

*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 3, number 3 • January-April 2019

*this issue features winter activities, history, up-to-date listings, and sights to see in the uniquely Quabbin heart of Massachusetts*

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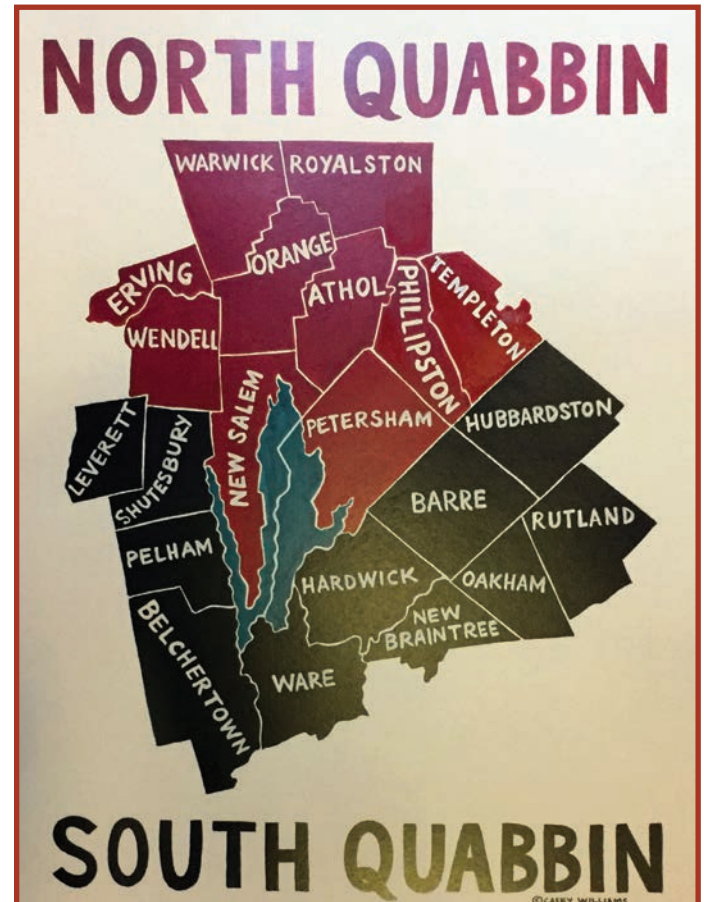


Weasel tracks dot a Quabbin region stone wall.  
photo © by Sue Cloutier

**ON THE FRONT COVER**

*Coyote*

a photograph by Dale Monette of New Salem



maps, bottom, show Quabbin towns past and present • maps © Casey Williams

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### SEASONAL IMAGES

Photos and Prints by Photographic Artist  
David Brothers

Many local North Quabbin images to choose from  
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### a note from Athol Historical Society

Happy New Year to all of our readers, advertisers, and all those who support our magazine.

The New Year—a time to celebrate, experience new things, and make resolutions. I want to celebrate what every contributor does for our magazine . . . celebrate the beauty of the written word, the talent of our artists, and the “eye” of our photographers. They give us so much to celebrate in every issue of our magazine.

How about resolutions? I’m not all that big on them, but I think we should all make a resolution or two this year: not the typical spend-less-money-this-year or spend-more-time-at-the-gym.

How about making a resolution to visit one or two of the towns in our twenty-one-town region that you haven’t visited before?

Or how about stopping into one of the businesses that advertise with us and seeing what they have to offer?

A dinner out at one of the restaurants we review is a resolution I could get behind!

How about a resolution to attend an event at one of the historical societies, all of which offer fun, interesting, or musical events throughout the season? Now there’s a great way to spend an afternoon or evening with the family.

There is so much to do, see, and celebrate in our beautiful Quabbin region. Make a resolution to get out there and check it all out.

Wishing you all a happy, healthy,  
interesting, and fun-filled 2019.

Debra Ellis, treasurer  
Athol Historical Society



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gratefully acknowledges the support of  
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### a note from the publisher of Uniquely Quabbin

We never know what new old thing will wend its way to our computers as we prepare *Uniquely Quabbin* magazine for print.

For example, we had no idea that J. R. Greene would write about old ice ponds and that the Athol Historical Society would produce an ad about them. We realized that Cathy Stanton planned to write about the effects of 2018 weather on Quabbin region farmers’ plans, that Diane Nassif would cover the trail exhibit at Petersham’s Harvard Forest, and that John Burk would tell us about the region’s flood control dams, but we had no idea how perfectly the articles would dovetail with one another.

When Charlotte Westhead appeared last year at an Athol Historical Society photo event, we couldn’t have predicted the revelations in her story about the enslavement of people of color during the colonial era in the geographical area that became the Quabbin region.

Other articles in this issue bring us more insights into what goes on in our central Massachusetts neck of the woods, and we have a list of potential articles as long as your arm for future magazines.

It’s exciting to expect the unexpected as we roll out each issue of *Uniquely Quabbin*. We hope you enjoy reading this one.

Sincerely,  
Marcia Gagliardi, publisher  
Haley’s

### about Uniquely Quabbin

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

FIND LISTINGS FOR  
NORTH QUABBIN AND SOUTH QUABBIN  
EVENTS  
BEGINNING ON PAGE 51



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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.

Swift River Valley Historical Society displays old Dana fire truck



The town of Dana, one of four central Massachusetts towns flooded in 1938 to create Quabbin Reservoir, purchased a Ford Model AA fire truck in 1929. The Model AA Ford was powered by the same 201-cubic-inch (3.3 L) I4 engine as the Model A Ford automobile. It produced up to 40 horsepower at 2,200 rpm and featured an updraft carburetor, 6-volt generator, 2-blade fan, mechanical water pump, mechanical oil pump, electric starter, and four-row radiator.

Swift River Valley Historical Society displays the truck in its carriage shed at 40 Elm Street in New Salem. The historical society will reopen in June.

find more information at  
swiftrivermuseum@gmail.com  
www.facebook.com/swiftrivermuseum

with art, springtime thrives all year round

text by Margaret Ellis Feldman • watercolor by the late Barbara Ellis

One of the first things children learn to draw is a house. You stick a triangle on top of a square, add some interesting details, and there you go! But as it's not that simple. Here's some insight into the process used by the late watercolorist Barbara Ellis for painting a portrait of a home.

First off, there's the photograph: she'd take a few, saving the best for reference as she painted. The sketch, done on location, is only about three by five inches and surrounded by her specific notes on color, contrast, shade, and other details. Along with a rudimentary full-size sketch done on site, she took photos home to her studio. Working indoors with all her supplies handy, she then proceeded with her final version.

In her watercolor *The Feldman House*, the main force—sunlight—shines directly on the front of the house. The tree casts its shadow on the lawn. Small sparkles reflect sunlight from the window panes,



The Feldman House

watercolor © by Margaret Ellis Feldman for the late Barbara Ellis

and solid darkness indicates the one open window and shed door.

Some of her precise notes include: “maple tree foliage slightly darker than shutters” and “shed lightest,” which guided her in finer gradations of color and tone. Yellows deepen from cream to gold, right to left, in morning sun.

Barbara implies springtime in the image, dating to 1991, according to

her notes. To contrast against the stone foundation, Barbara included daffodils in front of the house.

She created a basic three-color artwork dominated by yellow, gray, and green but with variations and a few accenting pink and rusty red spots. Its balanced design leads to a harmonious whole.

Barbara's creative instinct and exacting method endowed the watercolor with warmth, vitality, and love.

Artist Margaret Ellis Feldman is the daughter of the late watercolorist Barbara Ellis.



Snippets from Barbara's sketchbook provide insight into her working method.  
photos courtesy of Margaret Ellis Feldman



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# imagine caterpillars hiding away as they transform into moths year's darkest season provides ways

by Sue Cloutier



A grey fox forages at night in Quabbin region woods.  
photo © by Sue Cloutier

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The darkest season of the year provides many ways to discover the activities of wildlife. What animals live here? What are they doing?

You may not see the animals, but you can look for signs to answer such questions as you wander along woodland trails. The gates into Quabbin Reservation provide easy access to explore wilder places in our region.

In early winter, you may find signs of white-tailed male deer that marked their turf with antler rubs and scrapes on the ground where they urinate. Other males will know that marked territory is defended, while females get to check out the buck that left the sign.

Along established trails you may find young hemlocks that deer mark. Shredded ends of branches indicate deer browsing. Deer also feed on maple and cherry bark. They skin the bark up, and their bottom tooth marks often show. Deer lack upper teeth, so as they bite off their lunch, the branch does not show a clean cut as it would from rabbit or squirrel feeding. After snowfall, areas under hemlocks provide a common choice for deer to bed at night or during storms. If you chance upon such bedding area or deer yard, you can count the number of deer by depressions in the snow left by deer body and legs.

One small hunter we have in the woods is the fox. We have two species in the Quabbin region: red and gray. Long-legged, the red fox enjoys fields and edges of the forest while the gray has grown more accustomed to forest life. Gray foxes can climb trees, so their furry tracks can deadend at a tree when the animals climb in pursuit of a red squirrel. Other than that, when you find their tracks in the snow, just the size of the track may help you know if the fox you trail is a larger red with a bare pad on its paw or a smaller gray with a furry paw.

Downed or dead trees and stonewalls along roads provide cover for smaller wildlife. After snowfall, you can see traces of their pathways in the woods as they move out to feeding areas and back. White-footed or deer mice remain active all winter. Chipmunks that share cover exist in torpor and have their food storage right next to their sleeping chamber, so you will not see their prints until spring.

# to discover activities of wildlife

Along with mouse trails, you may find the two-two trail pattern of furry feet with long gaps between, as other animals, whether long-tailed weasel or ermine, leap through the snow after mice. Along with weasels, hawks, owls, foxes, and coyotes pursue mice for lunch. You may be lucky enough to read a story of life and death in the snow when mouse tracks end in the spread wing marks of an owl. Thus, stone walls and downed trees are great places to look for evidence that we share the woods with wildlife.

Not all evidence of wildlife in winter originates from activity shown by tracks. A tightly



Purple Plagodis  
Plagodis kuezini

summer has metamorphosed into a liquid within a thin exoskeleton that contains all the information enabling it



Straight-toothed Sallow  
Eupsilia vinulenta

to emerge in spring as a beautiful moth.

The Oldwife Underwing lays tiny eggs on bark so that they will survive the winter. Other moths may also spend the winter as eggs, or they may survive as adults, caterpillars, or in cocoons.



Oldwife Underwing  
Catocala palaeogama  
wrapped brown tangle along the branch of a tree by the trail may signal the winter home of a moth's chrysalis. Although it seems as if nothing goes on inside, much actually happens. The caterpillar that actively ate leaves in

To see cool moths, leave on your porch lights at night, even in winter. Have a simple camera to snap photos if you want to ID moths. Common Straight-toothed Sallows will come to lights or bait even on warm winter nights. Their caterpillars feed on maple, cherry, and oak. Teddy-bear like Tolype moths, common in Massachusetts, include the Larch Tolype whose caterpillars feed on hemlock. Their late-summer numbers have diminished as the number of hemlocks declines.

Instead of leaving a light on, mix up bait of old bananas and beer to attract moths. Then paint a patch on a tree trunk. At night, quietly approach by flashlight to see what feasts there. Some moths that don't come to lights will come to bait.

Moths and their caterpillars are an important part of a healthy landscape. They are a significant food source for birds and mammals we appreciate.

Not all moths in their cocoons will survive the winter. Like other animals, they have a part in a food



Larch Tolype  
Tolype laricis

chain. Back in the summer, as the caterpillar munched leaves, a parasitic fly may have laid eggs within the caterpillar. If so, those eggs hatch, eat the caterpillar from the inside so that the flies mature and emerge in the spring while leaving the remains of the moth behind in the cocoon.

One clear sign that spring is just around the corner: snow fleas often found on the snow at the base of a tree or in a puddle in the roadside. Those tiny black, rust, or brown insects can really jump and so also have the name springtails.

As spring approaches, we can start looking for leaf buds swelling, listen to chickadees singing their "Phe-o-be" love songs, and look for more wildlife in the Quabbin region.

An experienced nature center director with a special interest in biodiversity and educational programs, Sue Cloutier is inventorying living things on her New Salem property. She photographed the moths shown here.



Boldly-marked Archips  
Archips dissitana

## HARVARD FOREST EXHIBIT PAYS HOMAGE TO HEMLOCKS

by Diane Nassif

*Hemlock Hospice*, an art installation along trails on Harvard Forest property in Petersham, alerted visitors to the dying forest area in order to encourage understanding. Open through November 2018, the installation featured structures located at eighteen stations along a trail through open groves and ghost trees as a way of dramatizing the vanishing hemlocks.

Aaron Ellison, senior ecologist, and David Buckley Borden, an interdisciplinary artist and designer, offered interpretations of the installation featuring triangular shapes, the universal symbol for change and danger, and bright red, white, and yellow colors.

Healthy hemlocks create deep shade that lowers temperature and prevents light from reaching the ground, Mr. Ellison and Mr. Borden said. Fallen needles create a thick spongy layer above acidic soil to form a unique habitat for other species of plants, animals, fungi, and bacteria. The soft forest bottom becomes a seed bank for plants over time. Ecologists consider hemlocks a “foundation species.”



