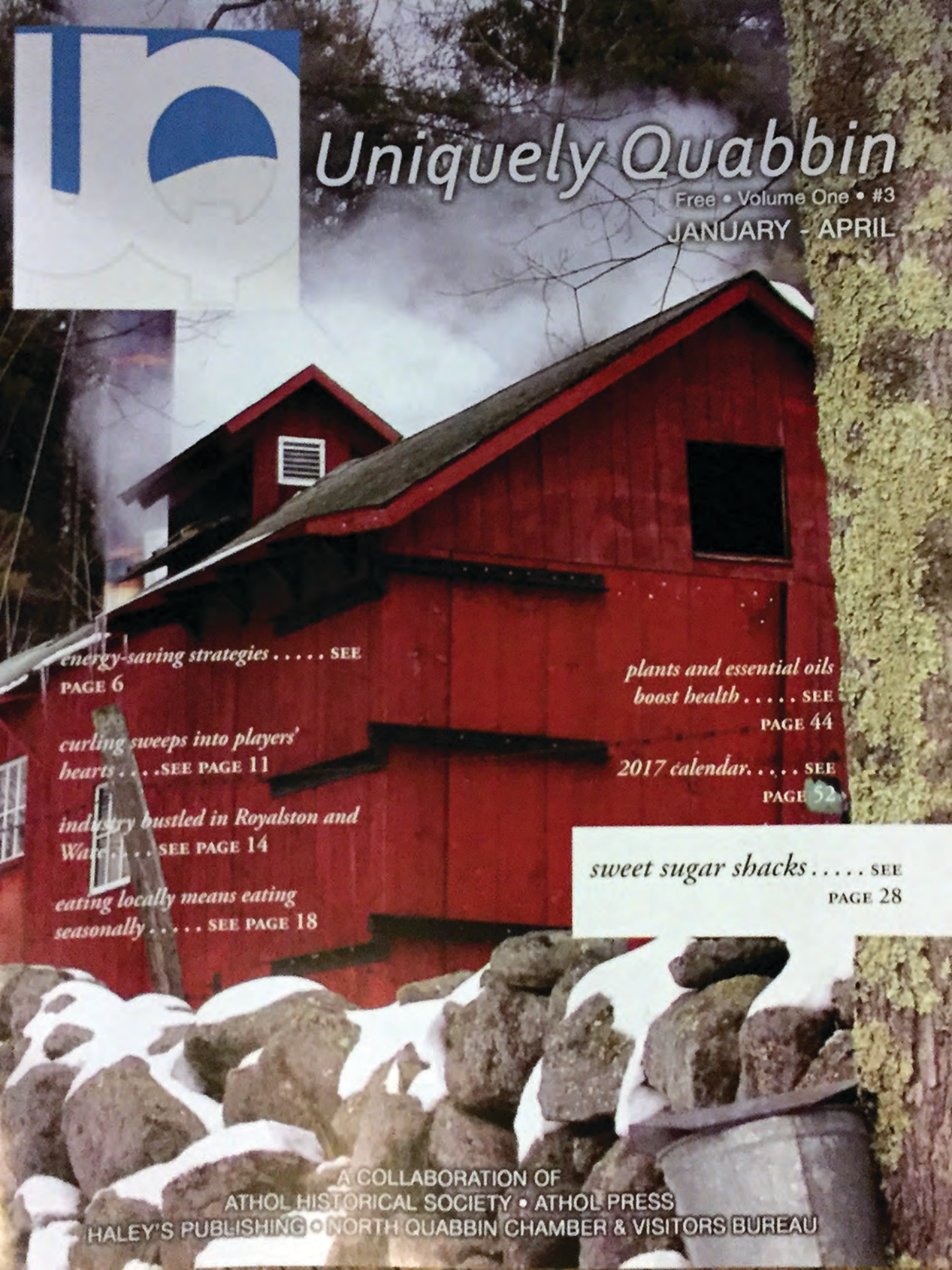
Uniquely Quabbin

Free • Volume One • #3
JANUARY - APRIL



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A COLLABORATION OF
ATHOL HISTORICAL SOCIETY • ATHOL PRESS
HALEY'S PUBLISHING • NORTH QUABBIN CHAMBER & VISITORS BUREAU

Uniquely Quabbin magazine serving
THE NORTH QUABBIN: Athol • Erving • New Salem • Orange • Petersham • Phillipston • Royalston • Templeton • Warwick • Wendell
THE SOUTH QUABBIN: Barre • Belchertown • Hardwick (Gilbertville) • Hubbardston • Leverett • New Braintree • Oakham • Pelham • Rutland • Shutesbury • Ware

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volume 1, number 3 • January-April 2017
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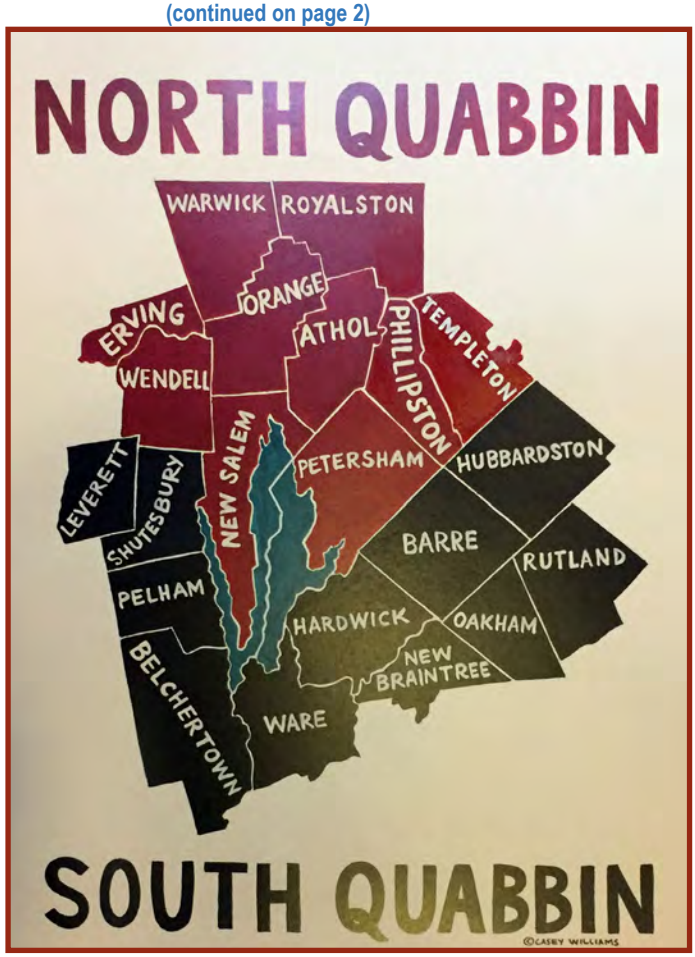

near Millers River in Athol, upper left

maps, bottom, show Quabbin towns past and present • photo © John Burk / maps © Casey Williams

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a note of thanks from Athol Historical Society

Dear Generous Donors,

On behalf of Athol Historical Society, thank you for your thoughtful contributions to *Uniquely Quabbin* magazine.

We want to thank Nancy Allen, Barre Historical Society, Al and Bonnie Benjamin, Karl and Doris Bittenbender, Leslie Bracebridge, Pamela Chevalier, Kathleen Cygan, Benjamin Ellis, Debra Ellis, and Ricard Flematti.

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Also, Cathy Stanton, Kenneth Vaidulas, Leonard and Joanne Venett, Whipps, Inc., Casey Williams, Gary and Karen Williams, Jamie Williams, and Thomas Williams.

Thanks as well to those who wish to remain anonymous and for the many cash donations we received.

Gratefully,
Debra Ellis, treasurer
Athol Historical Society

FIND LISTINGS FOR NORTH QUABBIN AND SOUTH QUABBIN EVENTS ON PAGE 55.

a note from the publisher of *Uniquely Quabbin*

Here we present you with the third issue of *Uniquely Quabbin* magazine. Writers, photographers, and artists from throughout the Quabbin region connect you to events, circumstances, and history that bring our exceptionally beautiful area to life.

To advertisers and generous donors, we express gratitude for your support of this endeavor serving thousands of readers in the twenty-one-town Quabbin region. You make our magazine possible along with its distribution free of charge.

Please consider making a tax deductible donation to *Uniquely Quabbin* magazine to help us continue our publication. Mail contributions to

Athol Historical Society c/o Debra Ellis
1390 Chestnut Hill Avenue
Athol, MA 01331

Thank you. We look forward to producing the next issue of *Uniquely Quabbin* magazine in May.

We wish you happy reading.

Sincerely,
Marcia Gagliardi, publisher
Haley's

about *Uniquely Quabbin*

Quabbin region, Massachusetts—*Uniquely Quabbin* serves the twenty-one Quabbin region towns.

Athol Historical Society, Athol Press, Haley's Publishing. and North Quabbin Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Bureau collaborate to produce *Uniquely Quabbin* in cooperation with writers, photographers, and artists from the greater Quabbin area.

The towns of Barre, Belchertown, Hardwick (Gilbertville), Hubbardston, Leverett, New Braintree, Oakham, Pelham, Rutland, Shutesbury, and Ware belong to the South Quabbin. Towns in the North Quabbin are Athol, Erving, New Salem, Orange, Petersham, Phillipston, Royalston, Templeton, Warwick, and Wendell.

Advertisers support *Uniquely Quabbin* along with earmarked donations made to the Athol Historical Society, which will send a letter acknowledging a tax deductible gift. The International Music and Art Foundation provided a seed grant to support the magazine and an evolving consortium of Quabbin region museums, historical societies, and arts centers.

Uniquely Quabbin is provided free of charge for single copies. Obtain multiple copies for $3.00 each.

Find maps of the Quabbin area on Page 1. Find calendar listings on Page 55.

Uniquely Quabbin

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We invite contributions to *Uniquely Quabbin* magazine. Contact Marcia Gagliardi at haley.antique@verizon.net or 488 South Main Street, Athol, MA 01331 with proposals to contribute to *UQ* or for letters to the editor.

Uniquely Quabbin magazine serves the twenty-one communities of the North Quabbin and South Quabbin.

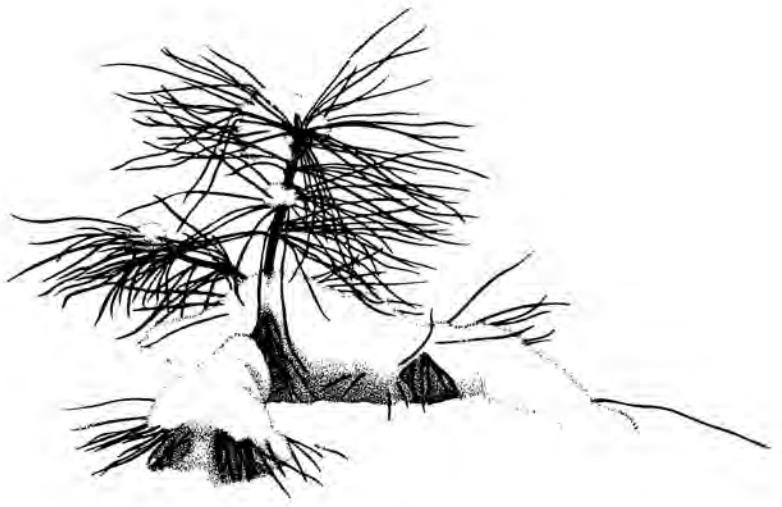
Quabbin Reservoir reflects its winter surroundings.

photo © Dale Monette

winter solitude

haiku by Matsuo Basho • text by Abigail Rorer

Winter solitude –
in a world of one color
the sound of the wind.



engraving © 2017 by Abigail Rorer

Matsuo Basho (1644-1694) mastered the Japanese haiku poem form. A haiku poem has seventeen syllables in three lines: the first line has five syllables; the second, seven, and the third, five. Haiku traditionally take the natural world as their subject matter.

