

Uniquely Quabbin magazine serving

THE NORTH QUABBIN: Athol • Erving • New Salem • Orange • Petersham • Phillipston • Royalston • Templeton • Warwick • Wendell

THE SOUTH QUABBIN: Barre • Belchertown • the Brookfields • Hardwick (Gilbertville) • Hubbardston • Leverett • New Braintree • Oakham • Pelham • Rutland • Shutesbury • Ware

CONTENTS

volume 5, number 1 • May to August 2020

this issue features summer activities, history, event listings, and
sights to see in the uniquely Quabbin heart of Massachusetts



Baby blue herons stay at home in their Rutland nest.
photo © by Nancy Lagimoniere

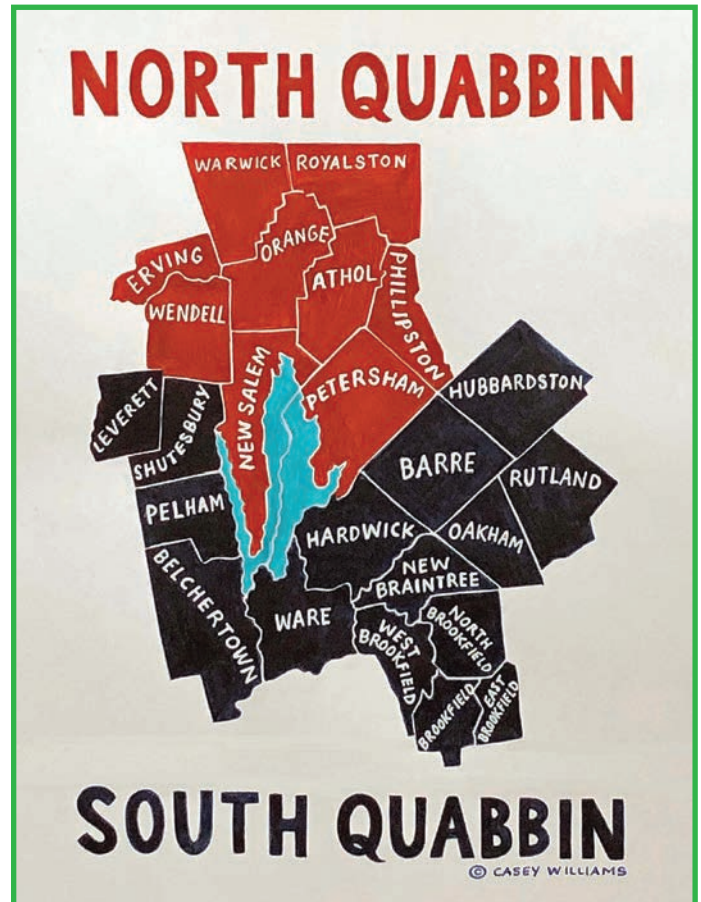
ON THE FRONT COVER

Spring Blossoms

a painting in oil on linen by Gillian Haven of Pelham

Quiet Places • Quiet Thoughts	4
blue hydrangea bursts with summer warmth	5
West Brookfield's Central NE Equine Rescue.	6
rehabilitated Ware and Wendell town bells	8
energy-efficient solar construction	10
villages of Gilbertville and South Royalston	12
Quabbin Reservoir filled after depopulation of towns	14
Swift River Valley Historical Society docents	15
Ken Levine model of Rabbit Run towns	16

continued on page 2



Quabbin towns past and present • maps © Casey Williams

CONTENTS

silvopasture enhances environment	18
bobcat provides an early summer eyeful.	20
flowers attract partner pollinators	22
Pelham Community Garden / Athol Environmental Center	24
Quabbin region historical societies	26
colonial era wolf gave cattle rabies	30
dairy bars mean summer in New England.	31
from the pens of Quabbin poets	32
muralists improve Ware and Athol sites.	34
beer yoga and wine yoga	36
disc golf	38
Nature's Nuances	41
Whimsy	53
Quabbin region calendar listings.	54

about *Uniquely Quabbin* magazine

Quabbin region, Massachusetts—*Uniquely Quabbin* serves the twenty-five 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 54

a note from Athol Historical Society

Thank you, thank you—

On behalf of Athol Historical Society, I want to thank the cultural councils of Athol, Hubbardston, New Salem, Orange, Petersham, Phillipston, Royalston, Rutland, Templeton, Ware, Warwick, and Wendell for supporting *Uniquely Quabbin* magazine with local cultural grants for 2020. Their support is vital to the life of our magazine.

I think with this issue, you will be thankful to spring into the pages of our magazine. Art, photographs, and articles will hopefully fill you with joy and wonder and banish the distress of the last few winter months. So, kick back, pour a glass of lemonade, and settle in for articles and pictures showing us what spring looks like in the Quabbin region.

I also want to thank our advertisers who play such a big role in the success of this magazine. An ever-growing list of businesses and organizations continuously support *Uniquely Quabbin*. Please get out there and support them as they support us.

Thankfully,
Debra Ellis, treasurer
Athol Historical Society

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THANK YOU!

a note from the publisher of *Uniquely Quabbin*

Summertime beckons as we look forward to renewal in our *Uniquely Quabbin* region. Our writers, photographers, and artists have found many treasures to tell you about.

As we anticipate new challenges, most significantly we imagine impending financial drawbacks. If you are able, we ask you to consider donating to *Uniquely Quabbin* magazine. You will find a PayPal link at our website, uniquelyquabbin.com, and a QR code on the previous page. Or, if you wish, please mail a check to

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Thank you for considering a gift to the magazine. We have taken pleasure in bringing it to you since May, 2016. We look forward to producing future editions, and we hope that you like this one.

Sincerely,
Marcia Gagliardi, publisher
Haley's

how we goofed in the January-April 2020 issue of *UQ*

We neglected to list North Orange among villages of Orange on page 9.

We failed to list Gilbertville Public Library among Quabbin Region Public Libraries on page 29.
Gilbertville Public Library • Linda J. Payne, director
259 Main Street • Gilbertville, MA 01031
(413) 477-6312 • gilbertvillelibrary@comcast.net

We incorrectly identified a traverse sled as a toboggan on page 57.



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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-five communities of the North Quabbin and South Quabbin.

Quiet Places • Quiet Thoughts

never dismiss the quietude of New England dirt roads

by Dorothy Johnson



Dorothy Johnson

Long ago, I taught a freshman English class at Holyoke Community College and asked my students what they had seen on the way to campus.

Always the answer? “Nothing.”

And I thought to myself that, if you don’t look, you will never see.

That thought comes back to me now as I search out quiet places. Some of them I have passed by time and time again, but I never noticed them until I really looked.

Cooleyville Road off Prescott Road in Shutesbury to Route 202 in New Salem qualifies as just such a place. First of all, off 202 in New Salem, you can find seven entrances to Cooleyville Road going both towards Quabbin Reservoir and away from it. The original road must have looped around until creation of Quabbin reservoir and Daniel Shays Highway, alias Route 202, split it in two. A dirt road from beginning to end, do not trust it in

deep snow, ice, or mud. Part of it got renamed Shutesbury Road, but Bruce Spencer who lives there told me that a longtime resident said she had always lived on Cooleyville and preferred it stay with that name.

Three bridges cross over streams on the Cooleyville Road section going close to Shutesbury center.

Driving along Cooleyville Road from New Salem, you will find a bridge over the West Branch of Swift River. Inspectors deemed the bridge unsafe and closed that part of the road, but you can drive right by that one until you find Canada Brook and the Village Brook. Both have

continued on page 44



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blue hydrangea bursts with summer warmth

text and watercolor by Kara K. Bigda



Feeling Blue

watercolor on clay panel © by Kara Bigda

Because our days are busy, filled with the tasks and responsibilities that life requires, it’s important that we remember to take note and appreciate the little things that bring us joy. Whether it’s recalling a favorite childhood toy, recognizing familiar packaging on favorite products, or taking comfort in a quiet corner of home, I aim to celebrate the modest gifts life provides and, in my own way, visually document the beauty and joy of my time in history.

In opposition to its title, “Feeling Blue,” marks the simple joy of summer. How I long for lazy days spent poolside or picnicking, visiting with friends and family while sharing hot dogs and potato salad, and spending

warm vacation days bicycling around Nantucket. Clipping blooms from unruly flower beds is always a treat, and blue hydrangea is one of my very favorites.

While discussing her penchant for interior decorating, my grandmother once said, “You can’t go wrong with blue and white.” I do think she was spot on!

Kara K. Bigda of West Brookfield taught art for all grade levels in the Quabbin Regional School District from 1998 to 2008. Since, she has concentrated on watercolor. She paints on treated clay panel and seals her paintings with a UV Protective finish that allows framing without the barrier of glazing. She holds a degree in fine arts from Amherst College. She shows at ArtWorks Gallery, Ware. Find more at karakbigda.com.

West Brookfield's Central NE Equine Rescue

by Ellen Woodbury

South of New Braintree in West Brookfield, Central New England Equine Rescue bustles with activity as volunteers and staffers lead horses, a donkey, and mini horses to the paddocks. Volunteers and staff also clean stalls and feed, water, train, and groom the animals. Rescue dogs Max and Emmy Lou bark greetings as Penny Blum, a volunteer from Petersham, and I walk into the horse barn. Penny volunteers once a week doing "whatever needs to be done." She said she loves being around the horses and sees dramatic changes as they get love and proper care.

Vicky Berry, co-founder, vice-president, manager, and boss-at-large, and her daughter Betsy Johnson, owner of Stonyfield Farm in Barre, started the rescue in 2003. They intended to rescue two horses. In the past seventeen years, the nonprofit has rescued more than two hundred horses, donkeys, and mules.

"I didn't grow up with horses," Vicky said, "but I did see a picture of my father dressed up as a cowboy



Blaze the rescue horse nuzzles a corral rail.
photo © by Ellen Woodbury

when I was four or five years old and thought he was most handsome!"

Growing up in Ludlow," she continued, "I wanted horse figures and made corrals out of sticks from my mother's landscaped hedges. I didn't have jump ropes. I had lassos and pretended to ride wonderful horses like Black Beauty and Flicka."

Roxann Banks, who came for an open house and ended up as treasurer of the nonprofit, names the horses as they roll in the mud. "We have twenty-two horses, a donkey, and two mini horses, Jack and Annie," said Roxann. She said a ninety-seven-year-old couple surrendered the minis when they could no longer care for them. "Jack and Annie need to be adopted together," Roxann said. "Previous owners can always come to visit in cases like this."



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Horses come from many sources. When mares, their urine used during pregnancy to create the drug Premarin, can no longer have babies, they may go to rescue or slaughter. Some foals of Premarin mares may also end up in rescue or the slaughterhouse.

"We have gotten carriage horses with scars along their sides from the tight carriage poles," explained Vicky. "They have a miserable life. Some horses come through the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals."

Animals arrive at the rescue usually in weakened and sometimes near-death condition. The facility quarantines recent arrivals for six weeks before introducing them to the other horses.

Animals receive appropriate hydration, proper nutrition, foot care, and parasite treatment to bring them into recovering good health. Once healthy, horses meet other horses courtesy of volunteers and staff and may experience training until ready for adoption. The adoption process involves an interview of prospective adoptive families and a visit to a proposed home.

Character references as well as farrier—a specialist in equine foot care—and veterinarian contacts determine whether a person or family can adopt. One or two follow-up visits post placement ensure the welfare of an adopted animal. When adoptive care proves inadequate, CNEER retrieves the animal. Vicky points out Amazing Grace, saved from slaughter by friends' donations; Cooper, "sweet as can be"; and Badonk, the donkey who takes the opportunity to bray as loudly as he can.

"We have a big volunteer program," Vicky explained. "Volunteers can be any age and skill level. Children

under eighteen need parent's consent, but we have jobs for everyone: mucking stalls, watering and feeding animals, grooming, and training. We offer a volunteer clinic to teach how to handle the animals. All our volunteers have one thing in common—big hearts. Vet tech students intern here from Mount Wachusett Community College in Gardner, Massachusetts. Becker College, Worcester, sent a volunteer, and two girls from Tantasqua Regional High School, Sturbridge, came as part of their community service.

"People came from Salesforce, Inc., the cloud-based software company," Vicky said, "and mended and installed that long fence out there in one day. They definitely weren't dressed for the cold or the country but they did it!" Her eyes twinkling, Vicky chuckled.

"So many people have donated time, care, money, skill," Vicky added. Vicky and Roxann listed Sara Newton, a veterinarian whom they called "an awesome human being"; Kerry Castorano, a grant writer; Susan Rayne, a lawyer and adopter of older

continued on page 50

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rehabilitated Ware and Wendell town bells

by Carla Charter



Renovated cleaned and honed Ware bell gears operate the hands that bring chime time back to town.
photo © by Dennis Pariseau

showed red and two, green. For Saint Patrick's Day, green again, and then red, white, and blue for the Fourth of July, said Moryl.

