

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



Ice coats a Templeton vista.
photo © by David Brothers

ON THE FRONT COVER

Winter's Deep Sleep

a watercolor by Candace Anderson of Petersham

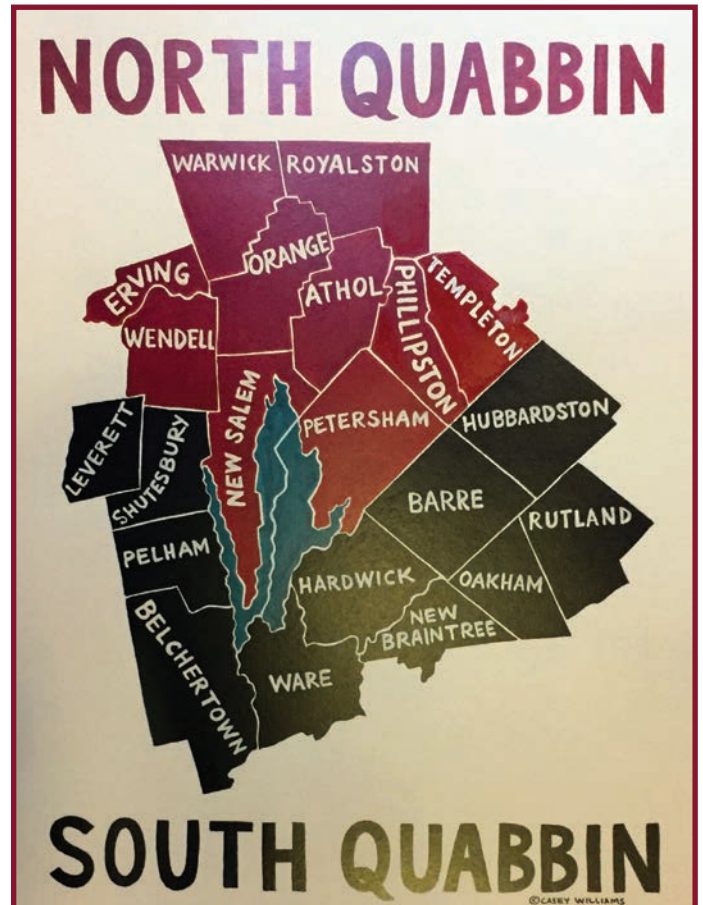
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volume 4, number 3 • January to April 2020

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

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Quabbin towns past and present • maps © Casey Williams

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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.

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

FIND LISTINGS FOR EVENTS IN
NORTH QUABBIN AND SOUTH QUABBIN
BEGINNING ON PAGE 62

a note from Athol Historical Society

Happy New Year and thank you to everyone who supports us in so many ways.

The New Year—a time to look forward to the new and exciting year ahead. So, why not take a leap—after all, it is a leap year—into the pages of our newest issue and explore all the new and interesting things our very talented artists, photographers and writers provide to us?

And then, along with me, say thank you for a look at this beautiful Quabbin region that our photographers' eyes have brought us and another thank you to the artists whose talent provides us with beautiful paintings of all areas of the Quabbin region and thank you to the writers, who bring us interesting, fun, and educational information on all things Quabbin.

We have so much to be thankful for in our incredibly amazing region where we get to spend every day, as well as the amazing magazine that brings it all to us.

And, as always, thank you to our advertisers, who play such a big role in the success of our magazine. It is an ever growing list of businesses and organizations that continuously support *Uniquely Quabbin*. Please support them as they support us.

Thankfully,
Debra Ellis, treasurer
Athol Historical Society

Letter to the Editor

To the editor of *Uniquely Quabbin*,
I am writing to express my appreciation for Mitchell R. Grosky's glorious portrait on *UQ*'s September-December cover. The scene depicts one of Wendell's special landscapes, Bowen's Pond. I am dismayed to report that there is a plan underway to demolish the exceptional panorama and the complex ecology it supports. An effort to forestall that plan is being organized. Should any *Uniquely Quabbin* readers like to support this undertaking please contact me, Michael Idoine, at mikar65@earthlink.net.

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a note from the publisher of *Uniquely Quabbin*

As writers, photographers, artists, and those of us behind the scenes put together and review each issue of *Uniquely Quabbin*, we discover all sorts of things.

For example, we couldn't get over discovering, in this issue, the boy garbed in a Union Army hat and pants at the head of several kids sliding in perhaps 1910 on a toboggan. From article to article to photo to art piece, we constantly find out new things.

UQ depends on an enthusiastic, upbeat, and dedicated team, to use the lingo of the day. Some fifty contributors amiably pursue suggested leads or propose their own before we seven or so behind-the-sceners do what we do to transform submissions into print.

After the September 2019 issue of UQ appeared, several readers called, wrote, or stopped by with opinions, and although we invited letters to the editor, everyone didn't want to submit one. Nevertheless, we discovered fresh perspectives, and we're grateful.

Someone disagrees with our treatment on pages 8 and 9 of Barre slave owners and enslaved African-Americans and/or native Americans. The reader said we should have rearranged the article and headlined it to highlight runaway slaves mentioned toward the end of the article.

Someone else commented that the issue felt much too laden with stories about the paranormal and ghosts. On the other hand, several people told us—unsolicited—that they "loved" the same stories, especially during the season of Halloween.

We welcome reader reaction and comment—not only because we want to know what you think but because it freshens our perspective.

So here we present you with the January 2020 issue of *Uniquely Quabbin*. We hope you like it.

Sincerely,
Marcia Gagliardi, publisher
Haley's

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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 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.

Quiet Places • Quiet Thoughts

village bandstands wait silent for other seasons

by Dorothy Johnson



Dorothy Johnson

On a cold blustery day as I drove to Belchertown from New Salem, I wondered what I would write about next.

Just then I noticed the bandstand on the Belchertown Common. If quiet means the absence of

sound, what could be quieter than a bandstand in winter?

So I began to look at bandstands.

While England has the most elaborate bandstands that came into being for public recreation after the Industrial Revolution, the structures became popular all over the United States to serve communities that had bands. They became widespread after the Civil War, and it seemed that each New England town wanted to entertain itself with a band on a stand.

The practice faded but did not vanish with the advent of radio and television.

I began to wonder where bandstands in the Quabbin area still stand. I already had seen Belchertown's, and I knew from pictures that New Salem once had one, now gone. It burned down almost a hundred years ago, and so I had to go further afield to find out where they are, where they were, and where they weren't.

Orange has one in Butterfield Park. Athol has two still with us, one in Fish Park and the other on the uptown common. Petersham, Barre, and Hubbardston each has its own. I have been told that many decorate

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Old Man Winter surveys the scene

text and sculpture by Margaret Feldman



Old Man Winter

mixed media © by Susie Feldman with graphic assistance for *Uniquely Quabbin* by Jessica Gale-Tanner

Old Man Winter, his beard blowing in the wind, lives in our house at Cutthroat Brook Tree Farm in Athol. He perches like a gargoyle against the ceiling. Secure in his eyrie, he continually observes the outdoors, whatever weather occurs. More than merely ornamental, he serves as our guardian spirit.

I created the sculpture from various oddball pieces of leftover supplies in my elementary art classroom. At the beginning, I wanted only to design an unknown something to soften the severe angle of a wall in our home.

An armature of florist's foam, cardboard, balled-up newspapers, a few scraps of wood, and what felt like miles of masking tape soon yielded a head-like structure. Strips and layers of plaster-infused gauze—who remembers the material medical casts used to be made of?—smoothed and filled out the contours of a male face, which definitely needed hair, lots of hair. I accomplished it by using clothesline and more gauze

and plaster, but as his beard flourished, he morphed gradually into the character of a forest spirit. To relieve the stark whiteness of plaster, I painted a shadowy grayish color overall, then wiped clear except where it remained, darkening the crevices. Finally a coat of sealant, and he had acquired his unique identity.

Neither gargoyle nor caryatid nor Green Man but somewhat related to all three, he embodies the essence of our surrounding woodland. Venerable and wise, he also asserts himself as strong and vital. Whatever situation nature produces, Old Man Winter regards it calmly. Realizing that every natural event provides benefits for some segment of earth's diverse life, he never complains.

Tranquil as the forest, always aware, our old man's quiet presence tells us he exists in harmony with nature.

We strive to follow his lead.

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



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many learned to downhill ski on Quabbin region

by Carla Charter

Before large New England ski resorts developed, smaller family-owned ski installations served the region, including several in the Quabbin area. Many local residents learned to ski on such slopes.

Among family-owned ski areas in the Quabbin area, according to Jeremy Davis of New England Lost Ski Areas Project, two had sites in Barre. One, Christian Hill Ski Area, operated from 1962 to 1969 by Dorothy Bassett and her sons Paul, Joe, and Dennis. The hill featured a drop of approximately 150 feet. An upside-down ski area, Christian Hill had both the lodge and parking area at the top of its ski hill. Along with skiing, the ski area

offered ski lessons and a lodge with a freestanding fireplace.

Eddie Cormier broke the tips of his new skis at Christian Hill, according to Lost Ski Areas information, and the Bassetts displayed them crisscrossed on the lodge wall. After Cormier died in the Vietnam War, the Bassetts maintained the ski display.

Barre Ski Tow/Pine Ridge Ski Area/Pine Ridge Snow Park, known by several names over the years, respectively operated from the mid 1950s to 1982, from 1990 to 2001, and from 2003 to 2006. "Pine Ridge Ski area was one of the larger ski areas in the area," Davis said. Pine Ridge was also laid out

as an upside-down area with a lift at the top near the lodge. By the mid-to-late 1960s, the slope had a vertical drop of 224 feet and offered night skiing. The area also scheduled an annual winter carnival, a torchlight parade, and a Miss Pine Ridge contest along with other races and events.

In Phillipston, Ward Hill/Snow Hill—owned by Herb and Doris Smith and their sons Wayne and Douglas—operated from 1961 to 1979. Davis said Ward Hill was certainly one of the largest ones in the area. There are a lot of great photos of it on the website. The ski area had a two-hundred-foot vertical drop, two slopes, and five trails. The

snowy slopes

summit had an incredible view of Mount Monadnock and the vicinity.

The warming hut and snack bar at Ward Hill was originally part of the homeowners' garage and offered soda, a coffee maker, deep fryer, and hot soup maker. In 1961 the ski area bathroom was a two-holer outhouse on the hillside above the parking lot. In 1963 construction began on a new lodge complete with an indoor bathroom.

In the beginning, Ward Hill offered free skiing to the first skiers who showed up after a snowstorm as they helped pack the snow surface. By 1963 the ski area had moved on to using a snowmobile to pack the snow.

Along with skiing, Ward Hill/Snow Hill offered a ski school and



Pine Ridge Ski Area, also once Barre Ski Tow and Pine Ridge Snow Park in Barre, operated in Barre from the 1950s to 1982, from 1990 to 2001, and from 2003 to 2006. photo courtesy of New England Lost Ski Areas Project

night skiing. In 1968 the name was changed to Snow Hill so as not to be confused with Ward Hill Ski Area in Worcester. In 1979 the Smiths decided the ski area was no longer a viable option.

In East Templeton, George Smith and his wife, Lou, initiated the Ladder Hill area about 1940 some two hundred feet from the current

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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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Quabbin region’s varied, picturesque villages

by Allen Young

The word village conjures up a special place, small rather than large—a peaceful, cooperative, friendly, warm, and cozy community. A village likely has a cluster of well-kept homes, some grand, others modest—and probably a shop or a restaurant or two and maybe an industry—or just as likely an empty factory building.

Most villages in New England have a geographical feature such as a hill or a river, a little park with a bandstand, a school or a place of worship, something old and something new—but more old than new. Without official recognition in Massachusetts as a municipality, a village may comprise a neighborhood in a town or city.



The Quabbin region village of North Leverett lines up along North Leverett Road, top, while Tully, a village in Orange, takes its place beneath Tully Mountain.
photos © by Dale Monette

enhance character of our twenty-one towns

Throughout the Quabbin region, residents experience sense of place and feel at home and connected to one another in many villages. Most of all, villages bring together caring people. Surely, that’s what was meant by Hillary Clinton’s famous book about education, *It Takes a Village*.

Dictionary.com defines a village as a small community or group of houses in a rural area, larger than a hamlet and usually smaller than a town, and sometimes (as in parts of the US) incorporated as a municipality.

The 351 towns and cities of Massachusetts have plenty of villages with no official or legal status. In our Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the concept of village remains undefined.

Leverett’s North Leverett and Orange’s Tully represent two of many villages in the Quabbin region. Some 1,853 people live in Leverett, some of them in North Leverett, a historic mill village that is home to a portion of the town’s population with the Sawmill River flowing through en route to the Connecticut River. By the mid nineteenth century, the village served as the town’s industrial center producing lumber, shingles, and scythes.

Industry declined in the early twentieth century, and some archaeological remains—including coke kilns used to make charcoal and the lumber mill built by Joseph Starrow—survive. Rattlesnake Gutter Trust preserves land in the area from development.