Born in Kyoto the son of a minor samurai and his wife, Basho moved to Edo in his late twenties. There, he joined a literary community and took up Zen meditation. Born Matsuo Kinsaku, he changed his name to Basho around the age of thirty-six when a student gave him a Basho tree, a banana tree, as a gift.

Basho had always been a wanderer. Before moving to Edo, he spent a few years wandering. After a fire took his home in Edo, he once again took up wandering. During this later period of wandering, Basho wrote some of his greatest haiku.

In 1691, he returned to Edo and died in 1694 while on a final journey to the home of his birth. His last haiku, a poem on his death: 'Stricken while journeying / my dreams still wander about / but on withered field.'

Petersham resident Abigail Rorer is proprietor of The Lone Oak Press: theloneoakpress.com

energy-saving strategies for New England winters

by Pat Larson

The temperature falls outside, and home thermostats click on and up for winter heat. Then for six winter months, the price of electricity rises higher than in summer. And people ask, "What can we do to save on energy use and costs?"

People can take many steps to save on usage and costs in their homes during the winter. Some people may take simple steps while others embark on new adventures with solar installations, heat pumps, and deep energy retrofits. But saving on energy and having a warm home during winter months does not need to be complicated.

Contact Mass Save and have a home energy assessment or energy audit completed. The audit qualifies a homeowner for free air sealing to cut down on drafts and up to $2,000, a 75% discount toward the installation of approved insulation improvements. For example, if the energy specialist recommends $2700 worth of insulation work, the homeowner only has to pay $675. Targeted air sealing in a residence is free and done by one of the contractors on the approved Mass Save list.

Once an energy specialist completes the home assessment and an energy savings plan, a residence may qualify for other no-cost items including LED lights, programmable thermostats, and water-saving devices. Start the process of a no-cost home energy assessment by calling Mass Save at 1-866-527-7283.

Dianne Salcedo of Orange, pleased with basement air sealing and other improvements after an energy audit, stated, "We've had other audits in the past, and our house was somewhat insulated. I was surprised that new materials and techniques were available for air sealing and insulating difficult areas. The new work made our basement warmer and the house more comfortable, and we saved money. I urge anyone who has not had an energy audit in the past two years or ever to call Mass Save and schedule one."

People may find more ways to use less energy and save money after completing weatherization projects.

(continued on Page 42)

A grand Belchertown Victorian residence takes its place in a fine parade of Quabbin region architecture ranging from Colonial through Federal and Victorian to Modern and post-Modern

photo courtesy of Realtor.com

Quabbin region showcases architecture

by Allen Young

I began my exploration of the Quabbin region as soon as I bought some land and started building a house in 1973 in Royalston, with a population at that time of about 950 people, tucked into the northwest corner of Worcester County. Interesting and varied architecture is readily available to anyone just driving around on country roads and village streets. Over time, I came to realize that both the entirety of a building and its details contribute to the pleasure.

When it comes to New England churches, authentic colonial homes built before the battles of Lexington and Concord, Greek Revival and Federal period residences from before the Civil War, graceful and elaborate Victorians, and massive brick factories, there are perfect examples all around us. Details that make these buildings fabulous are also there, things that can be decorative and/or functional like cornices, brackets, finials, gates, and fences.

Or take slate roofs. Where I grew up, in New York's Catskills Mountains, slate roofs were rarely seen. They are plentiful here, and their beauty comes in part from the simple fact that slate is a natural stone more enduring than wooden shingles—but it eventually diminished in popularity because asphalt is cheaper and easier to install. I knew I wanted a slate roof for my owner-built octagonal house, and it was installed by a local roofer who had a stash of recycled Monson slate that once covered a school in Connecticut. One of the slate roofs that inspired me was a bi-color (red and gray) roof on a house in Tully, a village in Orange.

In Royalston, a small battle took place when the hundred-year-old slate roof of the town hall finally needed to be replaced. A faction calculated asphalt would be the right solution, but a group of us campaigned–and

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DROWNED TOWNS ONCE HOUSED SUMMER CAMPS FOR

by J. R. Greene

Camp Pomeroy published an annual review.
photo and one on Page 22 courtesy of J. R. Greene.

If non-Jewish people think of Jewish summer camps, they may imagine rather comfortable accommodations in the Catskill Mountains of New York State, perhaps as depicted in the thirty-year-old movie *Dirty Dancing*.

Summer camps for Jewish youth date at least to the period right after World War I. Three of them were located in the Swift River Valley of west central Massachusetts, which were mostly inundated by the Quabbin Reservoir in the 1930s and 1940s.

George Haupt of Brooklyn, New York, developed two camps in the drowned town of Greenwich. Camp Pomeroy, on the shore of Warner Pond in the north part of town, served girls, with fourteen bungalows for campers, two halls, and a residence for counselors. The property included a 140-acre farm.

Camp Quabbin on the shore of Quabbin Lake served boys and had a hotel, the former Quabbin Inn, twelve bungalows, ten tentalows (structures with a roof and floor, but retractable canvas walls), a playhouse, and an office along with fifty acres of land. Haupt reported in the 1921 camp yearbook that he "put forth every endeavor to give you a camp that left nothing to be desired." This included tennis and basketball courts, and a baseball field.

JEWISH CITY KIDS

Among the activities for campers: hikes to Ware, Enfield, and the Boy Scout camp in North Dana as well as up Mount Pomeroy. The camp baseball team played matches with the town team of Enfield, another drowned town. Rabbi Price was on hand to conduct daily and Saturday worship services.

The camp yearbook included the usual advertisements in back from the campers' home area, but some ads did not originate with New York businesses. H. Stuart, the Greenwich contractor who built camp facilities, had an ad as did clothier Ansel Ward of Athol, the Athol National Bank, three Greenwich businessmen, and a candy maker and two kosher delicatessens in Springfield.

The 1925 yearbook combines both camps into one publication. For Camp Pomeroy, according to the yearbook, girls had access to the same team sports as the Camp Quabbin boys, including riflery and track. The yearbook cites an article from the *United Synagogue Recorder* regarding religious observances at the camps, which could "pride themselves on having demonstrated to American Jewry the possibility of conducting children's camps in strict conformity with the Jewish law, without interfering with the activities of the campers or sacrificing their pleasures."

Among new advertisers in the 1925 yearbook are Healy Brothers' Insurance Company of Barre and Ware

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ADAMS ANIMAL HOSPITAL

Adams Animal Hospital has proudly cared for the pets of the North Quabbin community since 1947.

No more trips to the office!
House Call Services

We are now offering a wide range of services in the comfort of your pet's home.

Some of the services we offer:

- Wellness & illness exams
- Nail trims
- Vaccinations
- Collect lab samples
- Humane euthanasia
- Basic supportive care
- Transportation back to our hospital if needed

See our website for details • www.adamspetvet.com

Our Cost Savings Packages

- **Puppy/Kitten First Year Plans**
- **Free Vaccines for Life**
- **Adult Wellness Packages**
- **Senior Wellness Packages**
- **Spay/Neuter Packages**
- **Dental Packages**

Warren Janes, Helen Purple, and Lois Janes. from left, sweep with corn brooms in the early days of the Petersham Curling Club.

photo courtesy of Cindy Hartwell

singular Petersham sports venue

Curling Sweeps into Players' Hearts

by Kathryn Chaisson

Behind a glass wall at the Petersham Curling Club, two independent games of opposing four-member teams proceed along 148-foot-long, flat, rectangular sheets of pebbled ice. Competitors or teammates, depending on your perspective, curlers traverse ice in rubber-soled shoes with grippers and sliders for traction and gliding.

The Petersham Curling Club stands alone in the Quabbin region for its sport, among fourteen Massachusetts curling clubs, and among some two hundred US curling clubs organized into associations.

Like curlers everywhere, most of those playing the game in Petersham wear light jackets or sweatshirts, allowing for flexible movement. No one seems to notice the room temperature of forty degrees, and each player has a strategic role to play directed by the skip.

Crouching on one knee, the lead on one team steadily glides along the ice with a forty-two-pound polished granite stone in one hand and a broom in the other for balance. Following the skip's guidance, he releases the rock's handle in a clockwise rotation, causing it to curl to the right.

With brooms in hand, the vice-skip and second hastily sweep the ice inches in front of the traveling stone, causing friction and creating a microscopic layer of water to help the stone travel further and curl towards the path of the button or bullseye at the end of the ice sheet.

"Whether you're eight or eighty, it's a game of finesse, not brute strength," says Cindy Hartwell of New Salem. Hartwell and her husband, Chuck, served on the private

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Jim Conkey and the Plain Old Way of

by Jonathan von Ranson

Jim Conkey presides outside Jim's C & M Roughcut

photo © Jonathan von Ranson

Making Lumber, Mulch, and Firewood

Jim Conkey saws boards, and some of us forego particle board, stress panels, and such materials and still build with lumber right off the sawmill. Unless we're ordering for delivery, we head to Jim's C&M Roughcut, drive our vehicles down to the stacks and the area with the species we're after—beautiful, fragrant pine or stronger hemlock with its splinters—and find the piles of desired thickness, width, and length.

We load up and tie down, then stop at corporate headquarters to complete the transaction with the chairman of the board (the pun found me, I didn't go looking for it).

There in his tiny, cluttered office, with his glasses on, Conkey, age seventy-four, adds up the tab. The buyer's checkbook comes out more or less willingly: the structural goodness of a local tree is coming home with us. The neighborliness of the exchange and localness of the lumber satisfy.

Dona Odou has bought a lot of Conkey's lumber, and she mentions the important phone aspect. "You call first," she said, since sometimes Jim and his helper are out on a delivery. He himself doesn't answer—he may be at the controls of his whirring mill in protective eye- and ear-wear. But his message tells you the day's schedule, and he always throws in a little extra commentary that's become a trademark. From building her house in Wendell a few years ago, Odou could still channel Conkey's recorded voice. "He's always, like, 'It's Thursday. The acorns are falling. That means it'll be snowing soon. If you need kindling, better get down here and grab it—it's mostly gone. Still got a lot of firewood, though.'"

A recent one: "It's Saturday morning. It's a little drizzly and dreary here this morning. Supposed to be a little sunshine later. There's always plenty to do here, so I'll be here 'til about one o'clock—come on down and get what you need. I'm always willing to take your money."

His status as a fifth generation sawmill operator surely explains at least part of why Conkey could stay in business during thirty years of great change in the lumber industry. For some time now, most Quabbin-area logs have trailered north to large sawmill operations, like

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ROYALSTON AND WARE ONCE BUSTLED WITH INDUSTRY

by Carla Charter

Otis Company Mills and Ware Industries clustered about a waterfall that powered mills in the early twentieth century.

postcard courtesy of Ware Historical Society

Now quiet rural towns, in the nineteenth century Royalston and Ware bustled as manufacturing hubs of different products, among them textiles. With many mills in the eighteen hundreds powered by water, the Ware and Millers rivers offered essential impetus to then burgeoning industry.