Harvard Forest's *Hemlock Hospice* art installation included “Memorial Woodshed,” a contemporary art installation acknowledging the decline of hemlock trees in New England forests. It shows a hemlock stump crashed to the ground. photo © by Diane Nassif

Researchers at Harvard Forest practice historical ecology. They match evidence from forest tracts including trees, cores of pollen samples from the ground and ponds, and gases released by trees, for

example, with historical evidence of human activity and natural events. Researchers focus on the interplay of eastern hemlock and white pine.

Hemlock abundance has moderated many times over

thousands of years. At the height of the last glacial age about 20,000 years ago, hemlocks thrived in Appalachia. Over the following 10,000 years, the species migrated to New England and then reached its peak population. Abruptly, about 5,500 years ago, a range-wide collapse of eastern hemlock occurred in New England, and the species nearly disappeared for 2,000 years. Hemlocks rebounded 3,500 years ago but never reached previous levels of abundance. Researchers do not know what caused the decline, whether disease, insect infestation, drier climate, or a combination of factors.

As the species rebounded around the time when European settlers arrived, another hemlock demise occurred. Farmers cleared sixty percent of land for agriculture and other endeavors in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, thus diminishing the number of hemlocks. The natural history of the species has been intertwined with human history.

David Foster, director of Harvard Forest, edited *Hemlock: A Forest Giant on the Edge*, including contributions from many Harvard Forest fellows who study the tree.

Tall with downward sweeping branches and small, flat, flexible needles, hemlocks have cones with small seeds not widely dispersed. Drooping branches intercept light and create dense shade, which the species tolerates well. Trees catch rain and snow. Hemlocks can photosynthesize at

extremely low temperatures, and they use less water than neighboring hardwood trees. They can grow whenever temperatures exceed freezing, thus providing an almost-year-round growth cycle. They can tolerate lengthy periods of low growth and then rebound and grow rapidly. Hemlocks dominate tree cover in central

continued on page 39

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# more eagles appear in winter at Quabbin than at any other site in New England

by Rick Taupier



A bald eagle soars over treetops of the Quabbin region.

photo © by Rick Flematti

During winter, more eagles appear at Quabbin Reservoir than at any other site in New England. The relatively mild climate compared to northern New England and an abundant supply of food attract the avian hunters. With their six- to nearly eight-foot wing spans, they rank as the most spectacular of more than 250 species of birds at Quabbin and among the greatest raptors of the world.

Tallies have sighted as many as fifty-two bald eagles at Quabbin on a single day during the Audubon winter bird count, when birders and researchers gather at strategic points to cover as much of the Quabbin view shed as possible. Seeing a soaring eagle always inspires,

reminding us of nature's majesty and the special bond nature shares with its creatures.

The white heads and tails of bald eagle adults create the proud appearance that led to their becoming an official symbol for the nation. Quabbin offers a wonderful natural environment for observing eagles, as roads and houses do not encroach upon its extensive shoreline and put pressure on the habitat.

Yet for much of the past century, eagles went locally extinct in Massachusetts. In 1905, the last known nesting pair disappeared due to habitat loss and pesticides, especially DDT, that compromised their ability to reproduce. Their heavy reliance on a diet

of fish allowed pesticides from runoff and direct application to bio-accumulate and affect the viability of their eggs. Bald eagles became endangered everywhere in the US except Alaska.

But, with the 1972 banning of DDT, eagles began to make a gradual recovery. In 1982, state wildlife officials and the Audubon Society launched an effort to reintroduce them to Quabbin's unique, protected environment. From 1982 to 1988, specialists raised forty-one eagle chicks from as far away as Manitoba, Nova Scotia, and Minnesota in special hacking stations that limited interaction with humans. The use of eagle puppets kept them from becoming habituated to people.

In 1989, watchers spotted the first two nesting pairs at Quabbin soon after the four-to-five years it takes bald eagles to reach maturity. As the population grew, nesting pairs spread to other areas of the state. In 2012, thirty-eight pairs were identified in Massachusetts and twenty-seven nesting pairs were successful in raising thirty-one chicks. The majority of those nesting pairs thrived on the Quabbin reservation. The successful restoration has offered many lessons about the reintroduction of other previously native species. The wild turkey, a large forager that has also made a huge impact around Quabbin, also experienced notable reintroduction.

Eagles come to winter at Quabbin from as far away as northern Maine. Birds soar and seek food, including carcasses from starving or injured deer or other animals that strayed onto the ice. Hikers spot them perched in trees on the southwestern shore of Prescott Peninsula. The presence of other eagle watchers with spotting scopes trained on the far shore always gives away an eagle perch.

Windsor Dam and Goodnough Dike also provide important viewing spots. Watching eagles land and feed always ends up quite fascinating. While majestic in the air, on the ground eagles seem a bit ungainly as they move in a side-to-side hop that belies their greater suitability for air travel.



A tree limb serves as a perch for an eagle.  
photo © by Rick Flematti

A favorite place for viewing eagles: Enfield Lookout on the Quabbin Administrative Road off Route 9 in Ware. A short winter road trip, warm clothing, hot coffee or chocolate, healthy snacks, and a good pair of binoculars all come in handy for what can turn into a magical winter morning or afternoon of eagle watching. Few landscapes appear more beautiful than those seen from Quabbin vantage points when a new snow has hushed the land with nature's beauty present for all to see.

Find information about eagles at the Audubon website link [massaudubon.org/our-conservation-work/wildlife-research-conservation/statewide-bird-monitoring/breeding-bird-atlases/bba2/find-a-bird/\(id\)/1160](https://massaudubon.org/our-conservation-work/wildlife-research-conservation/statewide-bird-monitoring/breeding-bird-atlases/bba2/find-a-bird/(id)/1160).

Rick Taupier, former professor and administrator at UMass, Amherst, owns Swift River Fly Fishing in New Salem.



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## ICE HOUSES STOOD NEAR MANY QUABBIN REGION PONDS

by Carla Charter



Many ponds where people harvested ice still exist in the Quabbin area. At the Quabbin Reservoir itself, in New Salem, Goodnow Pond lies inside Gate 35. Opposite the Enfield Lookout, just over a small berm lies the ice pond of the Woods and Ewing families.

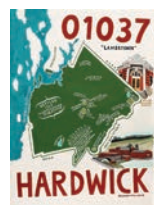
In Hubbardston, people used Moosehorn Lake for ice harvesting. In a 1979 *Yankee Magazine* article, C. C. Bemis relates the story of watching as his father, who worked for the Independent Ice Company of Worcester, harvested ice at Moosehorn. He shares an incident where the Clydesdales his father used for ice harvesting fell through the ice. He tells of heroic efforts his father took to rescue the horses in weather nine degrees below zero.

The Springfield Ice Company built an ice storage building on the southern end of Thompson's Pond about 1893, according to *The History of New Salem, Massachusetts 1753-1953*. A spur track ran from a nearby railroad station to the building, across a trestle just above the pond dam. The storage building burned in 1911 or 1912 to be reconstructed from 1914 to 1915 near the railroad station with no need to use the trestle. After several years, the new ice buildings burned, as ice houses often did.

In Oakham, a primarily rural farming community, almost every farm had a watering hole in the early 1900s that became a source for ice in winter, according to Edith Mathis of the Oakham Historical Association. Ponds that provided waterpower for sawmills made a good source for ice cutting. Sawmills also supplied the sawdust used to insulate ice in ice houses.

A list of ponds in Oakham used for ice harvesting includes, according to Ms. Mathis, ponds on Five Mile River, the Bothwell Mill pond on South Road, Dean Pond off North Brookfield Road, Peg Mill Pond east of Coldbrook Road, Crawford Pond on Crawford Road. Adams Pond on Adams Road, the Dwelly farm pond off Parmenter Road, and Foley Pond on Sanders Road. Coldbrook Springs had several mill ponds on Parker's Brook that must have been good sources of ice for that community.

In 1899, N. W. Packard hired thirty men to cut ice on Davis Pond, off Hapgood Road, presumably to sell at his general store in Oakham center. In 1898, Deacon Jesse Allen and Miss Susan Fairbank both had their own ice houses, Ms. Mathis continued.



"I remember my father and grandfather cutting ice on the Crawford Pond just below the knoll near the 1816 farmhouse where I grew up," Ms. Mathis said. "We had our own ice house about an eighth mile from the pond out in a secluded woodsy area surrounded by pine trees. The ice house was very tall (or so it seemed to me as a youngster), a three-sided wooden plank structure with no roof. Most of the sawdust used to insulate the ice was left over from sawing the wood used to heat the house.

"In the fall when my grandfather got ready to put the banking around the farmhouse's stone foundation," Ms. Mathis added, "he would make several trips to the ice house to load up the wheelbarrow with sawdust for fill in the banking. My sisters and I took turns riding out to the ice house in the empty wheelbarrow and walking back when it was full. In the spring, everything reversed, and the sawdust once again became an insulator, that time for huge chunks of ice that needed to be preserved as increasingly warmer weather approached."

In Hardwick in 1901, according to Emily Bancroft, author of *History of Hardwick 1865-1950* and editor of *I Remember, Stories from Hardwick*, the Hardwick creamery received ice so clear that one could read a paper through a piece of ice ten inches thick. Ice harvesting ponds in Hardwick included Dead Pond near today's Quabbin Gate 43 and Mixer's Pond on Ruggles Hill Road. Dead Pond also offered horse racing. People remembered that the largest commercial ice dealer in town, George Ballard, often gave ice chips to children in the hot summer months.

Snow's Pond on Pleasant Street, Ware, provided a place to cut ice, according to the Ware Historical Association. An ice house stood on the banks of the pond on Doane Road in Ware Center, and it would likely have stored ice.

Other Quabbin area ponds once used for ice harvesting include Queen Lake in Phillipston and Little Pond in Royalston, where an ice house barely stands on Winchendon Road near the Eagle Reserve. Other ice ponds include, in Pelham, the pond on Amherst Road by Cook Road and Moulton Pond on Pommogussett Road in Rutland. It also had an ice house.

Athol, Phillipston, and Swift River historical societies display ice saws and ice ephemera. Closed for the winter, the societies will reopen in the spring.

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



## QUABBIN CURRENT'S

# before refrigeration, people cut ice to preserve food

by J. R. Greene

In the days before refrigeration, people cut ice from the surface of frozen ponds in the winter to preserve food. Most ponds used for ice-cutting then were relatively clean compared to the polluted state of many by the mid twentieth century. People stored blocks of ice in specially designed compartments in basements or in buildings called ice houses.

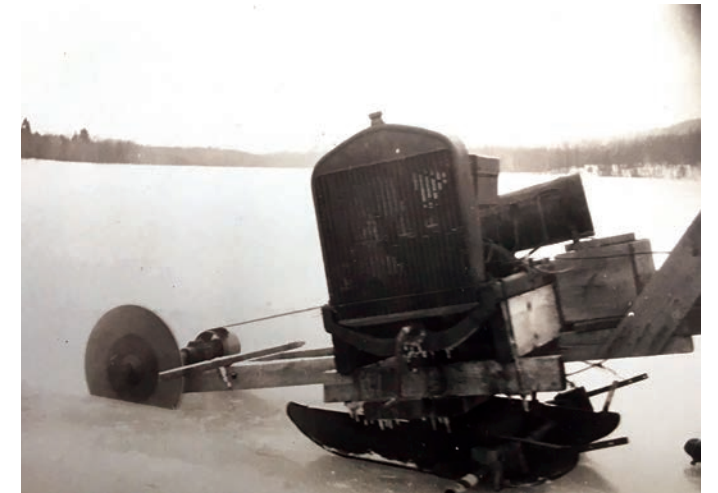
Ice houses or storage areas often occupied a cool place below the surface of the ground. Lined with stone and sawdust, they preserved ice as long as possible into the warm season. Families and storekeepers cut ice and stored it, and so did companies formed to take ice cut from lakes and large ponds to be shipped many miles away.

Some bodies of water used for ice cutting in the old Swift River or Quabbin Valley included Greenwich Lake, Quabbin Lake, Curtis Pond, Walker's Millpond in Greenwich, and Nesseponsett Pond in North Dana. People used special handsaws that looked like large tree-cutting saws to cut into surface ice and harvest blocks. While individuals did the work by hand, by the early twentieth century some more commercial operations used gasoline-powered saws.

Addison Moore of Belchertown ran a large commercial ice-harvesting operation on the southern end of Greenwich Lake. A large building, built around World War I, sat on a siding on the Athol branch of the Boston & Albany Railroad. Workers stored ice harvested from Greenwich lake in the building in anticipation of loading it onto refrigeration cars for shipment to an ice plant in West Springfield. From there, trains carried ice to destinations as far as Hartford and New York City. In larger towns and cities, an ice wagon delivered blocks of ice to homes and businesses on a regular basis.

With the inauguration of Quabbin Reservoir, all ice operations in the valley ceased. Some local ice companies, such as the Athol Ice Company, operated for a few years after World War II until the electric-powered refrigerator became a standard home appliance. The old ice pond remains at the junction of Chestnut Street and Fairview Avenue in Athol.

