collating, sealing and sending it off to the Postal Service bulk mail system. The folding, collating and sealing of over 800 newsletters could not be accomplished without volunteer help.

Many thanks to our Autumn 2018 newsletter volunteer crew: **Joie Ciepiela, Sally Fairfield, Andy Fairfield, Susan Gomberg, Joan Hanson, Catherine Hilton, Susan Millinger and Susie Mosher.**

Here's how to join us: When an issue goes to print, there will be a Town Announcement with the date and time the folding will begin. Any amount of time is welcome. The activity is easy and the conversation is always interesting and often funny!

Best wishes for your Winter,

Linda Avis Scott,
Administrative Secretary

Greetings from our town's new Treasurer

Residents of Shutesbury,

The opportunity to communicate with each one of you personally through this article is one I take great joy in. Many of you may know your town's Board of Selectmen appointed a new Treasurer in 2018 and I was pleased to accept this role. The previous Town Treasurer Gabriele Voelker dedicated 16 years of service to this community and her work ethic and quality were instrumental in the success of the office.

The Town Treasurer works closely with the Town Accountant to ensure checks and balances are had and I'm happy to share that the two offices have balanced each month since I have moved into the role.

One of the exciting changes I have implemented since moving into the role is the ability for town employees to view their paystubs and tax documents online. This change helps to create a more efficient Treasurer's office, puts the employees' financial information at their fingertips at all times, and helps reduce paper waste in the community.

I commit to continuing to look for ways to improve the office of the Treasurer in the community while maintaining the security, accuracy and efficiency that has held true for the office through the past years.

I look forward to any future interactions we may have,

Ryan W. Mailloux

News from the Assessors' Office

Exemptions: This is a reminder to seniors, veterans, and Community Preservation Act (CPA) exemption applicants that applications for exemptions for FY19 (July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019) can be filed in the Assessors' office at any time on or before April 1, 2019.

Taxable Personal Property: In Massachusetts, all owners of second homes, rental properties, businesses, and other taxable personal property located within the town are required to submit a Form of List (Businesses – State Tax Form 2, and second homes – State Tax Form 2HF) to the Assessors' office. Taxable personal property assessment is based on the ownership of the property on January 1, 2019,

and must be returned to the Assessors' office by March 1, 2019.

Charitable and Non-profit Organizations: In Massachusetts, charitable and non-profit organizations are required to submit the Form 3ABC by March 1, 2019 along with their most recent Form PC (Public Charities Annual Report). Form 3ABC must be returned to the Assessors' office by March 1, 2019.

Motor Vehicle Information: The motor vehicle excise tax is determined by a Massachusetts statutory formula (MGL Ch. 60A, S. 1) based on Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicle registration information including date of registration, vehicle year, make, model, and place of garaging on the tax date. Motor Vehicle Frequently Asked Questions, including motor vehicle abatement application forms, can be accessed at the Assessors' webpage www.shutesbury.org/assessors, and directly at <https://www.mass.gov/guides/motor-vehicle-excise>.

Detailed information concerning these topics can be found at the links listed at the end of this article, and on the Assessors' web page at the Shutesbury.org web site: www.shutesbury.org/assessor. Questions can also be emailed to assessor@shutesbury.org, asked in person at the Assessors' office (office hours: Mondays and Tuesdays 10am to 3pm, Wednesdays 1pm to 3pm, and Thursdays 12 Noon to 4pm), or by calling the office at 413-259-3790, where messages can be left at any time. If a message is left, please be sure to clearly state your name and number so we can return your call.

Property owners may drop off all applications and forms at the Assessors' office during regular Assessors office hours (Mondays and Tuesdays 10am to 3pm, Wednesdays 1pm to 3pm, and Thursdays 12 Noon to 4pm).

If the office is closed, applications and forms may be left in a sealed envelope in the Assessor's mailbox in the upper level hall of Town Hall. Applications and forms may instead be mailed to: Shutesbury Board of Assessors, P.O. Box 264, Shutesbury MA 01072.