Among the largest and most extensive manufacturing businesses in South Royalston, a branch of the American Woolen Company stood on land of The Royalston Cotton and Manufacturing Company owned by Rufus Bullock, then by George Whitney and Daniel Day. Fire destroyed the Cotton and Manufacturing Company on August 20, 1892.

American Woolen Company began by making fine suitings but soon turned to producing wool blankets. In 1916, according *to The History of the Town of Royalston, Massachusetts* by Lilley B. Caswell, the plant housed 2,976 spindles and 82 looms that employed one hundred and fifty hands.

Royalston boasted a train station that allowed the textile company to transport its products to the rest of the country. Peter Kraniak, president of the Royalston Historical Society and chairman of the Royalston Historical Commission, added that the station was used by other businesses, too. "I was told by the late Harold Newton, police chief, that most of the houses in Royalston had

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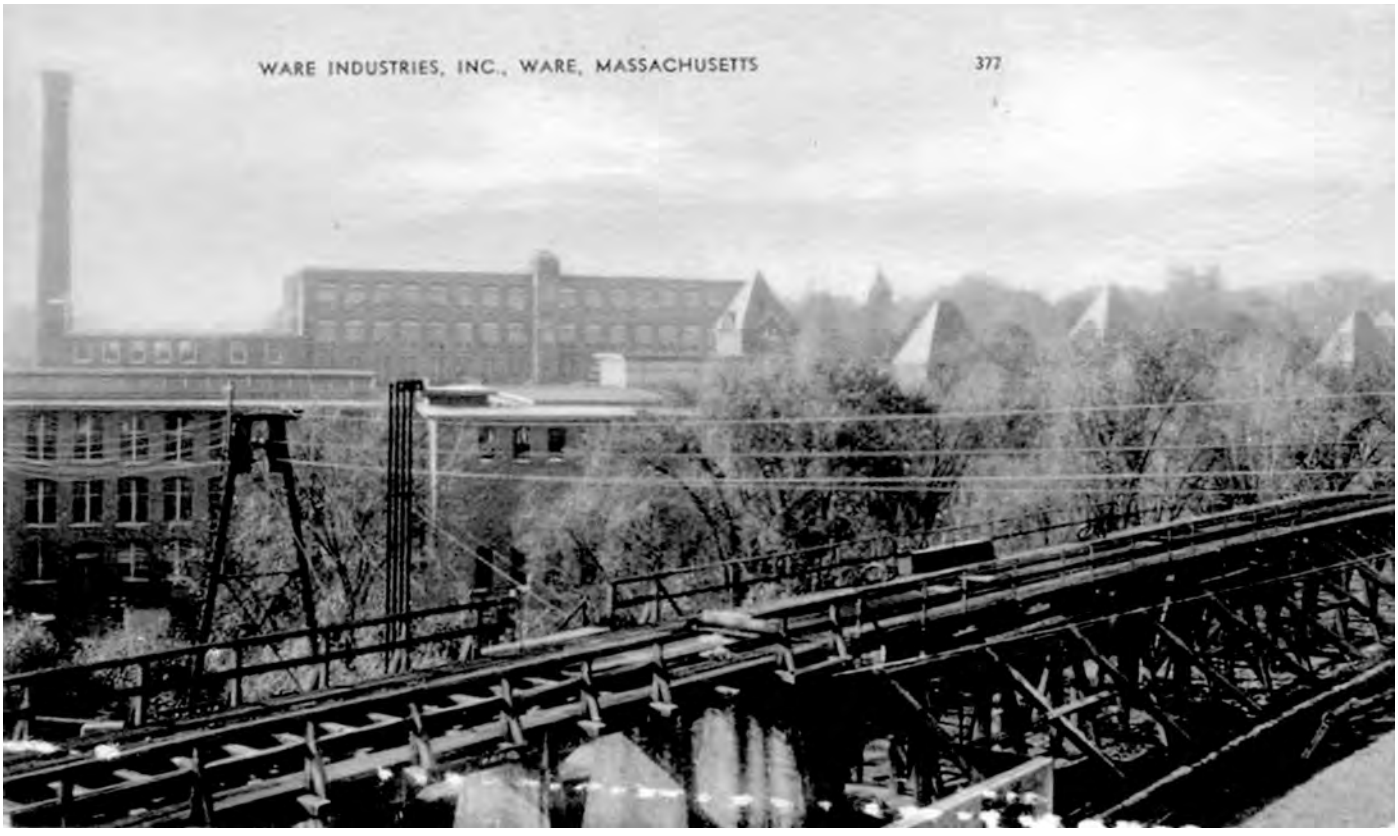

Ware Industries dominated Ware's landscape beyond the railroad.

postcard courtesy of Ware Historical Society

Nature's Nuances

by Clare Green

Fasting refers to a willing abstinence from food, solid or liquid.

At one time, the state of Massachusetts celebrated a holiday known as Fast Day on the first Thursday in April, before the spring planting season. The earliest known Fast Day, dedicated to public fasting and prayer, occurred in 1670 in Boston. It remained a holiday until 1894 in Massachusetts, and other states had such observances until 1991.

Children stayed home from school. They especially had to be quiet and respectful with good manners that day. Families attended church in the morning and afternoon, with an hour break at noon. People did not prepare nor eat dinner on that day. In her 1892 edition of *More Good Times at Hackmatack*, Author Mary P. Wells Smith indicates that children seemed to fare very well on Fast Day. All ages ate bread and butter at noon with fruit pie. The observance did not require children to fast, and they foraged the pantry and ate butternuts, apples, and whatever else they found. Apparently, the most difficult part of Fast Day for the young folk concerned a requirement for moderate action with polite decorum. Playtime had its limits according to each household.

Although no longer an official holiday in Massachusetts, fasting occurs in many faith traditions that adhere to fasting during various holy days. Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam all practice fasting.

Fasting may also occur to emphasize political beliefs and hone spiritual awareness.

People may choose to fast once per week or once per month to give the digestive system a rest. Fasters may consume water, juices, teas, or fruits, depending on the fast. Drinking nettle tea in the springtime stimulates and cleanses the digestive system. So does drinking water with fresh lemon juice.

Massage practitioner Andy Mathey of Good Shiatsu in Greenfield advises education, care, and concern when undertaking a fast for an extended time. Consult with your doctor, since fasting can also release toxins into your system if you have an underlying health issue. Be wise.

Naturalist and educator Clare Green of Warwick welcomes folk to visit her woodland labyrinth and fairy cottage.

Please choose reusable bags whenever you shop.
—Hattie Nestel

The Gilbertville Covered Bridge spans the Ware River and joins the Massachusetts towns of Ware and Hardwick in Gilbertville village.

photo © John Burk

eating locally means eating seasonally:

by Cathy Stanton

Public interest in locally produced food continues to grow, and more people are becoming aware that eating locally also means eating seasonally.

But how can we do that in the Quabbin region when our growing season is so short? Old and new techniques for growing and preserving food offer some answers to that question.

One old strategy coming back into fashion is the root cellar. I lived for many years in a mid-nineteenth-century house in Athol with a room at the bottom of the cellar stairs that my husband and I called "the ugly room." Tucked into a corner of the old stone foundation, it had a dirt floor and rows of decaying wooden shelves sagging off a once plastered inner wall. We sometimes joked that the threat of being put into this dark, cobwebby space must have been useful for scaring children into behaving.

Only after I began to get interested in the history of local food production did I realize that the ugly room was actually an old root cellar. In the days before refrigeration, a cool, dark indoor space was a way to extend the bounty of the growing season into the cold winter months. It provided a place to store fresh vegetables and fruit as well as canned, pickled, brewed, and fermented food and drink.

In our area, Jack Kittredge and Julie Rawson of Many Hands Organic Farm in Barre have helped to spark a revival of interest in root cellaring. When they built their farmhouse in 1982, they included a sizable, well-ventilated root cellar in the basement. They store a wide variety of the food they produce there as well as teaching others the basics of this largely forgotten skill. It's not rocket science, but it does need some attention to timing, temperature and humidity levels, and other factors. For example, carrots and beets do best buried in a container of damp sand or sawdust, while potatoes last longer if they have air circulating around them.

Jack Kittredge of Barre's Many Hands Organic Farm heads for the fields on a summer day.

photo © Oliver Scott Photography

not impossible even in wintertime

There's plenty of good advice about root cellaring available online, including a good introductory PowerPoint by Jack and Julie on the website of the Northeast Organic Farming Association of Massachusetts (NOFAMass), also headquartered at their Barre farm.

Many small-scale farmers have also embraced greenhouses and hoop houses as ways to extend the short growing season. Like root cellars, greenhouses are a very old technique, but today's growers experiment with new strategies and crops that expand the repertoire of what can be grown in central Massachusetts in late autumn, early spring, or even winter.

Seeds of Solidarity Farm in Orange makes extensive use of greenhouses, with a number of big structures on the property for growing leafy greens and other foods. Farmers Ricky Baruc and Deb Habib aim for a nine- or ten-month cultivation season, letting things die back in December and turning their attention to rebuilding, planning, and preparation for spring. By February, they're already planting seeds and welcoming the reappearance of over-wintered spinach.

Hoop houses, as opposed to greenhouses, tend to be smaller and often more adaptable. They're usually made of simple materials like PVC or aluminum pipe bent into curves attached to some kind of frame or pushed right into the ground, and covered with plastic or permeable row-cover cloth. As the terms suggest, high-tunnel hoop houses are sized more like walk-in greenhouses; some even have two layers of plastic with air blown between the layers to create an insulating barrier. Low-tunnel hoop houses are much closer to the soil, offering protection from cold and often from pests as well.

Spinach, Swiss chard, kale, lettuce, and other greens thrive in colder temperatures, and some newly popular varieties, like mache or "corn salad," are hardy enough to withstand even a New England winter.

Many farmers in the local-food economy make use of hoop houses to grow a wider range of products beyond the short summer growing season. At the Farm School in Athol, new farmers practice growing leafy greens throughout the winter in a high-tunnel hoop house and learn about the merits of different designs as part of their training.

Our forebears were skilled at many other ways to work within seasonal limits, including "putting food by" through canning, pickling, fermenting, dehydrating, and smoking fresh food in season. The advent of electric home refrigerators and freezers in the 1920s and '30s gave food-preservers another way to store the summer harvest. All of these methods are coming back into popularity as more people return to locally sourced foods, including from their own home gardens.

Supermarket shopping has conditioned most of us to expect a full range of fresh food year-round. Eating locally challenges us to notice and make use of what's actually available from our own area in the colder months. We're accustomed to celebrating the region's food traditions on special occasions like Thanksgiving, when a full feast from turkey, squash, and potatoes to cranberries and pumpkin or apple pie can be sourced from close to home. We can continue the celebration right through the winter by featuring more of what our area has to offer—and looking forward to the spring when the maple sap will rise and another short growing season will get underway.

Cathy Stanton is a writer and scholar who lives in Wendell and teaches at Tufts University.

in winter: a wacky feeling of comradeship

a photo essay © Mike Phillips

somewhere in some streets

—Jack Kerouac

Quabbin Flooded Kids' Summer Camps

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Camp Quabbin yearbook cover shows bunk and tent sites.

Laundry, which "by special appointment were launderers to Camp Quabbin and Camp Pomeroy."

