



Quabbin Visitor's Center
 photo by Tricia Burton

ON THE FRONT COVER
Autumn Moon at Harvard Pond, Petersham
 photo by John Burk

FIND CALENDAR LISTINGS ON PAGE 58.
FIND TOWN MEETINGS AND INFO ABOUT TOWN BOARDS
AT WEBSITES FOR *UNIQUELY QUABBIN* TOWNS ON PAGE 58.

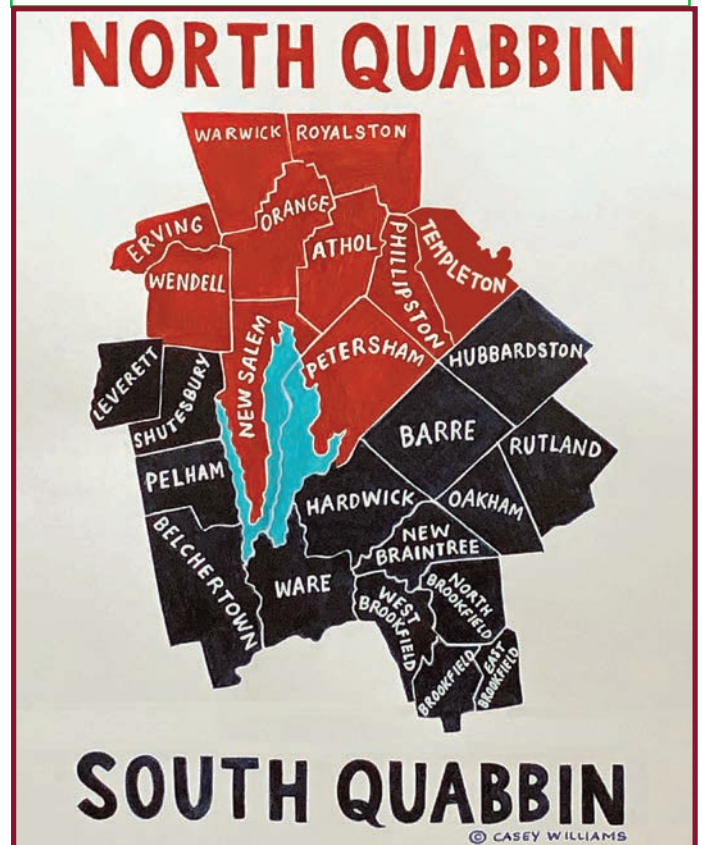
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volume 11, number 2 • September-December 2026

This issue features photos and art, nature, personalities, history, event listings, and sights to see in the uniquely Quabbin heart of Massachusetts.

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Quabbin towns past and present • maps © Casey Williams

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about *Uniquely Quabbin* 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.

a note from Athol Historical Society

Thank you, thank you . . .

On behalf of the Athol Historical Society, I want to thank the cultural councils of Athol, Barre, Erving, Hubbardston, Leverett, New Salem, North Brookfield, Oakham, Orange, Pelham, Petersham, Phillipston, Royalston, Rutland, Ware, Warwick, Wendell, and West Brookfield for supporting *Uniquely Quabbin* magazine with local cultural grants for 2026. The generous support from those councils is so important to the continued life of our magazine.

Grants, advertisers, and donations keep the magazine going. Donations are always appreciated and can be made by mailing a check to Debra Ellis, 1390 Chestnut Hill Avenue, Athol, MA 01331; by going to www.uniquelyquabbin.com and choosing the donate button; or by scanning the QR code at the bottom of the page.

Thank you to our readers who so generously support us with their donations. Not only do we appreciate your donations, but your kind, thoughtful, enthusiastic words of support fill us with pride and the desire to continue bringing you this wonderful magazine.

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

And it's fall! Those cool mornings, the crisp air filled with the scent of fallen leaves, the trees heavy with apples are calling to us to put that warm fleece on and rake those gorgeous red, orange, and yellow leaves and go to the nearest orchard to pick apples, pick up a couple jugs of cider, and grab a couple pumpkins for carving. There are so many things to do and places to go at this time of year.