Please be assured that your personal information is confidential and is handled and then destroyed, in keeping with Massachusetts Public Records statutes.

Please note that tax payments and

questions about payments should be directed to the Tax Collector, (413-259-1615, collector@shutesbury.org, Shutesbury Tax Collector, P.O. Box 175, Shutesbury.org.) Questions about values, abatements and exemptions should be directed to the Assessors' office.

All real estate and personal property tax information and forms: <https://www.mass.gov/lists/property-tax-forms-and-guides>

Motor vehicle excise information and forms: <https://www.mass.gov/guides/motor-vehicle-excise>

Note from the Town Collector

Dear Shutesbury taxpayers,

With the winter upon us, the third quarter of our real estate bills are due on February 1 and the calendar 2019 motor vehicle excise bills for many vehicles registered on January 1 may have been mailed. Additionally, excise bills on vehicles registered late in 2018 are billed during 2019. The year for which the bill is issued is found in the upper right hand corner of the bill.

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

Our on-line bill paying feature allows you to pay your tax bills either directly from your checking or savings account with a fee of \$.25 or with a credit card for a fee based on the amount of your transaction. To use this service, click on the Town's website and then on the announcement on the Home page.

For Real Estate and Personal Property taxes, you should enter 2019 for the year and just the bill number WITHOUT the RE or PP to enter the program.

For motor vehicle payments, enter the year and bill number which is found on the top, right side of your bill.

You are now able to find your bill information by clicking on the notation "Need help locating your bill" after you indicate what type of bill you wish to

Collector, continued on page 6

Collector, continued from page 5

pay. You then enter your last name and all bills in that name should be shown. Select the correct one and click on it and the amount due will appear.

PLEASE PLAN AHEAD when mailing your tax payments to avoid interest due to late payment. The date your payment is received in this office or by the lockbox is the date of payment for receipt purposes under Mass. General Law. If you send a check generated through a bill payment function from your banking institution, please note that it may take over a week for the Town to receive the payment. If you have the bill generated on the payment due date it will definitely be late.

If you receive a demand notice, you should pay it immediately as you only have 14 days from the demand date to pay before the bill goes on warrant which results in a substantial increase in the fees.

If you have purchased your property after January 1, 2018, Massachusetts General Law requires that the previous owner's name remain on the real estate tax bill. Hence, your name will appear with an "in care of". There is nothing we can do to put the bill solely in your name.

The question has come up concerning the information found on the bills. All information is required either by Massachusetts General Law or by the Department of Revenue of the Commonwealth. The Town and this office have no discretion on the statements printed thereon.

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 am here. If conditions are poor, I may not attempt to come to work.

Have a happy, healthy, and safe New Year.

Ellen McKay, *Collector*

News from Shutesbury Elementary School

Dear Shutesbury Community,

Happy 2019 from the staff at Shutesbury Elementary School! It is quite remarkable that we are halfway through our school year already. The students and staff at SES are in the midst of exciting units of learning and activities.



We started this year with an exciting new addition to our grounds — a new playground! I have included a recent picture of our 1st graders enjoying some playtime on the new structure. Thank you to the community members that supported this! Our students now enjoy safe and engaging playgrounds, time in the woods, sports and time on our track at recess. We go outside every day unless it is dangerously cold. We recently received a donation of hats and gloves from the Shutesbury Community Church and always welcome gently used snow pants, boots, and gloves from the community to support our students!

Our school also received some very exciting news from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education! Shutesbury did very well on MCAS last year and students exhibited lots of growth. Because of this, **Shutesbury Elementary School was named one of the top 52 schools (pre-K-12) statewide and was given the title of a "School of Recognition."** We are very proud of our students and staff for their hard work!

Our students continue to par-

ticipate in the "Moose on the Move" program where they run miles on our great track. This program is part of the *100 Mile Club* initiative (<https://100mileclub.com/welcome/>). Many students (and staff) have been running and walking a LOT. Several students are already beyond the 50-mile benchmark! As a school we have made it past St. Louis, Missouri on the map of the total miles (collectively) that have run or walked this school year. Major thanks to **Jessica Carlson-Belanger**, our school nurse **Katie Harrington** and our PE teacher **Steven Carra** for their work on this program!