Haupt sold both of the camp properties to the water commission that built the Quabbin Reservoir in 1934, receiving around $250,000, according to documents in the Quabbin records. Town reports show the property once assessed at less than $50,000. It was one of the largest property settlements made for the reservoir project.

The other Jewish camp in Swift River Valley was located on Pottapaug Pond in the southeast part of Dana, another drowned town. This Camp Dana for boys was built around 1926 by Sarah Feinberg of Ware on the old Blackmer farm of fifty acres with fourteen cottages, a mess hall, and a social hall. Little is known about the camp, as it operated only for five years before being sold to the water commission in 1931.

Phillipston's Queen Lake Camp, a Jewish camp for girls mostly from the New York and Boston areas, operated from 1921 to the early 1970s under the direction of the Schlosberg family.

Both camps provided some economic benefit to the communities where they were located, which included hiring local contractors to build them and obtaining some food and supplies from local stores. While a little known and nearly forgotten part of local history, the camps deserve to be remembered as part of the history of the old Swift River Valley.

J. R. Greene, a lifelong resident of Athol, is the author of twenty books, sixteen of which relate to the history of Quabbin Reservoir and the towns destroyed to build it.

Pictures of the camps appear in J. R. Greene's *Quabbin History Calendar* publications as follows: July, 2011, Camp Quabbin; July, 2010, Camp Pomeroy; July, 2017, Camp Dana.

Swift River: largest tributary to Quabbin

by Ashley Arseneau

The Swift River flows through our Quabbin region towns. With three branches called West Branch, East Branch, and Middle Branch, the river leads into Quabbin Reservoir at the northern end of the Quabbin Reservoir watershed. The Massachusetts General Court authorized damming Swift River in the 1930s to create the reservoir.

Trustees of the Reservation identify Swift River as the largest tributary to the reservoir, which joins other rivers in the South Quabbin region that flow to the larger Connecticut River.

A number of small streams and brooks join in Petersham to become the East Branch. The streams include Moccasin, Rutland, Shattuck, Popple Camp, and Bigelow brooks. Along East Branch, Connor's Pond abuts Rutland Brook Wildlife Sanctuary. Further along East Branch, find Brown's Pond in the area near the Petersham intersection East Street and Shaw.

Three hiking tracts owned by the Trustees surround East Branch. One, known as the Slab City tract, has abandoned cellar holes where houses once stood. East Branch enters the Quabbin Reservoir between Gates 40 and 41 on Route 32.

Middle Branch originates in northeast New Salem and southeastern Wendell, then flows over rocks through Morse Village. Moosehorn and Buffalo brooks feed Middle Branch as it eventually grows more rapid and rocky as it nears Quabbin Reservoir. Along the waters of Middle Branch are maple, birch, ash, and oak trees and some hemlock groves. Middle Branch enters the Quabbin near Gate 30 on Route 122 in New Salem after Buffalo Brook.

West Branch waters begin from boggy swamplands of Wendell in hemlock forests and fed by small brooks. Where they come together

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The late watercolorist Barbara Ellis depicted Swift River's East Branch for the cover of William O. Foye's 1992 book *Trout Waters.*

painting used with permission of Susie Feldman

Ice coats trees along Baldwinville Road in Templeton as temperatures descend.

photo © David Brothers

If you haven't, stay at a B & B

by Sharon Harmon

If you have never been to a bed and breakfast, add it to your bucket list.

Mark and Deni Ellis have operated **Clamber Hill Bed and Breakfast** in Petersham since 1997. The winding driveway through the woods makes magic in every season. Nestled deep in the woods it makes a treasure of delight to find.

"It's amazing how many international people come to see the foliage," Deni said. "We have had people from Europe, Great Britain, Asia, Australia, and even Brazil."

The inn features five rooms with stately Old World charm. In 2003, the Ellises added a restaurant open from 5 to 8 pm Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays with special holiday hours. A small gift shop adds to the attractions.

Clamber Hill also sponsors wine and whiskey tastings The inn welcomes dogs with their owners.

Contact relax@clamberhill.com

Another North Quabbin destination is **The Rose Cottage** in Orange. Proprietors Rose Marie Thoms and Nathan Steinberg started their business in 2003.

"There seemed to be a need for it, as there weren't any around here at the time," Rose Marie said. The B and B has two bedrooms and a shared bath.

Decorated in eclectic style, The Rose Cottage sports surrounding gardens and a gazebo. and stream with a waterwheel as a feast for the eyes when you have breakfast on the back enclosed porch.

A seasonal establishment, The Rose Cottage welcomes guests from May 1 until the end of November. Rose Marie said her favorite thing about The Rose Cottage is the people she meets. "Many of them become lifelong friends," she said.

Contact mariethoms@hotmail.com

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Petersham's Clamber HIll Bed and Breakfast (with restaurant) welcomes visitors from all over the world.

photo by Mark Ellis

What could be sweeter than a

Maple Sugar Locations around the Quabbin

Maple sugaring will not be hurried. It is more than the work of one night or one week. Its rhythms are measured in sunlight and shadow, in the tilt of the earth's axis and in the ancient memories of trees.

—Will Weaver, courtesy of Skyhorse Publishing

BELCHERTOWN
Occasional Creek Maple / Patrick & Sara Delaney
251 Daniel Shays Highway
Belchertown, MA
(413) 835-6331
Email: occasionalcreekmaple@gmail.com
Website: occasionalcreekmaple.wordpress.com
Facebook: Occasional Creek Maple

Shattuck's Sugarhouse / Will & Judi Shattuck & Family
34 Kopec Avenue
Belchertown, MA
(413) 323-7639
Email: shattuckssugarhouse@gmail.com
Facebook: Shattuck's Sugarhouse

ERVING
Poplar Mountain Maple / Warren & Jacquelyn Boyden
151 Northfield Road
Erving, MA
(413) 423-3242
Email: dansveggies@comcast.net
Facebook: Dan's Veggies and Poplar Mountain Maple

Zilinski Maple Syrup / John Zilinski
20 East Prospect Street
Erving, MA
(413) 422-2365
Email: zilinskimaplesyrup@gmail.com
Facebook: Zilinski Maple Syrup

HARDWICK
Hardwick Sugar Shack
Joe & Megan Raskett
572 Jackson Road
Hardwick, MA
(413) 477-0932
Email: joe@hardwicksugarshack.com
Website: www.hardwicksugarshack.com
Facebook: Hardwick Sugar Shack

LEVERETT
Field Family Farmstand and Sugarhouse
Jeff Field
264 Long Plain Road (Route 63)
Leverett, MA
(413) 548-9886
Facebook: Field Family Farmstand and Sugarhouse

Leverett Sugar Shack
Ted Telega
119 Long Plain Road
Leverett, MA
(413) 548-9413

NEW BRAINTREE
Grand Maple Farms / Justin & Paul Schur
727 Moore Road
New Braintree, MA
(508) 867-2526
Email: grandmaplefarms@gmail.com
Facebook: Grand Maple Farms
YouTube: @grandmaplefarms

NORTH ORANGE
Gauvin's Sugarhouse / Richard Gauvin
28 Royalston Road
North Orange, MA
(978) 575-0216
Email: rgbuckshot@yahoo.com

ORANGE
Johnson's Farm Sugarhouse / Steve & DeDe Johnson
210 Wheeler Avenue
Orange, MA
978-544-7835
Email: johnsonsfarm@verizon.net
Website: www.JohnsonsFarm.net
Facebook: Johnson's Farm Restaurant & Sugarhouse

ROYALSTON
Sweet Water Sugarhouse / Thomas LeRay
56 Brown Road
Royalston, MA
(978) 249-3464
Email: redneck01368@yahoo.com
Facebook: Sweet Water Sugarhouse

WARE
Maxfield Family Sugarhouse / David Maxfield
559 Old Greenwich Plains Road
Ware, MA
(413) 967-7347
Email: jeeperscreepers71@comcast.net
Facebook: Maxfield Family Sugarhouse

WENDELL
Sugarbush Farm / Bill & Laurel Facey
47 Davis Road
Wendell, MA
(978) 544-7178

Maps © Casey Williams

Quabbin region sugar shack?

by Paula J. Botch

Imagine gazing out your window on a moon-filled late winter night. Shadows of family scurry behind fogged windows of a tiny sugar shack in your own back yard. Open your door to the outdoor chill for a whiff of sweet smoke billowing from the sugar shack chimney as maple sap boils down into treasured syrup.

Debbie Ellis of Athol fondly remembers the years after her family's transition from a small farm to maple sugaring in the early 1990s. Tom Ellis cut an oil tank in half with a flat pan and tarp as his original equipment. He later upgraded and built a rustic sugar shack where long days of hard work went well into the nights. He always collected sap the old-fashioned way in buckets from about a hundred tapped maples that brought between five and ten gallons of syrup each season. Over the ten years of a maple-sugaring hobby, the shack produced homegrown maple syrup for sharing with family and friends. Simple, nostalgic memories. Delicious!

I know little to nothing about maple sugaring, and my mind's eye flashed images of bucolic landscapes filled with trees sporting old buckets that magically brought forth syrup. Those accomplishing maple syruping's hard work no doubt experience a bit of sweat along with the magic.

The art and science of harvesting maple tree sap that appears on our tables as pure maple syrup after time-honored processing, has a long history intertwined with legend dating to at least the 1600s in Massachusetts. In our own time, the process has in some cases become very high tech—and not so romantic.

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Tom Ellis, right, supervises emptying a sap vat into a metal can for transport to the boiling pan, c. 1989.

photo courtesy of Debra Ellis

(continued from Page 29)

And there's the matter of taste. It does matter, and it is different from sugarhouse to sugarhouse.

At least thirteen maple sugaring locations make their homes in ten Quabbin region towns. As with the two I visited, sugarhouses operate small and large, with more or less technology, yet the establishments themselves are alike in size and structure as well as the work process each season.

HARDWICK SUGAR SHACK

His sweet tooth made them do it! A warm and wonderful couple, Joe and Megan Raskett began their adventure in maple sugaring more than twenty years ago. Their two children, Emily and Jonathan, now young adults, continue to pitch in. With more than twelve hundred tapped trees in the back yard, this business not only satisfies Joe, his family, and the local community—their syrup runs across the globe.

When winter's cold slips a bit and spring's tiptoe of warmth sneaks in, annual preparations begin. Joe checks the lines and machine equipment, doing cleaning and repairs. Running his hand along sap lines, he feels for nicks and holes where squirrels, deer, or other creatures may have scratched or bitten through. Freezing nights and warmer days finally send sap flowing, delicate and light at the beginning, darker and full-flavored later on. Nature takes her time, and the season's sap flow fluctuates somewhat from year to year. When a season ends, there's another round of cleanup.

Megan feels having children involved allows them to be hands-on and connects them to what nature provides. Her now grown kids take youngsters on tours during sugar season and pass that message of connection along to a new generation. This outreach signifies part of what makes their business integral to the local community. They sell their syrup retail, and area restaurants use it on favorite dishes and in favorite recipes.

Hardwick Sugar Shack's maple syrup is swoon-worthy! You're welcome to visit, see the process, and sample it for yourself. Open house events generally occur every Sunday in March if the sap's flowing.

JOHNSON'S FARM SUGARHOUSE

Tucked away from the main drag in Orange sprawls the beautiful Johnson's Farm. Large, lush, open fields surround a charming country restaurant while directly across the street among trees stands their sugarhouse, painted quintessential New England barn red.