Put the fleece on, pull your Adirondack chair into those last warm rays of sun, and start reading this issue of *Uniquely Quabbin* where you will find plenty to do in our calendar of events.

Enjoy!

Debra Ellis

Athol Historical Society



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a note from the publisher of *Uniquely Quabbin*

Sometimes when *Uniquely Quabbin* writers, photographers, artists, and/or editorial board members get together, we can hardly believe our good fortune in having been able to continue this magazine we love for more than ten years.

Thanks to the vision, diligence, creativity, and professionalism of contributors to *Uniquely Quabbin*, fresh ideas and insights continue to bring the magazine original stories, photographs, art, and advertisements.

We couldn't do it without contributors' and advertisers' sustained support of *Uniquely Quabbin*. And we couldn't do it without the many readers who encourage us, suggest ideas for coverage, and provide incentive to maintain quality and freshness season after season in *Uniquely Quabbin*. Thank you, thank you.

Sincerely,

Marcia Gagliardi, publisher

Haley's

Uniquely Quabbin magazine



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Ware Cultural Council • Warwick Cultural Council

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We invite contributions to *Uniquely Quabbin* magazine. Contact Marcia Gagliardi at marcia2gagliardi@gmail.com or Post Office Box 365, 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

Random Encounters

by Sally Howe

I love random conversations. They happen sometimes with a cashier or someone passing by on a walk. Sometimes they last only a few minutes, sometimes longer.

One day, I was walking around a lake as someone just came out of the water from a swim. I asked him if he had had a good swim, and he started telling me about his life.



Sally Howe

He has been swimming in that lake since he was eight years old. He told me when he graduated from high school, how old he is, that he is a Vietnam War veteran, and about friends from the Vietnam war. Some friends aren't doing too well, he said. They are drinking, overweight, or can't leave the house. He has had multiple surgeries, new knees, carpal tunnel repair, some arthritis.

In that few minutes, he offered me a glimpse of his life.

Something similar happens so often, whether I overhear a snippet of conversation on a bus or in a store. The other day, trying to locate a particular jar of salsa, I stared at shelves down an aisle of the grocery store. Another shopper remarked how hard it can be to find what one wants and said, "And then they reorganize the store!" The comment started a conversation that lasted many minutes as it ranged from the high price of food into politics.

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autumn light casts unique shadows

soft pastels on sanded paper by Monica Winters



Birch Shadows

soft pastels on sanded paper by Monica Winters

Using soft pastels on sanded paper, I created the painting *Birch Shadows*. Nearly pure pigment, pastels offer vibrant colors and a deep, velvety texture. As a direct and immediate medium and one of the most enduring art forms, pastels provide colors that remain unchanged after application. I layered and blended the pastels to provide a rich, luminous, and almost three-dimensional appearance.

Inspiration for *Birch Shadows* comes from Quabbin Reservoir area during autumn. The painting compiles several photographs that capture brilliant fall colors with specific focus on the contrast between light and shadow.

Monica Winters, a New Salem resident and retired teacher, is passionate about soft pastels. The immediacy and vibrant colors of the medium inspire her landscapes, still lifes, and floral paintings emphasizing color and light-shadow contrasts. A member of the Quabbin Art Association and Central Massachusetts Pastel Society, she exhibits her art throughout the local community.

Harvard Forest, Petersham, hiking trails offer

text and photos by Sue Cloutier



Petersham's Harvard Pond exemplifies autumn foliage display.

Rich color permeates autumn in the Quabbin region. At Harvard Forest in Petersham, peak fall color usually occurs between early and mid October. Color comes earlier in New Hampshire and Vermont while typically occurring later in eastern Massachusetts and New York. Researchers track such data.

Taking a trip to Harvard Forest in Petersham offers a great way to see fall colors. Headquarters at Fisher Museum stand off Route 32 at 324 North Main Street.