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



A jerry-built rotary power saw used an old car or truck engine mounted on a sledge on Curtis Pond in northern Greenwich, one of the towns flooded to create Quabbin Reservoir. On some bodies of water, people marked off the boundary of an ice lot with metal posts sunk into the ice.

photo from the collection of J.R. Greene



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# flood control dams protect

by John Burk



Barre Falls Dam stored water in spring, 2010, after snow melted and before leaves returned to trees.

photo © by John Burk

As we were reminded during the ice jams on the Millers and Ware rivers in January, 2018, floods have long played a part in the history of central Massachusetts. In the early twentieth century, several historic

storms, including the floods of 1927 and 1936 and the hurricane of 1938, devastated Quabbin region communities. Archival photographs testify to the extent of damage: neighborhoods inundated, roads, bridges, and railroads washed out, stout brick factories destroyed, entire towns isolated.

Destructive as the storms were, they also led to measures that have substantially mitigated damage in recent decades. In response to public pressure following the 1936 disaster, Congress quickly passed an act authorizing the US Army Corps of Engineers to establish flood-prevention facilities throughout the country. In the four-state Connecticut River watershed, the Corps built a network of dams on major tributaries during the mid-twentieth century.

By 1940 construction had begun at Birch Hill Dam in South Royalston, the first of two projects in the

# property along area waterways

Millers River basin. Fearing another imminent disaster, local officials pressed for work to move forward expeditiously, and workers completed the dam in February, 1942, at a cost of \$4.8 million. Situated near the Millers River's confluence with Otter River, Priest Brook, and other tributaries, the 1,400-foot structure protects Athol, Orange, Erving, and Connecticut River towns downstream from Millers Falls. The reservoir is not a permanent lake but instead holds water only with activation of the dam. Lake Dennison Recreation Area, leased and managed by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, encompasses most of the adjacent flood-control area.

The Corps completed nearby Tully Dam in 1949 on the East Branch of Tully River about four miles

upstream from its confluence with the Millers in Athol. The project cost \$1.6 million. Tully Lake, created in 1966, has become the heart of a popular recreation area visited by more than 100,000 people annually. The flood storage area, which holds up to 7.1 billion gallons, extends upstream to Long Pond and Royalston State Forest. Lawrence Brook, another major tributary, empties into Tully Lake below the cascades of Doane's Falls.

In the south Quabbin region, Congress authorized Barre Falls Dam in 1941 to protect flood-prone communities in the Ware and Chicopee River watersheds, including Barre Plains, Gilbertville, Ware, and Springfield. However, as the storms of the 1930s

**continued on page 48**



Snow defines areas of Birch Hill Dam, South Royalston, on a clear winter day.

photo © by John Burk

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## walking for peace with monks and nuns, years in Japan



Sculptor Tom Matsuda pauses at the New England Peace Pagoda, Leverett, a Buddhist shrine dedicated to world peace and the abolition of nuclear weapons, which has inspired his art. He lives on Cave Hill Road across from the pagoda.  
photo © by Sarah Robertson

by Sarah Robertson

Leverett artist Thomas Matsuda finished a six-month cross-country peace march in 1982 in New York City organized by Nipponzan Myhoji, Buddhist monks who built Leverett's New England Peace Pagoda.

They joined some one million people gathered in Central Park for a Nuclear Freeze rally that protested proliferation of nuclear arms during United Nation's second session on disarmament.

Then Matsuda spent six months living in Arizona among the Navajo. "It was such a time of hope," he said. "After that, I travelled to Japan to learn about my roots."

A Japanese-American born in Connecticut, Matsuda was twenty-

## inform the art of Leverett sculptor Tom Matsuda

eight when he first traveled to Japan in 1984. There he met master Buddhist sculptor Koukei Eri, who became his mentor. For more than a decade, Matsuda stayed in the remote mountain village of Oshika-mura, sculpting stones he found in riverbeds and wood harvested from the surrounding forest while he studied Buddhism.

Today Matsuda lives across the street from the New England Peace Pagoda, where several of his stone sculptures and wood carvings stand. He also makes two-dimensional art in the form of abstract paintings and drawings. He finds inspiration in daunting concepts like environmental stewardship, disarmament, and the plight of native people.

"The art forms are not that different. I'm just reaching a different audience," Matsuda said. "There's always a spiritual side."

Matsuda's art has taken him around the world from Egypt to Ukraine, Qatar, Germany, Brazil, South Korea, and India. To give his work a keen sense of time and place, he researches his host country and culture to draw inspiration for his art.

"I try to do something relevant to the places I do the pieces," Matsuda said. "Relevant to the site and relevant to the culture."

Matsuda's passion for sculpture peaked around the time he discovered his affinity for Buddhism. Carving traditional Buddhist sculptures, like a seven-ton marble Buddha statue for the Grafton Peace Pagoda in New York state, became an expression of spirituality.

Matsuda prefers the gentle, meditative process of sculpting wood to the noisy power tools used on rock but admits the idea of his art forever carved in stone entices him. However, another reason Matsuda prefers making art with wood: it burns.

As chair of the art department at Mount Wachusett Community College in Gardner, Massachusetts, Matsuda teaches during the academic year and uses summers to practice his own art while traveling for fellowships and residencies. He works in many mediums including paint, charcoal, wood, stone, fire, dancers, and drums to share messages about humanity, Buddhism, and peace.

"I try to express the same message meaning in all my work," Matsuda said. "It just manifests in different forms."

After thirteen years in Japan, Matsuda returned to the US to care for his ailing father while he earned a master's degree in sculpture from UMass, Amherst. The tall wooden structures that stand in the courtyard of the W.E.B. Dubois Library there comprised part of his thesis project. He later burned four wooden spires in

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A sculpted Buddha by Tom Matsuda serves as the centerpiece for a household shrine.

photo © Marcia Gagliardi



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# after years behind-the-scenes, restored grand drapes

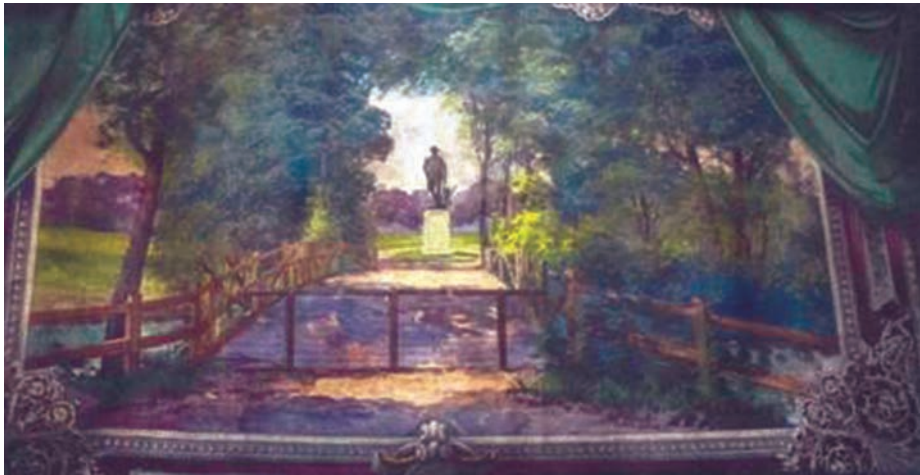
by Carla Charter

In the past, New England town halls served as more than a place to pay taxes or hold town government meetings. They also served as community gathering spots where people came to listen to speakers, attend theatre, and see other performances. Providing a backdrop for many performances were grand drapes—stage curtains painted with local, national, and international scenes.

Along with town halls, such drapes also graced Granges and headquarters of fraternal organizations including Odd Fellows halls and Masonic halls. In Texas, Nevada, Wyoming, and many western states, advertising curtains adorned one-room schoolhouses, as that's where people went for entertainment, according to Christine Hadsel, director of Curtains without Borders, a non-profit curtain conservation team housed in Burlington, Vermont.

Several grand drapes remain in the Quabbin area, including those in Templeton, Leverett, and Orange, with its Ruth B. Smith Auditorium in Orange Town Hall, built in the style of an opera house. Dozens of productions occurred there, including minstrel shows, band concerts, and dance recitals along with town meetings, according to Maureen Riendeau of the Orange Curtain Restoration Committee.

Twin City Scenic Company in Minneapolis created the Orange grand drape in 1912. Hanging to enhance the auditorium stage, it depicts the Minuteman Statue in



Templeton's turn-of-the-nineteenth-to-twentieth-century grand drape, top, will undergo restoration. Orange's grand drape, bottom, of the same vintage has been restored. photos courtesy of Narragansett Historical Society and Orange Restoration Committee

# will once more grace regional town hall stages

Concord, Massachusetts. The Minute Tapioca Company of Orange paid for the curtain, then donated it to the town.

Usually, Ms. Hadsel said, Orange's grand drape package included several accompanying curtains, although no one seems to know what happened to the other curtains in Orange. "They were probably street scenes and possibly interior scenes as well," Ms. Hadsel said.



Leverett's turn-of-the-nineteenth-to-twentieth-century advertising drape includes sponsors from Amherst and Montague. photo courtesy of Leverett Historical Society

Ignored since the 1960s, the Orange grand drape underwent restoration when individuals noticed it above the stage several years ago. They contacted Curtains without Borders to initiate the restoration process, according to Mrs. Reindeau.

Leverett, too, has a grand drape. In the mid twentieth century, when the curtain was in use in the town hall, many groups used the building. They included Thrifty Grange, Sunday School classes, Men's Club, and the Congregational Church ladies societies, according to the Leverett Historical Society. Family groups used the building for showers, wedding receptions, and get-togethers. Thurston Munson, a Greenfield artist, and his brother painted the curtain in the Leverett Town Hall about 1930.

Born in 1907, Munson earned a two-thousand-dollar prize that allowed him to travel in Europe and North Africa. Returning to the United States, he painted murals in hotel cocktail lounges after Prohibition. During the Depression, the Munson brothers painted roll-up stage curtains for towns in the Connecticut Valley. Munson curtains, including Leverett's, usually depicted a local scene surrounded by area advertisements.

Leverett's curtain remained in use until the late 1970s renovation of the stage area for office space.

In Templeton, W. Tandy of Gardner painted the grand drape that hung at the Grange in 1935, according to Brian Tanguay of the Narragansett Historical Society. "The front drape was the curtain, so it would go up for a performance and down for the finale," he said. "It

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## Quiet Places • Quiet Thoughts

### Wendell and Oakham libraries offer tranquil sanctuaries

by Dorothy Johnson

Where better to find a quiet place in midwinter than in a library? Not that libraries in 2019 resemble those of my childhood where a stern librarian shushed you if you spoke in a normal tone or if you happened to drop a book. No, today libraries serve as more than repositories of books. They provide computer labs, areas for study groups, places for special programs and meetings, and opportunities for borrowing books, films, and audio recordings.

On a quiet Tuesday afternoon, I visited the Wendell Free Library at 7 Depot Road in the center of town near the common and a senior center. When you enter the building, you pass through a foyer filled with posters and



Dorothy Johnson

flyers. Of course, you find a checkout counter in front of the office of Rosie Heidcamp, head librarian.

The place hummed busily that Tuesday afternoon. The school bus left high school students off, and they seemed to cluster everywhere. I feared I would not find a quiet place after all, but it turned out that they had their own need for quiet that didn't involve library rules.

The Wendell library has the Herrick Room, a wonderful meeting area that also serves as an art space with regular exhibitions. January and February feature the work of Phyllis Lawrence with the art of Gary Litton Lippincott to follow in the spring. Of course, the Wendell library also has a special children's area, but I found my quiet space in a comfortable chair by a back window overlooking a stone circle outside.

I learned that Kathleen Swaim, a longtime trustee, arranged for creation of the circle consisting of massive natural stones (granite, I think) placed around a center

stone. In its setting reposes a sense of timelessness. Those stones will seem to have existed forever and will remain long beyond books or windows or high school students.

The Wendell Library provides true community service. Besides the books and films available, countless programs serve the local people from yoga and strength-training classes almost daily to an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting on Saturday nights. You have only to check the library website to know the schedule.

On the other side of the Quabbin, in Oakham, I discovered another community library, though why do I say I discovered it? It's been there since 1892.

Oakham's Fobes Memorial Library looks almost like a fairy-tale structure. Made of fieldstone, it stands proudly on Maple Street close to the town hall.

If you park at the rear of the building, you can enter the children's area, a lively place with pillows and games on the floor, posters on the walls, and bookshelves with attractive titles in place. When I told the librarian I planned a magazine column about quiet places, she said that the children had gone home already or I wouldn't have found any quiet space there.

I then climbed shiny wooden stairs to find the adult area polished wood in evidence, everything spick-and-span. I found my quiet place in a room dedicated to historical Oakham where comfortable chairs face an unused fireplace. Pictures decorate the walls with old books on the shelves, but I found a touch of the modern in a Keurig coffeemaker so I could buy myself a cup. Altogether, I felt at home.




Wendell Free Library, left, and Fobes Memorial Library, Oakham, offer community services, reading and listening resources, and quiet places.

photos courtesy of the libraries

Samantha Bodine directs the library, which offers programs all through the year: sewing, robotics, reading clubs for adults, and play groups and reading clubs for children.


Somehow, I don't miss the old days of a strict silence in the library of my childhood even though my library card gave me hours of reading borrowed books and the fun of finding even more books in the stacks. Today's libraries in Wendell and Oakham as well as those all over our area bring forth a sense of community. They offer townspeople and visitors welcoming places to find a book or share in one of the library's programs or even a space to spend a few quiet moments.