"To get to the tower, we had to climb through the bell space, and I thought, 'Wouldn't it be great to get the bells ringing again?'" Mr. Moryl continued. "We called The Verdin Company of Cincinnati, the country's largest bell and clock restoration company, which automated the clocks in early 2000. We told them what we would like to do.

"The company completed a thorough assessment after looking at the quality of the bells to see if they could be rung again. We received a report a month later that the bells were in excellent condition."

Meneely & Company Bell Foundry in West Troy, New York, made the four stationary bells. The largest weighs thirteen hundred pounds; the second, eight hundred; the third, six hundred; and the fourth bell, three hundred. "All four bells are needed to play the Westminster Chimes, which once sounded on the hour," said Mr. Moryl. Once renovated, the bells will again mark time in town as well as toll during parades and other events.

"In 1901, a donation was made by the family of John H. Storrs to add a clock and chimes to the tower completing the architectural intent as the central civic structure in Ware," according to an architectural study of historic buildings prepared for Ware by Architectural Preservation Studio DPC of New York City.

Renovations necessary to get the bells ringing again include new bell strikers automated by control panels. New head bolts forged by the Ohio company will replace worn bolts to hold the bell to the beam.

Organizers have dubbed bell renovation and fundraising efforts WARE—Making the Bells Ring. The name, Mr. Moryl said, not only signifies the town making the bells ring but the concept of the people of Ware pitching in together to make it happen.

Renovations will cost an estimated twenty-eight thousand dollars, according to Mr. Moryl. "We started fundraising at the end of January and we are now at a little over twenty-three thousand dollars. We have had donations as little as five dollars and as large as five thousand dollars. The community has been great."

Citizens in Ware and Wendell have made it possible for bells to soon ring out across the Quabbin area.

In Ware, clock tower bells at town hall will once again mark time for the citizens.

Bill Moryl, a business owner, offered to spearhead the project when he heard the building inspector and town manager talking about the clock tower at town hall and how it would be nice to get the clocks lit again for the Halloween parade. Along with resident Ron Lamb, electrician at Springfield Technical College, and Anna Marques, Ware building inspector, Mr. Moryl went up in the tower and assessed what to do to light up the clock faces. Lowe's in Ware donated materials to relight clock lights.

"A week before the parade, we had all new wiring for the fixtures and all new LED bulbs," Mr. Moryl said.

Colors that light the clock change depending on the holiday. For Halloween, they beamed orange. For the town's December event, Holiday Flair, two of the clocks

mark public time with mechanized chimes

In Wendell, bell improvement constitutes part of a larger renovation of the Wendell Meetinghouse in the center of town. The G. H. Holbrook Bell Foundry in East Medway, Massachusetts, cast the building's bell in 1846. Holbrook had apprenticed to Paul Revere, according to Dr. Paul Godfrey, photographer for and member of Friends of the Wendell Meetinghouse.

Godfrey has previous experience with Holbrook bells. "When I was young, I lived in Abington, Connecticut, and there was a Holbrook bell at the Congregational church as well. I had the privilege of ringing it. I had the same feeling with the bell that hangs here," he said. "The whole bell apparatus is held together with wooden pegs and chestnut beams. I am curious as to how they got the bell apparatus into the belfry."

Renovations completed at the meetinghouse, also built in 1846, include windows and doors along with repairs to the roof and belfry. Upcoming renovations include cleaning the bell and replacing the pull rope and attic stairway to the bell.

Work will also occur on the interior of the building, including renovating ceilings, walls, and floors; making the interior accessible to the handicapped; and adding handicapped accessible restrooms, according to Christopher Queen, vice-president for development for the Meetinghouse Friends.

"We want to make the meetinghouse into a multi-purpose building," said Queen. "During the day, it will be a gathering place for seniors who will have activities and



Ware bell hangs ready to ring out the time.
photo © by Dennis Pariseau

access to a visiting nurse. In the evening, there will be theatre, music, and social gatherings, and the building will always be available for spiritual and cultural community activities."

As for completion of the project, Queen said, "We are aiming for Old Home Day in August 2021, the 175th anniversary of the bell and the building."

Contact the Town of Ware for more information about Ware bell restoration. Visit the wendell-meetinghouse.org for more on Wendell bells.

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



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Service Above Self

energy efficiency often recommends

by Diane Kane

When clients favor energy-efficiency, builders of Quabbin region homes and other structures pay attention to solar possibilities. While the former Rural Housing Improvement, Inc., and private builders put passive solar construction to use in the mid-to-late twentieth century, today's buildings feature full-out solar arrays and many energy-efficient features.

Tapping into the sun's power began outside the region before the early twenty-first century. The mid 1950s saw construction of the world's first passive solar commercial office building, according to a US government timeline. In 2000, solar



Ken and Andrea Lively designed their energy-efficient house in Royalston to take advantage of solar potential.
photo © by Diane Kane

energy became family-friendly, with the first home installation.

By 2001, Home Depot began selling residential solar power

systems. Tax credits offered by the Energy Policy Act passed in 2005 began a solar surge, resulting in one million systems installed



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attention to solar construction options

in the United States by 2019. The USDE timeline mentions the solar inventions of the late Alvin Marks of Athol, who died in 2008.

In recent years, Ken Lively of Royalston researched solar energy with a passion that led him to plans for a state-of-the-art solar-designed home. He faced only one obstacle: his wife, Andrea. Having lived in older homes with "character," Andrea said she needed "time to come on board." She finally warmed to the idea of minimizing their carbon footprint.

Construction began in 2019, with the result of a twelve-hundred-square-foot home strategically angled to the sun's path. The house has twelve-inch walls, maximum insulation, and triple-paned windows. PV Squared Solar, a worker-owned cooperative in Greenfield, installed thirty-nine solar panels on the roof. Living in a draft-free home with low maintenance and a charming character of its own has made Andrea a firm believer in solar energy, she said.

Ken has met his goal of a Net Zero home that exceeds all standards, but he hasn't finished yet. "We plan to convert Andrea's car to electric and charge it with our extra energy credits," he said.

Higgins Energy Alternatives in Barre, a family-owned business, has provided energy choices to the Quabbin area since 1975. Ron and Sue Higgins began their business with wood and pellet stoves. Anticipating the needs of a changing environment, they looked to solar.

"It seemed like a natural direction for us," Ron said. "Our customers

have trusted us for forty-five years to give them solid advice on the best home energy alternatives." Higgins offers free site review, installation, and financing. "Solar system technology has advanced, and the cost has decreased. It's a good investment." Higgins's most popular solar system, the All Earth Tracker, follows the sun in the day and shuts down to store energy at night. "The potential for solar is limitless," Ron said.

Cynthia Henshaw, executive director of East Quabbin Land Trust in Hardwick, believes in the need for balance. "As a land trust, EQLT's role is to conserve land for the greater benefit of residents and the environment," she said. EQLT harnessed solar energy by installing solar panels on the garage at their

headquarters as well as atop their property at the Petersham Country Store.

EQLT advocates for utilizing already developed areas or brown fields for solar developments. "Placing solar panels atop large box stores, parking areas, and buildings of all sizes gathers energy where it's consumed," Henshaw said, "and leaves the woods and fields intact to sequester carbon, provide wildlife habitat, and grow food." EQLT has taken a lead role in facilitating conversations within local communities to help share information about solar energy development.

With an eye to the future, Pete's Tire Barn installed 850 solar panels

continued on page 48

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Gilbertville and South Royalston provide

by Allen Young

With strong individual personalities, the villages of South Royalston in the North Quabbin and Gilbertville in the South Quabbin each cluster around a river

Gilbertville on Route 32A in Hardwick is home to about a third of the town’s three thousand residents. The village includes the Ware-Hardwick covered bridge over Ware River and Gilbertville Historic District with houses and a church constructed of native stone.



The Ware-Hardwick covered bridge spans the Ware River.
photo © by John Burk

Theresa Mongeau, 83, has lived her whole life in Gilbertville, including years making children’s clothing at the William Carter Company and living in a house built by industrialist George H. Gilbert for workers to live rent free. The eponymous village grew up around Gilbert’s wool textile mill, founded on Ware River in the 1860s. A large painting of him hangs in Gilbertville Public Library, distinct from Hardwick’s Paige Memorial Library.

“It’s very special because I grew up here and watched it grow,” Theresa said. “It’s the industrial part of Hardwick. My parents worked in the factories.”

Theresa recommended a visit to the Whistle Stop Café. “That’s an education in itself,” she quipped. “There’s a bench out front where the old guys sit with their coffee, and you won’t believe what they talk about—they are into everything!”

People drive quite a distance to patronize Rose 32 Café with a selection of quality breads and pastries as well as popular breakfast and lunch service as well. Hardwick Farmers Cooperative Exchange, founded in 1914 by local farmers, also thrives in Gilbertville.

Once or twice a day, freight trains of the Massachusetts Central Railroad, consisting of twenty-nine miles of track between Palmer and Barre, pass through Gilbertville. Local historian Emily Bancroft presents talks on Gilbertville’s past, including its industry and the railroad.

In South Royalston, the sound of freight trains also constitutes part of daily life. Sometimes called the south village, South Royalston is located four miles southeast of Royalston center, the location of the historic town common and several grand houses. Of Royalston’s 954 registered voters, 390 reside in South Royalston. Some commentators observe social class awareness characterizing Royalston as divided between the center and south village, although townspeople stress unity nowadays.

A recent selectboard report about the town’s future stated that South Royalston’s Whitney Hall, a school and a meeting place for generations, “must be saved as it is an important symbol of our town.” The projected cost for converting Whitney Hall to office space or housing would cost millions and require involvement of citizens of the entire town.

Many knew South Royalston for years as home of Pete & Henry’s Restaurant, but the building burned down in 2018 with no plans for rebuilding. Inspired partly by that loss, villagers formed a revitalization committee. The monthly town newsletter reports enthusiasm and creative energy emanating from the revitalization committee, which put on a lively fair in October 2019 to highlight plans for improvements. Fairgoers honored village history with special reference to the sizable Finnish-American community.

Hikers on a stroll that day along Millers River encountered bricks and foundation ruins from massive mills of another era. The trail on the south side of the river passes through a narrow strip of land between the river and the Pan American Railways tracks.

New owners of South Royalston’s Royalston Country Store have embarked on their own revitalization.

In years gone by, South Royalston residents usually attended high school in Baldwinville or Gardner, traveling morning and afternoon by train. The late Royalston police chief, Paul L. LaRoche, once told me

Quabbin region village personality



The woods of South Royalston harbor the foundations and ruins of mills from another era.
photo © by David Brothers

that while enrolled in a Gardner school he sometimes got off the train in Baldwinville “to play hooky.”

Lifelong resident and former selectboard member Linda Alger celebrates “village quaintness” as mostly unchanged. “We knew every neighbor and all their kids and so did our parents,” she reminisced. “It was not unusual to say to our parents that we were going to go to a particular house and get the response ‘Be back before dark!’ We got invited to every classmate’s birthday. No one was ever excluded. If any of our parents had an appointment or a schedule conflict, other parents would step up. It truly took a village to take care of one another.”

Residents appreciate Millers River flowing from Birch Hill Dam through dense forestland, although many remember the years when the river was polluted and smelly. The village has a wastewater treatment plant and water supply system.

Since 1973, Allen Young has lived in West Royalston, which used to have a village identity many decades ago. He is the author of an autobiography, *Left, Gay & Green: a Writer’s Life*.

villages of the Quabbin region		
ATHOL Athol Center Eagleville Fryeville Hillside Intervale Lake Park Partridgeville Pinedale Pleasant Valley Proctorville Riceville South Athol South Park Sunnyside	BROOKFIELD Over the River Podunk Potopog EAST BROOKFIELD ERVING Farley Village Creamery Station Millers Falls HARDWICK Gilbertville Old Furnace Wheelwright HUBBARDSTON Catville Nicholsville Pitcherville Williamsville LEVERETT Dudleyville Hillsboro Moore’s Corner North Leverett Rattlesnake Gutter Slab City	ORANGE Blissville Fryeville Furnace Holtshire North Orange 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
BELCHERTOWN Bardwell Chestnut Hill Barrett’s Junction Blue Meadow Dwight East Hill Federal Franklin Holyoke Laurel North Station Pansy Park Slab City South Belchertown Turkey Hill Tylerville Washington West Hill	NEW BRAINTREE NEW SALEM Cooleyville Hagerville Millington Morgan’s Crossing Morse Village New Salem Center North New Salem Puppyville Quimby Soapstone NORTH BROOKFIELD Bigelow Hollow Quaboag Village Rice Corner OAKHAM Coldbrook Coldbrook Springs Parkers Mills	TEMPLETON Baldwinville East Templeton Otter River WARE Brimstone Hill Gibbs Crossing WARWICK Barber Hill Brush Valley WENDELL Locke Village Wendell Depot list compiled by Carla Charter

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.