Discovery at Harvard Forest, one of the world's leading forest research centers, can start with just noticing trees, being curious, and asking questions. Both researchers and visitors start learning about plants as questions come to mind. Some questions researchers and visitors tend to want to answer include:

When and why do leaves change color in the fall?

What changes in the leaf to give it colors?

Does color in the leaf help the tree?

Like many of us, long-time Harvard Forest researcher and area resident John O'Keefe has long taken interest in when winter woods brighten with spring green and colorful leaves cloak fall woods. O'Keefe pursued such questions in his doctoral research at UMass, Amherst.

When O'Keefe came to work at Harvard Forest in the 1970s, he continued to seek answers to the perennial questions. With a love of walking in the woods, he found it easy and enjoyable to keep gathering data behind the Fisher Museum building on premises.

Long-term study of seasonal changes, called phenology, includes study of a variety of noticeable situations such as timing of bird and mammal migrations or blooming times of certain flowers.

Plant phenology offers a relaxing field study. Seasonal change doesn't need special equipment. With more than thirty years of data collection, O'Keefe's study shows that fall colors come later in the Quabbin region than they did in the 1970s. By extending the time of active

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many opportunities to view rich fall colors



Harvard Forest welcomes visitors to headquarters in Fisher Museum, 324 North Main Street, Petersham.

green leaves in the fall, Harvard Forest trees have more time to grow!

To answer questions about leaf colors, O'Keefe, coordinator emeritus of the Fisher Museum, and Dr. David Lee, emeritus professor at Florida International University, did chemical lab work to prove hypotheses of what goes on in leaves to create fall colors. O'Keefe and Lee set up a page on the Harvard Forest website called "Autumn Foliage Color" to explain their findings.

At one time, researchers presumed that colors of fall leaves always remained in the leaf while hidden by the green of working leaf cells. Current study shows that green does not hide red but that a leaf creates red colors in the fall. As that chemistry happens, leaves release nitrogen to the branch for use in the spring.

Harvard Forest celebrated the recent publication of a new book, *Let's Botanize!* by Ben Goulet-Scott, higher education and laboratory coordinator, and his friend and Harvard classmate, Jacob Suissa of the University of Tennessee. They collaborate by spreading the word about botanizing through the book and at online sites.

Botanizing resembles birding as those interested observe carefully and keep track of what they notice. *Let's Botanize!* presents an outdoor treasure hunt involving finding 101 different features in nearby plants.

Researchers advise hikers to take time to botanize when walking woodland trails, including those at Harvard Forest. They advise checking out plants' leaves, branches, buds, and bark. They encourage looking for

continued on page 51

Let's Botanize! 101 Ways to Connect with Plants

by Ben Goulet-Scott and Jacob Suissa

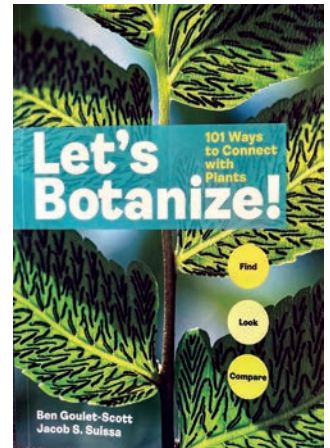
book review by Sue Cloutier

Let's Botanize! sets the stage for readers to become plant detectives. By developing quests that point out diverse attributes of plants, detectives develop appreciation for plants.

The first quests concern plant parts—leaf, stem, root. Then detectives look for patterns, the organization in plant structures that aid survival.

Finally, the detective considers how humans live with plants.

Let's Botanize! provides a guide for
continued on page 51



Let's Botanize encourages readers to become plant detectives.

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Wending its way through the Quabbin region, Berkshire & Eastern Railroad (BERX) America 250 commemorative engine, Locomotive No. 5946, a GE B40-8, wears a Statue of Liberty patriotic paint scheme.

photo by Chris Coyle



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Hessian POWs likely marched through

text and photos by Janice Stone



A stone carved decades ago marks passage of Hessian prisoners of war through New Salem during the American Revolution.