Playwright and director Dorothy Johnson seeks out quiet places. With Doris Abramson, she operated The Common Reader Bookshop on New Salem Common for many years.



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# records of colonial era transactions show people

by Charlotte Westhead

Finding out about life in the Quabbin region centuries ago may involve a fascinating search through early church documents about baptisms and marriages or civil documents including wills and deeds.

In 1681, records reveal that groups of Indians called an area thirteen miles northwest of Worcester Naquag, and English settlers called it Rutland. The area consisted of vast forests and rolling hills and many Indians lived in or traveled through the land on two main trails leading from Mount Wachusett in present-day Princeton west to modern-day Petersham or south to modern-day Brookfield. In 1682, Indian natives sold twelve square miles of the area to William Stougham of Dorchester and Joseph Dudley of Roxbury for twelve pounds. Some lay responsibility for the sale at the door of Gray Lock, an Abenaki war chief and son of Waranokes parents.

Settlement of Europeans developed slowly. Not until 1722 did Rutland incorporate as a colonial town. Just one year later in August 1723, Reverend Willard of Rutland was working in a field on Charnock Hill Road with Samuel Stevens when Indians attacked and killed them and burned the nearby gristmill, likely in retribution for colonial incursions on Indian land. Some say barley, oats, and wheat still grow where the grist mill once stood. And one year after that in August, 1724, Indians killed three more Rutland settlers.

Despite such tragedies settlement continued and people went about the business of the day. James Caldwell of Barre and Isabel Oliver of Athol married in Athol in 1751. In 1754 in Rutland, James Caldwell bought two people, Dinah and Mingo, for 106 pounds, according to records from the time. James Caldwell probably came for them in a farm wagon with his brother John, a lawyer. Dinah

was said to be about nineteen years old and Mingo, about twenty-one. John Caldwell inspected them, according to the records, and declared them both “sound and well.”

The Massachusetts Slave Schedule recorded three slaves over the age of sixteen in Barre in 1754, perhaps Dinah and Mingo who lived on the Caldwell property. Massachusetts colonial records did not count slaves under the age of sixteen. Dinah had a son Quork, about a year old and an infant girl, Mynah.

Dinah later said she was about seventeen years old when their previous owner, possibly Zedekiah Stone, sold her and Mingo because Stone had eight slaves and needed only six. That small community of eight adults on the Stone property would likely have included three or four adult women who could help and support each other during childbirth, illness, and with information about their responsibilities. At sale, Dinah lost familiar support. Perhaps she had heard that her new owner, James Caldwell, had a reputation for treating his slaves well: he rarely sold them.

Establishing a 2019 equivalent price for Dinah presents many challenges. In the simplest exchange from pounds at \$4.44 in 1723, loosely based on published equivalences, she sold for about \$500.00 then,

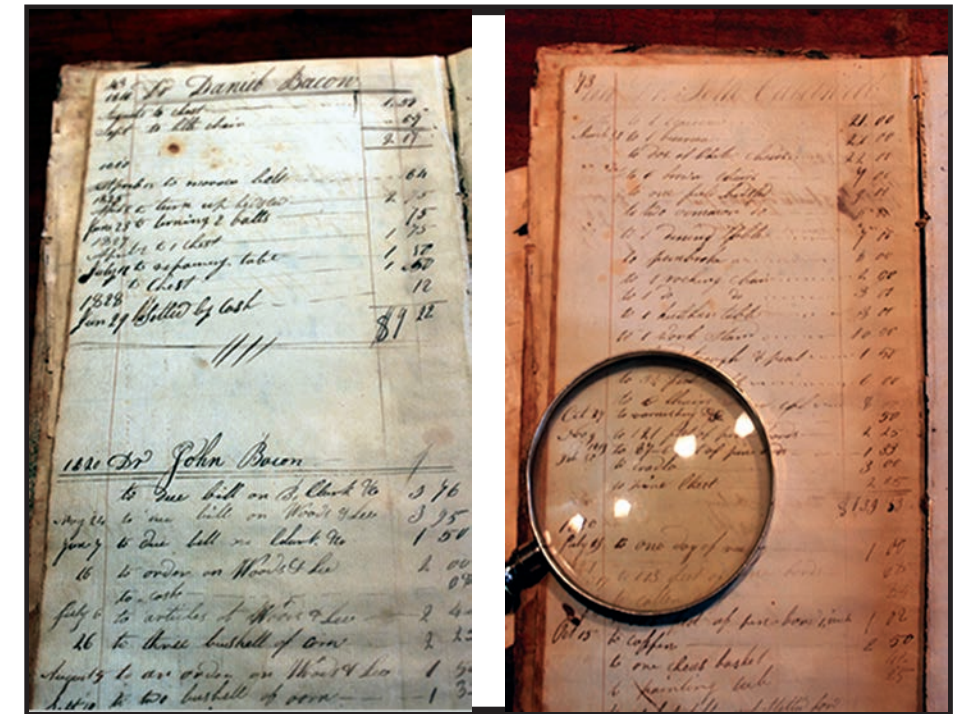
# bought and sold in Quabbin region yet-to-be

which would translate to about \$4,000.00 now.

Beginning in 1718 and lasting for decades, waves of immigrants from Ireland, including families, individuals, speculators, bondsmen, and servants with their own desires and plans arrived at the port of Boston. Some stayed in the city, some continued north along the coast, and some went west. Rutland's Caldwell, Black, Oliver, and Jennison families, Scotch-Irish immigrants, from Londonderry, Ireland were among this wave of immigrants.

Many of those moving west settled in Worcester. After months or years in Worcester, some continued north and west to Rutland, Athol, Pelham, and other towns. More settlers from the British Isles continued into the wilderness of Bennington or Brattleboro, Vermont, or Londonderry, New Hampshire. Generally, previous colonists welcomed and encouraged those new immigrants in western and northern settlements as loyal buffers against the French and Indians.

Vital records kept by colonial Massachusetts towns show that children of the Caldwells married children of the Blacks, Olivers, and Jennisons. In Rutland, they bought land close to each other. John Caldwell and Marmaduke Black bought abutting property, and James Caldwell bought part of what the records call Great Farm IX in 1737. Apparently, he did not move to Barre immediately. Lanslot Oliver bought part of Great Farm XI as well as three hundred acres in Maine.



Writer Charlotte Westhead, an amateur demographer, pores through page after page of records about baptisms, marriages, deaths, transactions, and more from colonial era settlements that eventually became the Quabbin region.

Demography refers to primary source study of population statistics.

Barre Historical Society houses the records shown here.

photos © by John Burk

Some built and lived in great houses or mansions, and some owned slaves.

A story, almost a myth, of strength, individuality, and perseverance has grown around James Caldwell. It begins with a story of the first winter he spent in Barre when he found shelter in the shelving rocks on his property. James sheltered on the rocks while building a log cabin, according to one chronicler. At a time when most houses were a story and a half, James built a two-and-a-half-story house that had hand-hewn beams and many windows in a day when authorities taxed windows heavily. James Caldwell's house constituted an obvious and deliberate sign of wealth. Once, according to the records, James alone drove his herd of cattle eighteen miles from Worcester to Barre presumably to a barn he built for them.

In 1740, John Caldwell got paid two pounds for his man's labor. John evidently loaned his man—"man" often refers to a slave for a job done for someone who reimbursed John for the man's labor. Evidently, the worker himself did not receive compensation for his skill nor time.

Interpreters of practices of the time often overlook the inequitable distribution of gifts and benefits from the king of England to some immigrants. Most adult Scotch-Irish males had served as loyal soldiers of the king and defended Londonderry against the Irish. The king wanted to reward the

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EXHAUSTIVE PARANORMAL INVESTIGATIONS DETERMINE VALIDITY

by Paula J. Botch

Ripe with creepy tales of hauntings, New England legend makes for spine-tingling tales on cold winter nights, and our imaginations rush to what's lurking just beyond the crackle-dance light of summer bonfires. Since my husband Johnny's death in 2016, I feel certain he's made his presence known. Within days of his death,



The Ghost Guys/People vs. Paranormal, from left, includes Lauren Middleton, Ben Ring, Anthony Mazur, and Tim Aldrich  
photo © by Anthony Mazur

my cat suddenly stood on his hind legs, rigid with a long unblinking stare toward Johnny's empty chair. I've been surrounded by smoke smells like the little cigars he smoked years ago. Twice his signature "Hey, Paula?" from another room has startled me.

Many claim experiences with the paranormal, while others doubt the possibility of such phenomenon. It's often difficult to understand. Recent years brought a proliferation of paranormal and ghost-hunting TV programs.

Actual paranormal investigators use a variety of methods to determine whether places are haunted or if natural causes exist. One of the most famous TV shows, *Ghost Hunters*, features a group from Rhode Island, The Atlantic Paranormal Society, known as TAPS. They've investigated everything from private homes to the Stanley Hotel in Colorado, the location that inspired Stephen King's novel *The Shining*.

Spooky *Castle Rock*, aka the Quabbin Valley town of Orange, has its own ghost hunters crew. Founded in 2007, Quabbin Valley Paranormal takes its place

OF GHOSTLY ENCOUNTERS

among many groups across the country officially part of the TAPS Family by following the group's guidelines and investigative methods. The most basic guideline encourages approaching claims of paranormal activity with skepticism. Investigations attempt to debunk claims, eliminating natural explanations before leaping to a conclusion that "It's haunted."

Headed by founding member and director Gerry Powling, QVP investigates sites all over New England, including many private homes, and locations such as Orange Town Hall and the University Club in Amherst. Prior to site investigations, QVP orchestrates the gathering of much information. Clients fill out questionnaires with site layout and type of activity or phenomenon followed up with a telephone interview. Ann Benard, group historian, researches site history, deed information, and genealogy. Steve Maggiolino, tech manager, handles equipment setup for investigations. He supervises the placement of cameras and recorders in specific areas where reported activity occurs. With several television monitors in a designated command area, at least one person watches and listens while the rest of the group, split into teams of at least two, go through the site using handheld video and voice recorders, cameras, and electronic meters.

Paranormal investigating isn't easy. Investigations take place during and often through the night. Although the process sometimes grows tedious, investigators examine all evidence afterward. Team members watch video taken, sometimes over and over, frame by frame. Audio often takes rewinding many times as the investigators listen for sounds or voices while other captured



Quabbin Valley Paranormal, from left, includes Steve Maggiolino, Gerry Powling, Ann Benard, Ingrid Pollard, Heidi Ash, Joanne Collins, and Stephen Turner.

photo © by Zach Benard

noises—a heater running or cars driving by—may make discernment difficult. They carefully study photos. They consider environmental information such as temperature fluctuations and electromagnetic field or EMF shifts. The unglamorous, though crucially thorough, go-through process can daunt some investigators.

QVP's other investigators are Ingrid Pollard, Stephen Turner, Joanne Collins, Heidi Ash, and Sara Leclerc.

continued on next page

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## making sense of the paranormal

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They've observed phenomenon during investigations—a voice calling someone by name, footsteps, and shadows.

What stands out as particularly frightening for QVP? Powling stated, "Although it rarely happens, there were a couple of locations—one in Maine and one in central Massachusetts—where a feeling of heaviness came over everyone upon entering." Before every walk-through, the group gathers for a protection prayer and does a cleansing prayer at the end.

Not all paranormal investigation groups have mediums or psychics among them. QVP's Joanne Collins serves as a forensic and psychic medium who sees and senses spirits. Ms. Collins said, "I didn't ask for this gift." She said it's been part of her life as long as she can remember. Collins also visits sites ahead of time without knowing any details about clients or locations. QVP includes her impressions with investigation files.

Another organization working to investigate the paranormal also exists in the area. With more than

twenty years of combined experience in paranormal work, The Ghost Guys/People vs. Paranormal from Ware investigates locations large and small. They've worked all over New England and beyond. According to founding member Ben Ring, they started with homes in the Pioneer Valley area and branched out to larger, sometimes historic, locations including the Victory Theatre in Holyoke and Saint Alban's Sanatorium in Radford, Virginia.

One of the most frightening places for the group involved a small home dubbed the Wheelwright Demon House in the Wheelwright district of Hardwick. After multiple visits, the group believes "with one hundred percent certainty" that a demon resides there. The group contacted the Roman Catholic Diocese of Worcester to do house blessings.

When the group's founders met, Ring worked as a tattoo artist. His client Sam Louvatikas had recently bought a house in Warren that had signs of paranormal activity. The two became fast friends and decided to

investigate the house, finding that it came naturally to them. Realizing they could help others, they continued working, eventually with like-minded people who joined them over the years. These days, investigators Ring, Lauren Middleton, Tim Aldrich, and Anthony Mazur make up the team.

"Our goal is to prove ghosts exist," said Ring. "The debunking process is just to solidify actual paranormal occurrences." Site investigations include an array of electronic equipment and live recordings. Working in teams of two, they prefer investigating with only their four core members, because they feel that larger groups seem to scare off spirits. Although some members do their own spiritual preparation prior to investigations, as a group they're adamant about doing cleansings at the end, applying sage oil because they believe it ensures that nothing will follow them home.