Quabbin Reservoir filled after depopulation of four towns

by J. R. Greene



In a view to the southeast, state photographers recorded destruction of the drowned town of Enfield before engineers oversaw filling Quabbin Reservoir in from 1939 to 1946.
photo from Metropolitan District Water Supply Commission archives courtesy of J. R. Greene

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts first oversaw Quabbin Reservoir filled to its 412 billion capacity in the spring of 1946. Filling the reservoir culminated a process begun in 1926 with the passage of the first of two legislative acts that set up the commission to construct the reservoir and authorized it to carry out the project. It took more than a dozen years to depopulate the four doomed Massachusetts towns of Dana, Enfield, Greenwich, and Prescott and parts of seven others destroyed for flooding and protection of

the reservoir watershed. The state flooded Swift River Valley beginning in 1939. It took seven years to fill the reservoir in part because Metro Boston began taking water from it as early as 1941.

Over the years, some people have propagated myths about what lies under the reservoir's surface. Some insist on intact buildings in the reservoir or ghostly cemeteries. Those myths have no truth to them: before the reservoir began to fill, the state oversaw tearing down

continued on page 49

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Swift River Valley Historical Society docents honor history by telling stories

photos and text by J. A. McIntosh

Trained guides called docents take visitors through the Swift River Valley Historical Society every Sunday and Wednesday, from mid-June to mid-September to inform them about the lost towns of Greenwich, Enfield, Dana, and Prescott.

Family connections brought John Swan of New Salem to SRVHS. A docent for two years, his family history in Greenwich goes back to 1743. Mr. Swan explained that John Towne, a veteran of seventeenth-century French and Indian Wars, received a grant of land in Greenwich for his services. He arrived with his youngest son, also named John, and generations of the family farmed in the Swift River Valley until Massachusetts flooded it to form Quabbin Reservoir. John Swan remembered attending Greenwich reunions with his mother, whose birth name was Towne.

Though John Swan has a fondness for the Greenwich room at the museum, his favorite room is the map room, formerly the breakfast room of the Whitaker-Clary house, the main building at SRVHS. The room contains a pre-Quabbin relief map of the valley with its farms and businesses clearly marked. "I can tell a story about many of the farms and businesses," said Mr. Swan, "to bring alive the inhabited valley."

Teaching brought Christine Mullen to SRVHS. A teacher at Warwick Community School, she first came to the museum when her third-grade class studied Quabbin. She describes her family as "history buffs" and has embarked on her third season as a docent. Her sixteen-year-old son has also expressed interest in working at SRVHS.

Ms. Mullen is fascinated by Burt Brooks, a painter who lived in Greenwich in the early twentieth century. SRVHS owns several of his paintings, but Ms. Mullen points to a window shade as her favorite exhibit. Burt Brooks and his estranged sister inherited their mother's home together. They continued to live in the home. The window shade referenced by Ms. Mullen depicts a blueprint of the house, clearly divided into Mr. Burt's rooms and his sister's rooms.

New Salem Library brought Walter Reynolds to SRVHS. Mr. Reynolds and his wife retired and moved to New Salem to be near their son. Mrs. Reynolds works at New Salem Library and found a job posting for the



Docents Christine Mullen, Jennifer Ames, and Walter Reynolds, from left, explain SRVHS exhibits.

museum. Mr. Reynolds responded to the posting and serves in his second year as docent. He does tours of Peirce Memorial Carriage Shed, a structure behind the Whitaker-Clary house that houses a model one-room schoolhouse, farming and outdoor equipment, and the Dana fire truck.

Her son brought Jennifer Ames to the SRVHS. Her twelve-year-old son, Marshall, introduced her to the Quabbin and its history. Marshall learned about Quabbin and the four submerged towns in school about three years ago and has been involved with SRVHS since then. Most days, he accompanies his mother to the museum and talks to visitors about what he has learned. He most likes the standing Victrola phonograph that plays records. Ms. Ames likes to spend time in the reconstructed one-room schoolhouse. She likes the slates, school bell, books, and desks that tell the story of learning a century ago.

J. A. McIntosh lives in Athol and writes books about the fictional town of Meredith, Massachusetts. Her latest novel, *Judge Hartwell*, was released in March 2020. She is on the board of directors of Swift River Valley Historical Society.

Tickets available online and at the gate

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Swift River Valley's Rabbit Run railroad inspires

text and photos by John Burk



Ken Levine found a pre-made electric train that resembles those that ran on Rabbit Run.

Athol and Enfield Railroad, later Boston and Albany Railroad and Boston and Maine Athol Branch, contributed significantly to Swift River Valley history during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Riders and others frequently called the fifty-mile line, created in 1871, Rabbit, Rabbit Run or Bunny Hop because of its frequent stops or hops along the

route. The railroad conveyed goods from factories and mills to markets in Springfield, Athol, and beyond. Farmers exported dairy products, produce, and ice harvested from local ponds. Tourists rode the train to hotels and summer camps, escaping Boston, Worcester, and other congested cities, and students from valley towns used the railroad daily to travel to Athol High School. The

railroad discontinued in the 1930s during Quabbin Reservoir's creation.

Artist Ken Levine of Petersham has re-created the history of the Rabbit and its communities in an intricately crafted exhibit made for permanent display in Swift River Valley Historical Society's Carriage Shed.

The ambitious project combines Levine's expertise and interests, including Swift River Valley history, railroads, and model making. A graduate of the Rhode Island School of Design with a degree in graphic design and photography, he taught art at colleges and schools and exhibits his work at many venues. Levine and his wife, Janet Palin, also an accomplished artist, operate

model-maker Ken Levine's drowned towns replica

Frames/Ink, which has offered services such as picture framing, calligraphy, and shadowboxes for more than twenty years.

Volunteer work at Harvard Forest's Fisher Museum, home to a famous series of forestry dioramas, helped inspire Levine's longtime interest in models. He belongs to Amherst Railway Society, a nonprofit organization of railroad enthusiasts. ARS headquarters in Palmer originally housed a church in the town of Enfield, flooded with three other towns to create the reservoir.

After proposing the exhibit to SRVHS, Levine began creating the model in 2018, and plans completion in the autumn. He assembles most elements, including buildings and sections of landscape,



The replica of drowned towns includes a model of an Enfield mill.

at his studio in Petersham. Grants from Massachusetts Local Cultural Councils of Athol, Hardwick-New Braintree, New Salem, Orange,

Pelham, Petersham, and Royalston provided financial support for the project.

Twenty-four feet long and four feet wide, the model features a functioning HO scale railroad with digital controls, sound effects, and LED lights. Made by the Bachman and Spectrum model companies, replica locomotives and rolling stock, represent the type used by the Rabbit during the late steam-engine era. The installation depicts railroad stations, crossings, and sidings along the line from West Ware to South Athol. Intertwined with the railroad, numerous historical landmarks of the lost towns include factories of Enfield, North Dana, and Greenwich; the Soapstone Hill

continued on page 56



SEASONAL IMAGES

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silvopasture combines livestock farming

with tree cultivation to mutual benefit

by Diane Nassif



Goat bucks pasture free among trees.
photo by Mary-Anne Reynolds

Farms and forests proliferate in the Quabbin region. Some farmers make good use of forests by implementing silvopasture, a way of farming practiced in many cultures and historical periods to integrate livestock farming with tree cultivation. With silvopasture, farmers manage grazing of animals such as cattle, goats, sheep, or chickens within areas of combined pasture and forest. The method increases the health of soil, animals, and people who consume resulting products, according to practitioners.

Combining farm and forest occurs along two separate paths. In one, taking care to prevent animals from damaging young trees, farmers plant the trees in existing pasture and may erect supports or cages to protect them. In the other, under supervision of a forester, farmers may open existing forest areas adjacent to pastures. Farmers create paths through the forest to provide areas for management fences and for animals to graze.

At Walker Farm in New Braintree, Joan and Randy Walker practice silvopasture on land farmed since the 1600s and in Randy’s family since the 1950s. Joan came to farming beef cattle through an interest in her health and the quality of the food she ate. After deciding she wanted to raise beef cattle, she spent four years studying to determine the breed of cow she

preferred for its flavorful meat and ease of management. She settled on Red Devon cattle, and in 2012, the Walkers bought a small herd that has grown to sixty.

Joan sees the farm as an organism. The key to silvopasture is management, she said, accomplished through fencing and moving the herd every day or two. Integrating cattle into the forest provides many advantages. The practice gives the animals shade in summer and a place to shelter in stormy weather. Cattle eat forest forage including oak leaves, poison ivy, apples, and apple leaves. What cattle eat overall contributes to the complexity of meat flavor. Cattle droppings including seeds of grass and apples enhance the forest and act as fertilizer. More bugs turn up and attract more birds. Invasive plants don’t spread if the cows keep them down.

Joan also practices ethical raising and slaughter of her cattle, thus deviating from traditional ways of raising some beef cattle. With an eye toward impregnation of selected heifers, she fosters them until three years old, full-grown, and healthy. Cows give birth at the end of the summer, and all calves feed on milk and pasture. Only in winter, they feed on hay mown at Walker Farm.

The Walkers harvest meat from three-or four-year-old cattle under the assumption that at that age they will be packing on fat and starting to retain flavors from vegetation they eat. Through annual inspection, the Walker Farm qualifies for Animal Welfare Approval, acknowledged by

continued on page 46



A free-ranging cow experiences silvopasture.
photo by John Burk

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getting an early summer eyeful near a beaver pond:

by Jim Morelly

One early summer day began like most weekend mornings. My feet hit the floor before dawn. I started the coffee, grabbed a snack, and headed out to Quabbin for a morning hike. I had no reason to think that the day would offer one of my top memorable wildlife experiences during nearly a decade of hiking.

As I parked my vehicle, it was barely light. Anxious to get started, I quickly set my GPS, shouldered my pack, and got on my way before the sun's rays could brighten the treetops. Reaching the first crown in the old road, I stopped and carefully scanned terrain reaching to the edge of a distant swamp. I had repeated that routine countless times until that day without seeing any notable wildlife. I know wildlife moves in dawn's crepuscular hour.

About a hundred yards ahead of me, a beaver pond shoreline came in view, and something looked out of place. Usually such things turn out nothing more than a stump, fallen branch, or a small boulder. That day, I used the camera's viewfinder as a monocular to get a better



There on the edge of the swamp sat a mature bobcat.
photo © by Jim Morelly

look—and did I get an eyeful! There on the edge of the swamp sat a mature bobcat.

I watched the bobcat as it sat motionless staring into the swamp. It didn't pick up on my presence. I could feel my adrenalin building with excitement. I recall telling myself, "Stay calm. Don't move. Let's see how this plays out."

Suddenly, the morning silence shattered!

A nesting songbird spotted the bobcat and perceived it as a threat, even though the feline sat a good distance from the bird's nesting bush.

The bird undertook deliberate aerial stunts as it targeted the cat's head. I'd never witnessed such a display of aggressiveness and agility by a small bird. The bird tried to divert the bobcat from locating its nest.

The ploy worked. The bird's taunting behavior distracted the cat, which sprang straight up in the air, turned slightly, and landed facing in the opposite direction. It stood motionless and stared intently towards the morning sky, evidently in anticipation of another bird kamikaze mission.

One swipe of that cat's paw could end that harassment

The cat's direction changed again, and so did the assault from above.



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a mature bobcat sitting motionless at the edge

After the teasing ordeal, the bobcat stood for a few moments, pondered as if collecting itself, then leisurely walked away. It appeared that the wildlife encounter had nearly ended.

Something I did caught the bobcat's attention and gave away my location. The bobcat's head turned sharply as it gazed back toward me and seemed to try to identify what had broken morning silence for a second time. Staring in my direction, the animal stood motionless as it attempted to categorize me. Boldly, the cat walked out to the center of the road, sat down, and continued staring in my direction.

Apparently uncertain, the bobcat contemplated the situation for a moment or two, stood up, and walked toward me. Sensing something out of place, the cat gave me one good stare, turned, and slowly walked away, stopping just short of the hardwood ridge.

I remained perfectly still. The cat turned again and stared in my direction. I couldn't believe it. For the second time, the cat walked ever so slowly toward me.

Taking a dozen or so steps, the bobcat again sat down and stared. I am convinced the creature could hear my heart beating from excitement. My patience and stillness kept the cat's curiosity for a few more minutes. Then the bobcat stood abruptly and walked toward me. A few more steps, and the bobcat had enough. It turned, then faded finally into the distant woods.

Such wildlife experiences occur infrequently. Staying present and mindful of wind direction while walking slowly will often offer the best wildlife opportunities hiking the Quabbin Woods.