Back in 1900, the Johnson family acquired the farm and began maple sugaring. It continues as a fairly large operation with a few thousand taps near their sugarhouse as well as trees they bid on in the Quabbin area. Several generations in, with Steve and DeDe at the helm—their grandchildren are the sixth generation, family and other helpers pitch in during sugaring season to gather sap from old-fashioned buckets as well as pipeline taps. During sugaring season, the sugarhouse is open to the public, and you can watch the process first hand.

Tom Ellis stirs boiling sap in a flat pan heating on a makeshift wood stove created from an out-of-service oil tank. Looking on: Benjamin Ellis, lower left, and the late Roger Barrett, right.

photo courtesy of Debra Ellis

You can count on great home-style meals at their restaurant across the street. Johnson's Farm constitutes a huge piece of the local community, and the family's "giving back" includes providing an annual free Thanksgiving dinner open to anyone who wishes to join them. Don't forget to try Johnson's Farm's own maple syrup—mmmmm!!—with meals and for sale to take home for your very own.

My quest to learn about maple sugaring piqued my interest in taste. Along with the pleasure of actually sampling syrup along the way, I solicited opinions and enjoyed the added treat of some great conversations and stories.

Paul Schur of Grand Maple Farms in New Braintree mentioned a distinct taste difference, especially in what's considered "factory-made" syrup. John Zilinski of Zilinski Maple Syrup in Erving said there is definitely a difference from maker to maker and with some additives. Thomas LeRay of Sweet Water Sugarhouse in Royalston spoke of a smoky flavor if the sap is cooked over a wood fire.

Paula J. Botch is a writer and photographer—and maple syrup lover—living in Orange, Massachusetts.

Submit letters to the editor of *Uniquely Quabbin* to
haley.antique@verizon.net or 488 South Main Street • Athol, MA 01331

New Restaurants

High Tides Restaurant recently opened in Barre on Route 122 near the Petersham line after an extensive renovation and facelift. Slate blue wooden siding and a newly designed ample parking lot lead into a family-friendly atmosphere.

Homey pine boards, sleek black seating, and sparkling stainless steel kitchen showcase a reasonably priced, mostly seafood menu. Premium items such as lobster are market priced. House wine, local beers, and mixed drinks are available and attractively priced. Chef John Flagg focuses on quality. He has crafted an efficient workplace designed to turn out generous portions of fresh seafood, hand-cut fries, onion rings, chowder, appetizers, and coleslaw.

Flagg has had culinary training and owned a restaurant in the distant past, but a layoff from Rodney Hunt gave him the opportunity to do again what he really loves-cooking!

Flagg has carved a specific niche for his eatery, aiming to complement other establishments in the area. "I want to make a living, not a killing," Flagg says and hopes to have many happy customers returning again and again.

Flagg looks forward to adding a seasonal dairy bar to his menu starting Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day. Patrons can enjoy their selections, including alcoholic drinks, outside near a waterfall as they relax in the long awaited New England summer.

All items can be ordered to go, and the restaurant is wheelchair accessible.

For more information, call 978-355-6715.

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Visit a Quabbin area museum,
historical society,
arts center, or library.
You'll be glad you did!

Vary Fare in the Quabbin Region

by Clare Kirkwood

Barre's High Tides Restaurant carves specific niche to "make a living, not a killing."

photo by Jim Flynn

Snow dusts Barre's Jenkins Inn.

photo by David Ward

Quabbin region historical societies,
museums, and arts centers
look forward to coordinated events
May 18-21, 2017,
the weekend before Memorial Day.

Quabbin region B & Bs embrace guests with country charm

(continued from Page 26)

In the South Quabbin area, the charming **Jenkins Inn** in Barre fills a beautiful, newly reconstructed Main Street building close to the town's commons. Warm, inviting Victorian style and décor enhance the building. Joe Perrin and David Ward, co-owners, started their enterprise in April of 1987. The house had been abandoned for nine years when they acquired it.

Guests find a dining room and four bedrooms with private baths open all year with holiday celebrations in the dining room featuring David's homemade desserts. Jenkins Inn serves afternoon teas from 2 to 5 on March Sundays. Immaculate rooms and attention to detail make the inn lovable.

"After all these years, we still love the business. You can slow time down coming here," David said.

Contact jenkinsinnbarre@gmail.com

A family-run operation, **Hartman's Herb Farm Bed and Breakfast** also has its home in Barre. It opened in 1990 and became popular mostly by word of mouth. Two miles west of Route 122 on Old Dana Road, you come to Hartman's rambling, inviting shop, bed and breakfast, and dining area.

In season, the Hartmans host outdoor weddings. Lynn and Peter Hartman own the enterprise with Carissa Hartman-Wozniak, their daughter.

A year-round business, Hartman's Herb Farm showcases farm- to- table dinners open to the public. Carissa said the B and B offers winter getaway packages.

Hartman's sports a down-to-earth country style, celebrating nature. The family farms to supply their popular herb business.

Be sure to browse in the intriguing shop with all its one of a kind gifts.

Contact hartmansherb@hotmail.com

Sharon A. Harmon is a poet and freelance writer from Royalston.

© Ami Fagin

Social Stratification, a visual haiku

Emotional mind states, observations of day to day reality, and the cheekier flashes of life's paradoxes are all fodder for visual haiku, according to artist Ami Fagin. Visual Haiku came as a sudden inspiration of daily watercolor meditative expressions articulating life's challenges and opportunities in a transient world where nothing is the same from one moment to the next. The series emerged in the late summer of 2016.

Amy Fagin specializes in traditional manuscript illumination at her 20th Century Illuminations print studio in New Salem. Author of *Beyond Genocide,* she is an independent scholar in genocide studies

NEW RESTAURANTS

(continued from Page 32)

The Barn Owl Restaurant recently opened in the old general store in Warwick. The landmark closed in 2004 after more than a hundred years of operation. Jim Kilroy, who had been eying the property since the 1990s with the dream of opening a ceramics studio, jumped at the chance to purchase it in June, 2015. This time, his dream took the form of a restaurant that he always knew would be called Barn Owl due to his lifelong fascination with the majestic bird.

Warwick residents welcomed the considerable efforts of the Kilroy family to transform the landmark and adjoining home into its present incarnation. A grueling fourteen-month stint of from twelve- to fourteen-hour days turned the vacant general store into a rustic but sophisticated space with outdoor dining.

Jim, a multifaceted artist, previously worked in carpentry, ceramics, floral arranging, cooking, and baking. He's crafted a white brick oven from his former pottery kiln to turn out skillfully prepared baked goods. His training includes studying at the Baking Education Center in Norwich, Vermont.

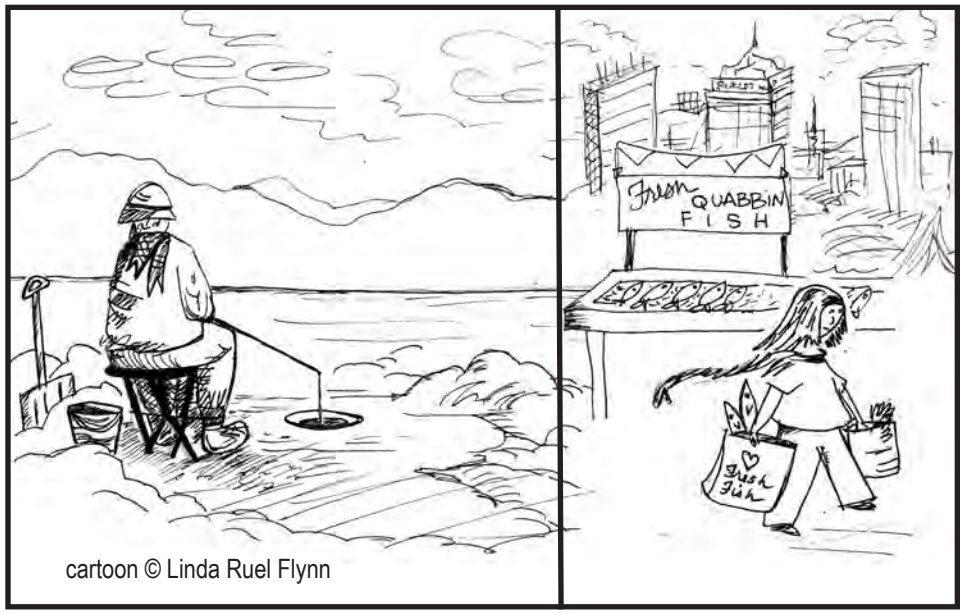
Similar to European cafes, Barn Owl is open Tuesday through Saturday 6 a.m. to noon and serves breads, bagels, pastries, and Deans' Beans Coffee. It's an inviting space to greet the day alone, with friends, or perhaps a good read. After a "siesta" break, the eatery reopens from 5-9 p.m. for light dinner fare. Wood-fired pizza, hearty homemade soups including vegetarian,

salads, and meats sourced from nearby Hattie Bell farm comprise the changing seasonal menu.

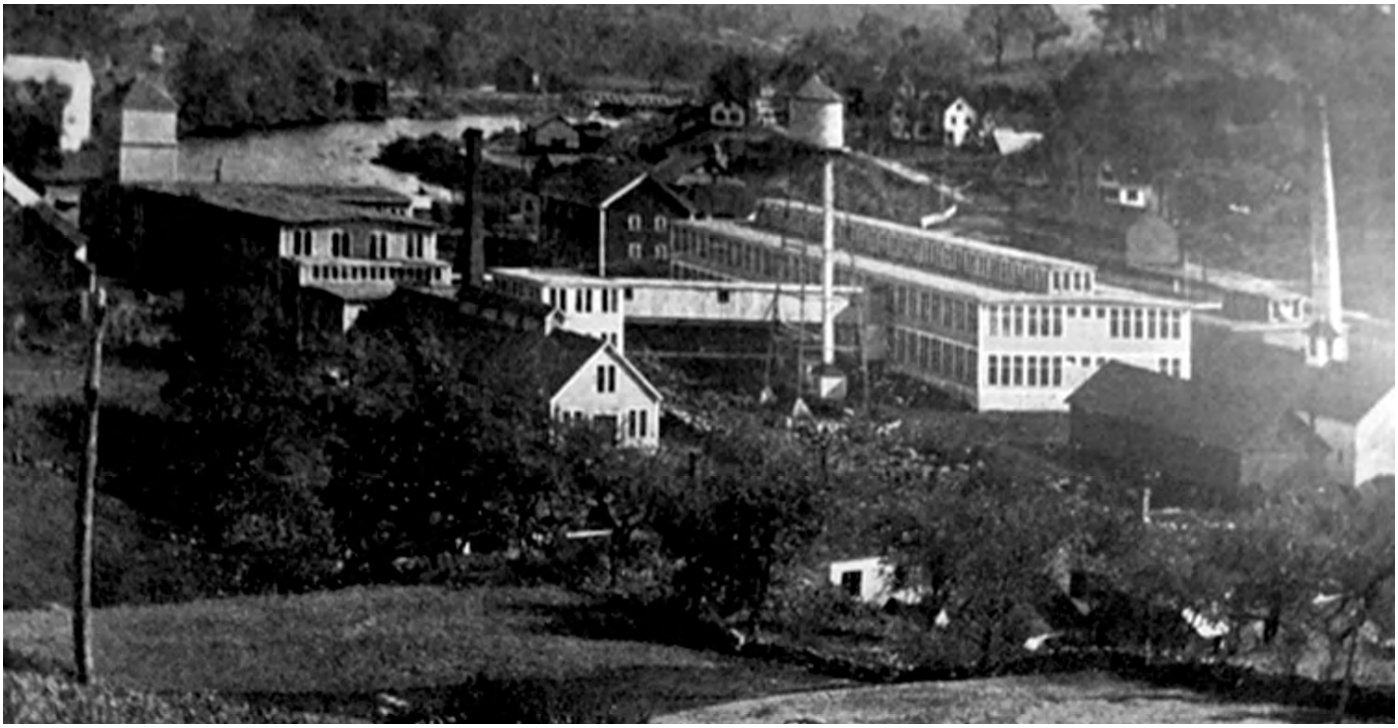
Sundays, Barn Owl opens from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. for breakfast/brunch.