Mediums assist with particularly sensitive cases when families are involved and afraid. With no knowledge of the case, a medium receives an address and provides immediate impressions followed by a solitary walk-through of a location. Findings become part of case records.

Check out their podcast web series *People vs. Paranormal*. You'll find the hair-raising investigation of the Wheelwright Demon House and a truly enjoyable interview with Dustin Pari of TAPS and *Ghost Hunters*.

Very friendly—and most helpful to me—the ghost hunters I met impressed me as serious professionals who don't take their field lightly. They say they have experienced paranormal events in their own lives that spurred their interest.

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Paula J. Botch is a writer and photographer who lives in Orange. Not tough enough for investigations, she's fascinated with the possibilities of paranormal phenomena and the investigative process.



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# unusual dampness (with squirrels) does not daunt

by Cathy Stanton

Tyson Neukirch moved to central Massachusetts to take a job at Athol's Farm School in 2011, a year of extreme weather events. In June of that year, a tornado tore through Springfield and neighboring towns. In late August, hurricane Irene visited the area and dumped as much as eight inches of rain on some parts of Massachusetts. Then a freakish early blizzard brought two feet of snow just before Halloween.

The weather in 2018 attracted much less public and media attention. But for farmers around the Quabbin area, Mr. Neukirch said, last year was tougher overall.



Tyson Neukirch  
photo © by Oliver Scott Snure

The wet year affected different farms in different ways. Like Still Life Farm, many vegetable and fruit growers had good harvests but struggled with water-related problems. Some experienced soil erosion after being deluged with rain. Neukirch notes that soil type—sandy, well-drained soil versus clayey soil—is less of a factor than a farm's overall hydrology, or where and how subterranean water flows across a given piece of land.

Many local farmers reported that some of their fields became saturated by midsummer 2018, making it hard to tend to livestock or get a tractor in to till, mow, or harvest. Some above-ground crops were quite happy with all the moisture, but many root vegetables simply rotted in the ground.

"We harvested our potatoes early but still lost some of them," reported Julie Rawson of Many Hands Organic Farm in Barre. "And we had carrots rot, too. I've never seen that

before! By August 14, it felt like the farm just said 'Okay, I can't handle this any longer.'"

Pumpkins, an iconic and lucrative crop for many New England farmers, were hit particularly hard. After ripening on the vine and soaking up far more moisture than they needed from saturated fields, many rotted quickly either before or after harvesting.

Red Apple Farm specializes in fruit trees and pumpkins with an extensive pick-your-own operation and heavy marketing of nostalgic New England farm imagery at both its Phillipston farm and its stall at the Boston Public Market. Owner Al Rose said the farm lost whole pumpkin fields to fungus, a problem that has rendered those fields unusable for the foreseeable future. Other fluctuations in natural cycles produced a bumper crop of squirrels and other rodents—bad enough to be dubbed "squirrel-mageddon" in some quarters—that also made inroads on Red Apple's pumpkins.

Mr. Rose noted that he hasn't been able to get into the fields to sow his usual cover crop of winter rye. And the many farmers in the area who make and sell hay or other fodder crops report frustration at the few days when they could mow their fields or bale their hay.

Fodder crops are essential to the area's dairy and meat production, and they link many local farms together in small-scale networks of exchange. Rachel and Bruce Scherer of the Little White Goat Dairy in Orange buy hay from another farm and found supplies in 2018 lower in

# Quabbin area farmers during capricious 2018



Wendell's Diemand Farm endured the fickle weather of 2018.

photo © by Oliver Scott Snure

both quantity and quality. To keep their herd fed year-round, they'll likely end up having to look farther afield for fodder—to farms in New York state or Canada.

Shifting weather patterns affect livestock in other ways, too. The Scherers noted that temperature extremes and wilder yearly fluctuations can throw off their goats' breeding cycle as well as Rachel's timetable for making the cheese, yogurt, and kefir that form a foundation of their business.

"On the plus side," Bruce Scherer points out, "there's lots of water in the wells!" A certain amount of fatalism has always stood New England farmers in good stead, and it's one of the strategies that comes through in answers to the question

of how farmers cope and how they think about 2019 after 2018's challenging weather.



squirrel  
photo © by Mitchell R. Grosky

As they've always done, farmers rely on each other to fill gaps in 2018 production. Red Apple Farm bought some late-season pumpkins from another grower in order to meet its demand. Caro Roszell, who runs a small community-supported-agriculture, or CSA, farm called New Wendell Farm, also bought some crops from fellow farmers in order to fill her customers' shares late in the season.

Ms. Roszell is among the many small farmers who rely on crop diversity to offset losses. In any given year, if one crop fails, another is likely to be abundant. It's a basic fact of farming and an argument against the kind of large-scale monocropping that now

continued on next page



squirrel  
photo © by Dale Monette

After a late spring and a dry start that sparked fears of another drought like the one the region suffered in 2016, the growing season was characterized by regular heavy rains that continued straight through the late fall.

"It went from being too hot and dry to everything being under water," recalled Halley Stillman of Still Life Farm in Hardwick. "We grow a variety of fruits and vegetables, and we ended up having good years in both 2016 and 2018. But 2018 was some of the worst weather we've had in forty years."

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## unpredictable weather patterns lead farmers to plan

continued from page 29

characterizes much of industrialized agriculture in the US.

As weather patterns grow more unpredictable, Ms. Roszell and many other area farmers also pay closer attention to new science and old methods for enhancing soil health and fertility. Farmers have long returned nutrients and carbon to the soil by fertilizing fields with animal manure. Recent research suggests that similar nutrient-cycling strategies have potential not only to buffer farms from extreme weather but literally to sequester atmospheric carbon and other greenhouse gases in soil, where it becomes food for beneficial micro-organisms rather than contributing to an increasingly overheated atmosphere.

"If you're working on diversity and fertility, it pays off," said Rawson, noting that Many Hands Organic Farm had its two best vegetable years ever in the drought year of 2016 and 2018's soggy



squirrel

photo © by Rick Flematti

growing season. "You have to listen to what the land needs."

In their non-farming hours, Ms. Rawson and Ms. Roszell both

work for the Northeast Organic Farming Association, NOFA Mass, an organization among those leading the way in thinking about how to make farming more economically and ecologically resilient. At NOFA Mass's winter conference, held in Worcester on January 12, 2019, workshops focused on a range of methods to help farmers adapt and cope with ever more volatile weather and climate.

Researchers around the region are also working to understand and respond to climate challenges. The recently released New England Adaptation Survey from the University of Vermont highlights adaptive strategies that fruit and vegetable farmers already use as

## in ever new ways

well as emerging and experimental approaches.

"Even in a good year, there's not a lot of margin in farming," the Farm School's Neukirch admitted. But Stillman at Still Life Farm hastened to add that bad weather and financial challenges are nothing new for farmers.

"It's just farming and the weather, and you never know what you're going to get," she said. "Even though 2018 was a bad year in a lot of ways, there's still lots of good local food at the farmers markets and other places and lots of farmers working really hard to make a living."

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

## Why so many squirrels in 2018?

by John Burk

A rather unusual sight caught my eye during the summer of 2018: an agitated female hummingbird buzzing around the head of a gray squirrel and chasing it around the yard. Moments later, I uncovered the source of the dispute, an empty hummingbird feeder with feeding ports and hanging bracket chewed off.

Similar stories have become the norm in recent months. Observers recognize gray squirrels for their problem-solving abilities, persistence, and adaptability to human settings. Unfortunately, those attributes combined with a significant food shortage have turned our familiar backyard neighbors into miniature Tasmanian devils.

An early and highly visible indicator of something amiss occurred when squirrels began venturing across area roadways in alarming numbers, often with fatal consequences. Farmers lost corn, apples, blueberries, and other crops. Around my home and neighborhood, squirrels have ransacked bird feeders, flower pots, plants, trees, chimney vents, window screens, pumpkins, and just about anything else potentially associated with a food source. Evicting squirrels and subsequent home repairs cost one unfortunate friend several thousand dollars.

So what's causing all this bizarre behavior? Wildlife experts see causes as a bumper mast—acorn, nut, and fruit—crop and small mammal population boom in 2017, followed by an abrupt decline in the food sources in 2018.

Simply put, lack of sufficient acorns and other staples has pushed squirrels and their rodent relatives to desperation. Before long, however, their population size and behavior should cycle back to normal.

Photographer John Burk's special interests include New England wildlife.

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cartoon © Emily Boughton



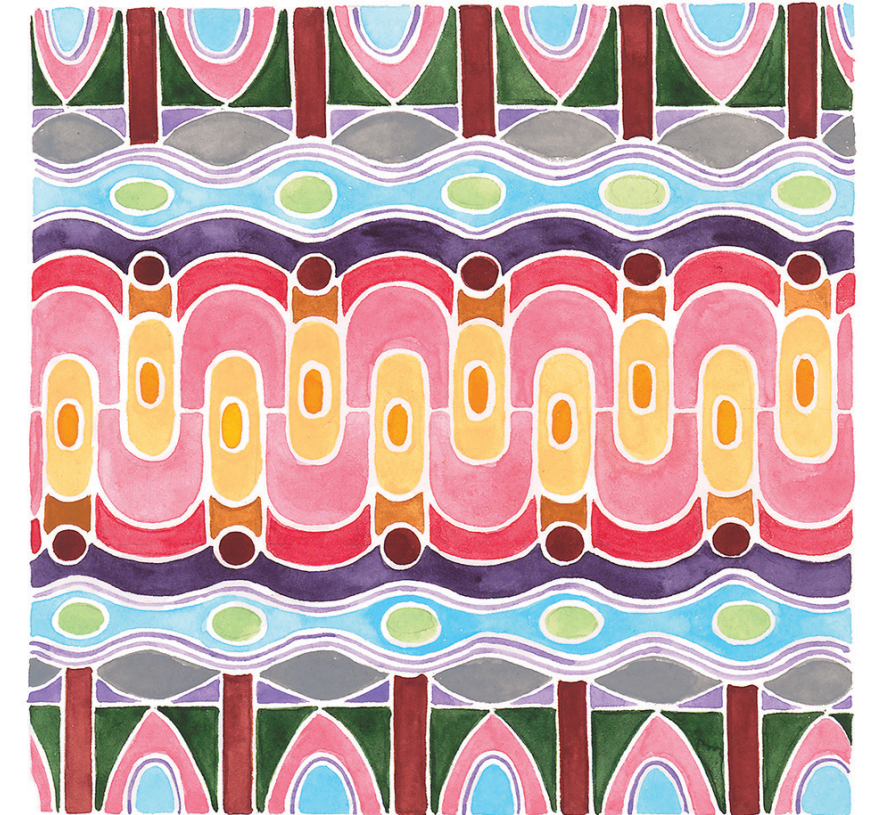
## Winter Wetland a visual haiku by Ami Fagin

A wetland landscape across from the former Fireside Grill in Orange inspired the abstract composition for *Winter Wetland*. Cattails, pines, rippling ice, and sunlight all play off and with each other in color, geometric shape, and line that encourages viewing something more in a visually literate, seasonal poetic interpretation.

Patterns in *Winter Wetland* suggest seasonal freshness and reliable repetition.

Ami's second collection of visual haiku, *One Hundred and One Visual Haiku • Volume Two*, has rolled off Athol's Highland Press. You can find it, along with *Volume One* and single framed visual haiku, on the artist's website: [visualhaiku.graphics](http://visualhaiku.graphics)

Amy Fagin (who works sometimes as Ami 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.



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## Ware's Workshop 13, Can Collectors, and Green Sisters contribute to Quabbin Region music scene

by Laurie Smith

Musicians, musical venues, open mic nights, and opportunities to take lessons, whether instrumental or vocal, abound in Quabbin region towns.

Artists purchased a church at 13 Church Street in Ware, supervised its renovation, and named it Workshop 13. The place has established itself as a nonprofit cultural arts and learning center. A multi-use community arts space, Workshop 13 aims to revive Ware through the arts, including through its musical contribution to the community.

Open mic events occur on the third Friday of each month in the Workshop 13 Grand Hall with its cathedral ceiling, stained glass windows, and amazing acoustics. Open mic welcomes all ages. Organizers suggest a five-dollar donation per person. Musicians who wish to participate must sign up in advance at Workshop13.org to ensure a spot.

Each open mic night, Workshop 13 hosts a different

house band. The house bands perform a few songs and also may accompany musicians that so desire. The venue welcomes all styles from instrumentalists to singers, and the event usually sells out each month, so arrive early. Refreshments on sale include beer, wine, soda, and popcorn.

On the first weekend of each month, Workshop 13 hosts a concert featuring a variety of genres.

A new music program at Workshop 13 provides music lessons to the public, including sessions in piano, group violin, ukulele, guitar, and drums at a private cost for beginners and intermediate musicians.



Folks may want to take a listen to the Can Collectors from Orange and the Green Sisters from Barre.

Carolyn Salls and Julie Johnson make up the Can Collectors duo. They started about three years ago on a



The Can Collectors of Orange, left, comprised of Carolyn Salls, left, and Julie Johnson, and the Green Sisters, right, including, from left, Rebecca (Beck), Betsy (Bets), Brie, and Melody (Mel), enliven regional music offerings.

photos courtesy of Laurie Smith

whim as friends suggested that the two musicians should play a tune together.