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



The bobcat had enough. It turned, then faded into the woods.
photo © by Jim Morelly

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—Emma Lazarus



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flowers attract

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A bumblebee finds pollen on a giant sunflower.

With all that swirls in the world today, we can find wisdom in taking a break to focus on the nearby miracles of the natural world. Wherever you are, flowers provide a bit of beauty and dynamic interaction. Take a moment when you see the bright flowers of the season, whether a common dandelion at the side of your lawn, a flower in your garden, or a lady slipper in the woods.

When looking at flowers, we can make discoveries.



Milkweed hosts
hairstreaks.

If you take the time, you will find a flower that attracts an insect partner taking nourishment. Milkweed serves as one of the best flowers to spend time with if you want to see pollinators at work. One milkweed bloom can host

many pollinators at the same time. The flower offers a meal of pollen or nectar, and the insect provides pollination services. Pollen attaches to the insect, and when the insect gets another meal from a different flower of the same type, pollination happens to results in seed formation.

Chance favors survival.

The lady slipper needs a native bumblebee species to pollinate it. Bumblebees have enough strength to push through flower parts and get



A white moth visits
a lady slipper.

partner pollinator insects

Sue Cloutier

to the nectar within. Bumblebees are quick, and even spending time in a patch, you will be lucky if you see pollination occur. Also attracted to the lady slipper, the white slant-line hasn't given observers an answer as to why. We know it doesn't feed there.

Some insects cheat and cut a hole through the base of a bloom to get nectar the easy way, and thus they do not act as pollinators. A bumblebee thief, for example, cut a hole in the bloom of Dutchman's breeches to get to nectar without pollinating.

Butterflies and bees show up as the most obvious pollinators you will see visiting flowers. West Virginia whites, a species of butterfly, visit early spring blooms



A West Virginia white, left, visits a
Quaker Lady bluet, while a banded
hairstreak feeds on nectar of
New Jersey tea.



In June, the banded hairstreak feeds on the nectar of New Jersey tea. Summer blooms of red clover attract butterflies. A hoary elfin with white on its hind wing displays the hoar frosting that gives it its common name. A cluster of black-eyed Susan blooms hosts a little pearl crescent. The tagged monarch, stopping on its way to Mexico, gets nourishment on goldenrod.



A hoary skipper feeds on red clover, from left, with a pearl
crescent on a black-eyed Susan, and a monarch on goldenrod.



While feeding on nectar, each of the butterflies inadvertently picks up pollen and aids in the flower's pollination.

Bees act as much more intentional pollinators. They use pollen to feed their young while collecting pollen and

feeding on nectar. Bees importantly pollinate in farms, fields, orchards, and gardens. You can see the full yellow

pollen baskets on the hind legs of a bumblebee and scattering of pollen on its legs and fur that it picked up from



A bumblebee feeds on azalea, left, and a
small bee on wild carrot.



The wild carrot hosts a much smaller native bee. It, too, has full pollen baskets. Perhaps you can see scattered pollen grains on a bee's thorax.

Pollinators include many types of insects, not just bees, butterflies, and moths. Look carefully, and you will see them, too.

As it drank nectar, the orange and black flower beetle picked up pollen all over its legs and antennae. The evening primrose moth makes a beauty to look for

continued on page 47

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Pelham Community Garden and Athol Environmental

by Carla Charter

Quabbin area gardeners do their part to give back to nature by providing essential plants that wildlife needs to thrive. Pollinators such as bees, wasps, other insects, hummingbirds, butterflies, and even bats help essential plants to prosper, and some gardeners favor plants that attract pollinators.

In 2017, Sue Tippet and Heidi Dollard created a pollinator garden with at least fifty different species that continue to thrive at the Pelham Community Garden in the Buffam Falls Conservation Area off of Meetinghouse Road.

“The garden is specifically designed to attract, support, and feed pollinators including bees, moths, wasps, flies, beetles, and ladybugs,” said Tippet. “The variety of plants, including milkweed, bee balm, and Joe Pye weed, produce nectar and pollen needed by pollinators for food, energy, and their reproductive cycle. Some pollinators use several different plants, while some use a more limited number.”

The garden also has host plants to provide food for caterpillars. “We plant milkweed to support caterpillars that will become monarch butterflies,” she said.

Gardeners choose pollinator plants by their shape, variety, color, and bloom time. “We plant pollinators to grow in succession to offer pollinators support from spring through fall,” explained Tippet.

Pollinator gardens provide several benefits, she continued. A number of pollinators, including wasps, flies, beetles, and ladybugs also serve as predators, which helps the community garden. “They keep the garden pest-free,” she said.

Another necessity of such gardens, according to Tippet, involves the decline of pollinators. The decline of pollinators, Tippet said, owes to lack of habitat, including a lack of continuous connected habitat. “Most lawns are food deserts for pollinators,” she said.

Another contributor to the pollinator decline, Tippet continued, is climate change. “Climate change has a huge negative impact on pollinators. Habitat loss and change due to severe weather events pose a significant problem and increase stress on vulnerable plant populations, making survival more difficult,” she said.

Along with Pelham’s pollinator garden, home gardeners can help plant as many native pollinators as

possible, she continued. “When we plant non-native plants, they may look beautiful but they don’t feed native pollinators,” she observed. Residents can stop using pesticides as well because pesticides contribute to pollinator decline.

During fall clean-up, she added, gardeners can leave dead plants in their garden so that pollinators have a place to overwinter. “When clearing out the garden, gardeners can stack plants in a corner of the garden plot,” Tippet said.

The community garden sponsors programs at Pelham Library on topics such as seed starting and vegetable growing along with pollinator workshops.

“The community and pollinator garden owes thanks to the Pelham highway crew and fire department who keep our water barrels full and help with mowing as part of our whole community effort,” Tippet continued.

In Athol, a collaboration of the North Quabbin Garden Club and Athol Bird and Nature Club led to a series of gardens at Miller’s River Environmental Center, Main Street, Athol. Designed to encourage wildlife, the gardens began as an all-club project, according to Christine Long, garden club past-president and current board member. “A habitat garden reflects natural areas of a region and aims for native species—those growing here before European colonization—that appeal, in this case, to birds, butterflies, and pollinators. The garden showcases the beauty and utility of such plants and offers a human-nature link within Athol’s parks and greenway network,” said Long.

Dave Small, president of the Athol Bird and Nature Club, said the Athol Parks and Greenway Network comprises a downtown network of parks and open spaces. A map of the green spaces in the network can be found at athol-ma.gov/parks-trails/pages/athol-parks-and-greenway-network.

Pollinators use native plants more effectively than nonnative plants,” said Heidi Strickland, a member of the Athol Bird and Nature Club. Native plants evolved with native wildlife, she said, and plants provide the foundation of the environment. Future generations of many plants require pollinators, Long added, and because of habitat loss and herbicide use, pollinators are under threat.”

Center encourage pollinators

Strickland said all plants in the environmental center garden grow native to Massachusetts and New England with “a lot of effort put into that.”

Four sections house the garden surrounding the environmental center. Near the front entrance, gardeners have planted shade-tolerant perennials including purple-flowering raspberry, foamflower, and bluestem lobelia plus groundcovers like partridgeberry and barren strawberry. The front garden hosts flowering dogwood, mountain laurel, red chokeberry, and sun-loving native perennials like New England aster and smooth aster. Along the stone wall, a woodland garden features mountain laurel, ferns, spring wildflowers, great rosebay rhododendron, and wildflowers like bloodroot, May apple, and Jack-in-the-pulpit.

In what gardeners call the Back West Garden, small trees including shad and witch hazel grow alongside shrubs like hazelnut and bayberry, gray dogwood, and highbush cranberry as well as moss phlox, Canada anemone, wild bergamot, common yarrow, and smooth aster.

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

Quabbin Vista a visual haiku by Ami Fagin



Amy/Ami Fagin specializes in traditional manuscript illumination at her 20th Century Illuminations print studio in New Salem. She is author of *Beyond Genocide*. Find more of Ami’s visual haiku at visualhaiku.graphics.



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Quabbin region historical societies

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Ensemble-Russell Watts on
vocals

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Annual Meeting

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Class fit for ages 9-99
The Heritage Center
20 Common Street, Barre

August 9, 2020, 1 pm
Wild Flora and Fauna Walk
Led by Barre resident and
conservationist Judy Schmitz

October-date to be announced
Four Centuries and Two Peoples:
The Landing of the Pilgrims at
Plymouth and
Those Who Met Them



**BELCHERTOWN HISTORICAL
ASSOCIATION**
THE STONE HOUSE MUSEUM
20 Maple Street, Belchertown
stonehousemuseum.org



**ERVING
HISTORICAL COMMISSION**
Pearl B. Care Building, Erving
erving-ma.gov



**HARDWICK
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**
40 Common Street, Hardwick,
hardwickhistoricalsociety.org
The Hardwick Historical Society
is delaying its seasonal programs
and "Open Museum" hours.
We will post these events
on our Facebook page:
Hardwick Historical Society
Museum or on our website at
hardwickhistoricalsociety.org
You can also call Anne at
(413) 477-8756.



**HUBBARDSTON
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**
4 Burnshirt Road, Hubbardston
hubbardstonhistorical.org

June 6, 2020, 10 am-1 pm
Williamsville Chapel
Pie Social and Plant Sale
Buy a homemade pie, whole
or by the slice. A multitude of
different plants will be on sale.

June 27, 2020, 10 am
Hubbardston Fair at
Curtis Recreation Field
Fiber Arts Demonstration
See how Hubbardston used fiber
in the past and how we use it
today. Fiber arts demonstration
by Plain View Farm. Sponsored in
part by a grant from the
Massachusetts Cultural Council.

September 19, 2020, 9 am-3 pm
Curtis Recreation Field
Hubbardston Field Day
Blacksmith Demonstration
Come say hello to Eli the
blacksmith and see what he
is making! Learn what local
blacksmiths did in the early days
of Hubbardston. Sponsored in
part by a grant from the
Massachusetts Cultural Council.

offer varied summertime programs

Check historical societies' contact info to confirm performance dates and times.

Hubbardston (continued)
September 26, 2020, 6:30 pm
at Williamsville Chapel
Equinox Concert featuring
Band of Voices
Doors open at 6:15.
Refreshments to follow.



**LEVERETT
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**
Leverett
leveretthistorical.org



**NARRAGANSETT
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**
1 Boynton Road, Templeton
narragansetthistoricalsociety.org

April 7, 2020, 6-8 pm
We begin our weekly Tuesday
museum hours

May 9, 2020, 1-5 pm
We begin our weekly Saturday
museum hours

June 27, 2020, 2-4:30 pm
Tea in the Garden
Visit with suffragist "Lucy Stone."
Victorian period dress encouraged,
favoring suffragist all-white
movement. Co-sponsored by
Templeton Cultural Council.

Narragansett, Templeton (continued)
some Saturdays in July, 2-4 pm
tea party in the back garden
Narragansett Historical Society.
Tea, light refreshments and history.

August 22 & 23, 2020, all day
Craft fair days on the Common,
share many activities with the
Historical Society. Visit the
infamous "What is It?" table of
oddities. Bring yours to stump
our visitors.

September 20, 2020
Motorpalooza 2020!
Classic cars, engines, machines,
and all things motors on display.
Free to display and view.
BBQ lunch and snacks for sale.
Live music sponsored by
Templeton Cultural Council.
Follow signs for parking.



**NEW BRAINTREE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**
10 Utley Road, New Braintree
newbraintreehistoricalsociety.org



**NORTH BROOKFIELD
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**
197 Main Street
North Brookfield
northbrookfieldhistoricalsociety.
wordpress.com



**OAKHAM
HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION**
1221 Old Turnpike Road, Oakham
oakhamhistory.com

August 29, 2020, 8 am-3 pm
Rain or Shine
Town-Wide Yard Sale
Maps available at
Oakham Town Hall
2 Coldbrook Road, Oakham

September 20, 2020, 1-5 pm
Rain or Shine
Vintage House Tours
Sign in and maps at
Oakham Town Hall
\$20 per person pre-registration by
September 15
\$25 per person day of tour



ORANGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
31 North Main Street, Orange
orangehistoricalsocietyma.org

Breakfast on the Porch 8-10 am
June 13, July 11
August 8, September 12
Musical program on the porch
on one Sunday afternoon to be
announced.