From handcrafted wooden furniture and tables to ceramics and floral touches, nothing in Barn Owl has escaped Kilroy's personal touch,. Residents and passers-by welcome the chance to talk over coffee and something divine on the patio with a view of serene country life or tuck into a bowl of soup or great handmade pizza in the earthy beauty of Barn Owl. For more information call 978-544-3430 or email BARNOWLBAKE@gmail.com for more information.

Clare Kirkwood is a dedicated foodie and graduate of the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, New York. She lives in Athol.



cartoon © Linda Ruel Flynn



An American Woolen Company factory sprawled along the banks of Millers River in South Royalston.

photo from *History of Royalston,* Lilley B. Caswell, 1923

TEXTILE MILLS BOOMED IN 19th CENTURY QUABBIN VALLEY

(continued from page 14)

fencing around them to protect the properties from cattle drives that came through town to the South Royalston train station."

Reminders of textile mill owners still exist on the Royalston Common today, according to Mr. Kraniak. He explained that, while the mill workers lived mainly in South Royalston, owners themselves usually lived on Royalston Common. Both Colonel Whitney's home and the Bullock house still stand in Royalston center as reminders of the town's textile past.

Ware, too, once hosted a booming textile industry. Among the most prominent textile manufacturers was The Otis Company which began in 1839. By January of 1840, the factory employed 211 people with a payroll of $2,665.00 and producing 744,465 yards of cloth.

In 1937, The Otis Company, the largest employer in town, notified their workers they would be moving. . In response to the move, selectmen appointed a committee that eventually developed a plan to sell shares in the company to townspeople.

"There was standing room only at a special town meeting with more (people) on the streets, with a bullhorn used to address these people," LaBombard said. "There were men, women, and children at the meeting. No one did not attend the meeting. The plan was approved, and as a result, the townspeople became owners of the mill." The town meeting created Ware Industries in the first employee buy-out of a major manufacturer in America.

Police Chief Bartholmew Buckley coined a phrase then that has stuck with the town to this day, LaBombard added: "Ware truly is the town that can't be licked."

The purchase of the factory by its workers made national news, with *Life* magazine covering the purchase in its May 23, 1938 issue in an article entitled "Life Goes to a Party: Ware, Mass Celebrates Comeback."

Later that year, a play, *We're Happy about the Whole Thing,* dramatized the town's purchase of the factory. The musical was produced in 1938, in 1986, and in 2016. The company ran for another thirty years under worker ownership.

Another textile manufacturer, Gilbert and Stevens Company, began in 1841 to make broadcloth, eventually

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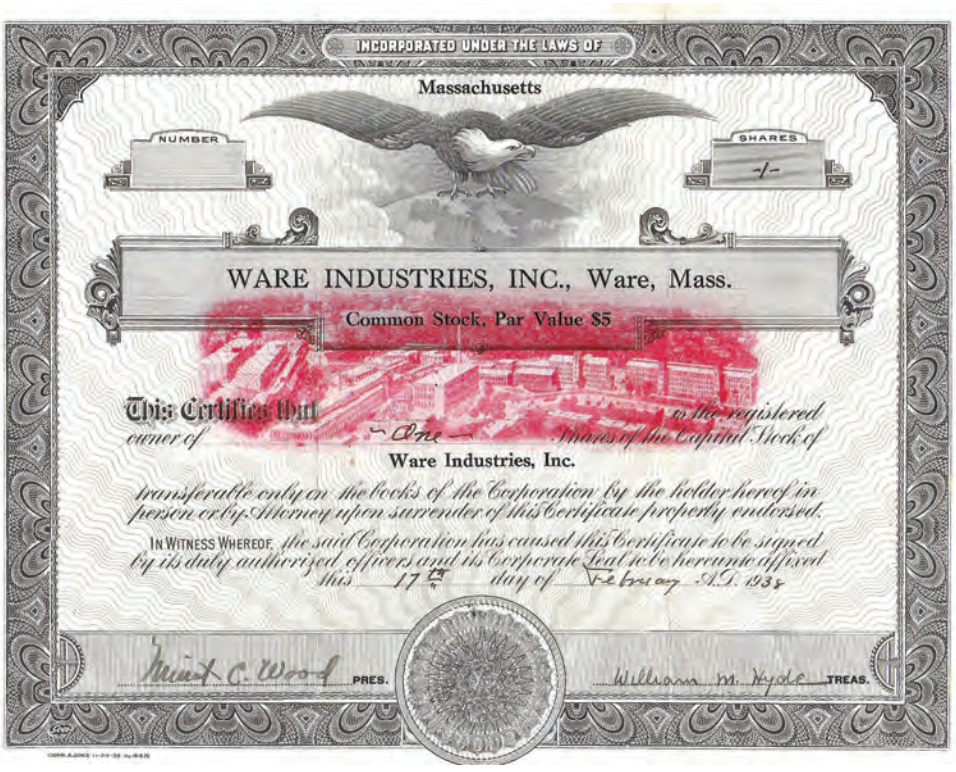
An early twentieth century postcard shows the main entrance of Otis Company Cotton Mill Number 3 in Ware.

postcard courtesy of Ware Historical Society

(continued from Page 39)



In 1931, a share of Ware Industries, Inc., stock traded for $5. Like other preferred and common stock certificates of the era, it is decorated with a vignette, this one depicting the mills of the Town of Ware viewed from an airplane.

Stock certificate courtesy of the Ware Historical Society.

instead producing "fine flannels," according to the *History of Ware* by Arthur Chase. In 1851 the company won a gold medal at the Great Exhibition in Crystal Palace, London but dissolved the same year, although manufacturer Stevens continued producing fine flannels in Ware.

In 1857, Lewis N. Gilbert, nephew of the founder, received an interest in the business. In 1860, George H. Gilbert and Company purchased land in Hardwick where the village of Gilbertville emerged. The business thrived, incorporated as The George H. Gilbert Manufacturing Company, making woolens and worsted mens wear.

Carla Charter is a freelance writer. She lives in Phillipston.

Brian Nugent, right, demonstrates a step in creating a winsert, an economical method for weatherizing windows at a 2014 workshop at Millers River Environmental Center, Athol.

photo © Pat Larson

WINTER ENERGY STRATEGIES

(continued from Page 6)

These might include blocking off unused rooms during the winter to cut down on heating costs or investing in energy efficient boilers, water heaters, and other appliances that may qualify for rebates and no-interest HEAT loans.

Speaking of drafts at windows, investigate creative do-it-yourself projects including construction of winserts. Winserts cost about twelve dollars for a standard size window and are constructed with simple wood frames and two layers of clear plastic attached to the frames. A winsert can be removed for the summer, stored, and reinserted the following winter. The double thickness of clear plastic increases the R-value of the window (the window's ability to resist heat loss), cuts down on drafts, and thus helps reduce heat loss through windows. Not only have individual homeowners worked with others to make winserts, but volunteers made and installed winserts in several public buildings throughout the Quabbin region during the past seven years.

Some towns worked with volunteer residents to construct and install winserts and also implemented energy reduction plans through Green Community designation. Since 2009, town governments have been able to apply for funding to help with five-year, twenty-percent energy reduction plans through the state Department of Energy Resources. In the Quabbin region, eleven of twenty-one towns gained Green Community designation between 2010 and 2015 to help meet costs of energy-saving projects. For example, Barre became a Green Community in 2011. Grant money allowed Barre to complete weatherization projects and installation of mechanical upgrades in some buildings, including the library with a climate-control heating system.

Heather Lemieux, town administrator for Barre, pointed out, "We have seen a reduction in energy use costs for town buildings with Green Communities projects."

Volunteers also worked with the Barre Energy Committee to construct and install winserts for the library windows. Jenna Garvey, circulation librarian for the Barre Library, recently shared that "winserts were put into library windows in early 2014 and not removed during the summer. This will be the third winter, we have benefited from winserts made by volunteers. I sit next to a large window, and it has made a big difference in cutting down on the drafts and heat loss."

PROVIDE SAVINGS, WARMTH

Several other towns worked with volunteer citizens to make and install winserts in public buildings. In Orange, volunteers put winserts into windows in the town hall and water department office building, an old house. Warwick employed volunteers to make winserts for the library as did Petersham. Both towns also received Green Communities grants to do insulation, air sealing, weatherization, and other energy-saving projects.

Other towns applying for Green Communities designation for early 2017 include Erving and Ware. Belchertown and several other towns in the state received Green Communities designation and recently reached the goal of twenty-percent energy reduction.

In the Quabbin region, many towns have old town-owned buildings that have benefited from energy-saving projects through the state's Green Communities program. All this work by both property owners and towns helps cut down on carbon emissions when less energy is used and thus helps prevent global warming that can lead to climate change.

Pat Larson is a retired educator living in North Orange..

Barre residents participate in a 2014 winsert workshop at Barre Library in order to winterize windows in town buildings.

photo © Pat Larson

Erving's East Mineral Road Foot Bridge, constructed in the late nineteenth century of iron, spans Millers River.

photo © Mitchell R. Grosky

plants and their essential oils boost health

by Ellen Woodbury

Versatile lavender, Lavandula augustifolia, offers antiseptic, anti-viral, nerve friendly, muscle-relaxant properties of high value to the body, especially in winter.

photo courtesy of rhs.org.uk.

Welcome to Winter!

In this season of limited light, increased stress, and potential exposure to colds and flu, our nervous and immune systems can suffer. Plants produce essential oils to protect themselves from bacteria, fungus, insect attacks, and decay. The same oils can help the human world in prevention and healing of some illnesses.

Extracted from a plant by steam distillation, plant oils constitute concentrated and powerful medicine. One of the most versatile and widely used essential oils is lavender, Lavandula augustifolia. Thirty pounds of lavender flowers produce fifteen milliliters of essential oil, an oil which may calm anxiety, promote relaxation and restful sleep, and prevent the spread of bacteria

in winter

We can use essential oils in different ways. We can inhale them from the bottle, from a tissue moistened with a few drops, or from a diffuser. We can apply oil directly to the skin or mix with another oil such as coconut, sesame, or olive oil and massage into tired muscles for relief. Skin absorbs oil into the bloodstream where it circulates through the body.

We can put a few drops of essential oil in a spray bottle to spritz after a shower or put a few drops into bath water. Diffusing lavender in a sick child's bedroom can help prevent the spread of colds to others as well as help the child get restorative sleep.

Lavender is widely known to have antiseptic, anti-viral, nerve tonic, and muscle relaxant properties. I recently applied a few drops of lavender essential oil to an oven burn I got on Thanksgiving. Pain and swelling lessened, and it seems that scar tissue will be minimal.