A talented Athol High School trumpet player who has sung in church and at family gatherings, Carolyn plays acoustic guitar and sings lead vocals. A few years after high school, Carolyn tried out for a play and started attending open mics, which boosted her confidence with her vocals. At an open mic, she accepted an invitation to

join the Johnny Stevens Band and performed with it for a few years. She then became a part of the band Evenspeak, a popular cover band. Carolyn has also performed with Raider Eddie and the Skeletones and Greg Smith. She recorded with Route 2 Revolution. She has been a part of the Captain Salls Orchestra, the Eastwood Dwellers, and Music Downstairs, all of them known in the Quabbin

continued on page 44

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# massage techniques offer therapies for body and mind

by Ellen Woodbury

Winter is upon us. Have you looked in the mirror lately and noticed your shoulders are almost touching your ears? Felt that the shoveling of heavy wet snow left your back muscles stiff and sore? Been unable to sleep?

Massage therapy and other touch therapies can help. Massage can lessen tension held in the body, reduce pain, increase blood flow, and quiet the mind to bring about relaxation.

## Zero-Balancing • Paula Lyons



Paula Lyons of Shutesbury practices Zero Balancing among other massage techniques.

photo © by Ellen Woodbury

A wellness educator, Paula Lyons of Shutesbury practices Swedish and therapeutic massage, integrative bodywork, and zero balancing. Paula recommends I talk with Lisa Berger, a licensed acupuncturist and teacher and practitioner of Zero Balancing in order to learn more about the theory of ZB.

Lisa, a licensed acupuncturist since 1995, became a certified Zero Balancing practitioner in 1997. She saw ZB as a way to develop the senses and rebalance the body to outgrow patterns no longer serving an individual. Dr. Fritz Smith, a medical physician, osteopath, acupuncturist, and pioneer in integrative medicine in the 1970s, developed ZB. Practitioners believe ZB can balance a person's structure and energy through the use of gentle healing touch, holding, and traction on specific joints in the body.

ZB touch affects soft tissue, energy, and the deepest and densest tissue of bone to help the body relax and reorganize, according to practitioners. Dr. Smith named

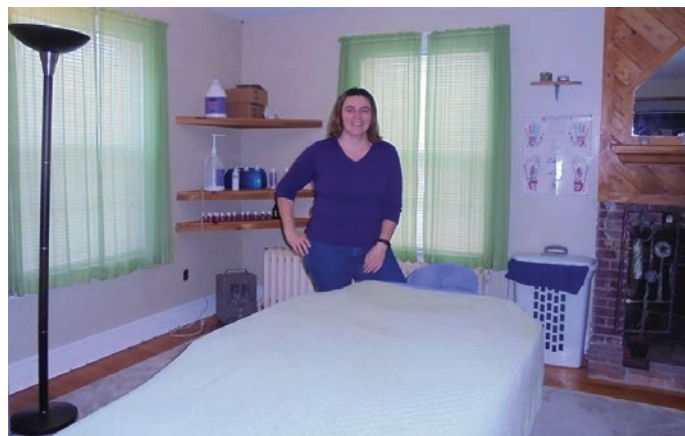
the techniques *zero balancing* because they can result in an individual's returning to mental, spiritual, and physical balance. Practitioners believe a session of from thirty to forty-five minutes with the fully-clothed client or patient lying on a massage table can help relieve body aches, release tension, bring lasting relief from emotional distress, and improve the quality of life. Many conditions—including chronic headaches or low back pain—that haven't responded to other medical approaches may respond to ZB.

Paula demonstrated a ZB touch and hold of my right leg at the site of a five-year-old fracture. I focus on the site and feel a gradual relaxation and lessening of tightness at the old break.

Paula shared that she has seen great improvement in many people with a wide range of conditions. She cited a client who had spinal fusion and experienced attendant discomfort. About six weeks following surgery, Paula gave the woman ZB treatments to release and prevent further buildup of tension in bones, ligaments, tendons, and muscles.

Whereas Swedish and other massage can treat soft tissue, Paula said, ZB can go deeper into underlying physical, emotional, and mental causes of imbalance. "I liked Zero Balancing because it combines eastern and western thinking," Paula said. "With healing touch, holding, and traction, the body can adjust to a higher level, and can let go of the anxiety and old patterns."

## deep-tissue massage • Jennifer Colasurdo



Jennifer Colasurdo of Athol uses deep-tissue techniques among other massage possibilities.

photo © by Ellen Woodbury

Jennifer Colasurdo, licensed massage therapist and proprietor of Kneading Your Needs in Athol, incorporates deep-tissue massage when needed. Deep-tissue work sometimes causes pain in order to break up scar tissue from surgeries and sports or similar injuries. Massage therapists learn to anticipate reasonable degrees of pressure. Particularly effective in tissues of the ankle, knee, shoulder, and hip, deep work can free up joints and increase range of motion.

Jen remembered a woman in her late eighties. "She had scar tissue built up in her ankle from surgery pins. I saw her twice a week in the beginning, then spaced out appointments to once a month. Now, she barely notices the scar tissue."

Practitioners believe sciatica, low back pain, fibromyalgia, hip pain, back and leg spasms often respond to deep tissue work. "I've had clients from the ages of forty-five to ninety-five who have benefited from deep-tissue work," said Jen.

Practitioners stress that people with varicose veins, circulation issues with swelling, pregnant women, and those with active illness should avoid deep-tissue massage. "The body is already working hard, and it will have to work so much harder (with certain conditions)," said Jen.

"It's best to maintain the body on a regular basis," she added. "A lot of people take better care of their car than their bodies. Our bodies are machines, too."

"Stay hydrated," she advised. "Every body function needs fluid."

When looking for a therapist who can best meet your needs, ask many questions in order to feel comfortable. Zero Balancing and deep-tissue massage represent just two methods of bodywork. We have many excellent practitioners in North Quabbin and South Quabbin towns.

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Ellen Woodbury, a massage therapist, lives in Athol.

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the wretched refuse of  
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tempest-tost to me.  
I lift my lamp beside  
the golden door!"*

—Emma Lazarus



ad signed by  
Hattie Nestel

## sculptor honors native and Buddhist traditions

continued from page 17



Matsuda stores stone, including a relief lotus, for sculpting.

photo © by Sarah Robertson

a field, inspiring his signature series of sculptures that utilize fire with elaborate, ceremonious performances of song, dance, and prayer.

Burning art pieces represents purification, Matsuda said, a concept he adopted from Hopi native American prophecy that predicts our society stands at a crossroads that will end either in peace or destruction.

“We purify ourselves to live in harmony with each other and the earth, or we become purified by

destruction, natural disaster, and war,” Matsuda said, “which is just like what we are seeing today.”

In 2010, to commemorate the sixty-fifth anniversary of the United States atomic bombing of Nagasaki, Matsuda partnered with monks at the New England Peace Pagoda for a ceremonial sculpture burning on August 9. People prayed on the hilltop before the pagoda while eight wooden sculptures burned, each representing one of the eight noble truths of Buddhism.

“The pieces can be looked at as both positive and negative,” Matsuda said. “positive in that they’re the burning away of desires, or they could be looked at negatively as destruction.”

Matusda said he will never stop trying to share his earnest quest for peace and understanding.

“It’s hard to be hopeful with the state of the world and country today,” he said, “but we have to be hopeful. It’s the only way to move forward. We have to try.”

Sarah Robertson is a freelance journalist. She lives in Leverett.



Hemlock Hospice installations on Harvard Forest trails included, from left, “Fast Forward,” “Sixth Extinction Flag,” and “Ineffective Insect Trap.”

photos © by Diane Nassif

## art installation laments decline of hemlock trees

continued from page 9

Massachusetts tracts, most commonly growing on slopes facing north or northwest.

Economically, eastern hemlock never attained the status of the white pine, which provided timber for four centuries. Instead, hemlock forests served the economy with bark for leather tanning. Today, hemlock bark provides landscaping mulch.

Mr. Foster said the hemlock woolly adelgid, an insect introduced to North America via ornamental Chinese hemlock plants, threatens hemlock forests. The adelgid feeds by sucking sap from hemlock and spruce trees. Climate change has augmented the spread of the adelgid north from Virginia, where it first showed in the US in 1951, into New England by 2009. The insect dies over the winter only if temperatures reach 15 degrees Fahrenheit below zero for several successive nights, a condition unknown for a decade.

The *Hemlock Hospice* exhibit turned the dying hemlock forest into an educational initiative whose two-mile out-and-back *Hemlock Hospice* trail in Petersham began with “danger” and “do-not-enter” signs at a trail head off the road. Named pieces dot the trail.

“Lantern” suggests that a cure does not exist for the current hemlock threat. Hospice or end-of-life care for hemlocks will only manage their loss. “Double Assault” represents the combined effects on hemlock trees of the woolly adelgid and preemptive logging of hemlocks in anticipation of their death.

At “Helmet,” visitors take a helmet on entering a potentially hazardous area. “HWA Tent” hangs

from a tree to represent a home for the adelgid. “Fast Forward Futures” suggests a next phase of forest growth, the black birch. Eventually, the birch will give way to a mixed deciduous forest of birch, oak, and red maple, according to Mr. Ellison. “Sixth Extinction Flag” represents massive loss of biodiversity as shown by *Hemlock Hospice*.

Find more information at [harvard-forest.fas.harvard.edu](http://harvard-forest.fas.harvard.edu). Search for *Hemlock Hospice*.

Diane Nassif calls herself a newcomer to the Quabbin region. She retired here nine years ago from the Boston area. She has found it a beautiful and welcoming community. She volunteers for local organizations and coaxes friends and family to visit the area to share her enjoyment of its farms, woodlands, artisans, and festivals.



Wendell artist Adrian Montagano got in touch with essential being in his painting *Interior Landscape #7*.

acrylic on paper painting © by Adrian Montagano



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## woodworkers take advantage of region's natural resources

by Sharon Harmon



Will Stratford of Leverett makes the most of found wood.  
photo © by Sharon Harmon

Woodworking businesses dot the tree-studded landscape of the Quabbin region.

Will Stratford

Will Stratford began Leverett Woodworkers by making tables and other furniture from recycled wood.

"I find lots of my wood on Craigslist and at houses demolitions," he said. "I got wonderful floorboards from a three-story house built in the eighteen hundreds."

Will recently built a table featuring a tiger maple top. He also makes farmhouse-style doors.

"He designs breadboard ends on his tables and makes benches to match tables, side tables, and end tables, and coffee tables," said Will's wife, Lisa, who attends to marketing for the company. "I don't have one to show you here in the house," she laughed. "It's the age-old story of the cobbler's kids not having any shoes."

Sometimes, Will works with their son-in-law, who made metal fabricated legs for a table that seems a perfect blend of a contemporary farmhouse table with modern.

"I like to think my furniture is unique, blending old stories and new stories in each piece of work. My grandfather logged in the Quabbin. He split the wood with his bare feet in a fourteen-inch-diameter log competition, so I guess there is wood in my blood."

find more at [Leverettwoodworks.com](http://Leverettwoodworks.com) or (413) 367-9220



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## to craft furniture, restore old homes, and make useful items

Robert Wright

Robert Wright Woodworking & Restorations of Orange specializes in historical structure remodeling and custom cabinetry. His family relocated from the Cape two years ago for a slower pace of life. Robert had worked under the tutelage of Tom Turcket, a Cape master craftsman.

The family settled on Wheeler Avenue in the well-known rhododendron house built by Orange sewing machine industrialist John W. Wheeler around the turn of the nineteenth to the twentieth century.



Robert Wright builds custom reproduction furniture.  
photo © by Sharon Harmon

Robert said, "I find woodworking very rewarding, and it brings me lots of joy working on reproduction period pieces. I also make built-in stairs and custom furniture."

He has made a custom jewelry box, created a replica of an early twentieth-century partner's desk, and built a solid cherry bar for clients. "I am self-taught for the most part," he said. "I started working with my father when I was fourteen." I could see the love of his occupation for historical restoration in his eyes.

email [RobertW.Restoration@gmail.com](mailto:RobertW.Restoration@gmail.com) or  
call (508) 237-7405

...

Jim Putney

Jim Putney of Royalston makes wooden handles for apple baskets and ice cream makers and stems for corn cob pipes. Touring his old barn where the work takes place feels like walking into the past. Jim uses old or handmade machines, tools, and implements. In the 1930s, Jim's grandparents Margaret and Roger Putney lived in Winchendon but operated their business in Royalston. During the bad winter of 1932, they had to ski to the mill in Royalston each day because, in days before electricity powered the shop and before Jim's birth, they couldn't let the steam boiler freeze up or it would shut them down.

continued on page 55

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grand drapes and advertising curtains add character to town halls

continued from page 19

is much smaller and depicts a Greek temple. The back drape is an advertising drape with the list of businesses who donated toward the drapes, but we have no idea who painted it. It might be the same artist. The advertising on the curtain probably paid for them.”

Mr. Tanguay said he expects that the curtain will undergo restoration within the next several years, once the Grange building has been restored and turned into a community center. The Curtains Without Borders preservation team assisted the historical society in taking down the drape and storing it safely. Estimates to restore it are around \$6,000 to get complete restoration.