Open Sunday and Wednesday
from 2-4 pm
June through September



PELHAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY
376 Amherst Road, Pelham
pelhamhistory.org



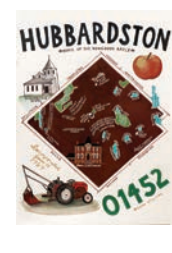
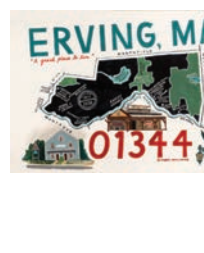
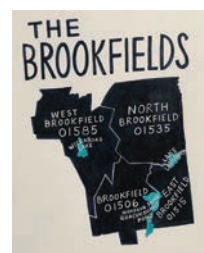
**PETERSHAM
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**
10 North Main Street, Petersham
petershamcommon.com



**PHILLIPSTON
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**
State Road, Phillipston
historicalsocietyofphillipston.org



QUABOG HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Central and Main Streets
West Brookfield
quaboghistoricalociety.net





**ROYALSTON
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**
2 Athol Road, Royalston
royalstonhistorical.org



**RUTLAND
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**
232 Main Street, Rutland
rutlandmahistoricalociety.org



**SHUTESBURY
HISTORICAL COMMISSION**
Shutesbury,
historical@shutesbury.org



The summer kitchen in the Whitaker-Clary House of Swift River Valley Historical Society houses a wood cookstove, a sink that drained through a hole in the floor to the ground below, a handmade table, and kitchen implements of a bygone era.



**SWIFT RIVER VALLEY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**
40 Elm Street, New Salem,
swiftrivermuseum.org

Swift River Valley Historical Society (continued)
June 24-September 20, 2020, 1-4 pm
Museum open Sundays and Wednesdays

May 17, 2020
Spring Hike. Meet at Gate 46 through Hardwick to Greenwich Plains.
Meet at Hardwick Common for car pooling and 11 am departure.

May 24, 2020
Memorial Day Observance at Quabbin Park Cemetery.
Refreshments at 10 am. March and ceremonies at 11 am.
Program at 2 pm TBA



Sterling Lamet, Gary Bernhard, Robert Raymond, and the late David Wheeler, from left, celebrate Shutesbury.
photo © by Karen Traub

CELEBRATE SHUTESBURY September 19
The Celebrate Shutesbury event scheduled September 19, 2020 celebrates the town, strengthens community, and provides a venue for townspeople to gather, according to organizers. Participants include town boards, performance artists, vendors, business owners, and town groups including the Shutesbury Elementary School PTO, Shutesbury Recreation Committee, M. N. Spear Memorial Library, Shutesbury fire and police departments, Shutesbury Athletic Club, and Shutesbury Community Church. Activities include pumpkin- and face-painting, doughnut-eating, tag sale, book sale, church tea and bake sale, emergency vehicle display, food, bounce house, and obstacle course. The Shutesbury Cultural Council supports Celebrate Shutesbury.
Jessica Carlson-Belanger at carlsonbelanger@gmail.com has further information.



WARE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Route 9, Ware,
warehistoricalsociety.wikifoundry.com

Swift River Valley Historical Society (continued)
June 21, 2020, 11 am CANCELED
Prescott Bus Pilgrimage-focusing on the northern half of peninsula,
Prescott Gate 21.
Meet at Swift River Valley Historical Society.
Fee of \$35.00 per reservation.

July 18, 2020, 9 am-4 pm
Old Home Day on New Salem Common
July 19, 2020
Gate 40 opens at 10 am, event concludes at 3 pm
Dana Reunion

July 26, 2020, 3:30 pm
Dana Vespers at Prescott Church on grounds of Society
Cake and lemonade served after the concert.

August 9, 2020, 2 pm
Tom Ricardi, Birds of Prey
Swift River Valley Historical Society grounds

August 23, 2020, 3:30 pm
Ecology, conservation and management of the bog turtle in
Massachusetts with Michal Jones, State Herpetologist. On the
grounds of Swift River Valley Historical Society.

September 12, 2020, 2 pm
Annual Meeting
September 20, 2020, 11 am
Fall hike. Gate 37 to North Dana. Limited parking so meet at
Petersham Common for car pooling.

October 4, 2020, 11 am
Prescott/Enfield Pilgrimage Bus Trip. Gate 17 down Sherer Road to
opposite Enfield Lookout.
Meet at Society. Fee of \$35.00 per reservation.

October 18, 2020, 11 am
Fall hike-Shutesbury/Pelham area. Meet at Gate 15.



WARWICK HISTORICAL SOCIETY
6 Athol Road, Warwick,
whs.steamkite.com



**WENDELL
HISTORICAL SOCIETY/LIBRARY**
7 Wendell Depot Road, Wendell



Pelham Historical Society inspired pen-and-ink artist
Jennifer Niles of Paxton.

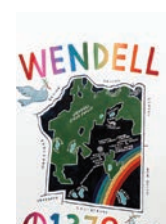
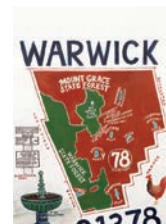
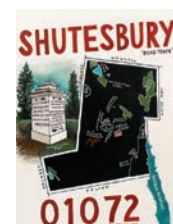
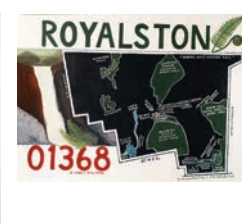
Farmers Markets
Barre Farmers Market, Common Street, Barre • 9 am-12 pm Saturdays
Hardwick Farmers Market, On the Common • 11 am-2pm Sundays beginning June 21
Orange Farmers Market • 3-6 pm Thursdays beginning June 4
Armory Parking Lot, 135 East Main Street, Orange
Petersham Friday Market, On the Common, Petersham • Fridays beginning May 29
Food Coops
Leverett Village Co-op, 180 Rattlesnake Gutter Road, Leverett
8 am-6pm daily • 8 am-7pm Friday
Quabbin Harvest, 12 North Main Street, Orange
10 am-7 pm Monday-Friday • 9am-5 pm Saturday
Food Pantries • check sites and hours
Amherst Survival Center • Barre Food Pantry • Good Neighbors Food, Wendell
Hardwick Food Pantry • Helping Hands Cupboard, Belchertown
Jubilee Cupboard, Ware • North Leverett Baptist Church Food Pantry
Orange Food Pantry • Our Lady Immaculate Church Food Pantry Athol
Rutland Food Pantry • Salvation Army Athol
St. Mary's Church Food Pantry Orange • Templeton Food Pantry

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Nimrod shot a wolf, but the town nevertheless euthanized cattle

by Charlotte Westhead

An unsigned scrap of paper in the Barre Historical Society thought to be written by Isabel Caldwell Jennison. The note reads, “Our Nimrod shot a wolf this morning.”

About a century ago, a grandfather who lived in Barre around 1771 told the following story to his grandson.

Nimrod saw a wolf approach the pasture. The animal behaved in a strange way. It leaped over the fence into the pasture where cattle grazed.

Nimrod got a gun and waited for the wolf to leave. When the wolf jumped over the fence, however, Nimrod shot it and shot it again, and it was dead.

Nimrod qualified to collect the large bounty offered for killing a wolf. Because of the wolf’s erratic behavior, someone on the farm sent part of the carcass for a rabies evaluation. The answer came back positive.

The wolf had killed cattle and maimed several others, with all considered contaminated. Jennison had to

euthanize every one—his entire herd of forty cattle—and thus suffered a terrible financial loss.

Jennison had a huge trench dug on the property, according to the story, with dead and maimed cattle disposed of first and then the remainder of the herd killed and buried.

Henrietta Brigham wrote about a wolf and cattle in a 1907 article published in the *Barre Gazette*. The article identifies a Negro servant about to leave the house when he saw a fierce wolf spring into the yard. When the wolf jumped from the pen, the servant fired and wounded the wolf, according to the article. The servant fired again when the wolf was forty yards away, and the wolf dropped dead. Animals bitten by the wolf became mad, wild, and furious, so authorities ordered them killed.

Old documents leave many mysteries. Barre records have other mentions of a Nimrod—but the same person?

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. She lives in Amherst.

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 despite temptation to do so.

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families pile into cars to head to the region’s dairy bars

text and photos by Diane Kane

at press time, we could not confirm open hours for individual dairy bars

Dairy Bar is a term used in the Northeast for small roadside restaurants that serve ice cream and other refreshments. They constitute part of our New England heritage.

For generations, families have piled into the car and headed out on the country roads throughout the Quabbin area in search of ice cream. Some of your first memories may include getting a cone filled with a sweet, creamy delight. Each dairy bar has unique design and menu—and so many choices: hard or soft, favorite flavors, and kinds of cones; shakes, sundaes, banana splits, and floats to tickle your fancy. Some dairy bars operate seasonally while others serve ice cream year-round for hardy New Englanders who can’t get enough cold. Regardless, each has the ability to bring a smile to your face.

Anne’s on East Main Street in Orange, owned by Kim and Vern Bass for the past ten years, opens for the season in May. “Our biggest selling ice cream flavors are cookie dough and oreo—and lots of soft serve,” they said.

Customers can enjoy footlong hot dogs, fresh chicken tenders or chicken nuggets, and burgers. Fresh seafood arrives twice a week. Popular dinners include whole clams or clam strips served with French fries and coleslaw.

“In May, we host Military Expo at Orange Airport,” the Basses said. “Some of the reenactors stop by the stand. It’s a fun time to see old vehicles and talk to people about history.” Anne’s has a little bit of everything to offer.



A family-friendly drive-in since 1956, Janine’s Frostee on East Street in Ware opens annually in mid March. The menu includes burgers, hot dogs, homemade soups, salads, grinders, wraps, fries, and onion rings. It boasts what it claims as the best lobster roll around and serves kids’ meals. Janine’s offers some fifty flavors of hard-and soft-serve ice

cream, frozen yogurt, sherbet, sorbet, and Flavorburst. Customers can sit at any of dozens of tables both

continued on page 43

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from the pens of *Uniquely* compiled by Carol Mays,

When sludging through hardship and stress, we need to escape at times to more fanciful, beautiful memories or images. The following three poems can assist us in noticing and remembering life at its best.

Two Miles from Eliches Park Deborah Rolski

I fall asleep
screeching wheels
screaming teenagers
careening carriages
on a rickety track

I am lulled by metal wheels
manual brakes
free falls
a lucid dream—
I ride unseen.

generational exhale of joy
sweet whipped cream,
a pillow of non-consequence

The coaster shakes,
I slip through the veil of childhood
fearless
experiencing gravity in concept
only—

Deborah Rolski lives in New Salem with her husband and son and their pets. She moved from Northampton fifteen years ago to escape the crowds and commune with owls. She teaches special education English in Barre.

Find *Uniquely Quabbin* online at
uniquelyquabbin.com

—Carol Mays, Poetry Editor

Night Peepers Sharon Ann Harmon

Tiny primordial
angel creatures
trumpeting their
sweet chimes into
the midnight air
singing salvation

Sharon A. Harmon is a poet and freelance writer. She lives deep in the woods of Royalston. She has resided in the Quabbin area since 1973. Her work has appeared in *Green Living* and *Silkworm 12*. She has two chapbooks of poetry, *Swimming with Cats* (2008) and *Wishbone in A Lightning Jar* (2017), Flutter Press.

Quabbin poets poetry editor

The Lure Michael Young

Star-burst sun thru
pine tree canopy,
slanted sideways beams
near dawn or dusk
illuminating leaf-green filagree
above
friendly waving ferns
below.
the soothing sound of
tea-dark water,
flowing thru pools,
'round rocky rapids.

A heron poised stock-still
on a rock,
likes to fish alone.
A duck darts downriver,
not deigning to share the scene.

Visions of
leaping trout,
launching over my line
and the big one
I caught once
evaporate into
the foggy mist,
rising from the Millers River.
It's time to go home.
I'll be back.

The Lure won a 2013 prize in the River Verses Poetry Contest of Millers River Watershed Council. It appears in Quabbin Quills' *Mountains and Meditation*. Michael has lived in Royalston for ten years.

a uniquely Quabbin door
at Wendell Country Store
photo by Mary Lou Conca



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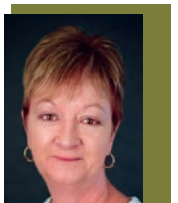
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muralists improve the scene

text and photos by Sharon Harmon

When Marie suggested a mural on a downtown vacant building on Ware's Main Street, the community supported her concept.

To produce the mural, Marie dropped off business cards that directed people to color something and drop it off at Workshop 13. Eventually, the gallery received hundreds of pieces of art. Examples of submissions include images of a feather or a bird with a comment about what lifts the creator.

Lowe's, Hanna Devine's Restaurant, and BT Copies and Prints donated materials. Kindergarteners drew feathers and birds with markers and crayons. Producing the eventual mural involved scanning children's drawings, printing and cutting them, adhering them to wings painted on the building, and covering them with layers of a water-based sealer.

Artist Gary Lipincott donated time to outline the wings for the project in the Grand Hall at Workshop 13.

Unveiled in April 2019, the mural struck many viewers as a kind of Where's Waldo? image with unending details to see.