I like to buy organic thus lessening the amount of pesticide chemicals a body will absorb. Lavender does not have known side effects and can be used with children. My aromatherapy teacher says, "Use these oils with respect and over time they will become your good friends!"

Jade Alicandro Mace, community herbalist at Milk and Honey Herbs of Shutesbury, uses plant or herbal medicine to address many conditions: anxiety, stress, depression, autoimmune conditions, trauma, pain, insomnia, and digestion issues, to name a few. A student of herbs

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QUABBIN REGION ARCHITECTURE COMES IN ALL SHAPES

(continued from Page 7)

won—for a new slate roof. It was around that time that I learned that an architect named Chauncy Chase had designed the Civil War era town hall, also designing his adjacent residence. Both of those buildings became part of the Royalston Common Historic District created in 1980.

At the time we voted on the district, including rather strict bylaws and establishing a commission to govern it, I anticipated there would be much opposition. You know the old adage, "A man's home is his castle." Would Royalston folks accept handing over their individual rights to others? In fact, they did, by an overwhelming vote. In the ensuing years, there have been some controversies, but the district is a resounding success. The town common, which this area is centered on, was laid out in 1752, and achieved its present shape about 1840. Flanking the common and lining the nearby roads are the town hall, First Congregational Church with a tall steeple, and private homes featuring primarily Federal style architecture. This church, like many in Massachusetts, lost its tall steeple in the hurricane of 1938, but generous donors provided funds for its reconstruction.

The Baptist Church in Athol is an example of a church that once had a tall steeple but no longer does because of that historic storm. White churches with steeples are icons of New England architecture, with plenty of them in Quabbin towns, north and south. However, shrinking congregations, and thus shrinking budgets, make them difficult to maintain.

Eastern religion has produced some interesting architecture hereabouts, including a Cambodian temple and a Buddhist Peace Pagoda, both in Leverett.

In the South Quabbin, the town of Ware's Church Street Historic District is remarkable. Between Park Avenue and Highland Street in this former mill town are numerous fine residential buildings. The area was developed primarily in response to the growth of industry to the south in the middle of the nineteenth century, leading to construction of Greek Revival homes. Increased economic prosperity later in the nineteenth century prompted the construction of numerous Victorian houses, many of which include particularly well-preserved carriage houses. The district was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1983.

The now quiet village of Gilbertville in Hardwick has a unique industrial look of yesteryear with a gorgeous library, brick factories, railroad station and multi-unit housing for workers.

Historical societies have converted beautiful old private homes or public buildings to museums and meeting places. For example, the Stone House in Belchertown and the Weymouth-French House in Orange are former homes, and the Athol Historical Society is located in a former meetinghouse. Caring for these buildings is a labor of love for society members.

Much historic preservation is left to chance, and money is always a factor. I have been saddened as I witnessed the demolition of two nineteenth century brick buildings in recent years just a few miles from my home—the Uptown Fire Station in Athol and The Grand Army of the Republic Memorial Hall in Orange. Some, like me, think more effort should have been made to preserve these bits of heritage. Others, to be honest, don't care about such things. I also have observed people who appreciate their old houses but simply don't have the money to do necessary repairs and painting.

Every reader can probably cite one or more favorite buildings of merit. My own short list includes these five, all in Orange:

A Victorian house, 142 South Main Street; a rare (for this region) art deco structure, the former Drum Restaurant on West Orange Road, designed by Greenfield architect Alfred Glass, currently empty and significantly damaged; a Gilded Age masterpiece, 175 East Main Street, the former Wheeler Mansion and Eastern Star Home, which was on the market in 2015 for $740,000 but is no longer for sale and has an uncertain future; the town hall with a great auditorium, designed by Elbridge Boyden who also designed Mechanics Hall in Worcester; and Central School, now a dance studio, built in the Romanesque style made famous by H.H. Richardson.

Next time you go for a drive to a Quabbin town, pay attention to the architecture. And if you know someone who teaches architecture at a Massachusetts university, send him or her this column with advice to bring students here for a tour. They can learn a lot.

Columnist Allen Young lives in Royalston. He received the University of Massachusetts Writing and Society Award in 2004.

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Cercosimo in Brattleboro or across the border into Canada. Lumber brokers have pretty much stopped buying big lots of lumber from Conkey and from the few small mills remaining in Central Massachusetts such as Bear Hill Sawmill on George Hannum Street in Belchertown and W. R. Robinson on Cleveland Road in Wheelwright, a Hardwick village. Even the pallet business is changing, adapting to the difficulty of finding labor by buying pre-cut pieces instead of board-length lumber.

But Conkey's good nature, humble persistence, and canny realism have something to do with C&M's longevity, too. Signs in and outside the rambling, rough-sided mill shed reflect that. One announces "Mayberry RFD—Goober, Gomer, and Andy—Don't Expect Much." *His* well-grounded expectations helped the mill weather three decades of business cycles and saw millions of board feet of North Quabbin trees into lumber for local houses, barns, and sheds as well as for the broader trade.

A Belchertown native, Conkey went to New Salem Academy for high school, Class of 1960. After graduation he worked a couple of years at his father's Belchertown mill. Originally water-powered, it was built in 1860 as the Pratt Brothers Saw & Grist Mill. Soon, with the Vietnam War escalating, the draft took him, but he "lucked out" and ended up in Germany from 1964 to 1966. Trained as an engineer, he "rode up and down the Autobahn looking at pretty women and drinking warm beer. To this day, I don't know how I got out of Vietnam."

A turn-of-the-twentieth-century postcard shows Pratt Saw and Grist Mill in Belchertown eventually operated by Jim Conkey's father.

postcard courtesy of Jim Conkey

Conkey got married while back home on leave. On his return to civilian life, he took a job in construction out of Orange. The commute from Belchertown soon grew tiring, and he moved his family to Orange. He suffered a back injury on the job and had an operation—"at the Farren. It was a good place for that then." Procedures at the time didn't involve rehab, he noted. Left to heal on his own, he remembers "doing nothing for five months"—no doubt a personal record. Advised to find an easier way of life, he took a job driving a log truck.

After a downturn in 1981, his employer couldn't stay afloat, and Conkey bought the company's log skidder, partially in settlement for overdue pay. From his first lots in Orange and Wendell, harvesting "mostly hemlock," he sold the logs to the Matthews & Smith mill in New Salem.

The mill's operator, Ken Matthews, was seventy-two and happened to be ready to retire. Conkey and a colleague, Bob Muzzey, bought the mill for eight thousand dollars. Muzzey, Conkey said, had a job at the Starrett Company in Athol and "good connections on Cape Cod. The two of us," he recalled, "worked three days a week at the mill and four in the woods." They remained partners in C&M Roughcut until 1986, when Conkey bought him out.

At times, firewood constituted a big part of the business. Two hundred cords went each year to the Cape Cod client. And lumber was selling: one year the mill sawed "just under a million [board] feet." Conkey added that his setup "wasn't made for that much production."

There were hard times, too. He remembers "two weeks after 9/11 when the phone didn't even ring. People were scared," he said. "The last recession [starting in 2008], I just weathered it out. I was diversified enough with the firewood, bark mulch, and sawdust, besides the lumber." His conservative practices served him and his mill survived to continue supplying to a regular, highly satisfied clientele.

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Keystone Bridge arches over the Middle Branch of Swift River in New Salem.
photo © David Brothers

Swift River Flows On toward the Quabbin

(continued from Page 23

was once the site of a mill and dam. A feeder of West Branch called Canada Brook has been known for a decent-sized Beaver Pond, while West Branch itself is rocky and slightly more cascading with areas of pooling to moderate depth. Canada Brook once also had cranberry bushes along its streams. Also fed by Camel and Village brooks, West Branch enters Quabbin Reservoir between Gates 16 and 17 in New Salem's Cooleyville area.

From the Quabbin Reservoir, Swift River flows south through Ware along to the Three Rivers area of Palmer, then joins Ware and Quabog rivers leading to the much larger Connecticut, said Cliff Read, Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation Quabbin Section Supervisor of Interpretive Services. The south section of the Swift River flows away from the Quabbin in Ware at the spillway near the Belchertown line.

Ashley Arseneau writes for the *Athol Daily News.*

Petersham teams leave for a Bonspiel or tournament. Headed out in 1965 are, from left, Helen Purple, Warren Janes, Bill McBride, Stan Holland, Dot Holland, Helene Rubino, Lois Janes, and Bill Purple.

photo courtesy of Cindy Hartwell

a game of finesse: curling

(continued from Page 11)

club's board of directors for eight years. Cindy started as a junior curler in the 1970s, curled for several years, left the area, and rejoined in 2006. Her father, Vincent "Bill" Purple helped found the club.

"The nice thing is that it's a team sport," she said. "It's not individual like golf. Here, all four players are involved in every shot."

The club has close to a hundred members with leagues that include: Men's, Women's, Mixed, Signature, Youth/Juniors, and Sundays and Tuesdays at Two. The season runs from early October through the end of March. Hartwell encourages new membership and credits the Olympics for increasing interest after curling became a featured event.

The Petersham club recently hosted the men's eight-team, three-day Gordon Emmet Bonspiel, curling's term for a tournament, with curlers from surrounding clubs. More bonspiels are scheduled there, attracting teams from Maryland to Canada.

Matt Craig of Barre has been curling since 1987 and knew very little of the sport until a former neighbor in Templeton enlightened him. He likens the game to a mix of "bocce and shuffleboard with forty-two-pound rocks" played by "a bunch of free-spirited people who want to have fun in the winter," which he says flies by when playing several nights a week.

When Belchertown residents Holly and Jay Shands lived in Wisconsin, a "huge" curling territory, they joined a local club. Jay curled in high school and encouraged Holly to try it. She became instantly hooked on the "fun" sport. After moving to Belchertown, they discovered the Petersham club while driving through the region and became members eleven years ago. Holly said, "The way it allows us to enrich our winter life is amazing!" She has found fellow curlers "friendly and welcoming."

Holly is pleased that the Olympics has helped introduce a younger generation of curlers. It's a sport, she said, that is for "all skill levels with tremendous diversity, and all ages and all walks of life."

Kathryn Chaisson is a writer who lives in Athol.

PETERSHAM CURLING CLUB HISTORY TIED WITH UNION TWIST DRILL

The Petersham Curling Club, founded in 1960, is one of only four curling clubs with dedicated ice in Massachusetts

In the late 1950s, Stanley L. Holland relocated from the Butterfield plant in Rock Island, Quebec, to the Union Twist Drill Company in Athol, where he was president. An avid curler, Mr. Holland wanted a club near his residence in Athol. As a result, many employees of UTD became founders and charter members of the club.

The group purchased land from the Petersham Country Club as the site for the curling club. Vincent "Bill" Purple, country club president, helped form the curling club. The country club sold land along Route 32 to the curling club in 1960 for half a million dollars, and construction began.

Modeled after the Border Curling Club in Stanstead, Quebec, Holland's home club, the Petersham facility cost fifty thousand dollars to build with support from UTD. Petersham Curling Club and the Border Curling Club call themselves sister clubs, and members curl at bonspiels, curling's word for tournaments, once a year at each other's clubs.

As its first officers, the Petersham club elected Holland president; William T. McBride, vice-president; Arthur E. Hamm, secretary; and Paul P. Jerris, treasurer. Hamm worked on the management team at UTD, McBride was a primary UTD distributor, and Jerris was a certified public accountant.

Information from the Petersham Curling Club.

May the sunrise bring you promise and the sunset bring you peace.