At a quiet intersection in North New Salem lies a low stone marker that tells a surprising story of the Revolutionary War. Carefully carved into the stone are the words

**October 25 1777
1000 Hessians Who Surrendered
at Saratoga Passed Here**

Why were they in New Salem? The written record is scarce, and some say that the stone commemorates only folklore, although it was inscribed and installed a long time ago.

In a town with a population of approximately 910 people in 1776, the arrival of 1,000 Hessian soldiers plus American troops guarding them would have made a major impression on the town.

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New Salem during war for independence

German soldiers—called Hessians by speakers of English—were hired out in January 1776 by their prince, the Duke of Brunswick, to join British forces against American colonists, according to a 1962 article by Dick Chaisson in the *Athol Daily News*. The Hessians fought with the army of British General Burgoyne, whose forces had just defeated the Americans at Ticonderoga, New York.

Because they joined along with another group of German soldiers from Hesse-Hanau state, they were all called Hessians. Unfortunately for them, American Continental Army forces led by General Horatio Gates and General Benedict Arnold defeated Burgoyne and his troops in the battle of Saratoga, New York on October 17, 1777. Members of the continental army then marched German forces from Saratoga to the Boston area for deportation back to their own country.

Although a well-documented route followed by the continental army runs south through West Springfield, some records suggest that another route went through Greenfield and Wendell to Petersham or Orange and onward to Boston. Breaking defeated soldiers into a few groups would have reduced the impact of troops on food supply and potential campsites in small towns along the way, according to some speculation. When the Hessians and their captors stopped in New Salem, the story goes, they camped on the knoll south of Hessian Lane near an apple orchard.

Many of the German soldiers never went back to Germany but preferred to settle in Massachusetts and neighboring states. Some deserted, and some were leased out or hired by locals who needed the labor on their farms. Towns with documented records of German troops who stayed, married, and raised a family there include Petersham, Bernardston, and Orange.



Accessed from Elm Street, New Salem, across from Swift River Valley Historical Society, Hessian Lane traverses a North New Salem wooded area.

Historians continue to research information about the Revolutionary War era march of the Hessians.

Janice Stone of Montague lived in Shutesbury for thirty-five years. She is a member of the Shutesbury Historical Commission.

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Counting Revolutionary Era Populations of Future Quabbin

by Carl I. Hammer

Quabbin Population in 1776

	MAC 322 Persons	Felt Whites	1777 Polls
Pelham	729	729	201
Greenwich	890	890	206
New Salem	910	910	226
Belchertown	972	972	225
Ware	420	0	150
Shutesbury	598	598	147
Warwick	0	766	166
Leverett	293	293	79
Hardwick	1393	1393	346
Petersham	1235	1235	298
Athol	660	0	191
Royalston	617	617	113
Templeton	1016	1016	235
Barre	1329	1329	325
Brookfield	2649	2649	655
Hubbardston	488	488	130
New Braintree	798	798	185
Oakham	598	598	135
Rutland	1006	1006	254

Documents record census data for future
Quabbin region towns.
tallies courtesy of Carl I. Hammer

Early governments were interested in population for two reasons: taxes and manpower. The number of people who could be taxed and engaged in the military or public works provided key indicators of national strength. For that reason, population figures constituted politically sensitive information, as they do today.

In early America, colonial governments rarely conducted what we would call censuses. Officials conducted the only one in Massachusetts before the Revolution in 1765. For most purposes, however, the old English institution of the poll tax levied as a flat rate on males age sixteen and upwards both provided revenue and indicated how many men were available for service.

In 1776, however, again a need arose for a census, because the Continental Congress meeting in Philadelphia in late December 1775 had proposed to apportion its debt “according to the number of inhabitants of all ages, including Negroes and mulattoes in each colony.” The congress therefore “recommended” that individual colonial authorities “ascertain by the most impartial effectual means in their power, the number of inhabitants in each respective colony.”