Our students are enjoying many interesting units in mathematics, language arts and social studies and science.

Fourth graders just finished up a unit on creating their own countries. They included report writing and learning around government, currency, natural resources, and mapping. They created national anthems, sewed country flags and made forms of currency in collaboration with the art teacher.

Sixth grade is preparing for an exhibition of learning around Native American uses of

School, continued on page 7

natural resources.

All students are enjoying our new curriculum Mystery Science, where students are given a mystery question around a science standard and conduct reading, experiments and writing around a specific topic. Some mystery questions include: Why do penguins have wings, but don't fly? Why is snow white? Where do bugs go in the winter? Why does the sun rise and set? Who set the first clock? What is strong enough to make a canyon?

Recently, a community member asked me if we work as a staff to talk about school safety issues. This question reminded me that we need to relay to the community all the thinking and work we do to keep our students and staff safe every day.

We work closely with the State Police as well as our local police and fire departments and chiefs around school safety.

The State Police conduct professional development yearly with our staff around safety procedures. We also practice safety drills at various points in the year with these safety officials. Recently, our staff received training on Reunification in case we need to leave the building in the event of an emergency.

A Shutesbury police officer begins their day at the school during drop off to connect with the students and families. We also have a Safety Committee comprised of local safety officials, teachers, parents and our school nurse. This committee meets throughout the year to tackle issues and question relative to safety. We are grateful to Chief **Walter Tibbetts** and Chief **Daniel Fernandes** for their support of school safety at SES. If you have questions around school safety, please don't hesitate to reach out to me.

This spring we are looking forward to an Artist-in-Residence visit and field trips to the Fine Arts

Center, Boston, and museums. We continue to cross our fingers for major snow storms to stay away so that we have minimal snow days!

As a school community, we continue to be grateful to a town that understands the importance of a well-rounded and robust elementary learning environment. Our students have meaningful curriculum, art, music, instrumental music, Physical Education (two times per week!), computer and library classes, yoga, time outdoors in nature, delicious lunches(!), and kind, talented, and generous teachers. They are able to use their imaginations, think critically, practice teamwork and create true friendships. Thank you for supporting us in ensuring the continued growth and development of our town's children.

Sincerely,
Jackie Mendonsa, *Principal*

Developmental screenings for 3, 4 and 5 year olds

In Shutesbury, developmental screening is available through the school as a first step in a process intended to find children in need of special services and to plan for meeting those needs.

Screening focuses on a child's growth in a number of areas, such as large and small muscle control, speech/language development and concept development. This activity takes about 20 minutes and consists of a number of games that children typically enjoy playing. The screening gives an indication of whether or not a child's skills are developing within the typical range.

If you have any questions or concerns about your child's development, would like more information, or wish to set up an appointment, please call **Grace Grieci**, Shutesbury Elementary School's Preschool Teacher at 413-259-1212 X140 or email her at griec-cig@shutesburyschool.org

This service is available to all families in town, including those with a child not already enrolled in the school's preschool program.

Shutesbury Early Childhood Program

The Shutesbury Elementary School Community (SES) believes that opportunities for early childhood education are essential components of a good education system. Early experiences in an environment rich in hands-on materials and activities provide children various opportunities to grow emotionally, physically, socially and cognitively.

We believe that a trans-disciplinary team approach, in which all adults working with children are responsible for a child's learning, is the most effective way of teaching and we also believe that parents are the most important teachers of their children and that their involvement in their child's education is essential.

Your child must be 3 years old on or before September 1, 2019 for preschool enrollment, or 5 years old on or before September 1, 2019 for kindergarten enrollment.