With a distinctly rural feel, North Leverett features predominantly residential buildings mainly Federal and Greek Revival in style, including the 1832 North Leverett Baptist Church. The Moore’s Corner Church is in the Queen Anne style. The National Register of Historic Places listed the village as a historic

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Quabbin Region Villages

ATHOL Athol Center Eagleville Fryeville Hillside Intervale Lake Park Partridgeville Pinedale Pleasant Valley Proctorville Riceville South Athol South Park Sunnyside	BELCHERTOWN (cont'd) Turkey Hill Tylerville Washington West Hill ERVING Farley Village Creamery Station Millers Falls HARDWICK Gilbertville Old Furnace Wheelwright	OAKHAM Coldbrook Coldbrook Springs Parkers Mills ORANGE Blissville Fryeville Furnace Holtshire Tully Wheelerville PELHAM PETERSHAM Ledgewille Nichewaug PHILLIPSTON Goulding Powers Mills ROYALSTON South Royalston	RUTLAND Muschopauge New Boston Rutland Heights White Hall SHUTESBURY Baconsville Lock Village TEMPLETON Baldwinville East Templeton Otter River WARE Brimstone Hill Gibbs Crossing WARWICK Barber Hill Brush Valley WENDELL Locke Village Wendell Depot
BARRE Barre Plains Bogue Center Village Christian Hill Coldbrook East Barre Falls Heald Village Ryder Village Mill Villages South Barre	HUBBARDSTON Catville Nicholsville Pitcherville Williamsville LEVERETT Dudleyville Hillsboro Moore’s Corner North Leverett Rattlesnake Gutter Slab City		
BELCHERTOWN Bardwell Chestnut Hill Barrett’s Junction Blue Meadow Dwight East Hill Federal Franklin Holyoke Laurel North Station Pansy Park Slab City South Belchertown	NEW BRAINTREE NEW SALEM Cooleyville Hagerville Millington Morgan’s Crossing Morse Village New Salem Center North New Salem Puppyville Quimby Soapstone		



list of Quabbin region villages
compiled by Carla Charter
Please let us know if you know of more.
Randomly, future issues of *Uniquely Quabbin*
will carry articles about villages.

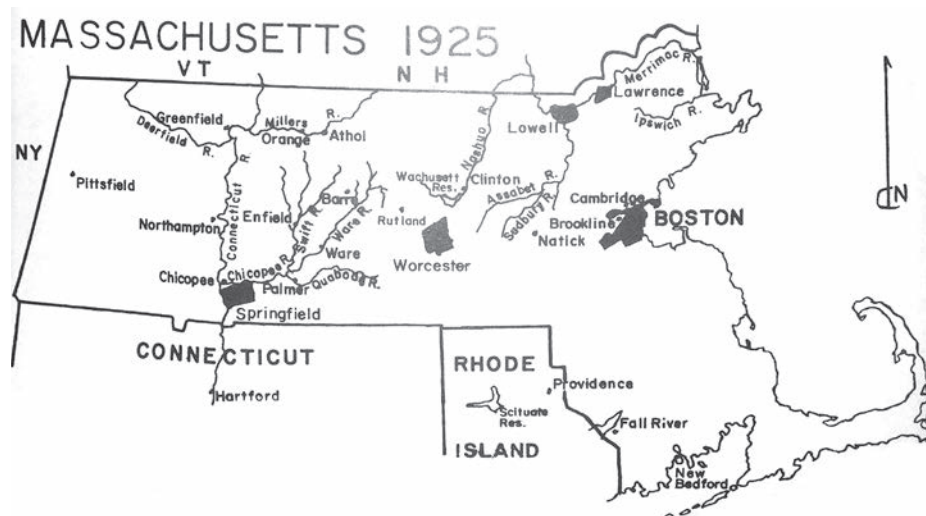
study considered alternatives to Quabbin Reservoir plan

by J. R. Greene

Before the engineer X. H. Goodnough endeavored successfully to push through his conception of what became the Quabbin Reservoir in the 1920s, the state funded a study to pursue an alternative project.

The study resulted from disagreement among state legislators about the recommendation of the 1922 Massachusetts Metropolitan District Commission and state board of health joint board report, which endorsed Goodnough's proposed reservoir in the Swift River Valley and diversion of part of the Ware River in Barre. Legislators disagreed about whether the plan would prove too expensive or cause dislocation of too many people and industries. After much debate in 1924, the legislature passed a bill to create a new investigating commission with funds to hire a "disinterested engineer" to come up with an alternative water supply plan to the one recommended by the 1922 report.

Governor Channing Cox signed the bill and appointed Elbert E.



In 1925, engineers and planners considered central Massachusetts rivers and how to use them in order to supply cities.
map © by J. R. Greene

Lochridge, an engineer for the Springfield Water Department, George Booth, publisher of the *Worcester Telegram*, and Charles R. Gow, an engineer from Brookline representing the metro Boston area, as commissioners from three designated parts of the state.

The group, named the Metropolitan District Water Supply Investigating Commission, began meeting in September 1924 and

hired Allen Hazen, a prominent New York consultant, as its chief engineer. The fifty-four-year-old Hazen held a degree from Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He had served with Goodnough at the state health department in the 1890s and authored several books on water engineering.

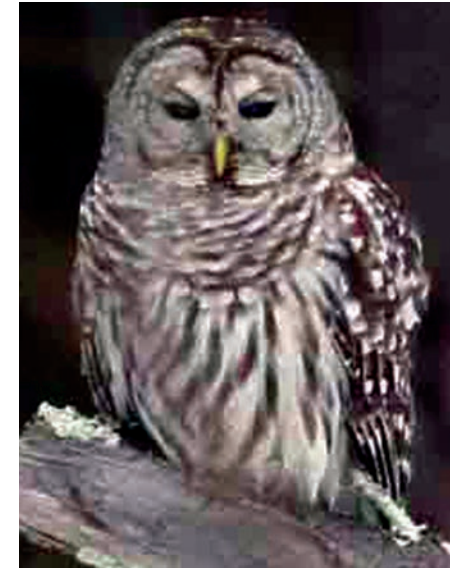
Hazen seems to have based his findings for the commission upon

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taking a two-owl hike on a single Quabbin Woods day

by Jim Morelly

Winter hiking in the Quabbin Woods and seeing two owls in one outing probably wouldn't challenge a skilled birder, which I'm not. In many miles trekking Quabbin's different habitats, I hadn't ever seen two owls in a single outing.



A barred owl perches on a log.
photo © by Jim Morelly

That is, until one unique 2019 winter morning.

I planned that winter day to hike to a known location that offers a panoramic view of the reservoir. The place has an ideal vista for glassing—that is viewing through binoculars—spans of ice in search of coyotes. Winter offers the best time of year to catch an elusive Eastern Coyote scouting Quabbin's frozen surface for a meal, because the animal doesn't camouflage against snow or ice.

The blustery weather that morning had a biting chill. The wind created whiteouts against the bleak morning sky, so I fast-paced hiking in efforts to keep warm.

The wind cut through me like a knife. I remember questioning my judgment: why would anyone be outdoors on such a miserable day?

Reaching the destination, I sat for a short time inspecting the open views of ice to the north as I peered through a pair of 8x42 binoculars, so magnification to a power of 8 by 42 millimeters. It wasn't long before cold settled in my bones and made me restless. Frigid temperatures won the battle. I needed to start moving.

Before shouldering my backpack, I gave the reservoir one last once over with my binoculars. Hoping to catch a coyote skirting the shadows of the distant shoreline, I looked north. Interestingly, I picked up on a white object among distant green pine boughs. It looked somewhat out of place, perhaps like an eagle perched in an evergreen tree. All

white, it appeared to be nothing more than a clump of snow resting on a branch. I had the passing thought that the white spot I spied could be a snowy owl.

I would need a closer look.

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A snowy owl hangs out in the snow.
photo © by Jim Morelly.

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Service Above Self

Walnut Hill Tracking Center offers

by Rick Taupier

I came away from my first meeting at the Walnut Hill Tracking and Nature Center in Orange with two convictions. First, nature sometimes writes stories in a script of animal tracks and signs. Second, I found Valerie and Nick Wisniewski, owners of Walnut Hill, eminently qualified to interpret that script and share with others emerging insights. They see animal tracking as an overarching theme leading to broad appreciation of the natural world and survival of the wild creatures within it.

Quabbin offers an almost ideal place for such a tracking center. Long extirpated wildlife species have reappeared, and populations of other species brought to the brink of regional extinction have rebounded. The most popular animals with participants at the tracking center include bears, moose, bobcats, fishers, and coyotes. Hundreds of participants come each year from New York, Boston, and throughout the Northeast with some from as far as California. They come not just to learn about tracking animals

but about tree identification, old growth forests, birding, wildflower identification, and naturalism. Programs at the center range from single days at local venues to multiple-day intensive programs, some in remote wilderness locations like Moosehead Lake in Maine and the Connecticut Lakes in Pittsburg, New Hampshire, where participants learn about lynx and pine martins that no longer live in Massachusetts.

Nick and Valerie learned their skills over years of courses and three-year apprenticeships with Paul

Rezendes of Athol, author of *Tracking and the Art of Seeing* (1992) and *The Wild Within* (2006). Sixteen years ago, they took over the business from Paul, extending its well-deserved reputation for excellence and preserving it as a strongly viable operation if not a full-time occupation.

They collaborate with other exceptional outdoor educators such as Bob Leverett, forest ecologist, and John Green, naturalist and birder. The center's programs offer different windows to the outdoor world and together amount to an extensive education in nearly all aspects of nature and its cycles.

experience and insight about the outdoors

Individuals learn as well about ethics. Valerie used the example of back-tracking as ethical behavior—electing not to follow wild animals and stress them but rather to trace the tracks to see where they came from and to discern what animals had been doing.

We talked also about learning skills of observation and survival and how our presence in the wild can influence animal behavior. I was taken by a story from Nick about a black bear encounter. He had entered an area known for black bears and felt intuitively an imminent sighting. Bears do not like to be surprised by humans. Nick, wishing to avoid a harmful interaction, picked up an old pot and banged it loudly a few times on a tree. He assumed that any nearby bears were warned off by the noise but was soon surprised to find a large black bear staring at him from an uncomfortably close distance. Sorting quickly through his mental list of actions likely to scare the animal away, he broke into a loud version of *We All Live in a Yellow Submarine*.

The bear shot off into the woods.

On another note, Nick talked about many years of observing black bears in certain areas with many bear-marked trees. Bears often walked in one another's footprints, an obviously learned behavior. Do those bears intend the behavior to mask the presence of smaller bears in a dense population? Unknown, but clearly the behavior is not accidental. Trackers better understand other animal behaviors, and tracking, along with browsing patterns, diets, and scat, indicate what animals have been doing and why. One upcoming program at the center concerns how animals prepare for winter. To tell the story, the program relies on all such signs.

I cannot think of a potentially more rewarding opportunity for families and children seeking a chance to use direct observation in order to develop a keen appreciation of the natural world and a love



Nick and Valerie Wisniewski of Walnut Hill Tracking share and teach about the outdoors and nature. photo © by Mitchell R. Grosky

for its creatures. The center charges reasonable fees to attend daylong courses.

I remember many years ago when my son, on a trip to observe the landscape and wildlife in one of our national parks, declared it to be more amazing than Disneyland. I suspect many young people would feel the same way upon discovering the wonders of nature in their own backyards.

Rick Taupier is a historian, fly fishing guide, and owner of Swift River Fly Fishing in New Salem.

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What happens to freshwater insects, reptiles,

text and photos by Sue Cloutier

Vernal pools we found in spring that supported a deafening chorus of spring peepers now lie silent. What has happened to those frogs that lived there? Autumn rains have filled pools that dried out in summer. Leaves cover surrounding woods, and ice now covers the pool.

Well, the peepers have dug in under leaf litter and logs or in mud at the pond bottom. The only things moving slowly across the bottom of the pool may be the nymphs of dragonflies, damselflies, or caddis flies. Their metabolisms have slowed in the cold, so not much seems to happen, yet they survive. Most have natural antifreeze in their



Peepers like this guy have dug under leaf litter at bottom of the vernal pool.



Egg cysts harbor fairy shrimp, like this one, that will emerge in February or March. photo by David Small



Quabbin region vernal pools lie silent in winter.

cells that keep them from freezing.

Also in leaf litter at the bottom of the pool, egg cysts of fairy shrimp wait to emerge in late February or March. Then you may even see inch-long pink shrimp under a clear rim of ice over the pond. Females have a noticeable bunch of eggs in a sac behind their eleven pairs of feather-like legs. The animals swim upside down, rowing with their gill-functioning legs and pulsing their eggs so each egg gets the oxygen it needs. A chance sighting of those ephemeral creatures delights the

spirit. Some years, one rarely finds them. Other years, your local vernal pool can have quite a few swimming in and under leaves at the bottom of the pool. They don't live long—just two to three weeks. Then their egg cysts survive at the bottom of the pool until conditions are “just right” for them to hatch.



Leaf litter from autumn foliage blankets the bottom of the winter vernal pool.

crustaceans, and amphibians more in winter?

If you stand on a bridge and look down, you may see a wood turtle slowly swim by beneath a clear ice-covered stream. Small fish called dace swim there, too, and provide an occasional meal for a turtle. But like fairy shrimp and peepers, their metabolism slows in the cold weather of winter.

Food for the turtle is not a problem, but one would think getting oxygen from a breath of air might be. Amazingly, the turtle adapts so that it can get oxygen from the water through its rectum. It breathes through its ass! Extra tiny blood vessels surround the end of the turtle's gut, and water pumped in and out of the gut brings needed oxygen into the turtle's circulatory system.

To survive, every species has “figured out” how



Wood turtles breathe air through their rectums while they live under water in winter.

to deal with all challenges faced in its natural habitat. Challenges due to cycles of seasons here in the Quabbin region resemble problems life faces all over our planet. For familiar things that live here, our challenge involves getting food and oxygen and not getting killed. That scenario has prevailed for millions of years.

Did you ever wonder about the origin of elements like oxygen or nutrients found in food? The answer to those questions shines in the stars. When you gaze up at the sky on one of our clear winter nights, you may see the familiar constellation of Orion. Lights that make up points of that constellation emanate from many types of celestial objects: stars, galaxies, and star clusters. A few similar

lights in our nearby space exploded in a sequence long ago to create most all the elements that came together to create Earth. Even before life emerged on our planet, recycling asserted itself as a necessary process. For example, lava from our planet's core erupts to form new land surfaces, and then, land erodes into the seas.

So for me, looking at the stars reminds me of a

distant origin of elements and makes me ponder all the ways nature recycles what is here. The eternal cycle of life depends upon recycling. Following atom by atom through time lets us understand the importance of building and using things that can break down and return elements to land, water, and air. Only so many elements become available to life on our planet, so re-use is essential.