The General Court in Boston received the “recommendation” on 22 January 1776 and referred it to committee. In February, the Court introduced “an Act to carry into Execution a Resolve of the American Congress, for ascertaining the Number of Inhabitants in this Colony.” After debate and revisions, on 16 February the Court approved a standard form to be printed and sent to “the Select men of the respective Towns” to gather the information.

On the same day the Act passed. It required the name of the head of each family, the number of whites and Negroes and Mulattoes in each family, and the total number in each family. Unlike in 1765, Natives and French “Neutrals” were not included in the count, nor was there any distinction by age or sex, only by race, since that was the only item required by the Continental Congress.

There were, unsurprisingly, problems in getting complete results from the towns. After almost a year, on 7 January 1777 the Court passed a Resolve requiring Select men of the delinquent towns to return their completed forms “forthwith.”



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Region Towns: the American Census that Nobody Wanted

Of Quabbin region towns, only Ware was noted as missing. Indeed, it appears that the large exercise in information gathering was abortive in most of the American colonies. It is easy to understand why that would be true in the South where detailed knowledge of large Black and Mulatto populations was perceived not only as a security threat but also subjected those colonies to a larger share of the public debt. Even in Massachusetts, where clearly a serious effort was made, no official notice of results was published, and they remain largely unknown.

In fact, the result was evidently so unsatisfactory and of so little practical use that on 11 December 1776 the Court passed a new
continued on page 46

1776 Worcester				York 1776			
X Barre	1329	3	1. 17 1/2	X York	2142	5	16. 2 1/2
X Bolton	1250	3	4. 2	X Kittery	2991	8	11. 3 1/2
X Uxton	762	1	10. 3	X Wells	2595	6	1. 11
X Northbridge	1374	3	9. 1 1/2	X Barwick	3315	9	4. 11
X Leominster	978	2	13. 3	X Andover	1140	2	15. 1
X Hardwick	1393	4	5. 1 1/2	X Biddisford	1006	3	1. 3 1/2
X Western	827	2	13. 1 1/2	X Appleton	815	2	6. 1 1/2
X Holden	749	2	0. 3	X Lebanon	570	-	17. 1 1/2
X Sudbury	800	1	13. 2 1/2	X Sandford	810	X	16. 9 1/2
X Grafton	861	2	17. 3	X Buxton	198	-	14. 11
X Petersham	1235	2	17. 9	X Fryburg	414		
X Royalston	617	-	12. 1 1/2	X Brownfeld	48		
X Westminster	1145	2	9. 1 1/2	X Great Falls	10		
X Athol	660	1	11. 8 1/2	X Little Compton	214		
X Templeton	1016	1	18. 9	X Mastham	225		
X Princeton	701	1	16. 4				
X Ashburnham	531	-	17. 5 1/2				
X Winchendon	519	-	14. 1 1/2				
X Northbridge	151	1	18. 1 1/2				
X Upton	1001	1	10. 1 1/2				

Register in the Massachusetts Archives with 1776 Census records data for Worcester County, left.