Please contact the school for Fall/2019 enrollment information. Call: Jessica Carlson-Belanger at the Main Office of SES, 413-259-1212 x100 carlson-belangerj@shutesburyschool.org or Grace Grieci 413-259-1212 x140 griec-cig@shutesburyschool.org

News from Union #28 Community Network for Children

SHUTESBURY – FREE WEEKLY TALES & TUNES

Come and enjoy stories, song and craft activities with your child(ren) and other families and caregivers from your community at the M.N. Spear Memorial Library. Tales & Tunes will continue on Mondays, from 9:30-11:00am and is facilitated by **Katie Tolles**. This program is intended for children 0-5 years of age and is sponsored by the M.N. Spear Memorial Library and Union #28 Community Network for Children. See CNC Website for program and event schedules, <https://sites.google.com/erving.com/cncprogram/home>

For more information please contact Gillian Budine, (978) 544-5157 or email budine@erving.com.

Community Network for Children,
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The M. N. Spear Memorial Library

10 Cooleyville Road
413-259-1213; www.mnspear.org
Mary Anne Antonellis, *Director*

Open Every Day

The M.N. Spear Memorial Library is open every day. Our hours are as follows:

Monday and Wednesday: 11:00am - 1:00pm and 3:00 - 6:00pm
Tuesday and Thursday: 3:00 - 7:30pm
Friday: 3:00 - 6:00 pm
Saturday: 10:00am - 1:00pm
Sunday: 3:00 - 6:00pm



The people who work in, govern and use libraries have been thinking about library fines for a long time, possibly as long as there have been libraries. Current trends are a slow shift away from charging fines for overdue items.

In 2011, the M.N. Spear Memorial Library stopped charging late fees for overdue books. At the time, we were concerned that inability to pay late fees might make our Library inaccessible to some of our users. We wanted to make sure everyone always had access to books, so we discontinued charging fines for overdue books and other reading materials.

We did continue to charge late fees for DVDs but we have also continued to think about late fees, accessibility how to best serve our community.

In 2017, a book called *This Is What a Librarian Looks Like: A Celebration of Libraries, Communities, and Access to Information* by Kyle Cassidy was published. In the first essay in this book, Amy Dickinson writes, "Late fees are the enemy of early literacy because instead of promoting responsible behavior, they suppress library visits for some of the people who need them the most."

This sentence, in an essay that is mostly a love letter to libraries in an actual book that has a feature about me rekindled my interest in expanding our non-punitive fine policies to

our entire collection.

Last June, the Washington Post Editorial Board wrote an opinion piece entitled, "More libraries are going fine-free. That's good for everyone." This movement is national news. If you are interested, here is a link, https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2018/06/15/7ad6f80e-709d-11e8-afd5-778aca903bbe_story.html?utm_term=.2d42f94ff699

Finally, in November, Dawn Wacek of the LaCross Public Library, WI, gave an inspiring Ted Talk. In her talk, Dawn shares how libraries connect communities and promote literacy and spark lifelong learners. But the fear of overdue book fines or the inability to pay these fines keeps people away, often the people who need libraries the most. Dawn asks, "What if your library just ... stopped asking for fines altogether?"

We are going to find out. At their December meeting, the Trustees of the Library agreed that if we truly want the resources offered by the library to be accessible to all, then non-punitive borrowing policies are best. We no longer charge late fees for overdue items.

If an item is lost or damaged, the replacement fee will still need to be paid. And if a patron has items that are long overdue, they will need to return those before borrowing more. If you have been reluctant to use the library because of late fees, come see us. We have lots to offer and we want everyone to feel welcome.

A thank you note!

The New Year has me reflecting on all the ways community members have helped the Friends of the Library raise and save money over the past year and in years past.

Over the past few years, we've been fundraising roughly \$25,000 a year for the new library fund and more funds used to enhance our collection and programming.

We have a remarkable level of community involvement and success for such a small library in a small town. I'm inspired by our collective commitment to support the library, determined to make it better for ourselves and our neighbors.