For example, leaves we greeted with joy last spring dropped to the ground this fall and now



Leaf litter sustains microorganisms and fungi like the *Amanita jacksonii*, identified by Noah Seigel. are being broken down by creatures in leaf litter and developing soil. Next spring elements from decayed leaves will nourish trees. As their roots absorb water, dissolved elements reach the growing leaves.

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By foraging for food, birds like this dark-eyed junco survive in spite of snow cover.

land trusts play vital, unheralded role

by John Burk



East Quabbin Land Trust purchased and preserved Ware's Frohloff Farm in 2010. In 2013, East Quabbin leased buildings and facilitated active farming on the property's ninety-five acres on Church Street.
photo © by John Burk

Land trusts play a vital, sometimes unheralded role in preserving the Quabbin region's abundant natural resources and rural character. The efforts of those small but efficient organizations have protected tens of thousands of acres in the Quabbin region to provide abundant recreational opportunities, crucial wildlife habitats, unspoiled scenery, and working forests benefiting local economies.

Land trusts protect land by brokering real estate transactions and managing and stewarding properties. More than 1,200 land trusts operate nationwide, including 150 in Massachusetts.

in preserving region's rural character

Most often organized as private non-profit corporations, many of them established in the mid-to-late twentieth century in response to rapid development and loss of farm and forest land.

Land trust resources, geographic coverage, conservation priorities, and scope of activities vary widely. Some, such as The Trustees of Reservations, founded as the nation's first land trust in 1891, and Mass Audubon, operate at statewide or national levels. Volunteers operate others. Many land trusts also engage in related activities such as planning, fundraising, community events, and trail maintenance.

Land protection options include conservation restrictions, or CRs, permanent legal agreements through which landowners surrender development rights while retaining ownership. Landowners may donate CRs to land trusts for tax deductions or sell them for income if the property has valuable natural resources. Agricultural preservation restrictions, or APRs, stipulate that properties remain actively farmed. Landowners can enroll their property in the Massachusetts Chapter 61 program, thus reducing property taxes in exchange for committing to keep land undeveloped. Land trusts also receive properties by donation, which provides tax breaks for donors. Complex projects involve coordination among land trusts, landowners, municipalities, state agencies, and other organizations.

Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust, or MGLCT, established by forester Keith Ross and other

North Quabbin residents in 1986, represents one of several regional land trusts serving Quabbin area towns. Its service area encompasses twenty-three towns in north-central and western Massachusetts. Like

many other similar organizations, MGLCT has grown rapidly from modest beginnings. Leigh Youngblood, longtime executive director, recalls working with a

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Mount Grace's Leigh Youngblood anticipates retirement

After more than twenty-five years of shepherding the growth of Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust and overseeing many projects and initiatives, Leigh Youngblood, executive director, plans to retire within a few years. Emma Ellsworth, newly hired deputy director, will work with Youngblood to ensure a smooth transition while continuing the organization's innovative work.

Ellsworth, who worked for more than twenty years as a labor union negotiator, is an avid hiker, hunter, and canoe racer who lives at the base of Tully Mountain. She credits her father, Allen Ross, a former MGLCT board member, with inspiring her interest in conservation.

"Strategic planning is one of the most important steps we can take to protect our scenic landscapes and wildlife habitat and mitigate the effects of climate change," Ellsworth said. "I feel so grateful to be part of the Mount Grace community working to save our beloved lands."

—John Burk



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records suggest that guardianship likely affected Isobel Caldwell, later by Charlotte Westhead

In 1767 management of the estate of James Caldwell changed. Adminstrating the estate included management of the farm and guardianship of the children. John Black, brother-in-law of the deceased James; John Murray, perhaps the wealthiest person in the area; and Zachias Gates served as guardians.

By 1767, young slaves Quork, 14, and Mynahybe 13, had likely trained to do the work of adults. James Caldwell Jr., the oldest child of the deceased James Caldwell and his widow Isobel, would have been about the same age as the slaves, possibly African-American or with heritage of mixed descent. The slave Dinah's younger children—Cato, Prince, Stepney, Boston, Rosanna, and Priscilla—probably lived with her and

another slave Mingo on the Caldwell farm. Also living on the farm must have been the younger children of James Caldwell Sr. and Isobel, including Sarah, 11; Anne, 8; William, 4; and baby Submit born in 1764 after James was killed.

Why did guardianship continue for the Caldwell children until 1782 when Submit, the youngest, was probably eighteen years old and James in his late twenties?

Perhaps guardianship continued because of Isobel's marriage to Nathaniel Jennison.

Documents at Barre Historical Society identify Pomp as "of" Mr. Henry Lee, so likely a slave BHS documents show that Pomp was suspended from the church due to insufficient grounds of charity. An undated scrap at BHS serendipitously mentions Pomp. It reads, "Pomp shot a wolf at close range as it approached an animal it had killed."

In the early 1800s, according to the documents, the slave Annie King died in the Boston area. The documents identify her as the wife of Pompey, a slave of the Caldwells

Information for Charlotte Westhead's articles derives from her consulting primary source records. Regrettably, the records contain little information about enslaved people. The writer and UQ editor strive not to make bold inferential leaps, although both author and editor often feel tempted to do so.

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Isobel Jennison, and all of her family's holdings, including the enslaved

of Barre. Is Pomp of other records the same Pompey? In 1812, Pomp died a feeble old man on the Allen farm while working in a field across the road from the house, according to Henry Harwood's diary housed at BHS.

Isobel Oliver Caldwell, a widow for five years, married Nathaniel Jennison Jr. on 1769 March 28 in Barre, according to the records. Six weeks later, Nathaniel Jennison Sr. died at the age of sixty in Barre. Perhaps the wedding date considered a possible illness of Nathaniel

Sr. so that he might witness the ceremony. Records note that Nathaniel Jr. had a "negro" driver for his carriage and a "negro" footman. After his marriage to Isobel, Nathaniel may have taken the enslaved men and probably some enslaved women to the Caldwell farm, where the newlyweds lived.

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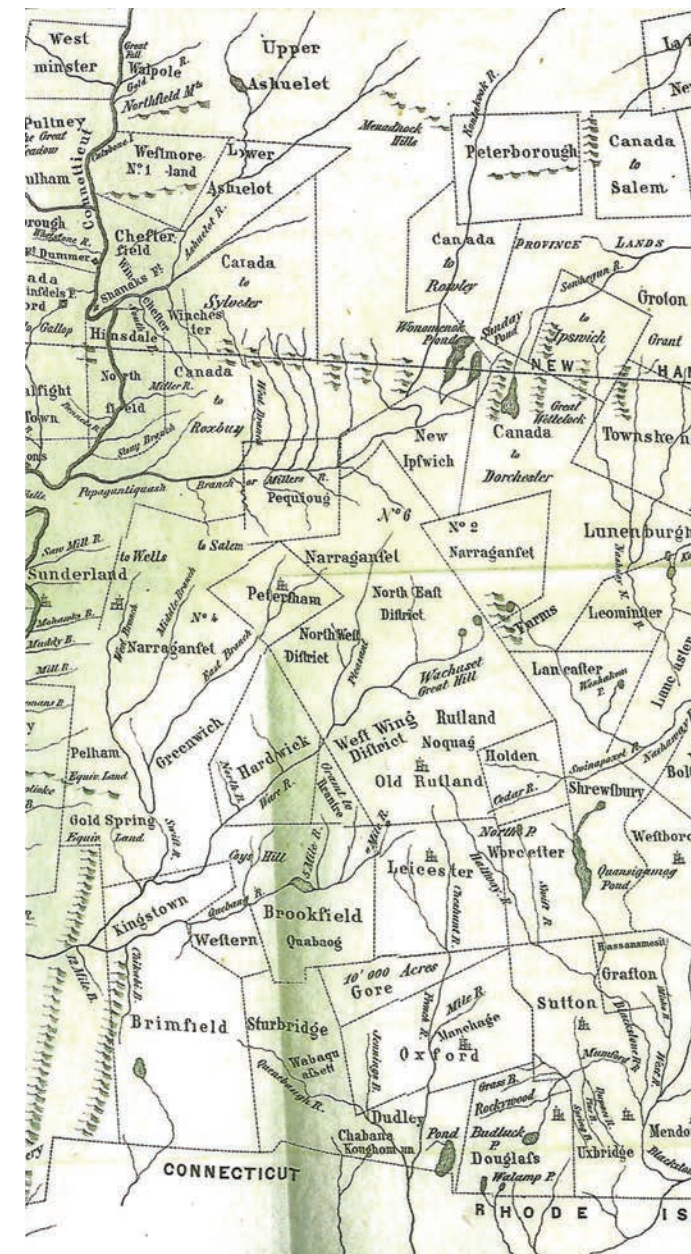
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The Old Indian Chronicle by Samuel G. Drake and published by Samuel A. Drake, Boston, 1867, includes a 1771 map showing Swift River Valley and surrounding towns at a time commensurate with events affecting the James Caldwell estate.

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Village Neighbors organizations

by Ellen Woodbury

Quiet, solitude, privacy, wildlife, and natural beauty: the list includes some of the reasons people live in North and South Quabbin rural towns.

Such positives can become negatives as people age, lose spouses or partners, and become less physically able. How can people remain in their homes if they want to? A nationwide movement called Village to Village works at developing ways to address the question.

Elizabeth Fernandez O'Brien and Paula Lyons of Shutesbury explained the development of Village Neighbors, one such organization serving people in Leverett, New Salem, Shutesbury, and Wendell. From January 2016 to February 2017, between six and ten neighbors got together periodically to read and discuss *Being Mortal*, a book by Atul Gawande.

Being Mortal generated a discussion among readers of aging in place. The discussion led to a task force that received a thousand-dollar Shutesbury Council on Aging grant to determine interest in the

village-to-village concept discussed in *Being Mortal*. Guest speakers from Nauset Neighbors and Monadnock at Home spoke to the task force, and from twelve to fifteen people from Shutesbury, Pelham, Wendell, and Leverett began meeting monthly. Eventually Pelham dropped out of the discussions, and New Salem joined the group.

Elizabeth explained that, as she took care of her parents, she saw things she liked and things she didn't like. "I want choices," she said. Serving people sixty and older, Village Neighbors celebrated its year anniversary in autumn 2019. They have plans to expand, including by developing programs with high school students from Franklin County Tech, and Amherst Regional. They are exploring connections with the five colleges and Greenfield Community College.

Since social interaction comprises a key predictor of happiness and health, such programs hold great promise for both old and young. Some seventy volunteers provide services such as transportation and physical tasks to sixty members. Originally Village Neighbors charged a yearly fee of \$125 per family or \$75 per person, but recently the board voted to provide services to members free.

Typically, people around the age of seventy-five ask for services, but younger people also ask for help. When a call comes into the online office, volunteers match a person in need with a volunteer who has gone through a Criminal Offender Record Information, or CORI, check. Village Neighbors spreads the word of their



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Paula Lyons, left, and Elizabeth Fernandez O'Brien of Shutesbury facilitate the Village Neighbors group serving Leverett, New Salem, Shutesbury, and Wendell.

photo © by Ellen Woodbury

services in a newsletter, at town meetings, at Old Home Days, and through councils on aging.

"Each town has its own culture, and many have informal networks already," added Paula, who has been interested from the start. "Reaching people who might not take part in town activities is a challenge in all towns," she continues. "We are always looking for ways to reach out and make people aware of available help.

information at villageneighbors.org or (413) 345-6894

In its formative stage and responding to a lot of requests, Petersham Partners has gathered information to integrate it into its brand of a village-to-village approach. Karen Davis and Jim Regan of the steering committee said their group will make decisions about the nature of the eventual service. Among the questions: Will we charge or not charge? What services will we offer?

Davis and Regan said the flexible village model takes into account the unique personality of the town.

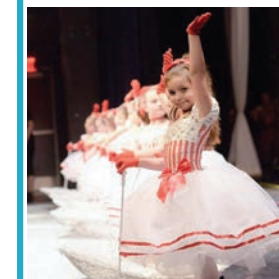
Some fifteen volunteers already offer mainly transportation and maintenance. They want to provide home check-ins for people returning from the hospital, help with information technology, social events, and pet care.

Karen and Jim described putting together first aid kits for use in power emergencies. The help assists not only members, said the organizers, but volunteers also enjoy health benefits of being involved, of being physically active, and of helping others.

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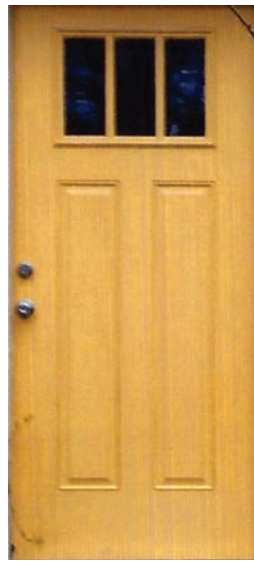
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Shutesbury boasts rainbow doors

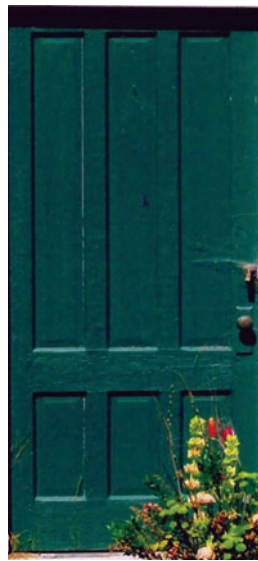
photos by Mary Lou Conca



lodge at Locks Village
Lake Wyola
Shutesbury



private home
Shutesbury



West School
former one-room
schoolhouse
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private home
Shutesbury



private home
Shutesbury

records show sale of enslaved people

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Records show that Nathaniel Jr. moved into James Caldwell's house. In one of his first actions there, he asserted his right to property inherited by that marriage by selling someone previously there, Dinah's eight-year-old son, Stepney. He sold Stepney to John Black, according to the records, by Stepney's weight by the pound. To accomplish the bargain, the traders first weighed the child. Due to lack of household scales at the time, they probably used a barn scale also used to weigh animals.