The brainstorm of artist Sonja Vaccari of Royalston, a mural adorns the long-abandoned cement foundation opposite Athol's Chestnut Hill Avenue at Old Main Street. Sonja transformed old remnants of Stan's Auto Body into a place of art.



Ware's downtown mural features designs from children contacted by Workshop 13.

Marie Lauderale, executive director of Workshop 13 artspace and gallery at 13 Church Street, Ware, got the idea to sponsor a mural from Kelsey Montague, a muralist from New York. Kelsey had painted a mural Whatliftsyou noticed by Taylor Swift who posted a picture of it. Swift's photo went viral.

at Ware and Athol sites

"Every time I came down the hill into town the walls were speaking to me," Sonja said, her eyes shining.

Sonja persuaded Stan Paluilis, owner of the lot, and his daughter Kim Filieo to accept her vision for their property.

People stopped at the nearby traffic light can pass the time viewing the mural installation.

"One day, two men—Jim Chastney and his cousin Walter—came and cleaned the area" Sonja said. She began painting in October, 2019, with five hundred dollars of her own money. Sonja used exterior house paints.

Sonja painted rain or shine. Donations gave her a surplus. Sonja gave half to Kim, who donated it to the Edward H. Phillips Post 102 American Legion in Athol.

"People who drove or walked by, talked to me, checked out the art, and made donations," Sonja said.

The mural depicts a range of local scenes from bears at Athol's Bears Den in Athol to



The centerpiece of Sonja Vaccari's mural at the former Stan's Body Shop in Athol showcases the native American name of the town, Pequoiag. Sonja donated the mural, which includes many scenes.

wildflowers and butterflies. A romantic couple dances to "In A Gadda da Vita" along with a painting captioned We are all Immigrants.

"I put the names of many of the people involved, including David Brothers, Angel and his son Jesse, and nice guys from Hamshaw.

"I want more people to be open to art."

Sonja paints custom murals on commission with traditional, classical, historical, primitive, and scenic motifs. Her website: www.sonjavaccarimuralist.com.

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

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Donna Holden, yoga instructor, raises a mug to beer yoga participants at Hardwick's Lost Towns Brewing.
photo © by Halley Stillman

trendy beer yoga and

by Laurie Smith

A trendy way to keep fit and enjoy breweries in the Quabbin region area, beer yoga consists of a hybrid with participants locally brewed beer before and/or after a workout. Some aficionados even combine the two at the same time as they drink while stretching.

What better way to get healthy and stay in shape than to combine exercise with a visit to a local brewery or winery in order to support local business and socialize with friends.

Donna Holden, a yoga instructor, teaches a monthly beer yoga class at Lost Towns Brewing in Hardwick. Lost Towns has sponsored the popular classes since the spring of 2019 and they sold out each month. She said that adding the beer to the yoga class brings in new people who may not have tried yoga previously. It attracts a lot of couples, and often women use the class to entice their husbands to experience a workout.

Donna described the atmosphere as laid back and less intimidating for some, for all ability levels, and

wine yoga provide hybrid fitness options

focuses on fitness and fun. Add socializing and having a beer, one before the class and another afterwards, both included in class cost.

Classes occur during off hours of the brewery on Sunday mornings before opening to the public. Lost Towns hosts beer yoga classes themed by season with, for example, a Santa class in December and a Valentine class in February. I visited on the day of a St Patrick's day class, and all participants dressed in festive green. Irish music played, with an Irish food pop-up after class. Donna said that many craft breweries offer beer yoga.

Monthly beer yoga at Lost Towns costs twenty dollars per person per class with recommended advance tickets available through the Facebook page and website.

At Hardwick Town House on Sunday and Monday evenings, Donna teaches Hatha yoga classes focusing on breathing and mindfulness.

Email Donna at Htownliving99@outlook.com.

Justine Rovezzi teaches a wine yoga class called "Yoga at the Winery" at Hardwick Winery. The hourlong class

session caters to all levels with a glass of wine included in the twenty-dollar price.

Justine formerly taught beer yoga in Worcester, but when she and her husband bought a home in Hardwick, she wanted to work closer to home, so she started Quabbin Valley Yoga in Ware above Hanna Devine's Restaurant. She teaches five classes a week, including Sundays and evenings.

Wine yoga classes take place every fourth Sunday with tickets available at Event Bright. Yoga at the Winery has a Facebook page.

Find other beer yoga classes at Stone Cow Brewery in Barre, and at Honest Weight Brewery inside the Orange Innovation Center building in Orange.

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

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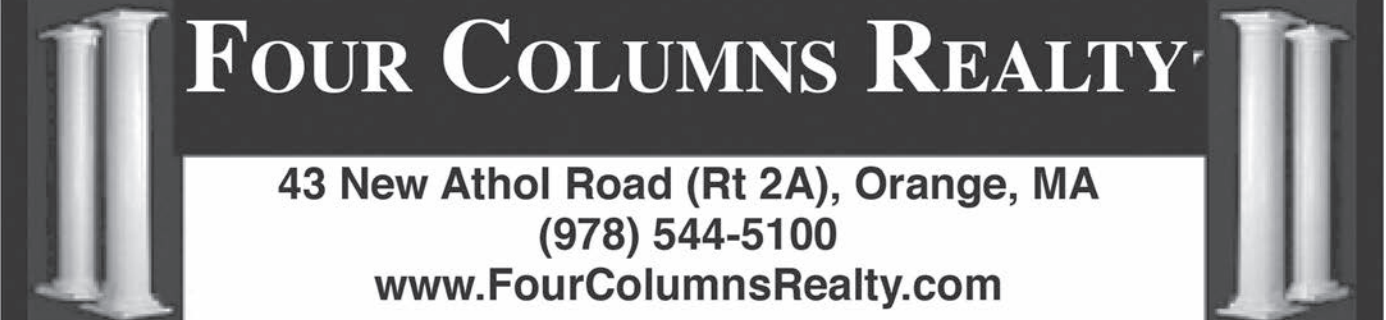
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disc golf activity soars throughout Quabbin region

by Gillis MacDougall

Playing disc golf can fill competitors with joy. They may play the sport solo or with others. Disc golf can take a player's mind off life's negative aspects, and many consider it super fun.

One of the fastest growing sports in the world, disc golf has been around for about forty years. Western Massachusetts has many courses with more under construction.

Similar to regular golf, the game involves play with a scoring system similar to golf on a nine-or eighteen-hole course in the open or in the woods but with tee pads and baskets instead of holes. Notably, disc golf costs much less to play than regular golf.

Instead of hitting a ball with various clubs and depending on desired effect, a player throws different discs.

In the Quabbin region as in other rural areas, the official address of a disc golf course may elude discovery. For example, Google Maps may say a course exists in one

town while a course's Facebook page may list another. GPS can help you get there, including to those at Barre Falls Dam in Hubbardston, Tully Lake on the border of Athol and Royalston, and Flat Rock Road in Athol.

Barre Falls Dam course features long, open holes. The front half or first nine holes appears especially spacious with the back half shorter and more wooded. Water behind the dam—sometimes not much more than a stream, and other times more of a lake—adds beautiful aspects to several holes. The course is often windy, which can be an advantage if you have power and can throw over-stable discs into a headwind. Throwing over-stable discs requires intricate knowledge of different types of discs and how they work. But, to be honest, lots of wind can lessen the fun overall.

The Tully Lake course offers beautiful scenery and outdoor experiences. Hole One, for example, requires a 370-foot downhill shot with the basket situated near the

continued on page 40



Barre Falls Dam disc golf course in Hubbardston features spacious, wooded, often windy holes
photo © by Gillis MacDougall

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A white-tailed deer overlooks its reflection in Quabbin Reservoir.
photo © by Dale Monette

disc golf addresses differ

continued from page 39

lake's edge. Local Boy Scouts helped design and build the course. Holes Three through Seven, called Birdie Alley, comprise a stretch of holes easy for accomplished players who will find it simpler to pick up strokes in the front half than later on in the course.

There's something homey about the Flat Rock Course, a privately owned course open to the public. Facebook lists it at 2260 Flatrock Road, Athol, although Google Maps shows something different. Course quirks include creative three-dimensional tee signs with, for example, actual pebbles to signify a stone wall.

Ideal disc golf conditions involve temperate weather with moderate humidity and low or no wind. Wind can make or break the experience. My dream day on the course features temperatures around seventy degrees.

I recommend that readers acquire at least a couple of discs and go out and play a few rounds. You may find you love the experience!

Disc golfer, photographer, athlete, and student, Gillis MacDougall lives in Greenfield.

Nature's Nuances

by Clare Green

legendary and historical Warwick's Aunt Zylpha

I invite all readers of *Uniquely Quabbin* magazine to visit their town's historical society and historical societies in other towns during the summer to uncover silent treasures waiting there. New Englanders share rich history. I offer one treasured story told through the imagined heart and voice of Zylpha:

I be sittin' at heaven's porch, rockin' an' a'viewin' all the comin's an goin's of me home for seventy years. I be Zylpha Smith in this here rockin' chair. Me name means babblin' brook from the old Hebrew bible, and that's where me lived most of me days, alongside a merry flow of water. It be named Mount Grace Brook and still trickles today along the gulf side of what they call Route 78, traveling north from the Warwick Town Common.

I be seein' wooded and forested Warwick growin' all these years and changin' since I be born in 1815 an' lived out until 1885, buried in site unknown to ye folk in Warwick, but in the ground me body be laid, me spirit be free.

Pneumonia got me held strong until that cold February third day when I let meself go from these hills and woods from the surroundin' almshouse on Winchester Road.

I be nicknamed Aunt Zylpha so folks would know I be hurtin' no one, not even a flea.

"Oh," they say, "there goes a-walkin' Aunt Zypha in her green cloak agin" at dawn or dusk. Me walked the seven miles to North Orange to sell me palm leaf hats to Amos.

As a child, me had the normal and happy life of a young girl attendin' one of ten local schoolhouses near the foot of Mount Grace.

I outlived me father and mother, Levi and Lydia, and me sister Esther. Their stones be markin' their lives in Warwick Cemetery, unlike me life, never marked.

I be a recluse for me olden years after I was left at the altar for another. He, who now has no name in my heart, never came back from a business trip in Boston. He wedded a fancy man's daughter. I reckon she came from money.

I just din't have bootstraps big enough to pull meself up.

I too ashamed to show me face, so me home and parents became me comfort. Takin' care of them in their olden ages, Father, a town pauper, dying in 1842 of consumption, then Mother ten years later in 1852. Esther, me dear younger sister, 1821-1849, only lived twenty-eight years, dyin' three years before father, also of consumption.

Father often be quotin' John Keats: "Truth is beauty, beauty truth."

So I be rockin' an' sittin' at heaven's porch an' reflectin' on all that has been and will be. Heaven's too busy a place for me. I like it out here porcheside to heaven's gate. Recently saw Charlie Brown talkin' and walkin' through these gates, sharin' his stories from ninety years livin' in Warwick from 1927 to 2017.

Clare Green, author and educator, portrays Aunt Zylpha during Warwick's August Old Home Days' Cemetery Walk. A booklet of Zylpha's life, stories, and tidbits of Warwick's history is in process, soon to be sold at the Warwick Historical Society.



Clare Green as Zylpha

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dairy bars offer ice cream and variety of refreshments

continued from page 31

outside and under a covered patio. Janine's also hosts live entertainment weekly.



Becki's Bistro, Barre

Becki's Bistro in Barre center offers a breakfast and lunch menu for eating in or taking out. The ice cream window opens as soon as weather allows. The outside patio with tables and umbrellas provides a comfortable place to enjoy creamy treats while taking in picturesque Barre Common.

The Kitchen Garden on Baldwinville Road in Templeton, a family-owned bakery and gift shop since 1988, opens its dairy window and outside deck in early May. Kitchen Garden makes its own ice-cream sandwiches, cookies, and almond-cake sundaes.



Murdock Farm on Elmwood Road, Winchendon, operates from the first weekend of May through the end of September with ice cream homemade in the dairy, except for dairy-free sorbets and yogurt ice



cream. Proprietors of the dairy bar, founded in 1964 when Murdock Farm operated as a working dairy, say, "We needed to do something with the milk left over after bottling for our door-to-door delivery." The farm no longer supports milk cows but maintains a small herd of Texas Longhorns as curiosities.

Ice cream isn't just a guilty pleasure, according to nutritionists. The treat provides key nutrients, including bone-strengthening calcium, blood-pressure-lowering potassium, and energizing B vitamins.

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

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quiet dirt roads punctuate wooded landscapes throughout

continued from page 4

rustic-looking bridges with huge long logs as guard rails, and you can imagine the clatter as you cross the wooden planks. It's safe but rustic.

The site constitutes a perfect quiet place to park a car off road in the unlikely event of another coming along. You can stand by the brooks running beneath the bridges. I have been told that, in early spring, fish come up the brook to spawn and sometimes fishing people have caught a large salmon. I have to take Bruce Spencer's word on that, because I have never seen fish or fishing people there.