photocopy courtesy of Carl I. Hammer

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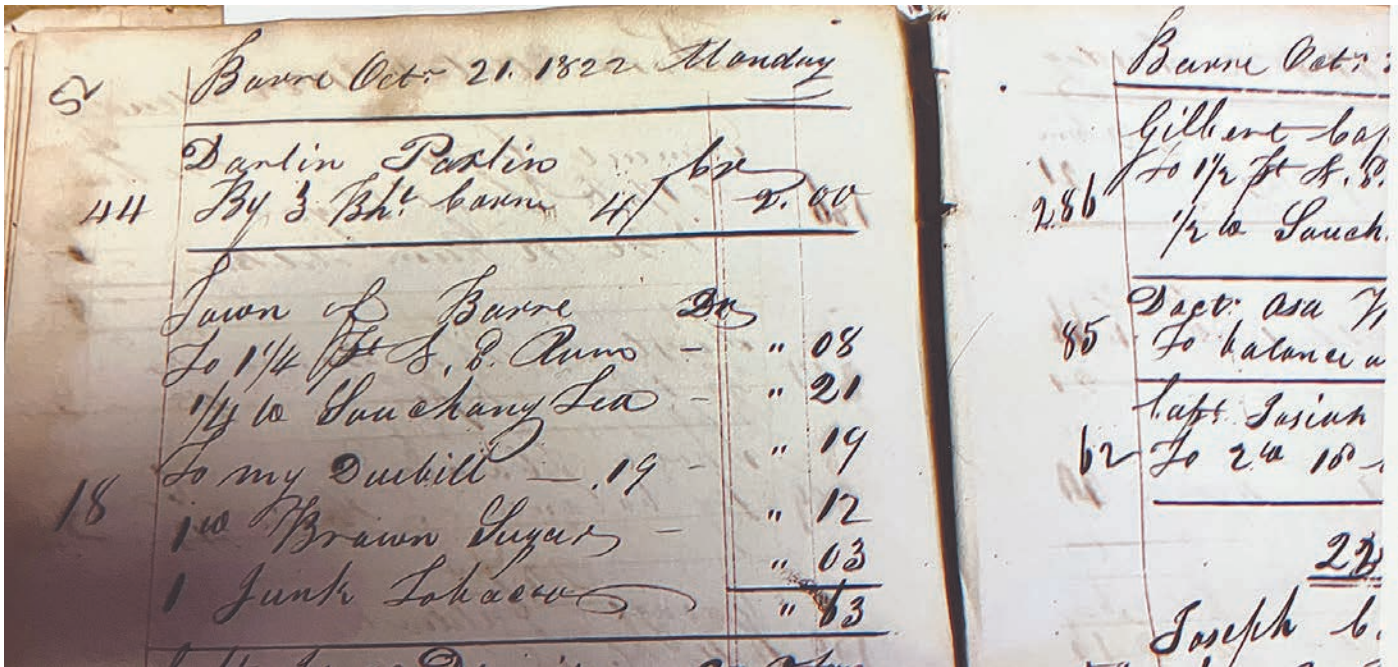


ORANGE

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early 19th-century account books provide

by Charlotte Westhead



An entry, bottom left, above, in the Luke Houghton account book shows an 1822 entry for Town of Barre purchase of rum, tea, brown sugar, and tobacco.

photo courtesy of Barre Historical Society

Account books, also called ledgers, provide a unique view of commercial activity in a particular place and time. A ledger dated from 1820 at Barre Historical Society records the business account of Luke Houghton. University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Special Collections holds a second ledger, dated from 1832 from a general store in Enfield.

Page format for the two ledgers is similar. A narrow first column holds a number that identifies a person throughout the book, thus providing an efficient

reference. A second column lists the name of the person and the transaction with notation of the sale as for cash, trade, or credit. A third column records the transaction amount.

The ledgers reveal much about local society at the time with scant federal government or state government help in caring for the impoverished. In Barre, neighbors and church members intending to help collected clothing, shoes, firewood, and candles, according to the ledgers, and once a destitute widow with several

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unique view into commercial activity of the time

children received a cow. Food provided often consisted of biscuits, tea, flour, and rum. Both towns gave rum and occasionally wine to the needy. Towns often reimbursed the cost of goods, such as clothing and food to the individuals who donated them.

Christmas does not appear to have been a big holiday in Barre or Enfield in the 1820s and 1830s. No notice of Christmas appears in either ledger, and both stores were open and recorded sales on Christmas day. During December, a slight increase in sales of flour, ginger, nutmeg, and cinnamon may have been related to more baking in colder weather or to the celebration of Christmas.

The Barre ledger contains what Luke Houghton, the owner and probably a carpenter, paid for pine, oak, cherry, chestnut, mahogany, and other wood. For example, 160 feet of oak cost \$1.78, 200 feet of maple cost \$2.00, and 571 feet of cherry board cost \$12.77. Houghton also records how much he charged for tables, bedsteads, chairs, and coffins. He priced a chest at \$1.75, six "3-corned chairs" at \$3.00 for the lot, a mahogany table at \$6.50, 6 hat blocks at \$2.54 for the lot, and six beehives together at \$3.50.