The John Blacks, related by marriage, owned the abutting farm, so Stepney would be living nearby in possibly somewhat familiar surroundings.

When Isobel married Nathaniel, records referred to her as "the young widow." When she married James in 1751, she was eighteen years younger than he, but records provide no clue to her actual age.

A marker stone at the site where a tree branch fell and killed James Caldwell says he was fifty-two years old when the accident that killed him occurred in 1763. Isobel's grave has not been found, and Barre's vital records have no indication of the date of her death.

Barre tax records show that Nathaniel paid taxes and held municipal offices into the early 1780s but contain no record of his death.

Charlotte Westhead, retired registered nurse, spends time at Quabbin region 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.

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Accessible from Quabbin Gates 28, 29, or 30, classic Keystone Bridge makes way for snowy landscape.
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performers, artists, and performance spaces enhance regional communities

by Carla Charter

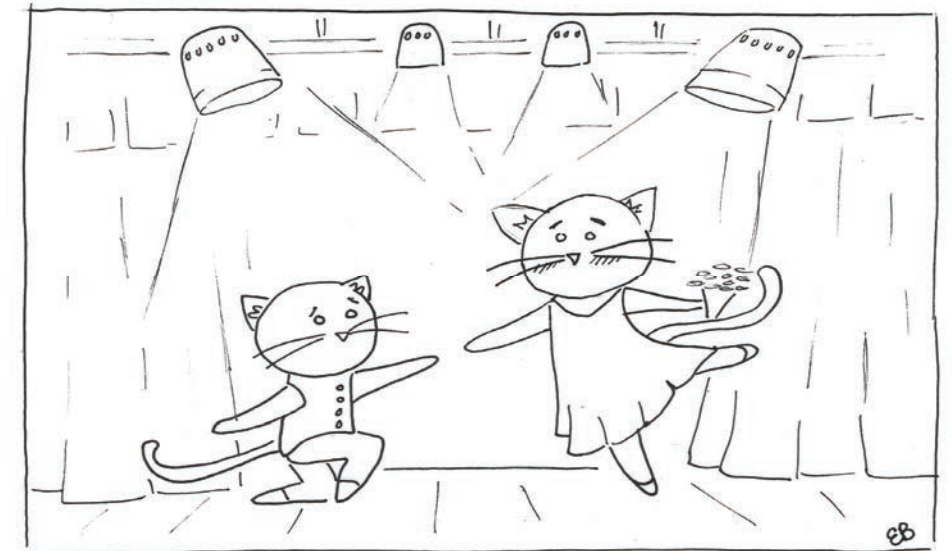
Many performers and artists make their homes in the Quabbin area. The region also has a large number of unique performance spaces where such artists can share their work with the community.

Among them is Workshop 13 in Ware with its Grand Hall, complete with a cathedral ceiling and stained-glass windows. The workshop opened in 2013 after several artists who painted together in Thorndike, a village of Palmer, went in search of a new space. When they investigated in Ware, they found the building on the docket to be torn down. After they bought the building, they embarked on a weekend-by-weekend grass roots efforts to refurbish the space, according to Marie Lauderdale, Workshop 13 executive director.

Performances at the workshop include an open mic night on the third Friday of every month. Workshop 13 also has space for musicians to provide lessons or create and record Programs in the visual arts, performing arts, and clay for children take place during school break. In the future, Lauderdale hopes to grow Workshop 13's music and drama program and offer more instrumental music classes.

Workshop 13 also operates ArtWorks, an art gallery, and ClayWorks, a pottery studio on Main Street in Ware. Workshop 13 accepts donations of gently used instruments that they recycle for use by children who want to take classes.

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Performance spaces in the Quabbin region present musical, dramatic, cinematic, artistic, photographic, and other entertainment.
cartoon © by Emily Boughton

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shops appeal with vintage, local, and handmades

by Sharon Harmon

Walking into Country Bumpkin in Templeton makes me feel like a kid in a candy shop. The place displays many styles of products ranging through antique, vintage, and locally hand-made merchandise. A former shop manager, Kimberly Pirner, the owner, seems to know her stuff.

Country Bumpkin is eclectic and charming with nooks and crannies for seasonal displays from Halloween to Christmas and Easter. Local products include handmade earrings and necklaces from bg Thurston, alpaca products from In Plain View Farm, and goat's milk soap from Elzires Acre. I was smitten by name pins. I thought they were new but found out from Kimberly that they date to the 1950s and 1960s.

Country Bumpkin includes a downstairs chock full of furniture and household items. Kimberly's husband, Kevin, said he serves as CEO, which means "carry everything out," he said laughing.

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Lind Foss has operated Dandelion's in Barre, a four-room artisan shop, since 2013. Her mother, an artist, loved artisan shops, so Lind followed in her footsteps. "We have beautiful items from Barre, Petersham, the Brookfields, Worcester, Vermont, and New Hampshire," she said. "We sell wholesale and items on consignment."

A two-hundred-year-old building provides Dandelion's space. On display, the shopper finds wooden bowls and wooden pens. The shop's wide assortment includes specialty teas and honeys, one-of-a-kind jewelry, candles, clothing, and poetry books by local authors.

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



Country Bumpkin in Templeton purveys furniture and small items.

photo by Sharon Harmon



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“a force of nature” instrumental in program and building design

Wendell Free Library's Heidkamp plans retirement

by Jonathan von Ranson

Rosie Heidkamp, Wendell's library director for almost thirty years, plans to retire in 2020, a unique intention in the region.



Anticipating retirement later this year, Rosie Heidkamp takes her familiar position at the helm of Wendell Free Library.

photo by Jonathan von Ranson

In 1991, five years after Rosie came to Wendell, she was appointed library director. Five years after that, a tornado tore through the center of town and damaged the partially dismantled old schoolhouse in process of becoming the new library.

With design decisions suddenly freed up, Rosie contributed to them. And force of nature herself with unusual focus and diplomatic skills, she went on to help redefine the library's role to the benefit and appreciation of the town.

“Before the new building opened,” she said, “I felt like I was rowing a boat. When it opened, it was like captaining a schooner.”

It wasn't just the new program offerings. “People's reaction was it was like the Taj Mahal,” she recalled. “People automatically took off their shoes in the entryway. I felt like keeper of the temple”—one with a large, bright children's room, separate office, special nook for teens, and public computer stations.

Meeting rooms existed in other town buildings, so whether to include one in the library stirred debate. The state pushed for one, then a private, locally matched grant appeared. And once the library opened, classes started on subjects like mushroom ID, better vision, drawing, yoga, book groups on death and dying and on fostering global unity, and revolving art exhibits. Ongoing programs include tai chi, balance and strength training, two film series, and a steady patter of one-time presentations. That aspect sometimes gets called Wendell University.

Programming, Rosie says, “turned out to be a wonderful part of the job,” which she describes as “basically trying to take the pulse of the community. To actually get paid to think whether there's a way I could help meet that need . . . !” With the Herrick Room right there for special programs, she can oversee them without much breaking her stride.

Friends of the Wendell Library helped fund construction and has gone on to subsidize programs.

continued on page 54

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Leverett Library
75 Montague Road
Leverett 01054
(413) 548-9220
Natane Halasz, library director
major renovations completed in 2002



library list and information compiled by
Carla Charter
with assistance from
Charlene Deam

NEW BRAINTREE

New Braintree Public Library
45 Memorial Drive
New Braintree 01531
(508) 867-7650
Joan Haynes, library director



NEW SALEM

New Salem Public Library
23 South Main Street
New Salem 01355
(978) 544-6334
Diana Smith, library director
major renovations completed in 2004



OAKHAM

Fobes Memorial Library
4 Maple Street
Oakham 01068
508-882-3372
Samantha Bodine, library director
major renovations completed in 2008



ORANGE

Wheeler Memorial Library
49 East Main Street
Orange 01364
(978) 544-2495
Jessica Magelaner, library director



MOORE LELAND LIBRARY

172 Athol Road
Orange 01364
(978) 575-0444
Jessica Magelaner, library director

PELHAM

Pelham Town Library
2 South Valley Road
Pelham 01002
(413) 253-0657
Jodi Levine, library director
opened in 2000



PETERSHAM

Petersham Memorial Library
23 Common Street
Petersham 01366
(978) 724-3405
Amber Johns, library director



PHILLIPSTON

Phillipston Free Public Library
25 Templeton Road
Phillipston 01331
(978) 249-1734
Jackie Prime, library director



ROYALSTON

Phineas S. Newton Library
19 The Common
Post Office Box 133
Royalston 01368
(978) 249-3572
Katherine Morris, library director
major renovations completed in 2000



RUTLAND

Rutland Free Public Library
280 Main Street
Rutland 01543
(508) 886-4108
Kerry Remington, library director



SHUTESBURY

M. N. Spear Memorial Library
10 Cooleyville Road
Shutesbury 01072
(413) 259-1213
Mary Anne Antonellis, director



TEMPLETON

Boynton Public Library
27 Boynton Road
Templeton
(978) 939-5582
Jackie Prime, library director
major renovations completed in 2000



WARE

Young Men's Library Association/
Ware's Public Library
37 Main Street
Ware 01082
(413) 967-5491
Heidi Reid, library director
major renovations completed in 2000



WARWICK

Warwick Free Public Library
4 Hotel Road
Warwick 01378
Ivan Ussach, library director
major renovations completed in 2000



WENDELL

Wendell Free Library
7 Wendell Depot Road
Post Office Box 236
Wendell 01379
(978) 544-3559
Rosie Heidkamp, director
major renovations completed in 2009



MAPS BY
CASEY WILLIAMS



Ice floes drift along the Connecticut River in Erving beneath French King Bridge.

photo © by Gillis MacDougall



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French King Bridge once called "most beautiful"

A three-span cantilever arch structure, French King Bridge crosses the Connecticut River on the border between the towns of Erving and Gill, according to *Wikipedia*. The bridge, part of Massachusetts Route 2, carries automobile, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic and is owned and managed by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation.

A rigid structural element such as a beam or a plate anchored at one end to a (usually vertical) support from which it protrudes, also according to *Wikipedia*, a cantilevered connection could also run perpendicular to a flat, vertical surface such as a wall. Engineers may construct cantilevers with trusses or slabs. When subjected to a structural load, the cantilever carries the load to the support places forced against during a moment of shear stress, *Wikipedia* says.

French King Bridge opened to traffic on September 10, 1932. The American Institute of Steel Construction named it Most Beautiful Steel Bridge of 1932. The state rebuilt the bridge in 1992 and refurbished it between 2008 and 2010.

—Marcia Gagliardi

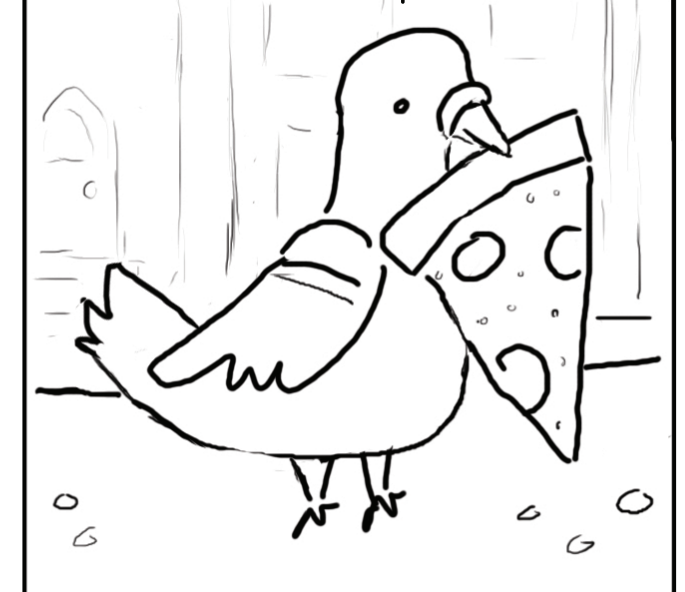
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in the Quabbin

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in Boston

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Hemasundra Duggireddy, BDS, DMD, FAGD, with Amy Burnham, dental assistant, examines a patient in the offices of Athol Dental Associates.
photo © by Mike Phillips

UQ region's

Some sixteen offices house dental practices throughout the Quabbin region. Among them is the practice of Dwight Stowell Jr., DMD, whose practice includes Athol Dental Group and Orange Dental Group in the Quabbin region and the Gardner Dental Group.

In 1975, Dr. Stowell started his dental practice in a one-room Athol office. In the past forty-five years, he has expanded the practice to include Orange Dental Group and Gardner Dental Group.

dentists put teeth in their practice

by Ellen Woodbury

Margaret Bousquet, Athol Dental Group administrator, recently described the practice as serving people of all ages, from six months to the eighties and nineties. Dentists include Dr. Stowell, Dr. Hemasundra Duggireddy, and Dr. Ping Zhang.

"We like to support local causes and businesses by donating to church fairs, golf tournaments, and high school fundraisers," Margaret said. "We like to give toothbrushes and other dental supplies to veterans. We've known families for years and like being part of the community."

Most dental practices accept insurance, and the Stowell groups accept all forms of insurance or work out payments so people can acquire needed dental work. Open Saturdays for a full day and some holidays, Athol Dental makes dental care accessible to people who work as well as students in school Monday through Friday.

Evolving through the years, many practices, including Athol and Orange dental groups, operate without paper. Athol and Orange dental groups do x-rays with a small camera, thus limiting radiation exposure for employees as well as patients, and pain management has become more accurate and efficient.

"We no longer wheel in a giant x-ray machine and then spend time in a dark room with exposure to harmful chemicals," Margaret said. Dr. Duggireddy, a dentist at the Athol office for almost eight years, earned recognition as a Fellow of the Academy of General Dentistry: an achievement accomplished by only six percent of general dentists in the US and Canada. FAGD designation ensures the dentist has knowledge of the latest techniques practiced in a classroom setting multiple times a year.