Dozens of volunteers contribute in a collective effort to both provide dynamic library services now and save for a new Shutesbury Library in the future. You've baked and bought baked goods, donated, staffed and shopped our book sales, cooked and served and cleaned for community dinners, offered and met challenge gifts, addressed and stuffed envelopes, joined the Friends, bought stuff (think apparel, coffee, mugs, syrup), collected and redeemed bottles and cans, spruced-up yards, donated to and benefited from tag sales, folded t-shirts, hauled things, raked, run errands, and cast your vote to realize the dream of a new library. You show up at 7 am and stay until the job is done, whether it's dark or foggy or scorching or rainy

Thank you, continued on page 9

CORNERED BEEF DINNER

A Benefit
for The Friends of the M.N. Spear Memorial Library

Friday, March 15th ~ 6 pm
Shutesbury Athletic Club

Suggested donation: \$10 adults, \$5 kids

Join us for a delicious, traditional corned beef dinner featuring corned beef, cabbage, potatoes, and carrots.
We will also have a vegetarian option.

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or cold.

I am so appreciative of this lively and productive crew—for your brainpower, food, money, muscle, stuff, and time--and proud to be a member. Thank you for all you do for our town's public library.

Kanopy: Stream classic cinema, Indie film and top documentaries

We are pleased to announce a new resource for Shutesbury library users. Kanopy offers streaming access to popular, independent, and documentary films.

Enjoy more than 30,000 films entirely free with a Shutesbury library card. Set up an account with an email address and enter your Shutesbury Public Library card number. Limit four films per person each month. Here is the link - <https://shutesbury.kanopy.com/>

Community Read this March and April

The Stranger in the Woods: The Extraordinary Story of the Last True Hermit
by Michael Finkel

Ten local libraries have joined together to coordinate a community read of a story about a man living alone and outside in the woods of Maine for 27 years.

In 1986, a young man abandons his car and walks into the Maine woods with a backpack and a tent (although he had never slept in one in his life), eventually constructing a secret campsite where he lives

through all seasons without talking to anyone, without being seen by anyone ... **for 27 years.** In 2013, he is discovered and arrested after years of stealing what he needed to survive alone and outside in the woods: food, clothing, propane. In 2017, the only journalist whom the hermit talked to writes this extraordinary story.

Throughout March and April, copies of the book will be available to borrow from the library. A robust schedule of programs, book discussions, film screenings, hikes, and survival skills workshops will be offered at participating libraries. Why does a man choose to live alone, outside, through bitter winters and buggy summers? Is the "hermit" Christopher Thomas Knight a hero or a criminal? We will explore these and other questions as we read and contemplate our community read.

The first related program in Shutesbury will be a visit with local author John Elder Robison on Tuesday, March 12, 7pm, at Town Hall. John is the author of *Switched On*, *Raising Cubby*, *Look Me in the Eye: My life with Asperger's* and *Be Different: Adventures of a free-range Aspergian*. John was diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome, an autism spectrum disorder, when he was an adult. He is widely known as an advocate for people with autism and neurological differences.

After Christopher Thomas Knight was apprehended, local authorities struggled to understand why he



walked away from society. Autism is considered as a possible diagnosis. John will join us in conversation about the book, his own experience with autism and advances in research and understanding about autism.

John is a member of the Inter-agency Autism Coordinating Committee of the US Department of Health and Human Services. John is the Neurodiversity Scholar in Residence at The College of William & Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia. He's a visiting professor of practice at Bay Path University in Longmeadow, MA where he is proud to offer his insights into autism and neurodiversity to the next generation of clinicians to serve New England. John is also the neurodiversity advisor to Landmark College in Putney, VT.

John's books are available to borrow from the library and he will have copies available to purchase during his visit.

To learn more, visit our website, or stop into the library.

Community Network for Children, Continued from page 7

SHUTESBURY FREE WEEKLY PLAYGROUP

Come and enjoy time with your child (ren) and other families and caregivers from your community at the Shutesbury Elementary School. Playgroup will continue on Fridays, from 8:45 - 10:15am.

This Playgroup is facilitated by **Joie Ciepiela** and is intended for children 0-5 years of age. Playgroup is

sponsored by the Shutesbury Elementary School and Union #28 Community Network for Children. Program not held during school closures. See CNC Website for program and event schedules, <https://sites.google.com/erving.com/cncprogram/home>. For more information please contact Gillian Budine, (978) 544-5157 or email budine@erving.com.