The cost of coffins sold by Houghton varied by size and type of wood used. His ledger includes notes about coffins in daily sales that end when, compared with previous years, the ledger records a significant increase in deaths in Barre. Houghton then records the size, type of wood, and costs of coffins at the end of the ledger. A small pine coffin was 67 cents.

Houghton had a diverse business. Usually in exchange for credit in the store against items he provided the store,

he bought cordwood, hay, honey, butter, pork, potatoes, vegetables, fruit, and palm braid from people in town. In 1822, he bought a load of hay, and on December 23, he paid a man \$20.00 to "carry the hay to Boston."

Houghton invested in real estate. The ledger carefully records the amount he charged for a quarter of a house, half of a house, a house, a store, and a house rented by the month or year, all carefully recorded. He also had expenses and needed workers from time to time. Walker worked 8 days for \$3.75, while Jones earned 74 cents for a day's work. He paid Frank \$5.00 for keeping oxen for two weeks. He paid a helper \$49.00 for 28 weeks and 1 day of work.

Charlotte Westhead, retired registered nurse, spends time at Quabbin region libraries poring through demographic records of the colonial era. She lives in Amherst.

clarification from Charlotte Westhead of information in May *Uniquely Quabbin* article about ledgers

Women and often others in the household braided palm leaf. Ledgers record palm leaf braid traded by the yard in general stores for store credit and less often for cash.

Roxanna, as cited in the May *Uniquely Quabbin* article, received \$1.25 for braid she made while Ella received 83 cents for her braid with amount of braid produced not recorded either for Roxanna or Ella. Harriet earned \$3.00 for 200 yards of braid and Abigail received \$3.75 for 300 yards. People also bartered with future braid. For example, Polly had a balance of \$1.54 cents she would pay the store in braid in the future.

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Quabbin construction inundated agricultural

text and photo by John Burk

Nestled atop a high valley ridge, the small agricultural community of Prescott had many productive orchards and farms. Located in northeastern Hampshire County, its landscape encompassed approximately thirteen thousand acres mostly situated on the Prescott Peninsula, a long ridge between the middle and west branches of Swift River. Other prominent landmarks include Mount L, Russ Mountain, Prescott Hill, Mount Pleasant, and Rattlesnake Mountain.

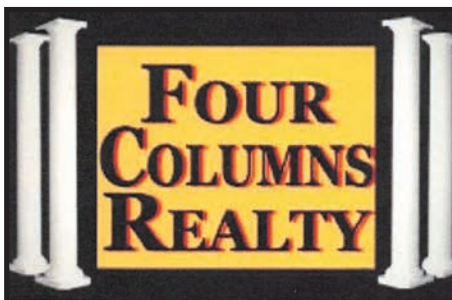
On the west side of Prescott Peninsula, Swift River West Branch formed Prescott's boundaries with Pelham and Shutesbury. Other waterways included Egypt, Sugar, Schoolhouse, and Prescott brooks and a short section of Swift River Middle Branch in the town's northeastern corner. Located at the base of Russ Mountain, Russ Pond was the largest natural body of water in Prescott.

Itinerant groups of Nipmuc Native Americans seasonally utilized natural resources of what became Prescott for hunting, fishing, and gathering. Identified potential sites serving the Nipmuc include the Swift River Valley and uplands near Lighthouse and Prescott hills.

Prescott was formed from the East Parish of Pelham and a three-mile tract of land in southern New Salem. During the 1740s, early European settlers established homesteads along Swift River West Branch, Prescott Hill, and Mellen Hollow in the southeastern part of the area that would become the town. Named for Colonel William Prescott, a military officer who commanded American forces at the Battle of Bunker Hill, Prescott incorporated in 1822.

Leader of the fabled rebellion that bore his name, Daniel Shays owned a farm from 1780 to 1787 near Swift River West Branch in what became Prescott. Nearby Conkey's Tavern, built in 1758, served as a meeting place where Shays and other disgruntled farmers conceived the uprising.