Ms. Hadsel of Curtains without Borders has written a book, *Suspended Worlds*, about the grand drapes and their history. Ms. Hadsel covers the history of grand drapes in Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine. The book includes a chapter on artists who created the curtains.

New England grand drape artists include Charles Henry, a Vermont artist who painted sixty of them, including thirty-five still existing. “He painted curtains, wrote plays, and did vaudeville,” Ms. Hadsel said.


“I have only ever come across three mid-1930s women artists of grand drapes,” she added. Scenic artists, they worked at the same time in the same area of northern New England and one in Connecticut.

“In Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont we have found ninety percent of the drapes,” Ms. Hadsel said. The group has found fewer in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and Connecticut because of greater loss there. She said renovators of southern New England town halls often cast drapes aside. Ms. Hadsel said she

welcomes information about grand drapes.

Find more discussion of grand drapes at the organization’s website, [curtainswithoutborders.org](http://curtainswithoutborders.org).


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



Minute Tapioca Company, which had its early twentieth-century factory in Orange, sponsored the town’s grand drape.  
photo courtesy of Orange Restoration Committee

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Frozen Quabbin region woods shimmer in a watercolor by the late Barbara Ellis of Petersham. Artist Margaret Ellis Feldman comments on her late mother's painting: In the few luminous moments just before sunset on a snowy winter day, the lowering sun casts a pinkish light on majestic pine trees, throwing them into intense brightness and contrasting deep shadow. From her window, using only ink and a rosy wash, Barbara captured a transitory magical glow before the day dissolves into dark. watercolor © by Margaret Ellis Feldman for the late Barbara Ellis / watercolor courtesy of Jane Gagliardi

## musical ensembles bring versatility to performance venues

continued from page 35

area. Carolyn also sings with Them Guys, a duo with her longtime partner, Timothy Britt.

Julie Johnson plays the steel drum and sings back-up vocals. From a toddler she started singing as part of the Johnson Family Singers until they disbanded in 1975. She sang in the chorus all through high school and was a member of the band Double Vinyl.

The Can Collectors play mostly acoustic alternative soul at private parties and community events. They have a weekly online request show called Two-Hour Tuesday Tuneage on their Can Collectors Facebook page, where fans can request a song and the duo will pick one a week to honor. They often host guest performers on the Facebook show. Julie said that her favorite part of the online request show involves learning a new song that she and Carolyn have never heard before.

The Green Sisters of Barre includes actual sisters Melody, Betsy, Brie, and Beck who have played venues around Massachusetts and New Hampshire for the

past few years. They perform a wide range of original numbers and folk, bluegrass, barbershop, blues, and country music on acoustic instruments. They sometimes will switch the instruments around before you even have time to think.

The sisters started as youngsters singing with their parents' country band, The Housejackers. The performers prodded their children to join them onstage, much to their chagrin as little kids, of course. But as they got older, they said, they each developed musical passions in their own direction. In 2015 after playing classical music together at a friend's wedding, Brie asked, "Do you guys want to make this into a real band?" And they've been playing gigs ever since.

The Green Sisters will play at the First Universalist Church Coffeehouse at 31 North Main Street, Orange, at 7 PM Sunday, April 6. Check out their full schedule online at [thegreensistersfour.com](http://thegreensistersfour.com)

Laurie Smith is an early childhood provider. She lives in Athol.

## Nature's Nuances

by Clare Green

Tea Time

"Sit. Join me for tea. Would you like milk and sugar or honey in it or lemon or plain? Relax. I'll get it for you. Herbal or black or pine-needle tea?"

I love to brew a pot of pine-needle tea. It's delicate and light green in color with a soft pine aroma and woodsy taste that feel so nourishing. Its main ingredient is shikimic, also a prime component in tamiflu, a medicine for treatment of flu and thus touted as an antiviral. Brew a sprig of pine needles from any conifer for pine-needle tea. Pour hot water over the sprig and let steep for at least fifteen minutes.

Although recorded history indicates that a Chinese official probably enjoyed the first cup of tea in 273 CE, native populations dating back 12,000 years probably brewed teas from barks, pine needles, and plants.

In the United States, we learn that a ship set sail to China in 1787 to collect its cargo of tea. Soon, colonists consumed more than a million pounds of tea yearly. When the Boston Tea party ensued with a boycott of Asian tea because of British taxes, colonists resorted to drinking bergamot or bee balm tea. Ironically, black teas with bergamot comprise today's Earl Grey tea.

Folks from England, India, the United States, and Japan consume the most teas in 2019. Cultivating, harvesting, and grading tea leaves constitutes an expansive enterprise.

Each midafternoon on land or sea, Eleanor Roosevelt, US First Lady of the 1930s and 1940s, refreshed and relaxed with the taste and aroma of a ritual cup of tea. In fact, you can still have "Tea with Eleanor" at Campobello, New Brunswick, while docents at the



Antique and modern porcelain waits for tea time in a painting by Olga Antonova of Royalston and Watertown.

oil on canvas painting © by Olga Antonova

Roosevelt summer home regale you with poignant historical tales from her life. "Tea with Eleanor" includes tea heartfully served complete with sugar and ginger cookies made from Eleanor's own recipe.

Browse local grocery aisles and food coops for a new herbal blend, green tea, or black tea. Green teas have higher antioxidant content. Consider shopping for a teapot at a local antique shop if you don't have one. Collect a few china teacups to make it delightfully interesting. Tea always tastes best in a porcelain cup. Do take a moment for a cup of tea! Happy brewing!

Clare Green, retired educator from Warwick, welcomes folks to visit her woodland labyrinth or stop by for a cup of tea.

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## primary records shed light on life in colonial era

continued from page 23

loyal soldiers, and he also wanted to settle loyal men with their families in the colonies to defend his land against claims of the French and Indians. As a result, he offered hundreds of acres free and sometimes a lifetime of tax-free status. For example, William Caldwell, father of James and John, was “prohibited from paying taxes for his entire life in any of the king’s domains.”

Another beneficiary of the king’s largesse was John Murray, son of the Duke of Atholl, Scotland. A big man, he stood over six feet tall. Contemporary estimates suggest he weighed more than three hundred pounds. Murray built a mansion in Rutland and lived lavishly. He received a large land grant northwest of Rutland and in 1774 got a thousand acres and then another nine hundred acres in Vermont where Ethan Allen and his Green Mountain Boys strenuously objected to the grant, which the king eventually rescinded.

He was principal in the transactional and legislative founding of Barre, Oakham, Athol, and Hubbardston,

according to *Wikipedia*. Some believe John Murray had twenty-one children by three consecutive wives. With benefits, entitlements, men, land, business, money, wives, and children to manage, Murray needed help. Maybe he had indentured servants or possibly the status symbol of slaves, although so far no one has documented that Murray had either.

The Quabbin area has many stories to tell about its early beginnings, and many such stories can be found in the church and civil documents of the day. Some may find documents dry and dusty, but they are filled with fascinating stories of the time.

Charlotte Westhead, retired as a registered nurse at Shriners Hospital, Springfield, spends time at Quabbin region historical societies and university libraries poring through demographic records of the colonial era. She contributed to the books *Sandisfield Then and Now* (2012) and *From Schul to Soil* (2018), a *History of Jewish Farmers in Berkshire County*. She lives in Amherst.



A lone duck floats across wintry Millers River between Athol and Orange.  
photo © by Sue Simonds

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## flood control properties offer

continued from page 15

became increasingly distant memories, a lack of funding and public pressure delayed the dam and several other projects. After Hurricanes Connie and Diane caused another round of flooding in southern New England in 1955, support quickly revived, and construction began the following year. Secretary of the Army Wilbur Brucker attended dedication of the dam, completed in 1958 at a cost of \$2 million.

Barre Falls Dam spans Ware River 0.3 miles downstream from the confluence of the East and West Branch headwaters at the Barre-Hubbardston town line. Three large dikes stand along the perimeter of Blood Swamp at the southern end of the flood storage area, which has a 7.8 billion gallon capacity. Apart from high-water periods, the reservoir stays dry most of the year. Engineers considered a permanent lake that would have inundated wetlands, wildlife habitats, and fishing areas, but never created it. “Allowing rivers to flow as close to their natural state as possible is crucial to maintaining the ecology of the watersheds,” said naturalist Dave Small, whose father was the first chief dam operator at Tully Lake.

The state manages the adjacent upper Ware River basin, one of the region’s largest wilderness areas, for water supply protection. Managers periodically divert the river’s seasonal high flows to Quabbin Reservoir at a Massachusetts Water Resources Authority facility downstream from Barre Falls Dam. The Army Corps and MWRA collectively manage flood protection and water releases when needed. Conant Brook Dam in Monson, built in 1966, provides additional relief for the Chicopee River watershed.

The Reservoir Control Center in Concord, Massachusetts, coordinates operations for the Army Corps flood management projects in New England, which include 35 dams in five river basins. Using satellite and land-based sources, hydrologists continually monitor river levels, precipitation, snowpack, and forecasts to identify potential floods.

Although storms have regularly continued to impact central Massachusetts, the dams have helped prevent a repeat of past disasters, thus saving local communities

## opportunities for recreation

more than \$160 million per recent estimates. The dams received their greatest test during the April, 1987, flood, when early spring rainstorms drenched ground already saturated with melted snow. The Millers River rose to nearly 34 feet at Birch Hill Dam, inundating 81 percent of the flood-control area. Tully and Barre Falls respectively reached 62 and 72 percent of their capacities. During last year’s ice jam on Millers River, Birch Hill Dam and Tully Dam prevented a potentially damaging flood in Athol. Storage areas at both facilities filled to roughly 25 percent, the highest levels since 1996.

In addition to flood control, Army Corps properties offer benefits including watershed protection, wildlife habitat, and recreational opportunities. Visitors enjoy activities including hiking, biking, cross-country skiing, paddling, fishing, wildlife watching, picnicking, and disc golf. In April when conditions permit, Birch Hill Dam and Tully Dam are used to manage the Millers River’s flow during the River Rat canoe and kayak races.

Find more information at [nae.usace.army.mil](http://nae.usace.army.mil).

Photographer John Burk’s special interests include New England rivers and weather.



In the depths of winter, who can guess what spring will bring?  
*Ethereal Spring*  
painting in acrylics © by Susan Marshall of Warwick

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## charming doors enhance buildings throughout the South Quabbin

by Mary Lou Conca



My fascination with old doors continues as I explore and photograph historic buildings and homes of the Quabbin region and their majestic doors. I found charming doors accenting historic buildings throughout the South Quabbin, including

from left, top,

at North Leverett Baptist Church, built in 1767 as the Baptist Church of Montague  
70 North Leverett Road, North Leverett

at Shutesbury Community Church, built in 1827 as the Federated Church  
6 Town Common Road, Shutesbury

at Rhodes School, built in 1934 and housing Pelham town offices, 351 Amherst Road, Pelham,

at a private residence, built 1737 and formerly the United Church of Pelham, Amherst Road,  
and from left, bottom

at Clapp Memorial Library, built in 1887 19 South Main Street, Belchertown

at Hope United Methodist Church, built 1835 as Union Street Church in Springfield and  
moved by horse wagon and ox carts in 1873, 31 Main Street, Belchertown

at Ware Center Meeting House and Museum, built in 1799 and has served as the first town hall, first school, and  
parish home for the First Church of Ware, corner of Belchertown Road and Greenwich Road, Ware

at Harvest Home, a private home on Belchertown Road in Ware

photos © by Mary Lou Conca



## Uniquely Quabbin Calendar Listings

January 16, Wednesday

Creating Your Vision for 2019

6:30 pm-8:30 pm

Athol Public Library

568 Main Street

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How will you make your dreams come true? Get a guided journey into 2019 by creating a personal vision board!.  
Registration required

athollibrary.org

January 18, Friday

Open Mic Night

7:00 pm-10:00pm

Workshop13

13 Church Street

Ware

\$5 suggested donation. Beer, wine and soft drinks available for purchase.  
workshop13.org

January 25, Friday

Family Bingo Night

6:30 pm-7:30 pm

Naquag

285 Main Street

Rutland

A night of Bingo fun with family and friends.

January 27, Sunday

Tracking the North Eastern Coyote

10:00 am-4:30 pm

Quabbin Reservoir

New Salem

Follow the trails of northeastern coyotes, immersing ourselves in the world of this fascinating animal.

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walnuthilltracking.com

January 25-January 27

Friday-Sunday

Of Mice and Men

7:30 pm

The Center at Eagle Hill

242 Old Petersham Road

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January 26, Saturday

A Winter Reading

4:00 pm-6:00 pm

Parish Hall

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February 2, Saturday

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10:30am-12:30am

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February 5, Tuesday

Valentine's Day Chocolate

Shortbread Cookies

3:00 pm-5:00 pm

Quabbin Harvest

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Orange

Learn how to decorate homemade shortbread cookies with Mary from Sweet Cottage Farm.