Dr. Zhang provides coverage and Dr. Stowell continues as senior clinical director. When asked why people may not obtain the dental care they need, Margaret answered quickly "Fear! And of course, the cost. We're not your parents' practice anymore. We'll work with you. We always have coverage, so please don't hesitate to call with whatever is going on. We're here to help!"

continued on page 52



Rutland's Dr. Resmi Nair pauses between patients.
photo © by Ellen Woodbury

QUABBIN REGION DENTISTS

ATHOL

Athol Dental Associates
38 Exchange Street
(978) 249-8545
Dr. Hemasundra Duggireddy
Dr. Ping Zhang
Dr. Dwight K. Stowell
atholdental.com

Athol Family Dentists

78 Brickyard Road
(978) 249-7444
Dr. Verne Goldsher
Dr. Steven Johnson
Dr. Peter Brzoza
Dr. Michael Caban-Orthodontist
atholfamilydentists.com

Quabbin Valley Dental

546 Main Street
(978) 830-4610
Dr. BehruzAlmassian
Dr. Anna Rossis
quabbinvalleydental.com

BARRE

Robert Rapisarda DMD
48 Allen Drive
(978) 355-4656
Dr. Robert Rapisarda
drrapisarda.com

BELCHERTOWN

Baystate Dental of Belchertown
131 North Main Street
(413) 211-7686
Dr. Gary Circosta
Dr. Indu Yadav
Dr. Benjamin Bilok
baystate-dental.com

Belchertown Dental Family

1 Main Street #102
(413) 323-7660
Dr. Joseph Ting
Dr. Theresa Hoang
dentalfamily.com

Valley Dentists of Belchertown

20 George Hannum Street
(413) 289-5113
Dr. Mark D. Medaugh
belchertown-dental.com

Yuh Fang Hsiao DMD

71 North Main Street
(413) 323-7660
Dr. Yuh Fang Hsiao
yuh-fanghsiaodmd.com

ORANGE

Orange Dental Group
9 Grove Street
(978) 544-3515
Dr. Ping Zhang
Dr. Yimar Angell
Dr. Dwight K. Stowell Jr.
orangedentalgroup.net

ORANGE

(continued)

West River Dental Associates
450 West River Street Suite 2
(978) 673-2009
Dr. Joseph Gomez
Dr. Christopher Nguyen
Dr. Kevin Guze
westriverdentalma.org

RUTLAND

Carewell Dental
102 Main Street
(508) 332-7345
Dr. Resmi Nair
carewelldental.com

WARE

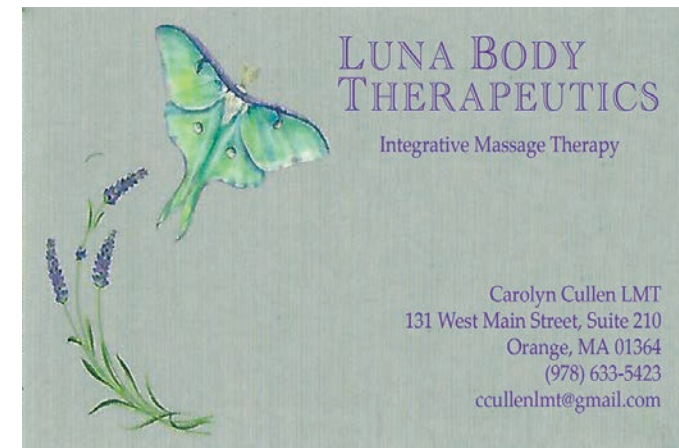
Dhillon Family and Cosmetic Dentistry
173 West Street
(413) 289-5130
Dr. Navkiran Dhillon
dhillonfamilydental.com

Quaboag Valley Dental Family

90 South Street
(413) 967-3385
Dr. Joseph Ting
Dr. Theresa Hoang
dentalfamily.com

Robert W. Shamey DMD

244 West Street
(413) 967-4550
Dr. Robert Shamey
drshamey.com



Carolyn Cullen LMT
131 West Main Street, Suite 210
Orange, MA 01364
(978) 633-5423
ccullenlmt@gmail.com



Photography by John Burk

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For this issue of Uniquely Quabbin, I chose four poems that speak of renewal, light, peace, and the yearning for justice—all qualities associated with the winter season and the opportunity for quiet reflection that it brings.
—Carol Mays

The Oak Trees Speak
Richard W. Bachtold

After the blinding snow,
the light of the morning revealed
that creative winds had sculpted,
on selected shimmering dark oak branches,
words of white in an ancient language
for newly opened eyes,
which beheld these transformed trees
as white-robed oracles.

Richard Bachtold passionately followed his calling to poetry for over thirty years, before his death five years ago. He lived a simple lifestyle on his beloved two-acre homestead in rural Hardwick. He self-published four books of poetry, the most recent called *Poems of the One*, which included “The Oak Trees Speak.”

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from the pens of Uniquely
compiled by Carol Mays,

Meteor Shower
Chris O’Carroll

(originally published in *Iambs & Trochees*)
A comet strews its path with cosmic crumbs,
motes, castoff scraps of solar system stuff,
specks inconsiderable, yet enough
to coruscate. Around our planet comes
a yearly, fire-eyed impresario
bent on refashioning each humble grain
into a drop of incandescent rain,
the star of its own brief but brilliant show.
We snag bits of debris in high, thin air
and frenzy them to glow and disappear.
Some drill our night sky, lunge with white-hot spears,
others trace threads as fine as baby hair.
Alike to dainty wisp and lancing thrust
we *Abhh!*—dust amply entertained by dust

Chris O’Carroll is the author of the *The Joke’s on Me* published by White Violet Press. He has been a *Light* magazine featured poet and frequently contributes topical verse to that journal’s “Poems of the Week” feature. He lives in Pelham with his wife, the historian Karen Manners Smith.

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Quabbin poets
poetry editor

Grace
bg Thurston

What I have is all I want.
It is enough to walk
this narrow dirt road
with two dogs who live
in the present of each day.

The scent of woodsmoke
drifts through dark trees
that sway leafless in this
cold stick season time
before winter’s reign
of snow and silence.

While the fields sleep
and the sheep slumber,
I am grateful in knowing
all I ever wanted, I have

bg Thurston lives on a sheep farm in Warwick. Her first book, *Saving the Lamb*, published by Finishing Line Press, was a Massachusetts Book Awards highly recommended reading choice. Haley’s published her second book, *Nightwalking*.

If There Be Shepherds
Dorothy Johnson

If there be shepherds,
let them come now
while wildfires set the stars ablaze
and the seas rise
perhaps to meet the fires.
The wise men will be late again,
stepping carefully over the hot sand.
Afraid to fall. Afraid to fail.
Stopping now and then
to collect a tax
or see if their investments prosper.
We need a shepherd now
to save the flock from wolves
and to keep the new lambs safe.

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. She writes *Quiet Places* • *Quiet Thoughts* for *Uniquely Quabbin*.

Eveline MacDougall
founder & director, social-justice chorus, Fiery Hope
formerly known as Amandla

author of the book
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performance spaces throughout North and South

continued from page 25

Workshop13.org contains more information and links to registering for open mic.

In Hardwick, the Center at Eagle Hill opened in September of 2008 to provide a space for Eagle Hill

School students to grow and learn in the arts and to create a space for the community to come together and experience world-class performance. “We have a team of interns from Eagle Hill School including interns in

technology, theatre, and arts management interns,” said Molly Archambault, front of house and marketing manager. She said interns help with shows after taking classes in production areas.

The center produces at least two school performances and two by Gilbert Players, a community theater group based in Hardwick. The venue features a variety of concerts including folk and country music, comedy shows, a dance and theatre mix, and tribute bands. The school sponsors an annual summer music and car show. The website, thecenterateaglehill.org, offers more information.

Friends of Hardwick’s Old Stone Church at 283 Main Street in the village of Gilbertville organize concerts in the space.

Opened in March 2019, Stage on Main at 17 South Main Street, Orange, provides a space for artists and community members to experience the arts, said Candi Fetzer, founding manager. Operated by volunteers, Stage on Main offers free performances and gallery shows.

offer entertainment variety throughout the year

Diverse uses for the space include movies, poetry readings, bands, author readings, and karaoke competitions. Future plans include a competition similar to Shark Tank and a game night during the winter. Gallery space for local artists and a marketplace with an eclectic mix of artisans’ work help support Stage on Main, whose Facebook page has more information.

Barre Players Theater at 64 Common Street, Barre, first formed in 1921. By the end of the 1930s, interest declined, but the group re-formed in the 1950s and has been going strong ever since. According to Jay Burnett, the group’s president, “Barre Players have been giving back to the community for more than fifty years.”

Barre Players creates four productions a year as well as a youth production in the summer. Along with theater, the players offer community workshops, including those for aspiring directors. Burnett said the players welcome new members. Information is at barreplayerstheater.com.

In 1794, the First Church of New Salem built a meetinghouse. Sunday services in the meetinghouse ceased before the Civil War because of other houses of worship built in town. In 1985, the 1794 Meetinghouse Preservation Committee formed and soon established what it called “the smallest civic center in the nation.” In tribute to the structure’s iconic pointed steeple, the group adopted the phrase “Aspire to the Arts.”

Quabbin Valley Pro Musica, resident chorus of the Meetinghouse, performs in January and June under the direction of Geoffrey Hudson of Pelham. The Meetinghouse schedules a summer music series running through October.

“The thing that makes the Meetinghouse space so special and unique are the beautiful acoustics inside,” said Brad Foster, executive director, who also maintains the Meetinghouse website at 1794meetinghouse.org. “Outdoor surroundings enhance the scene,” he said.

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



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East of Quabbin Reservoir, a plowed road invites winter hikers.

photo © by Dale Monette

Lost Towns Brewing, Sweet Euphoria strike sonorous local chords

by Laurie Smith

Lost Towns Brewing at 483 Main Street in Hardwick opened its doors in December of 2018. When the opportunity came to attain a farmer brewer license a few years ago, Halley and Curtis Stillman, owners of Still Life Farm, decided to make a go of it with some of their friends. Paul McNeil, beer brewer and Pam and Jim Spurrell own the place with the Stillmans.

The owners all felt that the town needed such a venue for people to get together and enjoy local music and local food. They strive to create a comfortable, relaxed atmosphere where everyone gets to know everyone with “a unique homelike feel like having friends hanging out in your living room.”

As an added bonus, Lost Towns Brewing welcomes dogs. The venue also has an event called Beer Yoga for those who want some exercise while they sample beer.

Lost Towns brews craft beers on a small scale with a small system that enables something new every weekend. The brewery highlights farm-fresh ingredients into its blends. The owners grow ingredients they use on their



The Lost Towns Brewing crew includes, from left, Curtis and Halley Stillman, Pam and John Spurrell, and Paul McNeil.

photo by Laurie Smith

farm. Squash ale, for example, uses a blend of spices and herbs with sunshine squash.

The brewery's menu includes fresh local foods every weekend with a variety of fruits, cheeses, and popcorns

continued on page 48



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Quabbin from Enfield Lookout proposes many Quabbin mysteries.

photo © by Dale Monette

Cumberland Farms a visual haiku by Ami Fagin

Notice the price of gas lately? Well, in a nostalgic gesture to many of our regions' iconic Cumbies, I created my Rockwellian homage to downtown Athol. Note the nuance of coloration of the Cumberland Farms street sign, geometry of parked cars, pastel details in snowplowed snow, ironclad sky, Woody's Diner (now long shuttered), and the casket factory. The composition makes a prosaic portrait of an old New England mill town in the middle of a drab winter's day. Cheer up and enjoy.

The Quabbin region has Cumberland Farms stores in Athol, Baldwinville (part of Templeton), East Templeton, Gilbertville (part of Hardwick), Orange, and Ware.

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. Find Ami's book collections of visual haiku on the artist's website: visualhaiku.graphics



© Ami Fagin

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Ice House Pub, Barre, and White Cloud Diner, Orange,

by Diane Kane



Ice House Pub, Barre, serves a selection of craft beers, wine, designer drinks, and food from a diverse dinner menu.

photo © by Diane Kane

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Ice House Pub • Barre 7 Worcester Road • Barre

Owner Henry Hauptmann of Ice House Pub at 7 Worcester Road, Barre, wants you to “rethink pub food.”

Hauptmann originally planned to open a small burger joint, but his vision grew with his passion to serve his community with quality food. In February of 2019, he opened his gastro-style pub that seats more than 150 with booths, tables, and a sitdown bar. Ice House has a farm-to-table menu including local craft beers, area produce, and natural grass-fed beef from Hauptmann’s own family farm in nearby Hardwick.

An adult game area with comfortable seating and play area keeps kids entertained while waiting for their meals. Ice House also has an expansive outside lighted dining area when weather permits.

On a Wednesday night, I visited Ice House with a group of friends. Kat, one of the managers, greeted us with enthusiasm and seated us in one of the spacious, oversized booths. Joe, the bar manager, took our order from many beers to choose from, a nice selection of wine, and several designer drinks. Joe’s personal creation, Not Miranda’s Cosmo, is a refreshing delight with white cranberry and pomegranate liqueur garnished with lime for \$9.

We couldn’t resist trying some of the tempting



present varied and casual local dining possibilities

appetizers. Eggplant frites for \$10 is lightly breaded and baked with a side of chipotle sauce. Homemade hummus served with spiced pita points for \$7 tasted fresh and delicious. Pastrami salmon served with capers and crusty pretzel crostini for \$10 provided a rare treat.

We asked the server to wrap up our extras and moved on to the main course. Squash and scallop risotto for \$26 arrived creamy and filled with sea scallops pan-fried to perfection. Haddock tacos for \$18 seemed a little spicy but delicious. Artisanal flatbreads range from \$14-\$16 and make a great appetizer or meal. Several burgers to choose from include Don’t-Have-a-Cow, a homemade sweet potato patty with all local vegetarian ingredients.

I ordered the beer cheese bacon burger for \$18. Cooked to exactly medium rare as I ordered and served with a generous portion of handcut-to-order fries, it qualifies hands down as the best burger I have ever had. We couldn’t leave without trying dessert. Delicious apple crisp ala mode and to-die-for chocolate cheese pie topped off the meal.