2017

january

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29	30	31				

february

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26	27	28				

march

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may

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june

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july

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23/30	24/31	25	26	27	28	29

august

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september

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october

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november

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december

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artwork by Linda Ruel Flynn www.flora-ly.com

FLOWERS ARE YOUR FRIENDS, ESPECIALLY IN WINTER

(continued from Page 45)

since 2005, Jade has an extensive background in Chinese medicine, Ayurveda, and western herbalism. She teaches herbalism classes such as Spice Rack Medicine and From Roots Up throughout New England. She leads workshops and medicinal and edible plant walks and provides eight-month apprenticeships.

Jade sees people for herbal consultations both in her private practice and in the Blue Dragon Community Herbal Clinic, a sliding scale treatment center in Greenfield.

An herbal consultation provides an opportunity to sit down in a relaxed environment to have an in-depth discussion about health concerns. The hour and a half allows a thorough, unhurried look at concerns and possible solutions. Recommendations about food, nutrition, lifestyle, and herbal medicines come from the discussion. A personalized herbal formula takes shape from the needs of each person. Clients may take recommended herbs as teas, tinctures, or flower essences.

Jade takes about a week to write up recommendations and formulate medicine for each client. A follow-up appointment in three or four weeks helps track the results.

With some exceptions, one may take herbal medicines safely alongside pharmaceuticals. A knowledgeable herbalist like Jade will know safety precautions. You can find out more about Jade and her classes, workshops, walks, apprenticeships, and consultations at her website www.milkandhoneyherbs.com.

Ellen Woodbury has been a massage therapist for twenty years. She practices in Petersham in the North Quabbin.

Lily, a golden retriever puppy, prepares to jump in for lavender therapy.

photo © Debra Ellis.

As the crow flies, it must be winter in the Quabbin region.

photo © Mitchell R. Grosky

Uniquely Quabbin Calendar Listings

January 14, Saturday
Benefit Concert
7:30 pm
The Green Sisters & the Slik Pickers
Wendell Full Moon Coffeehouse
Wendell Town Hall
On the Common
Wendell
All ages, non-smoking and alcohol free. Sliding scale donation $7 – $15 (cash only) at the door.

January 18, Wednesday
Movie: *Blazing Saddles* (1974)
7:00 pm
Directed by Mel Brooks
The Center at Eagle Hill School
242 Old Petersham Road
Hardwick
(413) 477-6746
• snacks, beer, and wine available for purchase

January 26, Thursday
Mish Michaels Presents
Ms. G's Shadowy Road to Fame
4:00 pm
Athol Public Library
568 Main Street
Athol
(978) 249-9515.
Broadcast meteorologist and environmental reporter, Mish Michaels will presents her book, *Ms. G's Shadowy Road to Fame: The 'True' Story of the Massachusetts State Groundhog* at the library. Autographed copies of the book will be available for purchase.
Call for information.

January 28-29, Saturday-Sunday
2017 Tully Lake Winter Campout
Tully Lake Campground
25 Doane Hill Road
Royalston
Winter camping skills.
For information, call 413-628-4485, Ext. 3, or email acaluori@thetrustees.org

February 1, Wednesday
Art Tea
4:00 pm
The Center at Eagle Hill School
242 Old Petersham Road
Hardwick
(413) 477-6746
Featuring Emily Cornell Du Houx, photography
Free. Call for reservations

February 11, Saturday
Rose Ensemble
7:30 pm
The Center at Eagle Hill School
242 Old Petersham Road
Hardwick
(413) 477-6746
The Roots of Bluegrass: A Journey through America's Folk, Old-time, and Gospel Traditions.
The Rose Ensemble presents popular music and ballads, dances, hymns, and anthems.

February 15, Wednesday
Movie: *Rocky* (1976)
7:00 pm
Directed by John G. Avildsen
The Center at Eagle Hill School
242 Old Petersham Road
Hardwick
• snacks, beer, and wine available for purchase

March 4, Saturday
The Center's Got Talent
7:30 pm
The Center at Eagle Hill School
242 Old Petersham Road
Hardwick
(413) 477-6746
Fifth annual community talent show open to residents of Central Massachusetts.
Profits go to the Hardwick Food Pantry.
Call for information.

March 4,5,11 & 12, Fridays and Saturdays
annual pancake breakfast
8:30 am - 1 pm
Heifer Farm
216 Wachusett Street
Rutland
$14 per adult; children 3 to 10, $7 per child; children 2 free
Farm tours and exploration of Heifer's Global Village.
Reservations recommended. Call 508-886-2221 or e-mail heifer.farm@heifer.

March 25, Saturday
Dana Louise & the Glorious Birds
7:30 pm
The Center at Eagle Hill School
242 Old Petersham Road
Hardwick
(413) 477-6746
Jazz and bluegrass vocals with a contemporary beat

April 8, Saturday
The River Rat Race & Big Cheese
5K Fast Start Canoe Race on Millers River from Athol to Orange
10 am parade.
1 pm start near South Main Street Bridge, Athol.
Strong current and hundreds of canoes.
Community events all day.

April 8, Saturday
Diego Figueiredo
7:30 pm
The Center at Eagle Hill School
242 Old Petersham Road
Hardwick
(413) 477-6746
Jazz, bossa nova, and classical guitar fusion.

April 14-16 and 21-23, Fridays-Sundays
The Fantasticks
http://www.eaglehill.school/page/arts/performing-arts for show times
The Center at Eagle Hill School
242 Old Petersham Road
Hardwick
(413) 477-6746
The Fantasticks, a musical about a boy, a girl, and their two fathers who try to keep them apart.

April 15, Saturday
Brunch with the Easter Bunny
8:00 am to 1:00 pm
$10, adults; $5 kids 3-10 years and seniors 65+
Children's Egg Hunts
9:00, 10:00, and 11:00 am for children 5 and under
Free
Adult Egg Hunt, 12 pm
$5.00 to participate
Teen Egg Hunt with prizes at 12:30 pm
Free
Sponsored by Phillipston Lions Club
Red Apple Farm
445 Highland Avenue
Phillipston

May 5-7, Friday-Sunday
Little Women
http://www.eaglehill.school/page/arts/performing-arts for show times
The Center at Eagle Hill School
242 Old Petersham Road
Hardwick
(413) 477-6746
Little Women, a play based on Louisa May Alcott's life, *Little Women* follows the adventures of the March sisters: Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy.

calendar listings compiled by Mia Haringstad
submit calendar listings to haley.antique@verizon.net

Snow blankets an Athol back yard near Millers River.

photo © Marcia Gagliardi

rustic sawmill gets away from Home Depot

(continued from Page 47)

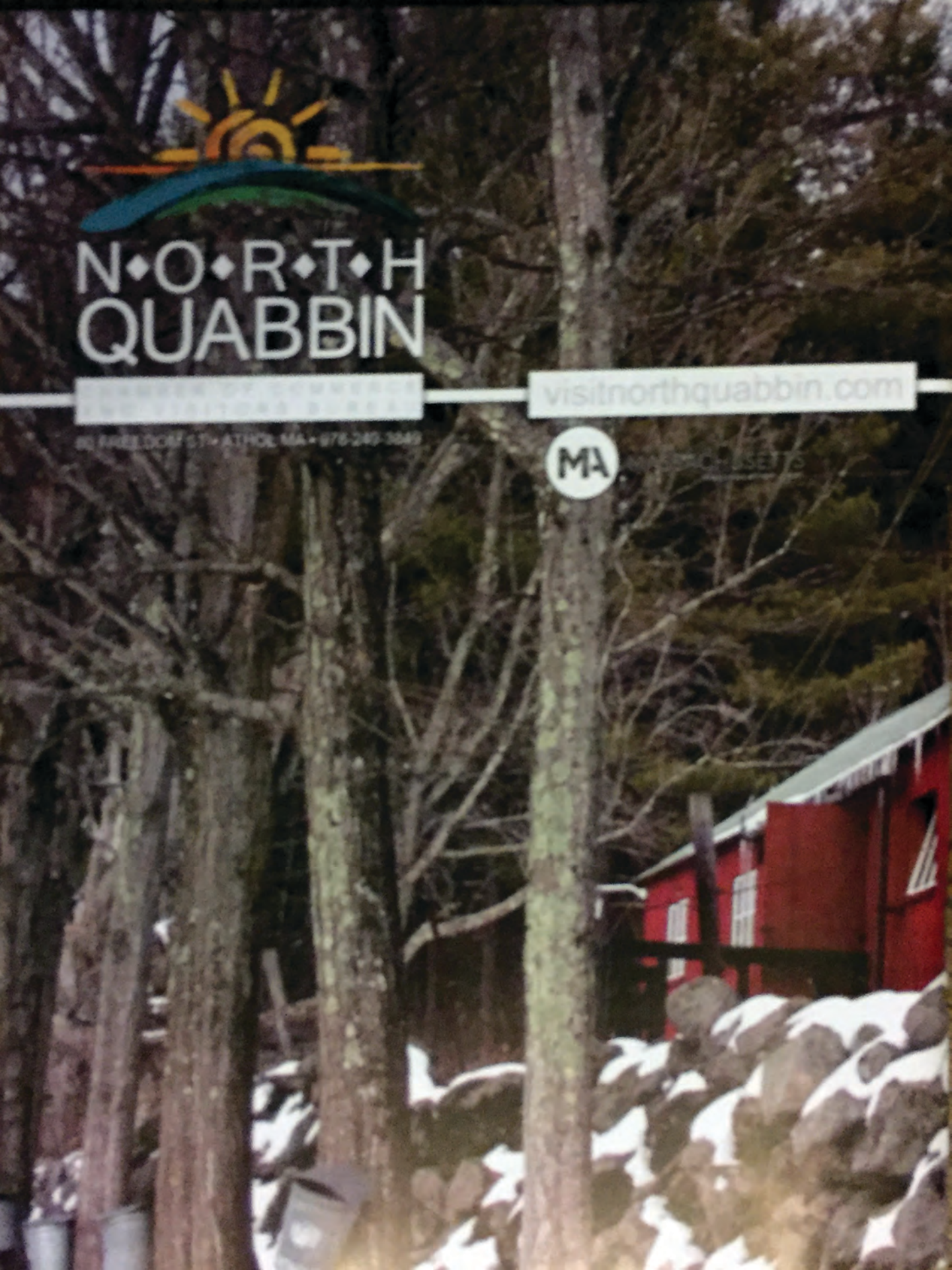
"Quality," "promptness," "he bent over backward," "one of the nicest" . . . and, most mentioned of all, "sweet"—these compliments about the man and his way of operating a sawmill. About the mill itself, "wonderful," "very rustic, like Fred Flintstone," "a wild getaway from Home Depot."

My friend Dan Leahy, one of those praise-singing customers, built his sugar shack with Conkey's lumber. Dan's heart is in the woods. He married Julia Rabin in a ceremony at their Wendell home fifteen years ago, and Dan, in preparation, went to C&M for the altar he envisioned for the ceremony. "I told Jim what I needed, and he was like, ' . . . OK.' He helped me load it—an eighteen-inch-diameter log about four feet long."

I happened to officiate at that ceremony, and my notes rested on the log that came from Jim Conkey's operation. It feels today like a symbol, almost, of a community's life and times. It wasn't just a log. It was what and where—and who—was in it.

Dan says the altar still stands.

Jonathan von Ranson is a writer, former newspaper editor, and stonemason who lives in Wendell.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