February 6, Wednesday

Creative Crafting for Adults

6:30 pm-8:30 pm

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continued on the next page



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**Sunday: 9am-1pm**

**Offering Free Prescription Delivery**  
**(7 Days a Week) to:**  
**Athol • Orange • Royalston**  
**Petersham • New Salem • Phillipston • Erving**  
**Wendell • Templeton • Warwick**

## Uniquely Quabbin listings

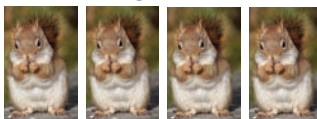
continued from page 51

**February 13, Wednesday**

**Creative Cooks**  
3:30 pm-4:30 pm  
Fobes Memorial Library  
4 Maple Street  
Oakham  
Grade school children are invited to come and learn basic cooking skills with a take home recipe to share.  
fobesmemoriallibrary.org

**February 15, Friday**

**Open Mic Night**  
7:00 pm-10:00 pm  
Workshop13  
13 Church Street  
Ware  
\$5 Suggested donation. Beer, wine and soft drinks available for purchase.  
workshop13.org



**February 15, Friday (continued)**

**Cherish the Ladies**  
7:30 pm  
The Center at Eagle Hill  
242 Old Petersham Road  
Hardwick  
Timeless Irish traditions and good cheer.  
thecenterateaglehill.org

**February 23, Saturday**

**Planner Madness**  
10:00 am-12:00 pm  
Athol Public Library  
568 Main Street  
Athol  
Popular planner choices.  
Registration required  
athollibrary.org

**February 23, Saturday (continued)**

**Richard Chase Concert**  
7:30 pm  
Wendell Full Moon Coffeehouse  
6 center Street  
Wendell  
Benefiting the 1794 Meetinghouse.  
Wedelfullmoon.org

**February 28, Thursday**

**Sherlock Holmes with Barry Deitz**  
6:00 pm-7:00 pm  
Athol Public Library  
568 Main Street  
Athol  
Come learn about the world's most famous literary detective.  
Registration required  
athollibrary.org

*please tell our advertisers you saw their ads in  
Uniquely Quabbin magazine.*



# Orange Dental Group



**9 Grove St.  
Orange, MA**

## Welcome to Orange Dental Group

Orange Dental Group is special because we love our profession and patients sense our commitment to provide them with the best suitable dental treatment available. Our no-stress, peaceful and relaxed atmosphere make patients feel at home.

Every patient is treated with love and respect as human beings should be treated. Our energy goes to treating our patients with the highest commitment to the dental standards of our time.

## ***Emergencies seen promptly***

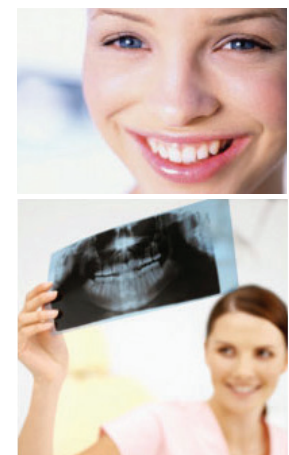
Orange Dental Group accepts most insurances, including MassHealth and Fallon Insurance. Financing assistance is available.

**www.orangedentalgroup.com**  
**infoorangedental1@verizon.net**

## **Our services include:**

- Children's dentistry
- Preventative dental care and restorations
- Oral surgery & extractions
- Root canals
- Dentures
- Crowns & bridges
- Periodontal treatment

***Dentistry for the entire family***  
**978-544-3515**



**March 1, Friday**

**The Masters of Soul, a Motown Review**  
7:30 pm  
The Center at Eagle Hill  
242 Old Petersham Road  
Hardwick  
Fully choreographed performances of both male and female groups backed by a live band.  
thecenterateaglehill.org

**March 5, Tuesday**

**Intro to Herbalism**  
3:00 pm-5:00 pm  
Quabbin Harvest  
12 North Main Street  
Orange  
Learn how to make herbal tea, tinctures, and oils with Community Herbalist Carol Joyce of White Buffalo Herbs.

**March 9, Saturday**

**Tracking Walk**  
10:00 am-3:00 pm  
Quabbin Reservoir  
Petersham  
A day in the accidental wilderness, a vast area of diverse habitat.  
Registration required  
winterberrywildlife.ouroneacrefarm.com

**March 15, Friday**

**Open Mic Night**  
7:00 pm-10:00 pm  
Workshop13  
13 Church Street  
Ware  
\$5 Suggested donation. Beer, wine and soft drinks available for purchase.  
workshop13.org

**calendar listings  
compiled by  
Emily Boughton**

submit calendar listings to  
calendar@northquabbinchamber.com

**March 16, Saturday**

**Bay State Wind Ensemble**  
7:30 pm  
The Center at Eagle Hill  
242 Old Petersham Road  
Hardwick  
Bay State Winds is a chamber wind ensemble comprised of Massachusetts musicians who perform works of the greatest composers.  
thecenterateaglehill.org

**March 20, Wednesday**

**Great Oreo Cookie Taste Off**  
3:30 pm-4:30 pm  
Athol Public Library  
568 Main Street  
Athol  
Which Oreo is the best? Does more filling mean better flavor? Is original king or will another flavor conquer? We will put each flavor to the test until we crown an Oreo cookie champion! For teens in grades 6-12  
Registration required  
athollibrary.org

**March 23, Saturday**

**Rani Arbo and Daisy Mahem Concert**  
7:30 pm  
Wendell Full Moon Coffeehouse  
6 center Street  
Wendell  
Benefiting the Friends of the Wendell Free Library  
wedelfullmoon.org

**March 27, Wednesday**

**"New Views of Gilbertville"**  
entry deadline  
Hosted by the Friends of the Stone Church and Hardwick Historical Society  
Juried photography contest and exhibit April 13-June 3. Cash prize.  
Call (413) 477-6028  
sites.google.com/site/  
EastQuabbinArtistsAlliance/home  
EastQuabbinArtistAlliance@gmail.com

**March 29, Friday**

**Molodi Live**  
7:30 pm  
The Center at Eagle Hill  
242 Old Petersham Road  
Hardwick  
MOLODI is a performance ensemble that takes body percussion to the extreme. They blend collegiate stepping, tap, gumboots, beatbox, poetry and hip hop dance with guerilla theatre and robust personalities.  
thecenterateaglehill.org

**April 2, Tuesday**

**Seed Starting**  
3:00 pm-5:00 pm  
Quabbin Harvest  
12 North Main Street  
Orange  
Learn how to jump-start your own garden with, herbs, perennials, flowers, and heirloom plants with Tony Leger of Foothill Farm.

**April 3, Wednesday**

**Creative Crafting for Adults**  
6:30 pm-8:30 pm  
Athol Public Library  
568 Main Street  
Athol  
Get guided, step by step instructions, and all the materials to make a beautiful handmade craft.  
Registration required  
athollibrary.org

**April 4, Thursday**

**Can the US Constitution Save Us from 1984?**  
6:00 pm-8:00 pm  
Athol Public Library  
568 Main Street  
Athol  
What can the novel 1984 teach us about resistance and resilience, freedom and truth, and the responsibility of a free press to challenge power?  
athollibrary.org

continued on the next page

## Uniquely Quabbin listings

continued from page 53

April 13, Saturday (continued)

Pamela Means  
7:30 pm  
Wendell Full Moon Coffeehouse  
6 center Street  
Wendell  
Benefiting the Wendell Community  
Kitchen Fund.  
wedelfullmoon.org

April 14, Sunday

Beavers and Otters: Wetland  
Exploration  
10:00 am-4:00 pm  
New Salem  
A day-long adventure exploring  
wetlands and learning about the  
diversity of life found there.  
Registration required  
walnuthilltracking.com

April 19, Friday

Open Mic Night  
7:00 pm-10:00 pm  
Workshop13  
13 Church Street  
Ware  
\$5 Suggested donation. Beer, wine  
and soft drinks available for purchase.  
workshop13.org

April 27, Saturday

Vintage and Antique Show and Sale  
9:00 am-2:00 pm  
Petersham Town Hall  
17 South Main Street  
Petersham  
Come enjoy the beautiful spring  
weather while taking advantage of the  
opportunity to find quality items in the  
scenic Quabbin area of Central MA.

May 3-May 5

Friday-Sunday

Bye Bye Birdie  
7:30 pm  
The Center at Eagle Hill  
242 Old Petersham Road  
Hardwick  
Presented by EHS Production  
thecenterateaglehill.org

May 9, Thursday

Delvena Theatre Company  
Murder a La Carte  
6:00 pm-8:00 pm  
Athol Public Library  
568 Main Street  
Athol  
Performance written by Fran Baron  
Ages 18+  
Registration required  
athollibrary.org

May 12, Sunday

Birding by Ear  
7:00 am-10:00 am  
Belchertown  
Naturalist, photographer, and expert  
birder John Green will be the guide  
for your eyes and your ears, as you  
experience the world of birds.  
Registration required  
walnuthilltracking.com

May 16, Thursday

Perfect Horses and Brave Men  
7:00 pm  
Woods Memorial Library  
19 Pleasant Street  
Barre  
Presented by Lester Paquin and Lucy  
Allen. Hosted by the Barre Historical  
Society.  
barremahistoricalsociety.org

## Uniquely Quabbin listings

May 18, Saturday

Carrie Ferguson  
7:30 pm  
Wendell Full Moon Coffeehouse  
6 center Street  
Wendell  
Benefiting the Deerpaths Beneficiary.  
wendellfullmoon.org

for additional *Uniquely Quabbin*

calendar listings or events posted

after our calendar deadline,

please go online to

uniquelyquabbin.com

or

northquabbin.com

## woodworkers produce useful items

continued from page 41

Jim grew up in the mill where  
he works with his wife pitching in.  
His grandfather started the business  
when his hours were cut during the  
Depression, and he decided to make  
handles for wooden buckets.

Jim's plant makes approximately  
350,000 basket handles annually,  
and they ship them for use by the  
White Mountain Ice Cream Freezer  
plant. The family's wooden handles  
for apple baskets go to Buffalo.

"We are still in business because  
of our pipe stems," Jim said. "They  
make up ninety percent of our work.  
We average nearly a million a year,  
although in the early 1960s we made  
as many as three million a year."  
Missouri Meerschaum Company  
buys the pipe stems. Photos in Jim's



Putney apple basket handles  
get shipped to Buffalo.  
photo © by Sharon Haromon

workshop walls show Admiral  
Richard E. Byrd smoking corncob  
pipes from Missouri Meerschaum  
along with a display of pipes.  
call (978) 249-7787

Sharon Harmon is a poet and freeland  
writer from Royalston.

April 4, Thursday (continued)  
Forgotten Farms Movie Screening  
7:00 pm  
Stone Cow Brewery  
500 West Street  
Barre  
Hosted by the Barre Historical Society.  
barremahistoricalsociety.org

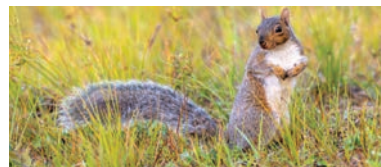
April 11, Thursday

Thru Hiking the Appalachian Trail with  
Sam Ducharme  
6:00 pm-7:30 pm  
Athol Public Library  
568 Main Street  
Athol  
Modern-day adventure with images  
and stories that will leave you with  
a renewed awe of the beauty of our  
country and its people.  
Registration required  
athollibrary.org

April 13, Saturday

River Rat Race  
Big Cheese 5K  
10:00 am Parade  
1:00 pm Race Start  
Millers River  
Athol and Orange  
Annual canoe race along the Millers  
River with hundreds of racers and  
events in the area all day long.

Spring Swing Dance with the Nelson  
Riddle Orchestra  
5:00 pm  
The Center at Eagle Hill  
242 Old Petersham Road  
Hardwick  
Swing through the Big Band Era with  
the famed Nelson Riddle Orchestra!  
thecenterateaglehill.org



Mike's Photography  
weddings • senior photos  
family photos • class reunions  
wildlife • sports  
phone: (978) 821-6642  
email: photog46@hotmail.com

*Making Uncommon Meals  
On the Athol Uptown Common*



Breakfast Soups Lunch

Catering Special Events

1493 Main Street  
Athol, Massachusetts

Find us on Google, Facebook, Yelp



## Breathe easy again

Pulmonary services at Athol Hospital bring patients with lung conditions back to enjoying life

When you can't breathe, nothing else matters. If you or someone you love has a respiratory condition or illness, you know how frightening it is when you can't get breathe.

Pulmonary Rehabilitation at Athol Hospital is a one-stop option, right in your back yard. One of the most comprehensive skilled programs in Central and Western Massachusetts, Athol Hospital's program is led by a team of qualified respiratory therapists, on-site 24 hours a day, seven days a week, the program is staffed by Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) certified registered nurses and is overseen by pulmonary physicians. We employ a multi-disciplinary approach that includes physical and occupational therapies, nutrition counseling, social services and nurse case management.

Our care team's number one goal is to improve condition self-management and help patients enjoy an active and independent lifestyle.

For more information visit [www.atholhospital.org](http://www.atholhospital.org) or call (978) 249-1244

### MAKING CHANGES THAT WORK

A treatment plan helps you reach your goals to live a better quality of life. The changes you make with the help of the pulmonary rehab team bring you to those goals. Do you want to:

- Breathe better
- Dance or exercise
- Have energy to enjoy your children and grandchildren
- Rely less on others
- Do everyday activities with less shortness of breath
- Return to hobbies and activities
- Travel
- Make fewer visits to the hospital or emergency room



**Athol Hospital**

Member of the Heywood Healthcare Family