Menu options often change seasonally and according to available fresh meats and produce. Prices of entrées at Ice House Pub run from \$10 for a nice sized portion of homemade mac and cheese to \$39 for Ruby Ranch bone-in ribeye. The menu has something for every taste and wallet but be prepared to order on the high end, since all the options tempt the palate.

Ice House has ample room to hold your special family events. The eatery hosts public local wine dinners and pairs up with the Barre Players theater group to bring murder mystery dinners to the pub.

Closed Tuesday. Dinner from 4 to 8pm Sunday and Monday, from 4 to 9 pm Wednesday and Thursday, and from 4 to 10 pm Friday and Saturday. Lunch from 11 am to 4 pm Saturday and Sunday.

White Cloud Diner • Orange 627 East River Street • Orange

Early one Monday morning when I entered White Cloud Diner, 627 East River Street, Orange, the room bustled with activity. My friend and I found a place at the counter. Miranda, our server seemed unfazed by the hectic atmosphere. She immediately greeted us with a smile and brought coffee.

After looking over the many appealing choices, I decided on an omelet with mushrooms and onions. It

came with a choice of wheat, rye, white, cinnamon/raisin bread, or an English muffin with hash browns or home fries included for \$7.99. My friend ordered the short stack of two French toasts topped with bananas for \$5.99 with a side of sausage for \$2.00. Our meals came out quickly and piping hot.

After enjoying another cup of delicious coffee, I sat down and talked with owner Jennifer Sheldon. She and her husband, Bill, moved to the area from Leominster three years ago. They had worked in the retail business before coming here.

“We had been looking for a business opportunity that would allow us to be a big part of the community, and with this diner we found it,” Jennifer said.

They purchased White Cloud Diner in December, 2018. Jennifer expressed pride in the history of White Cloud Diner. “The restaurant has been open continuously for sixty-one years,” she told me. “All of our changes were made while in operation.” The place can accommodate about forty customers and often does.

continued on page 44

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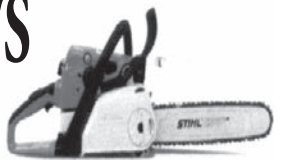
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Barre and Orange eateries focus on community

continued from page 43



Jennifer Sheldon, owner of White Cloud Diner in Orange, said special events encourage community.

photo © by Diane Kane

Jennifer informed me that many of her staff, welcome additions, formerly worked at Johnson’s Farm in Orange.

White Cloud Diner has a variety of lunch options, with breakfast offered all day. “Our Reubens are quite popular,”

Jennifer said. “They are corned beef—never pastrami—and come on European marble rye customers rave about!” Sandwiches and burgers run from \$6.99 to \$9.99 and come with a choice of French or sweet potato fries. For an extra dollar, diners can substitute beer-battered onion rings or get a side order for \$4.99. Chowder or soup of the day goes for from \$5.00 to \$7.00 and a half sandwich and soup for from \$8.99 to \$9.99.

White Cloud Diner offers season specials. “We offer homemade Guinness beef stew during the winter months,” Jennifer told me. “And it’s very popular!”

Jennifer and Bill focus on the community. Some of the fun events they hosted last year included Star Wars Day in May, Return to Hogwarts in July, and a Pumpkin Festival in October. Events proved so popular that the diner will likely repeat them. Follow White Cloud Diner on Facebook for more information on coming events.

Closed Tuesdays. Open from 7 am to 2 pm Wednesday through Monday.

Diane Kane, a writer and former chef, lives in Phillipston.



Snow dusts the spillway at Quabbin Park, located in both Belchertown and Ware.

photo © by Dale Monette

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JANUARY-APRIL 2020 • UNIQUELY QUABBIN MAGAZINE 45



First Thaw
oil on linen painting © by Gillilan Haven



In loving memory of the president and owner of Orange Oil Company

Robert E. "Bob" Harris, Jr.

who died on June 5, 2019. Family and friends will dearly miss him,
as certainly will his Orange Oil family, who loved him and knew him best.

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Bob Harris Jr.

Bob Harris Jr., late president and owner of Orange Oil Company, had an amazing work ethic evident early in his life.

While in grade school, Bob began pumping gas at his father's gas station in Orange. The business evolved and his father started Orange Oil Company in 1947.

Bob often took the company truck to high school, so he could deliver heating oil and kerosene after school hours. His father wanted him to go to college, but Bob wanted to go to trade school. He obtained his license to be a burner technician, and then Orange Oil could offer service and installations as well as delivery.

Not one to sit idle, Bob obtained his trailer truck license and convinced his father to buy a tractor trailer truck so they could haul their own oil out of Sterling and Boston

Bob worked long hours his entire life. In his younger years, he did service and deliveries by day and hauled oil at night. In his later years, he was still first to arrive in the morning and was always the last one to leave.

He really did love to work.



Petersham Partners, from left, are Kathleen Geary, Deb Bachrach, Lynn Shaw, Karen Davis with Emory Davis in carriage, Sandy Page, and Jim Regan

photo © by John Burk

Village Neighbors' efforts at aging in place

continued from page 21

"Most people want to maintain their independence as long as possible," added Jim. "Some very independent people live here who just need a little help."

"I can do these things now, but in fifteen or twenty years, I too will need help. We want that help to be in place for people now and for us in the future," added Karen.

information at
petersham.ma.partners@gmail.com

information about the village
model:VtVnetwork.org

Lifepath's mailing list of Village Neighbors
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Ellen Woodbury, a massage
therapist, lives in Athol.

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brew pub, lively ensembles, enhance regional music scene

continued from page 39

for snacking. As far as hot foods, hot food pop-ups bring food to the venue. Some often available include ramen, Jamaican, tacos, hotdogs, and sausages plus a pizza oven. For dessert, the place sometimes has an ice cream pop-up.

Music offerings at Lost Towns include a variety of live, local music. The venue favors acoustic acts not too loud for the small atmosphere. Often the brewery features Irish and Scottish music as well as blues, but Lost Towns offers no consistent genre.

Musicians soon on tap include Shin Dig from 3 to 5 pm on March 14 to celebrate Saint Patrick's day, Rosie Porter performing country music

from 4 to 6 pm March 28, and Noah Lis with upbeat oldies from 3 to 5 pm April 26.

The Lost Towns Facebook page lists food and music events or email info@losttownsbrewing.com.

Lost Towns Brewing open hours: from 4 to 8 pm Fridays; from noon to 8 pm Saturdays; from noon to 6 Sundays. Coming soon: open hours on Wednesday and Thursdays.

Musicians and hot food pop ups interested in bookings call Halley at (413) 277-0818.

Sandie Murcell and Topo Hakkinen make up the dynamic duo Sweet Euphoria. Their



Sandie Murcell and Topo Hakkinen make music together in their duo, Sweet Euphoria.
photo by Laurie Smith

collaboration includes mixes of acoustic and electric sound featuring covers from artists like Cab Calloway, the Beatles, Led Zeppelin, Pearl Jam, and Donovan.

Topo plays guitar in the duo. He grew up in Gardner but has lived in Orange for the past fifteen years. A local music veteran inspired by the Beatles, he started learning guitar at fourteen. By eighteen, he played in his first rock

band called SGF, the first of many bands over the succeeding five decades. Topo has covered a wide range of genres, including country, country rock, folk, blues, jazz, and rock and roll, his first love. He has played all over New England with many musicians.

Sandie, covering vocals, ukulele, and percussion, grew up in Athol as the youngest of seven children. She lives in

Orange with Topo, her partner. Music filled her childhood as a big part of everyday life. Her four brothers each played the guitar, and music from bands such as Cream and the Beatles played in the kids' bedrooms at home. She started in the school chorus and playing clarinet at school. Later, Sandie bought an inexpensive soprano ukulele from a friend and taught herself how to play. She said her brother John encouraged her progression by working with her weekly going through Beatles songs and playing with her for hours.

Sandie plays mostly a tenor ukulele after using a variety of types over the years. In 2008, she joined a band called the Sunbeams, which worked on coordinating benefits for organizations with the help of local musicians who donated their time. Sunbeams supported NEADS, a nationally recognized, accredited nonprofit that trains highly skilled service dogs for the deaf, disabled, and veterans experiencing post-traumatic stress.

Sandie met Topo at an open mic, and when the Sunbeams broke up, the couple decided to continue with a musical adventure together as

Sweet Euphoria, and that is where they remain three years later—making the music together that they love to play.

Sandie and Topo's events appear on their Facebook music page, Sweet Euphoria. Sweet Euphoria played at the Orange Starry Starry Night celebration on New Year's Eve 2019. Also find them playing at the Blind Pig in Athol, local open mics, at Phillipston's Red Apple Farm events in the Brew Barn, and at the Gardner Ale House.

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



Russian Teatime
oil on canvas painting © by Olga Antonova

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land trust resources, geographic coverage, conservation

continued from page 17

small staff on projects such as the ambitious Tully Initiative, which involved more than a hundred land transactions protecting ninety-one hundred acres in the four towns of Athol, Orange, Royalston, and Warwick. MGLCT's has headquarters at Skyfields Arboretum in Athol, next to Lawton State Forest, its first land protection project.

Renowned for practicing ecologically sound forest stewardship on its properties, MGLCT serves as a model for landowners working with it.

MGLCT's recent successes include completion of the Quabbin-to-Wachusett Initiative, a federally funded forest legacy project encompassing more than four thousand acres and thirty-two properties in north central Massachusetts. Many benefits include water supply protection for the Quabbin Reservoir network, establishment of a large regional greenway, and sustainable working forests. MGLCT also partnered with the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife and North County Land Trust, serving Templeton and communities east of the Quabbin region, to establish Norcross Wildlife Management Area on

grounds of the former Fernald School in Templeton. The 465-acre property, featuring rare grassland habitat and frontage on Norcross Brook, comprises a crucial link in a 2,200-acre protected corridor extending to Otter River State Forest. At the Eagle Reserve in Royalston, MGLCT opened a universally accessible community trail, appropriately named for renowned area naturalist David Small, in June.

East Quabbin Land Trust, or EQLT, based in Hardwick and covering Petersham, Barre, New Braintree, Ware, and adjacent communities, celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary in 2019. Reflecting on its history, Cynthia Henshaw, executive director, said, "The trust was originally started in 1994 because residents saw the increasing threat of development from the building boom at that time. Since then development pressure has ebbed and flowed with the economy, but we've had strong support throughout the east Quabbin region to conserve farms and woods, preserving the rural community character for the future."

As of 2019 EQLT has protected more than five thousand acres, manages eighteen preserves, and

priorities, and scope of activities vary widely

monitors conservation restrictions totaling one thousand acres. Picturesque Mandell Hill Conservation Area, with old farm fields maintained as working pastures and grasslands, embodies the organization's priorities of preserving agriculture, wildlife habitat, and rural culture. In October EQLT opened a universally accessible half-mile section of the Mass Central Rail Trail off Church Street in Ware. It connects to the adjacent Frohloff Farm Conservation Area. The three-mile segment of the rail trail in Hardwick and New Braintree features two historic railroad bridges recently restored by volunteers.

Kestrel Land Trust also commemorates a milestone anniversary. 2020 marks its fiftieth year protecting land in the Pioneer Valley. Originally founded by Amherst volunteer conservation leaders in 1970, KLT expanded its coverage area in 1988 to include the west Quabbin towns of Shutesbury, Leverett, Pelham, and Belchertown because of development threats and increased awareness of land protection at regional scales. KLT has protected more than twenty-five thousand acres in nineteen towns.

In upcoming months KLT and the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game, or DFG, will finalize a conservation restriction protecting 2,058 acres of land owned by the W. D. Cowls Company in Shutesbury, Pelham, and Leverett. The property, named the Walter Cowls Jones Working Forest, provides public access for hiking, hunting, and fishing; water supply protection for Quabbin Reservoir and the town of Amherst; and outstanding wildlife habitats. Cowls sustainably manages timber to produce locally made forest products. The project builds on the 3,500-acre Paul Jones Conservation Area on Brushy Mountain in Leverett and Shutesbury, established in 2011 in conjunction with Cowls, Franklin Land Trust, and DFG. That conservation restriction is the largest on private land in Massachusetts to date.

KLT also collaborated with the town of Pelham and area landowners to establish Buffam Brook Community Forest in 2017. The 160-acre preserve, featuring a recently improved trail system, also serves as a research site and outdoor classroom for institutions such as the University of Massachusetts and Hitchcock Center for the Environment.

Franklin Land Trust, or FLT, established in 1987, prioritizes protecting agricultural land in Franklin County and adjacent portions of Hampshire County.

FLT permanently protects farms by purchasing properties, selling development rights to the state APR program, and then reselling the land to young farmers. FLT has protected thirty-two thousand acres, including fourteen thousand acres of farmland. Originally based in Ashfield, it now has permanent headquarters in Shelburne Falls.

To learn more about land trusts, options for protecting land, volunteer opportunities, and upcoming events, visit their websites:

Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust
mountgrace.org

East Quabbin Land Trust
eqlt.org

Kestrel Land Trust
kestreltrust.org

Franklin Land Trust
franklinlandtrust.org

Photographer and writer John Burk documents Quabbin region wilds (and not so wilds) in image and word. He lives in Petersham.

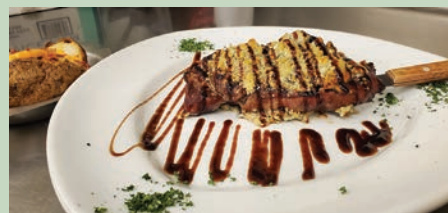
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Sunset settles over the Quabbin in New Salem.

photo © by Dale Monette

region's dentists consider effects of vaping, gum health

continued from page 33

The Rutland dental office of Dr. Resmi Nair hums with quiet efficiency. Having practiced with the Orange Dental Group and Quaboag Valley Dental Family, Dr. Nair bought the Rutland practice in 2009.