FAMILIES CONNECTING SERIES

Save the dates! The Community Net-

work for Children Program is offering "Families Connecting," a discussion group on Thursdays, February 28, March 14 and 28 and April 11 from 5:30 – 7:30pm at the Erving Elementary School.

It will include a family meal, child care and facilitated discussion time. The focus is on families with children 0-5 years of age.

Email the CNC Program to **register for dinner and child care** at budine@erving.com or call 978-544-5157.



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HOW TO CONTACT TOWN OFFICIALS

Go to www.shutesbury.org to find email addresses, or call the appropriate number below.

ACCOUNTANT Gail Weiss 259-1108	ELEMENTARY SCHOOL Jackie Mendonsa, Principal 259-1212	RECREATION COMMITTEE B.Z. Reily 413-687-3605
ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY Linda Avis Scott 259-6550	EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIRECTOR Walter Tibbetts 259-1211	RECYCLING COORDINATOR Gary Bernhard 259-1235
TOWN ADMINISTRATOR Rebecca Torres 259-1214	FINANCE COMMITTEE George Arvanitis, Co-Chair 259-1348	REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE Stephen Sullivan 259-1626
ANIMAL INSPECTOR Nancy Long 259-1279	FIRE DEPARTMENT Eric Stocker, Co-Chair 259-1250	SHUTESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE Lauren Thomas-Paquin 259-1602
ASSESSORS Kenneth Holmberg 259-3790	FIRE DEPARTMENT Walter Tibbetts, Chief 259-1211	UNION #28 SCHOOL SUPT. Jennifer Haggerty 413-423-3337
BOARD OF HEALTH Catherine Hilton, Clerk 259-2122	or at home 259-1286	SELECT BOARD Melissa Makepeace-O'Neil, Chair 256-0312
BUILDINGS COMMITTEE Bob Groves 259-1200	HEALTH AGENT Claudia Lucas 549-3710	Elaine Puleo 259-1979
BUILDING INSPECTOR Jim Hawkins 413-774-3167 x. 113	HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT Tim Hunting 259-1215	April Stein 259-1074
CEMETERY COMMISSION Marilyn Tibbetts 259-1976	HISTORICAL COMMISSION Leave inquiries at 259-1214	SHUTESBURY BROADBAND COMMITTEE Gayle Huntress 259-1905
COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMM. Rita Farrell, Co-chair Allen Hanson, Co-chair 259-1623	M.N. SPEAR MEMORIAL LIBRARY Mary Anne Antonellis, Dir. 259-1213	Asha Strazzero-Wild 413-478-8368
COUNCIL ON AGING Med-Ride Program 259-3796	LIBRARY TRUSTEES Kate Cell, Co-chair 259-9129	TAX COLLECTOR Ellen McKay 259-1615
David Dann, Chair 259-1554	OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE Leave inquires at 259-1214	TOWN CLERK Susie Mosher 259-1204
CONSERVATION COMMISSION Leave inquiries at 259-3792	OUR TOWN NEWSLETTER Janis S. Gray 259-1584	TOWN MODERATOR Penelope Kim 259-1326
CULTURAL COUNCIL Rory Valentine 256-0563	PERSONNEL BOARD Anna Mundow 259-1668	TREASURER Ryan W. Mailloux 259-1801
DEPT. OF VETERANS' SERVICES Timothy Nijadlik 772-1571	PLANNING BOARD Deacon Bonnar 259-1276	TREE WARDEN Leave inquiries at 259-1215
DOG OFFICER Nancy Long 259-1279	PLUMBING/GAS INSPECTOR John Letourneau 367-0017	WEB COMMITTEE Jamie Malcolm-Brown 413-362-9996
ELECTRICAL INSPECTOR Maurice Gregoire 253-7505	POLICE DEPARTMENT Daniel Fernandes, Chief 259-1279	ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS Charles J. DiMare 549-5330
	Dispatch 413-625-8200	
	POLICE, FIRE & RESCUE SQUAD 911	