The rest of the dirt road goes up and down and finally climbs a hill to enter paved Prescott Road in Shutesbury. You can see houses

along the way, but the principal views concern pines, hemlocks, hardwoods, and mountain laurel along with ubiquitous New England rocks.

As I went searching on Route 78 for a different dirt road in another town, I turned right just by the Warwick Fire Station onto Hastings Pond Road. The name intrigued me, and though at first I drove on paved road, it turned into a dirt road as I drove along until I found Hastings Pond itself.

I had driven by a mammoth free-standing rock perched by the side of the road and looking like a giant petrified balloon. Unfortunately for me, the dirt road came to an end in a front yard, so I

turned around and drove out again.

Later, I looked into it and I learned that Hastings Pond has no public access. Homeowners own the land right to the shore, and the state owns the pond itself. I had a delightful time one Saturday looking for the information in Warwick's Public Library, where the staff made me feel at home with cookies and coffee.

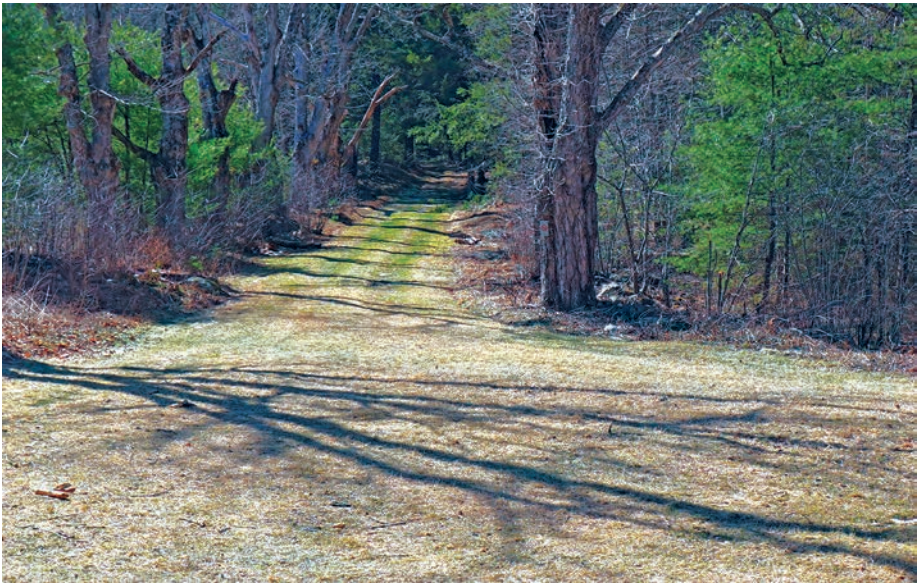
On another excursion, I decided to drive into the Federated Women's Club State Forest on Route 122 between Petersham and New Salem. Mostly because it is old and scarcely kept up, the road features primitive paving. As you drive along a thousand acres of forest, you get a sense of what Longfellow called, "the forest primeval" or ancient because the

the region

deep, thick trees occasionally include a standing dead tree riddled with woodpecker holes. It made me glad to see walking trails off the main stem, and when I came to the end of tar pavement, I found a dirt road leading to a *Road Closed* sign near what seemed to be a broken bridge.

All through the North Quabbin area, you can find dirt roads of every description. Some go nowhere.

They include old logging roads long discontinued while others may lead to homes and farms. Around the reservoir itself, any number of enticing dirt roads lead into the woods or down to the water. Often you'll find a place to park, and you can walk for an hour or walk for a whole day. Sad to say, no dogs



Dirt crossroads near Hastings Pond in Warwick give a sense of the forest primeval. photo © by Mike Phillips • spring greening by Jessica Gale Tanner

allowed, but people can find great peace in the quiet of the dirt roads leading through Quabbin Reservoir land.

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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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.

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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Quabbin area farmers experiment with silvopasture

continued from page 19

Consumer Reports as the only highly meaningful food label for farm animal welfare, outdoor access, and sustainability. The Walker Farm store sells meat that Joan calls “delicious and healthy.”

“You are what you eat eats,” she said.

Maryanne Reynolds and Jana Dengler own Stone Harvest Farm in Petersham and practice silvopasturing with North American Cashmere Goats. They spent two years looking for land and located a former farm that they are returning to agricultural use. It had many stone walls, evidence of old pastures.

Maryanne and Jana explored alternatives for handling the land, much of it recently forested. They learned about silvopasture from the Cornell College of Agriculture and Life Sciences in Ithaca, New York, and the Northeast Silvopasture Conference sponsored by the Cornell College Extension in November 2011. They had a silvopasture forestry plan created and implemented on their land, thus leaving the best trees to provide canopy and genetics for future healthy trees. Minimal slash remained, and land scarification created a good bed for pasture seed to take hold.

In 2011, they acquired fifteen goats from other cashmere farmers and began their husbandry. Currently, they have forty goats.

Fencing proved more challenging than anticipated in the face of a need to separate herd subsets. One goal: keep does and doelings together and separate from the mature bucks. Another goal: integrate weaned bucklings into the herd of mature bucks when they are two years old but not before.

Goats can jump fences and also may find it entertaining to visit the other groups, so, according to

Maryanne and Jana, “The boys are kept two fences away from the girls.”

Cashmere goats have dual coats with guard hair protecting sought-after cashmere hair. From February to May, owners comb the goats to take under hair then sold in a variety of forms. Raw cashmere requires washing and carding before spinning. The raw product has a market, but more likely, farmers send it out for processing that returns it as cashmere roving for spinners or spun yarn sold at fiber festivals in New York and Massachusetts.

Part of the combing process involves evaluating each goat’s fleece to determine where an animal fits into the breeding program. Farmers evaluate the diameter, crimp, and length of each goat’s hair taken at a goat’s first year of age and annually thereafter. Older goats may have a larger diameter of hair and less palatable meat, so farmers cull them from the herd as a result of annual quality control.

Silvopasture numbers in a group of farming methods growing in use due to their impact on sustainability of soil and carbon sequestration. Called *agroforestry*, that group of practices also includes windbreaks, riparian forest buffers, alley cropping, and forest farming.

Diane Nassif calls herself a newcomer to the Quabbin region. She retired here eleven years ago from Boston. “Be on the lookout for farms in the Quabbin region that incorporate forests,” she advises. “You will find them.”

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insects, birds, and mammals serve as pollinators

continued from page 23

in the spire of blooms of its namesake. Sometime, the flower closed in sunlight hides moths from sight. Take a close look to discover them as they blend well with the blossom.

Because so many pollinator insects provide food for spiders, you may see a food chain in action. While hiding in the white flowers of wild carrot, a white crab spider captured an insect for lunch. There you have the drama of life in the wilds of your garden!



A beetle visits goldenrod, from left, while an evening primrose moth rests on a flower, and a white spider consumes dinner on white wild carrot.

Some birds and mammals also assist plants by moving pollen. Birds like the indigo bunting approach flowers to capture insects there, while hummingbirds seek out blooms for



An indigo bunting snacks on milkweed.

nectar and insects but inadvertently each may act as pollinators. Those who band hummingbirds often find the pollen on the bird’s bill. And at least in tropical regions, bats also assist plants by pollinating blooms as they lap up nectar.

In China, widespread use of insecticides to protect crops ended up killing native pollinators. As a result, fruit trees couldn’t produce their fruit and people took over the job of pollinating blossoms every spring. Performing their task, workers on ladders filled orchards. With careful precision, they moved flowers’ pollen to accomplish their work.

In our own gardens and lawns, we should take heed of that. Respect the lives of insects that keep the cycle of life going. What will you discover the next time you take some time to really look at nearby flowers?

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.

Oakham Historical Museum and the Young Family Annex

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Located in one of the town’s oldest buildings known as the Fobes-O’Donnell house and the town’s first post office, the Museum offers two floors filled with hundreds of artifacts. The displays include period clothing, Native American, town industries, diaries, musical instruments, hair combs and bonnets, Civil War items, books, and more. The Museum is on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Young Family Annex, constructed in 2019 by the Pathfinder Regional Vocational Technical High School, houses the Museum’s large artifacts, among which are the town’s 1860s hearse, a sleigh, milk bottle collection, 1870s town safe, ice harvesting tools, cheese factory wheel hoist, and much more.

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Higgins Energy, Pete's Tire Barns foster solar innovation

continued from page 11



In 2010, Peter Gerry installed solar panels on the roof of the Pete's Tire Barn distribution center in Orange. When he was eighteen in 1968, he founded the business that today distributes a full line of passenger tires, new and retreaded truck tires, farm/agricultural tires, off-the-road tires, and other product lines.



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in 2010 atop the distribution center in Orange, generating four thousand watts of electricity monthly. "In the ten years since we installed the system, we have prevented two million pounds of CO², the main cause of global warming, from entering the atmosphere," owner Peter Gerry said.

Excess energy transfers to the tire production facility. "By using solar energy to make our retreads, we save more than eight thousand gallons of oil a day," Gerry said. "According to a report by (the tire maker) Bridgestone, we are the greenest tire company in the United States." Gerry believes that using rooftop solar systems on large buildings comprises the best way to minimize impact on the environment and save the planet for future generations.

The mission of Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust, based in Athol, involves benefiting the environment, the economy, and future generations by protecting land and encouraging land stewardship. With those goals in mind, in December of 2019, MGLCV accepted a donation of forty solar panels by PhippenAdams Solar. The rooftop array, placed on MGLCV's Quabbin Harvest building in Orange, is dedicated to the memory of the late Peter Talmadge of Greenfield Community College, whom an MG spokesman called "a champion of energy conservation." The array constitutes the thirty-second system donated by PhippenAdams to area nonprofits.

Environmentally conscious local companies, like Higgins Energy and Pete's Tire Barn, conservation-minded residents, and dedicated area land trusts offer keys to a bright future in the Quabbin area.

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



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Quabbin Reservoir conceals artifacts of drowned towns

continued from page 14

some buildings for salvage value, burning some down, or bulldozing others into their foundations. The state also supervised cutting and burning all trees within the future flow area.

The state undertook the measures because the reservoir would provide drinking water, so the Metropolitan District Water Supply Commission had to oversee removal of potential water pollutants such as buildings or trees. If one remembers the movie *Deliverance* starring the late Burt Reynolds, the whole point of the men's canoe trip concerned a power-generation reservoir that would flood the area they traveled through. Near the end of the movie, a scene shows the men paddling by treetops and roofs of houses already partially inundated, circumstances acceptable for a reservoir not meant for domestic drinking water.

Laws prevent swimming or diving at Quabbin Reservoir, so you can't see the barren reservoir bed.

Despite destruction of buildings and trees before flooding of Quabbin, the reservoir and reservation conceal remains of former human habitation in the Quabbin basin. Roads, foundation walls, property border walls, and boundary walls of cemetery lots remain. The PBS documentary *Under Quabbin* includes scenes of some. Divers who filmed the program found gravestones left at the sites of cemeteries during removal of graves in the thirties and forties to other cemeteries.

The first major drought to hit the Quabbin Reservoir occurred in the mid-1960s when its level fell to only forty-five percent full. Much of the reservoir bed in the northern half became exposed to view for the first time since the 1940s and revealed roads, stone walls, and a sandy, muddy land surface. Some former residents of

North Dana received permission to obtain a key to a gate blocking access to the watershed and drove into the site of their former home.

Exploring the northern shoreline on foot offers historical insights. For instance, if you hike along the former railroad bed in New Salem when the reservoir is down a few feet, you will come across the site of the former New Salem railroad station. To get to the station, follow the dirt road to the left inside Gate 35 for about a mile, not far south of where the roadway ceases to be the old cinder composition and becomes gravel. Only large flat stones remain from the original structure. Just one example of curious remains of human habitation in the valley flooded for the Quabbin Reservoir, Massachusetts Route 21, a paved road, runs inside the gate to the right. Hike on that past power lines, and the road goes into the water in less than a half mile at what appears to be a sandy beach.

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

... in a democracy, the legal branch of the government is the safeguard of continuity, the citizen's protection against arbitrary acts by the Executive. A rotten judiciary is the handmaiden of dictatorship. In Germany and Austria, "justice" was administered in the name of injustice.

—Simon Wiesenthal
Nazi hunter and survivor of the Austrian Holocaust

ad signed by Hattie Nestel

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Roxann Banks, CNEER treasurer, left, with Vicki Berry, founder, and Winnie, a rescue horse, invite volunteers. Penny Blum, below, a volunteer who answered the call, assists with care of Jack and Annie, mini rescue horses.