"We were over a Honey Donut shop, and no one knew we were there," she laughs. Practicing dentistry in India and graduating from Boston University Goldman School of Dental Medicine, Dr. Nair wanted to influence peoples' health while balancing her personal and work lives. In 2017 she moved the practice to its current, more visible location. In her general dentistry practice,

she sees six-month-old babies and hundred-year-old elders.

Dr. Nair said she has seen an increase in cavities in teenagers' teeth due to consumption of energy drinks, soda, and electrolyte drinks. "We don't know the effects yet of vaping on teeth and gum health, but there are sure to be some," she explains.

Dr. Nair concurs with Margaret of the Stowell groups that fear, anxiety, embarrassment, and cost create the biggest blocks to people getting good dental care. "With regular care, people can reach a point where prevention is less expensive than treatment for problems," she says as we pass through one room after

another of the facility with its sleek modern equipment.

"Technology has changed dentistry. So much can be done in house, and it's not as scary as a lot of people think," Dr. Nair laughs. "Regular maintenance, nutritious food, lowering sugar intake, eliminating chewing and smoking tobacco—all will improve gum and teeth health," Dr. Nair explains. "Everyone wants a beautiful smile. We are an Invisalign provider. The process straightens teeth without braces. You'll develop confidence and interact more easily. We can help you!"

Ellen Woodbury, a massage therapist, lives in Athol.

an excellent two-owl day

continued from page 11

I found hiking tough that morning. Snow had a thin crust that barely supported my weight. When I navigated around trees, snow surfaces gave way.

I should have packed snowshoes. I found walking exhausting, to say the least. I felt concern about possibly becoming overheated in such cold temperatures. Finally, I gained enough ground to slip back out to the shoreline for a closer look. Raising the binoculars, I glassed the tree line and—

I confirmed my suspicions There in a distant tree perched a snowy owl. I couldn't believe it!

I had to tell myself to calm down and put excitement in perspective. Looking at the distance to get in camera range and realizing how far I had to hike to get a photo presented a challenge. In efforts to close the gap, I set a slow, deliberate pace.

My patience paid off. Before soaring away into a snow squall, the snowy owl presented many picture opportunities.

What a magnificent sight!

The adrenalin rush of seeing such a unique raptor made my ongoing hike seem effortless.

As I rounded a cove, I stopped dead in my tracks. A short distance from me, next to an outcrop of boulders, stood the snowy owl watching the reservoir. The owl didn't look at me. It was like I wasn't there.

What an incredible wildlife experience, but there's more.

Hiking another half mile to reach my vehicle, I loaded my gear into the truck and started the ride home. I happened to look into a small overgrown field where sat a barred owl.

I put the truck in neutral and let it roll backwards clear from the owl's view. Might I have a second owl photo opportunity?

The barred owl did not behave nearly as tolerantly as the snowy owl, but I did I manage to push the plunger once on the camera.

What are the odds of seeing two owls in one day at Quabbin? Based on my experiences, not very good.

And on top of it, one of them a snowy owl?

Thus, I had a once-in-a-lifetime wildlife experience while hiking in the winter Quabbin woods.

That day's events also demonstrate that some good reasons exist for hiking in the worst weather.

Jim Morelly is an outdoor enthusiast with a lifelong passion for nature.

*Give me your tired, your poor,
your huddled masses
yearning to breathe free,
the wretched refuse of
your teeming shore:
send these, the homeless,
tempest-tost to me.
I lift my lamp beside
the golden door!"*

—Emma Lazarus



ad signed by
Hattie Nestel

Wendell's Heidkamp plans retirement

continued from page 28

"I get a lot of kudos for my role," Rosie said. "That's nice. I'm aware I work hard, but people who aren't close don't realize—it's a whole organization. Many parts of the library run without me. I'm in constant contact with the trustees. I get guidance from them."

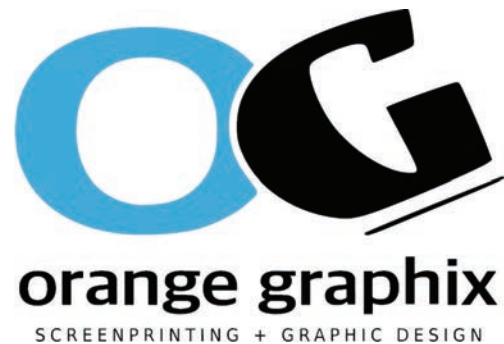
In turn, she guides the library with skill and will do so until her retirement in June, 2020.

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

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animals employ diverse strategies to survive on winter land and water

continued from page 15

The importance of leaf litter should not be underestimated. Science exploring that unseen frontier has discovered more about the importance of microorganisms and fungi to the plants we see in forests, lawns, and gardens.

As we go about our lives this winter, remember the amazing things that other life forms experience. Remember ways that wild things cope with cold in the Quabbin region.

And consider how we as a species fit in to the complexity of life on Planet Earth. When getting food, recycle what you can. When moving around or staying at home, conserve as much energy as you can. All our efforts to survive should enable us and our earthbound companions to live long and prosper.

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.

Candace Anderson found inspiration in Sue Cloutier's article for the cover painting of this issue of *Uniquely Quabbin*.

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Nature's Nuances by Clare Green

a wheelbarrow from Eugene

wheelbarrow loaded
just as memories careen
gentle heart whispers



Clare Green and her late son, Ned, often visited
with their neighbor Eugene back in 1978.

In the simplicity of just being and showing a little old-fashioned neighborly kindness, a neighbor and a young mother created treasured moments for a lifetime. Together we wove a memory.

Eugene, my old farmer friend, lived in his mother's home along Route 78 in Warwick. During the days of summer, you could find Eugene porcheside. He always extended a warm welcome and invitation to sit a spell with him on his porch when I drove by in my robin's egg blue VW bug and I happened to see him and have extra time to visit. I'd pull into his driveway, take a seat on the porch with him, and join him in conversation. My two-year-old son and I would enjoy the moments shared. Eugene's bright blue eyes sparkled as he chatted about farm and town lore and stories from his time of service during World War II. I listened with fascination bordering upon reverence. I imagined the difficulties he must have endured and bore witness to, and now, I thought, "Here he is—a farmer."

"Let's go pick some beans," he said one day.

"Okay," I replied.

We picked beans together, and he gave them to me.

Another time when I visited, he said, "The corn is ripe for pickin'. Let's go and fill up this basket!"

I still use that wooden-slatted basket to this day!

During another late summer visit, he exclaimed, "The blackberries are in. Pick as much as you want. Stop by anytime and get them, even if I'm not here."

And so those small but heartfelt gestures of Yankee kindness touched our hearts as well as our taste buds. As a new single mom on a limited budget, I dearly appreciated the gifts of fresh produce, but mostly I enjoyed sitting on the porch with Eugene and talking. We relaxed. For me, time stood still. It was a small oasis of neighborly thoughtfulness as I learned the ropes of a new town. Eugene helped me to feel right at home.

So I didn't think it was out of the ordinary when I had a dream that Eugene gave me the blue work shirt off his back. I awoke. "Yes," I thought, "that dream is so



true! Eugene would help me in any way he could."

Over the years we'd sit and visit. When fall came, I was able to purchase the needed supply of cordwood from him. He knew I'd need a wheelbarrow, so he donated one to me. Nowhere in Warwick could you buy a wheelbarrow. Forty years later, I am still using that gift.

Eugene moved to a nearby hill town when he met the love of his life, Christine, and eventually married her. A couple of years after

that, he and his brother won the lottery worth a million bucks. His brother lived in Athol, where some stores sold lottery tickets, although nowhere in Warwick sold them.

Eugene had told his brother always to buy two tickets and that he'd pay for the ticket when he saw him. Amazing. They won. The *Athol Daily News* carried an article about them and their winnings.

"Now that you have all this money, what are you going to do?" the writer asked Eugene.

His reply? "I guess I'll go fishin'."

Just like Eugene—money wouldn't change him. But, he and his wife did spend some of the winnings to travel and explore new sights together.

Eugene married late in life and had a wonderful six years until he experienced his last curtain call with a fatal heart attack at the Big E, the New England Agricultural Fair, in Springfield, Massachusetts. Those who knew Eugene took solace in the location of his death amidst the wonders of an extensive farm fair. He lives on in my memory as a gentle soul who reached out to a young mother and her son.

When the task of stacking wood for winter approaches, I still use his wheelbarrow and imagine the twinkle in his eye.

Clare Green, educator and naturalist, welcomes folks to visit her woodland labyrinth and fairy cottage in Warwick. She provided photos of her son with the VW beetle and of the wheelbarrow.

charming, distinctive villages abound in Quabbin region

continued from page 9

district in 2014. The Leverett Village Co-op and New England Peace Pagoda, both established in the 1980s on their current sites, add a contemporary feel.

Paula Green, a resident of North Leverett for the past thirty-five years, moving from New Jersey, describes it

as a wonderful place to live, with rural homes set deeply in the woods and room for a big garden. I like the people very much, a terrific mix. There are old timers who have been here for many generations, but most of us are outliers. I feel like we’re all a bunch of refugees.

Paula and others find it appealing that the village is “close to Amherst, Northampton and Greenfield, communities with some sophistication and interesting things to do.” She participates with Hands Across the Hills, connecting people in Leverett with folks in rural Kentucky in order to facilitate dialogue and understanding.

Tully Mountain, elevation 1,163 feet, a popular hiking destination, rises above the village of Tully, called Tullyville on some maps. Tully Trail, Tully River (both

east and west branches), and Tully Road go through the place, home to a substantial portion of Orange’s 7,839 population. Tully Mountain, part of a state-owned wildlife management area, once had a soapstone quarry and a ski slope.

Jeff Cole, a resident of downtown Orange, spent his youth in Tully. His mother and maternal grandmother grew up there. He enthusiastically recalls

the peacefulness of the village, the humming of the machines at the former Worrick Table Shop, but most of all, there were plenty of kids to play baseball and ice hockey with. We used to clear a huge ice patch on Tully Pond and there was once a time when you could water ski on Tully Pond, but you had to know where stumps lurked!

The Tully CCC was founded in 1948 and met in a converted chicken coop until the building at present was erected and an addition was added to that in 1975 . . . I remember Mayo Road and Packard Road were never plowed in the winter as the places were all seasonal then.

Memorial Day is a big day still in Tully for paying respect and visiting with family and friends at the fire station over coffee, donuts and lemonade. The new fire station replaced a station from about 1860 which still stands on Royalston Road.”

On Tully Pond, the Athol Area YMCA operates Camp Selah, originally for kids from Worcester. People sometimes confuse Tully Pond with Tully Lake, a larger body of water located on Route 32 at the border of Athol and Royalston.

Locals know the Tully River, West Branch, as Tully Brook, once the site of Tully Brook Inn, a restaurant that closed in the 1970s.

Alex’s Restaurant, long gone, sold Phillips 66 gasoline. A former mill building houses the Boiler Restaurant, formerly Tully’s Mill Pond Restaurant founded by Stephen Thompson, called Tully Thompson, who grew up in the village. Other Tully businesses include Noel’s Nursery and the Drew family’s Porter Transportation.

Allen Young lives in Royalston. He received the University of Massachusetts Writing and Society Award in 2004 and is author of the autobiography, *Left, Gay, & Green*.



Wintertime did not always mean work in the days before Quabbin flooded the Swift River Valley. Sometimes it meant play, as demonstrated around 1910 by a group of boys on a toboggan. The boy in front wears a Civil War Union cap and trousers.

photo courtesy of Swift River Valley Historical Society

other plan insufficient for state’s urban water supply

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the minority report in the 1922 joint board study. In his minority report, James Bailey of the MDC recommended driving wells east of Worcester and a smaller reservoir on Ware River without building one in the Swift River Valley.

Hazen knew that the Ware River supply alone would not sufficiently address the water needs of Worcester and metro Boston, so he recommended a reservoir on the Assabet River east of Worcester and one on the Ipswich River north of Boston. Experts saw the projects fulfilling metro Boston’s water needs for three decades. Issued as a 177-page report, the Gow Plan—named after the investigating committee’s chair—comprised House Document 900 for the 1926 session.

Initially, the Gow Plan won some support from the MDC, which liked the lower cost, and the City of Worcester, which could share the cost of developing the Ware project with Metro Boston.

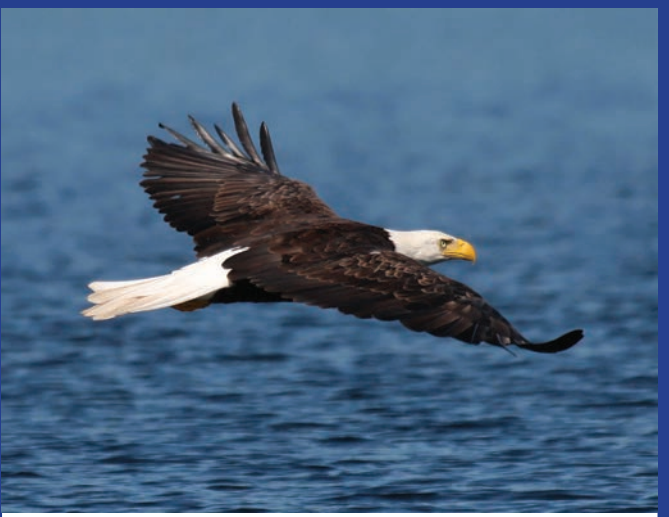
The legislature’s joint committee on water supply held many hearings on the Gow Plan in the early months of 1926. All interested parties testified, mostly against the Gow Plan, with engineer Goodnough relentlessly pushing his ideas. After a great deal of debate, legislators reached no agreement upon which plan to go with. Governor Alvan Fuller appointed a committee of engineers to come up with a solution. Charles Gow

served on the committee, which included Goodnough and two of his associates.

In the report to the governor, Gow ended up supporting most of Goodnough’s proposal, as did the other committee members. The governor presented the report to the legislature, which passed the Ware River Act after several more weeks of debate. That law set up the Metropolitan District Water Supply Commission, or MDWSC, to build the Ware and Swift River projects. The Swift River Act, passed in 1927, authorized what would become the Quabbin Reservoir. Gow’s nephew, Frederick, worked as an engineer for the MDWSC on the Quabbin project.

In the final analysis, the Gow Plan would have bolstered metro Boston and Worcester water supplies for two or three decades, but additional sources for the water systems would have been necessary by the 1950s. The growth of towns such as Hudson and Maynard in the Assabet River Valley and extreme pressure on the Ipswich River caused by local water users around the turn of the twenty-first century have shown that those portions of the Gow Plan would not have worked out in the long term.

J.R. Greene is the author of sixteen books relating to the history of Quabbin Reservoir and the towns taken for it. He has done narrated slide programs on the subject since 1976.



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Quabbin region hosted now lost downhill ski areas

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Sometime in the mid/late twentieth century, a skier slaloms down Phillipston's packed Ward Hill, later Snow Hill. photo courtesy of New England Lost Ski Areas Project

location of Wilson Bus Company. It closed in the early 1970s with the expansion of Route 2. The area had night skiing, according to New England Lost Ski Areas Project, which also observes that young skiers often mowed lawns and shoveled snow to save up for a season pass of ten dollars at the ski area. The snack shack had a wood stove and a Coleman lantern with coffee, hot chocolate, and candy for sale.

Rutland Hill in Rutland opened in the 1950s and likely closed in the early 1970s. Located off Pomaguset Street and owned by Ray Kline, it had three rope tows,

three trails, and one beginner slope. Kline did all of maintenance and grooming with a big sled pulled behind an old bulldozer while his wife handled ticket sales and the snack bar.

Several private schools in the area had ski slopes for students and staff, among them Eagle Hill School-Blood Hill in Hardwick, open from 1971 to 1983. Pioneer Valley Academy, run by the Seventh Day Adventist Church in New Braintree, had a ski area for students and staff during the 1970s. People skied on a small hill near a pond where staff and students skated. The ski hill had a hundred-foot vertical drop. After it closed, the land became the home of the Massachusetts State Police Academy.

Pine Crest Ski Area, located in the Pine Crest Section of Hubbardston, seems to have operated for two or three years in the mid twentieth century.

As for preserving the history of former ski areas, Davis said, "It's a race against time. However, we're always hopeful that parents or grandparents might have information."

New England Lost Ski Areas Project has information about closed ski areas in the Quabbin area as well as others in New England. The site accepts information, recollections, or photos of former ski areas at nelsap.org.

New England Ski Museum's two locations in Franconia Notch, New Hampshire, and North Conway, New Hampshire, have more information on New England skiing or skimuseum.org.

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



A horse pulls a sleigh through Swift River Valley in days before flooding of Quabbin Valley

photo courtesy of Swift River Valley Historical Society

horses pulled Quabbin sleighs in olden days

by Elizabeth Peirce

The full moon of January 2020 shone down on the Quabbin Valley just as it has since the beginning of time. Snow sparkled in moonlight, trees creaked and groaned in the wind, and coyotes howled their blood-curdling mournful cry.

Once on such a night in then Swift River Valley, before the reservoir claimed four towns, the air filled with the sound of laughter, jingle of sleigh bells, squeaking of snow underfoot, slashing of skates, and the clip-clop of horses hooves on the snow-packed roads pathed for sleighs.

Europeans settled in the Quabbin Valley in the early 1700s. For generations, people enjoyed customs from Europe, including sleigh rides, skating parties, bonfires, game and oyster suppers, taffy pulls, and square dances.

Fun happened only after people did the day's work—that's how it used to be!

Elizabeth Peirce is curator at Swift River Valley Historical Society.



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area bandstands proclaim community

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bandstands for the holidays and that the Hubbardston bandstand is spectacular. In the future, I'll go looking for them at the holidays. Decorated or not, all mentioned take an octagon shape. I don't know why.

As far as I know, there's no particular symbolism to an eight-sided structure so I asked local carpenters who suggested that the octagon might be stronger but they wouldn't swear to it. One said it might be easier to build than a circle. Finally, one man suggested it could be to accommodate different sections of a band. A musician friend said it had to be for the musicians so they could fit in and still leave room for the leader.

No two bandstands appear exactly alike. Belchertown's seems tall but Petersham's only moderately so. Both have room underneath for storage. At lunch one day at the Petersham General Store, a friend said that one summer day when she babysat grandsons on the common, they discovered the Petersham bandstand storage door unlocked, went in, and found what they considered pirate's treasure they had to leave behind.

Barre's octagon has pillars, steps up to a solid floor, and plantings surrounding its stone foundation. Athol's foundation has stone blocks and pillars holding up a steep roof, while the bandstand in Templeton has three steps up with trimmed bushes around the structure and benches outside.

Wendell has its own style. It is not octagonal but square, not white like all the others, but brown. Is it a bandstand or a gazebo? It's also brought up to date by being accessible to the handicapped. On the side opposite the entrance are three large millstones holding memorial plaques. The first bronze plaque honors Korean and Vietnam veterans, the second memorializes those who fought in World War I, and the



Belchertown, top, and Wendell bandstands wait in winter snow.
photos © by Rick Flematti

third World War II. A fourth stone is unmarked with no plaque at all. A flagpole stands outside.

If I may return to the notion of the symbolism of the New England bandstand, perhaps it stands for a time when each town embraced community, never perfect, but still community. We knew our neighbors and could share time on our town common. Perhaps the modern day has lost the literal feeling, especially now when computers seem to rule our worlds, but a bandstand on the common reminds us of the literal community we still can have.

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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Uniquely Quabbin Calendar Listings

January 11, Saturday

The Green Sisters
7:30 pm
Wendell Full Moon Coffeehouse
6 Center Street
Wendell
Benefiting Foundation for
Community Justice
wendellfullmoon.org

January 21, Tuesday

Upper To'gallants and Rusty Scuppers
6:00 pm-7:00 pm
Athol Public Library
568 Main Street
Athol
Upper To'gallants and Rusty Scuppers
contains entries from seagoing logs
kept by Haldt Jr. as well as drawings,
photographs, luggage decals from
around the world, and Dina Merrill's
letters.
Athollibrary.org

January 24, 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 25, Saturday

Vision Board Workshop
10:00 am-12:30 pm
Athol Public Library
568 Main Street
Athol
registration required
Athollibrary.org

January 25, Saturday

(continued)

NELCWIT Bowl-A Thon
12:00 pm-3:00 pm
French King Bowling
55 French King Hwy
Erving
Join other community members and
advocates committed to ending sexual
and domestic violence

January 26, Sunday

Winter Schooling Show Series 2020
9:00 am-4:00 pm
Stoney Hill Farm
1510 South Street
Barre

New Salem Winter Nature Walk
8:00 am-11:00 am
Quabbin Reservoir
Ware
Winter is a great time to enjoy the
outdoors and all that Quabbin
Reservoir has to offer. Join John
Green, naturalist and photographer,
on a walk in search of winter
songbirds, bald eagles, animal tracks,
and more.
members: \$15; non members: \$20.
massaudubon.org

Tracking the Northeastern Coywolf
10:00 am-4:30 pm
Quabbin Reservoir
New Salem
Follow the trails of northeastern
coyotes, immersing yourself in the
world of this fascinating animal. Come
join Nick on an all-day adventure
walking with the coywolf.
\$50 per person
walnuthilltracking.com

February 2, Sunday

The Double Crossers
2:00 pm
Stone Cow Brewery
500 West Street
Barre
Its the coldest time of winter! Come
warm up with The Dirty Double
Crossers!

General, Soldier, Civilian, Preacher:
Portraits of Four Civil War Heroes
2:00 pm
Barre Congregational Church
30 Park Street
Barre

Readers Play
3:00 pm
Stage on Main
17 South Main Street
Orange
*Twenty-Five Questions for a Jewish
Mother* by Judy Gold and Kate Moira
Ryan

February 8, Saturday

Skyfields Tracking Workshop
9:00 am-12:00 pm
Skyfield Arboretum
1461 Old Keene Road
Athol
Learn to spot and interpret wildlife
signs as you walk through the trails
and woods around Skyfields with
veteran tracker and naturalist Paul
Wanta. Last year's attendees saw
signs of rabbits, deer, wild turkeys,
and porcupines.
Registration required.
mountgrace.org

February 9, Sunday

Ice Harvesting in New England
2:00 pm
Oakham Historical Museum
1221 Old Turnpike Road
Oakham
Historian Ken Ethier will describe
the process and tools used in ice
harvesting during the nineteenth and
early twentieth centuries.
Linda Housman (508) 882-3990

Jeff Burnham Performs
2:00 pm
Stone Cow Brewery
500 West Street
Barre
Original songs and covers featuring
Lindsey Clark on viola and vocals.
Bandsintown.com

February 15, Saturday

Coffeehouse Variety Show
7:30 pm
Wendell Full Moon Coffeehouse
6 Center Street
Wendell
Benefiting Wendell State
Forest Alliance
wendellfullmoon.org

February 20, Thursday

Black History Month Movie Night
5:00 pm
Stage on Main
17 South Main Street
Orange
Screening *Invictus*

February 22, Saturday

Rave On-A Buddy Holly Tribute
7:30 pm
The Center at Eagle Hill
242 Old Petersham Road
Hardwick
Rave On, a high-energy show of
Buddy Holly's classic hits with songs
from Jerry Lee Lewis, Elvis, Dion, and
The Belmonets,
thecenterateaglehill.org

February 29, Saturday

The KonMari Method
10:00 am-12:00 pm
Athol Public Library
568 Main Street
Athol
Slide presentation and hands-on
workshop about decluttering with
Maile Shoul. Registration required
Athollibrary.org

March 5, Thursday

Women's History Month
5:00 pm
Stage on Main
17 South Main Street
Orange
Screening *Hidden Figures*

March 7, Saturday

Fancifool!
7:30 pm
The Center at Eagle Hill
242 Old Petersham Road
Hardwick
Fancifool! with Ananda Bena-Weber,
a hilarious, heartwarming,
thought-provoking show about love.
A multi-media one-woman show with
the interpretation of twelve characters
based on real stories of New Yorkers.
Featuring dancing, singing, mime,
clown, and social commentary.
thecenterateaglehill.org

March 14, Saturday

Zydeco Connections
7:30 pm
Wendell Full Moon Coffeehouse
6 Center Street
Wendell
Benefiting Friends of the Erving
Public Library
wendellfullmoon.org

March 15, Sunday

Globetrotting: Canvassing the World
with photographer Mitchell R. Grosky
5:00-7:00 pm
Stage on Main
17 South Main Street
Orange

March 21, Saturday

Back to the Garden
7:30 pm
The Center at Eagle Hill
242 Old Petersham Road
Hardwick
Back to the Garden celebrates
folk-rock trailblazers Carole King, Joni
Mitchell, and Laura Nyro. Challenged
by traditional images of women in the
music industry, they explored territory
outside accepted confines of popular
music.
thecenterateaglehill.org

March 24, Tuesday

Philosophy, Feminism, and the
Walking Dead
6:30-8:00 pm
Athol Public Library
568 Main Street
Athol
A discussion facilitated by two
members of the Mount Wachusett
Community College faculty to focus
on philosophical ideas embedded
questions of ethics, morality, and
gender politics. Registration required
Athollibrary.org

continued on next page

calendar listings
compiled by
Emily Boughton

submit calendar listings to
calendar@northquabbinchamber.com

Uniquely Quabbin listings

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March 29, Sunday

Maria Ferrante, soprano and Ivan Gusev, pianist, in concert
concert
3:00 pm
Stone Church
283 Main Street
Gilbertville

April 3-5, 2020

Friday-Sunday

Petersham Cultural Council Art Show
Petersham Town Hall
7:00-9:00 pm Friday, reception
11:00 am-4:00 pm Saturday
noon-4:00 pm Sunday
Petersham Cultural Council regional art show open to area artists. More than a hundred works of art on display and for sale. Opening reception Friday evening. Music and refreshments. A call to artists will be sent in February.

April 11, Saturday

Easter's Great Gathering
Red Apple Farm
455 Highland Avenue
Phillipston
Vendor fair, egg hunt, basket raffles, animals, hayrides. and more.
redapplefarm.com

April 18, Saturday

Peter Krasinski
Accompanies Peter Pan
7:00 pm
Stone Church
283 Main Street
Gilbertville
Peter Krasinski's improvised performance, inspired by the Stone Church and its 136-year-old instrument—a live accompaniment to a feature-length silent film, *Peter Pan* (1924) on the 1874 Johnson and Son tracker organ.
(508) 882-3980 for more information.

April 18, Saturday

(continued)

Do it Now
7:30 pm
Wendell Full Moon Coffeehouse
6 Center Street
Wendell
Benefiting Village Neighbors
wendellfullmoon.org

April 21, Tuesday

Make Pounded Cheese!
6:00 pm-8:00 pm
Athol Public Library
568 Main Street
Athol
A Historic Deerfield's Open Hearth Cooking Program food specialist presenting recipes that have taste of the past
Reservations required.
athollibrary.org

April 26, Sunday

Four Centuries and Two Peoples: The Landing of the Pilgrims at Plymouth and Those Who Met Them
2:00 pm
Barre Town Hall
40 West Street
Barre

May 9, Saturday

Airborne Comedians
7:30 pm
Wendell Full Moon Coffeehouse
6 Center Street
Wendell
Benefiting Community Network for Children
wendellfullmoon.org

May 9, Saturday

Airborne Comedians
7:30 pm
Wendell Full Moon Coffeehouse
6 Center Street
Wendell
Benefiting Community Network for Children
wendellfullmoon.org

May 15-17, 2020

Friday-Sunday

Armed Forces Weekend

Military History Expo
10 am-4 pm daily
645 South Main Street
Orange
tickets at history-expo.com or at the gate



Peter Krasinski will perform at Saturday, April 18 at the Stone Church, Gilbertville
photo courtesy of the Old Stone Church.