Central NE Equine Rescue takes in abandoned horses, donkeys

continued from page 7

horses no one else wants; Carroll and Diane Dwyer who donated money for the riding ring; Peter Whitmore, horse whisperer and trainer; and Matt Caprioli, Bob Rotti, and Eric John, whom Vicky identified as “all farriers with such skills!” People

New England Equine Rescue Inc. at (413) 265-3270 or (978) 621-6717 or at their website centralnewenglandequinerescue.com

Ellen Woodbury, a massage therapist, lives in Athol.

can also sponsor a horse or donate for a specific reason like the big spring vet bill or food, she said.

Past benefits and fundraisers have included a horse show at Felton Field in Barre, a wine tasting at Hardwick Winery, an annual picnic in Ludlow, and an auction of a quilt made up of individual panels depicting horses.

Every two years, some horses go to the Equine Affaire at September’s Big E in West Springfield.

“Our mission is to rescue abused, neglected, abandoned, on-the-way-to-slaughter horses, donkeys, and mules,” reads the CNEER mission statement, “to give them clean water, nutritious food, medical care, restore their health and spirit, and find them loving and forever homes.”

As we leave the place, Vicky and Roxann waved good-bye. “Come visit us at the farm,” Vicky called. “We have a pitchfork with your name on it!”

For information, event dates, donations, or appointments for a visit, contact Central

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A hummingbird flutters near a backyard feeder.
photo © by David Brothers

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WHIMSY

three-foot rat, Bigfoot, UFOs share Quabbin spotlight

by Ann Reed

A three-foot rat made a series of cocky appearances in Orange. Bigfoot dwelt in bucolic Warwick amid protective humans. Elusive wildlife magically paraded in Pelham. A 1960s UFO spectacle had Athol townsfolk gawking skyward like extras in the opening credits of Superman of black and white TV. A spaceship landed . . .

The Quabbin Region's storytellers' underground pokes open its own air holes to draw freely from Out There.

During Mud Season 1995, the giant rat scampered through residential yards and frisked about a crowded bus stop. One eyewitness described it as "hunchbacked" and "as tall as my three-year-old."

Another had considered apprehending the filthy larrikin by "stepping on its tail" when it traipsed through his property.

As a reporter, I had gathered those accounts. And I've never stopped harboring the misunderstood vagabonds I call the "unbelievable true story."

Belchertown's Jimmy Burgoff, gravity-confounding piano mover and musician, is accustomed to magical moments. Still, he specially remembers that spring 2016 morning drive onto Pelham's Old Belchertown Road that produced more than a rabbit from a hat. A "huge black bear" crossed, rose onto hind legs, and stood upright behind a tree to play peek-a-boo.

"I see-ee you!" Burgoff sang out, rolling onward to meet a gray "bobcat" weighing an anomalous "sixty-to-eighty pounds." A deer



Sasquatch with Whimsy writer Ann Reed

appeared and, as exclamation point, a bunny bounced.

Fortunately for my yarn tracking, there's no such thing as a crazy question around here.

Asked about a rumored 1960s spaceship landing near Lake Mattawa, Orange, Jane Peirce, selectman, said she'd heard nothing.

"But . . ."

Peirce provided a consolation tidbit as big as a Christmas present. "When I was in junior high, there was a UFO in Athol that a lot of people saw."

On that, Cindy, who'd answered the phone at Athol Public Library, consulted others and returned with plot-thickening stardust:

"It was in the 1970s, over Tully Lake." Royalston.

An internet headshot features David Young's beard colored

like two-toned cotton candy. When asked about talk that "an investigative team once slipped into town to eye a resident Bigfoot, all kept secret to guard against trigger-happy interlopers," the colorful Warwick official answered in a harrumph:

"Never heard a thing about that. I'm a rationalist." Young nevertheless deemed plausible claims of local brushes with extinct cougars. Witnesses' hushed tones, he speculated, suggest protectiveness similarly associated with Bigfoot loyalists.

(Cindy recommended *The Quest for The Eastern Cougar* by Robert Tougas.)

A Wendell friend traced baffling indoor noise to find a cougar vocalizing outside her glass doors. A New Salem friend encountered one in her driveway.

In another nature fluke, Maureen Riendeau recalls, Orange first-graders started the 1954-1955 year seated "three to a desk." On day three, still fragrant with apples-for-teacher, educators answered the baby boom by dismissing the youngest children, including Maureen, to postpone schooling for a year.

Riendeau shared that flabbergaster at a 2018 block party blessed by rain and forced indoors for storytelling.

Orange freelancer Ann Reed started out selling one-liners to comedienne Joan Rivers. She has written for newspapers as a columnist, arts critic and correspondent.

Uniquely Quabbin Calendar Listings

PLEASE DOUBLE CHECK DETAILS FOR EVENTS.

May 29, Friday
Petersham Friday Market
3 pm-6 pm
Fridays, May 29 through October 23
Petersham Common
Local seasonal vegetables, fruits, baked goods, and crafts Health screenings. Free live music.
Petershamcommon.com/fridaymarket.htm

June 6, Saturday
Ledgeville School Open House
noon-4 pm
first Saturdays through October
191 East Street
Petersham
One-room schoolhouse restored by Petersham Historical Society A docent will answer questions.

June 10, Wednesday
Astrophotography
6:30-7:30 pm
Athol Public Library
568 Main Street
Athol
Aldrich Astrophotography Group will discuss astronomy photography. Registration required.
(978) 249-9515 • athollibrary.org

June 13, Saturday
Jeff Wilson Clinic
9 am-5 pm
NEECA Arena
802 New Sherborn Road
Athol
Jeff brings thirty-five years of experience to the clinic, suitable for all breeds and disciplines.
neeca.org

Breakfast on the Porch
8 am-10 am
Orange Historical Society
31 North Main Street
Orange
orangehistoricalsocietyma.org

June 14, Sunday
King's Tour of the Quabbin
7 am-5 pm
Naquag Elementary School
285 Main Street
Rutland
Bicycle 62, 100, or 125 miles from Rutland around Quabbin Reservoir. This is not a race.
bikereg.com/quabbin

June 18, Thursday
Plants Go to War
6:30 pm-7:30 pm
Athol Public Library
568 Main Street
Athol
A botanical history of World War II with Judith Sumner: victory gardens and agriculture, timber, rubber, coal, and cotton, plant products that supplied the military and home front. Registration required.
(978) 249-9515 • athollibrary.org

June 20, Saturday
Orange Solstice Riverfest
4 pm-9 pm
Orange Riverfront Park
Orange
Ball game, hot dogs and beer, local music, road race, fire pits in the river, and lighted boat parade

June 21, Sunday
CANCELED
Prescott Bus Pilgrimage
11 am
Swift River Historical Society
40 Elm Street
New Salem
Northern half of the peninsula through Prescott Gate 21.
swiftrivermuseum.org

June 24, Wednesday
Historic Deerfield Open Hearth Cooking Program
6 pm-7:30 pm
Athol Public Library
568 Main Street
Athol
Historic food demonstration with opportunity to help prepare recipes and have taste of the past. Registration required.
(978) 249-9515 • athollibrary.org

June 26, Friday
Orange Community Band Concerts
7 pm
Fridays through July 31
Butterfield Park
Orange
Summer season of outdoor concerts by the Orange Community Band.

June 26, Friday
Evening with Nat Cole King
7 pm
Athol Historical Society
1307 Main Street
Athol
An evening of Nat King Cole with the Temp-o-airy Jazz Ensemble-Russell Watts on vocals
atholhistoricalsociety.weebly.com

Barre Horse Show
Felton Field
Barre
neeca.org

June 27, Saturday
Fiber Arts Demonstration
Hubbardston Fair
10 am
Curtis Recreational Field
Hubbardston
See how Hubbardston used fiber in the past and how we use it today. Fiber arts demonstration by Plain View Farm. Sponsored in part by a grant from the Mass Cultural Council.

June 27, Saturday
(continued)
Tea in the Garden
2 pm-4 pm
Narragansett Historical Society
1 Boynton Road
Templeton
Meet “Lucy Stone” at a Tea in the Garden. Lucy Stone, one of the first suffragists, advocated for equal rights. Victorian period dress encouraged, especially favoring suffragist all white. Co-sponsored by Templeton Cultural Council.
Narragansetthistoricalsociety.org

June 28, Sunday
History at Play: Judith Kalaora in *I Now Pronounce You Lucy Stone*
2 pm
Stage on Main
17 South Main Street
Orange

July 11, Saturday
Breakfast on the Porch
8 am-10 am
Orange Historical Society
31 North Main Street
Orange
orangehistoricalsocietyma.org

July 15, Wednesday
Imagine Your Family Story
6:30 pm-8:30 pm
Athol Public Library
568 Main Street
Athol
How to get organized and begin the search with vital records and family memorabilia.
Presentation by Sara Campbell followed by time to get started.
(978) 249-9515 • Athollibrary.org

July 16, Thursday
Artist Opening: Margot Parrot
3 pm
Stage on Main
17 South Main Street
Orange

July 18, Saturday
Old Home Day
9 am-4 pm
New Salem Common
swiftrivermuseum.org

July 18-19, Saturday and Sunday
Blueberry Jamboree
10 am-5 pm
Red Apple Farm
455 Highland Avenue
Phillipston
Celebrating all things blue and summer! Bart's ice Cream, lobster rolls, BBQ, live music all day, great blueberry picking Brew Barn offerings including Rick and Al's Blueberry Apple Ale
Redapplefarm.com

July 19, Sunday
Traditional Arts: Crochet
11 am-1 pm
The Heritage Center
20 Common Street
Barre
Free class fit all ages
barremahistoricalsociety.org

July 26, Sunday
Dana Vespers Concert
3 pm
Swift River Historical Society
40 Elm Street
New Salem
Cake and lemonade after the concert.
Swiftrivermuseum.org

Karaoke
3 pm-5 pm
Stage on Main
17 South Main Street
Orange

August 8, Saturday
NEECA Confidence Course
NEECA Arena
802 New Sherborn Road
Athol
With Libby Lyman
Neeca.org

Breakfast on the Porch
8 am-10 am
Orange Historical Society
31 North Main Street
Orange
orangehistoricalsocietyma.org

August 8-9, Saturday and Sunday
Sunflower Fest
9 am-6 pm
Red Apple Farm
455 Highland Avenue
Phillipston
Featuring 1/2 acre of PYO sunflowers, food, vendors, hula hooping, henna art, Brew Barn, live music all day long.
Redapplefarm.com

August 9, Sunday
Wild Flora and Fauna Walk
1 pm
Barre Historical Society
18 Common Street
Barre
Led by Barre resident and conservationist Judy Schmitz
Barremahistoricalsociety.org

Birds of Prey
2 pm
Swift River Historical Society
40 Elm Street
New Salem
Tom Ricardi presents Birds of Prey.
swiftrivermuseum.org

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THANK YOU



model commemorates towns under Quabbin

continued from page 17

quarry; hotels, fire stations, Enfield's town hall, cemeteries, farms, and ice-harvesting houses. Prominent natural features include Mount Zion, Russ Mountain, Mount Lizzie, Mount L, Great Quabbin Hill, the Swift River, and various ponds.

Levine regularly attends events such as the annual ARS Hobby Show in Springfield to study building techniques and purchase materials and supplies. Archival photographs serve as references for buildings and the lost towns. To create the basic components, he uses Styrofoam, plywood, and pine wood, including lumber donated by Heyes Forest Products of Orange. He makes topographic features of plaster and foam and creatively crafts trees and vegetation with dried flowers, glue, and sprays. He shows a progression of seasons from winter in the south to spring in the north. Interactive recorded interviews with former residents complement the model.

The exhibit enable people to learn about the history of the lost Swift River Valley towns, the importance of railroads to society, and the craft of model railroading. "This project



Ken Levine's model details the towns of Dana, Enfield, Greenwich, and Prescott as they appeared before Quabbin waters covered them.

photo © by John Burk

is my heartfelt tribute to the many people, places, and memories of the four lost towns. Since I moved here fifty years ago, their nearby presence has deeply moved me. I want to perpetuate the stories and the railroad that connected the valley with the rest of the region," Ken said.

Swift River Valley Historical Society, 40 Elm Street, New Salem

open 1 to 4 pm Wednesdays and Sundays, June through September. Visit swiftrivermuseum.org or call (978) 544-6882.

For more information about Ken Levine, visit frames-ink.com.

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

Orange Community Band

Orange Community Band, directed by Stephanie Parker, plans to open its summer season of outdoor concerts at 7 pm June 26 on the bandstand in Butterfield Park. Rehearsals for the summer will begin June 10. Concerts will continue on Friday evenings through July 31.

Open to musicians from grade eight on, the band includes high school and college students, parents, professionals, and retirees, including some members in their nineties. Founded in the 1850s, the band ranks as one of the three oldest in Massachusetts.

Check Orange Community Band FaceBook page or call (978) 413-6867 to confirm performance dates and times.