One of three small villages of Prescott, Prescott Hill consisted of a general store, post office, Congregational church, tavern, and several residences. Following numerous debates about locations for meetings, in 1838 the town hall was built near Prescott Hill.



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town of Prescott

Named for John Atkinson, a veteran of the American Revolution and prominent early settler of Prescott, Atkinson Hollow had a tavern, stores, schoolhouse, and a Grange hall that hosted many community events. In 1922, a festive celebration of Prescott's centennial took place at Atkinson Hollow.

At the New Salem town line, North Prescott contained a general store, post office, cemetery, and Methodist and Baptist churches.

Despite rugged topography, Prescott had many farms that produced dairy products, vegetables, blueberries, grain, cereals, and other commodities. High elevations and well drained glacial soils of Prescott Peninsula favored cultivation of orchards with many varieties of apples. At Prescott Hill, a cheese factory opened in 1869.

Several small industries, including gristmills and sawmills, a soapstone factory, and two charcoal kilns, operated on Swift River West Branch and other locations in Prescott. Other shops produced carriages, sleighs, matches, boxes, vinegar, cider, palm leaf hats, and batting, wads of cotton or wool utilized in quilts and mattresses.

With a flag station that served a nearby soapstone quarry and sawmills, a portion of the Athol Branch of Boston and Albany Railroad passed through the northeastern corner of Prescott.

By the 1920s, decline in the number of farms caused the population of the community to decrease to just 235 people. After authorization of Quabbin Reservoir in 1927, most residents rapidly sold their properties to the state Metropolitan District Commission, which administered affairs of the town from 1928 to 1938. Upon disincorporation of Prescott in 1938, New Salem annexed most land of the town with a small section acquired by Petersham.

Closed to public access since the 1940s, Prescott Peninsula is a protected wilderness utilized for research related to wildlife, forest ecology, and water quality. From 1969 to 2011, the Five Colleges Astronomy Department operated a radio observatory at the former site of Prescott Hill village.

Preserving the history of Prescott, several former buildings of the town stand in other communities.

continued on page 47



Originally moved to Orange from the Swift River watershed during construction of Quabbin Reservoir, the North Prescott Methodist Episcopal Church building today stands next to Whitaker-Clary House in North New Salem as part of Swift River Valley Historical Society.

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Elizabeth Ware Packard: One Woman's Struggle for Human Rights

by Sue Cloutier



Elizabeth Ware Packard
champion of human rights
photo courtesy of
Creative Commons

A birth in 1816 changed the lives of many women in the US. Elizabeth Ware was born in Ware. First born of four children in her well-to-do family, she was the only girl. Her father, Samuel Ware, served as preacher at the Ware Congregational Church. Her mother was Lucy Parsons Ware.

The family's heritage did not provide the name for their town, which came from Native American fishing traps or weirs on the river. Anglicized, the word became "ware," and thus the river and town took the name Ware.

Pastor Ware supported Elizabeth's education at the Amherst Female Seminary where she studied classics, mathematics, and French. She graduated at nineteen and became a teacher at a private school. During a stressful first year, she developed a brain fever that put her in the hospital for weeks.

Elizabeth did not believe the hospital helped her with their intended cure of bleeding and purging. An independent thinker, she believed time cured her and then returned to teaching.

When she was twenty-two, her parents arranged her marriage to thirty-six-year-old Theophilus Packard Jr., a Calvinist minister. The Packards lived in western Massachusetts towns where he preached while she bore and cared for their five children.

In 1854, they moved to the Midwest. Theophilus continued preaching, and Elizabeth managed the children and continued her religious studies. She had their sixth child in 1858.

continued on page 55



Seven of the areas Historical Societies are opening their doors to provide you with a glimpse of our local history and what makes the North Quabbin region so special.

Royalston Historical Society
1 On The Common, Royalston, MA

Orange Historical Society
41 North Main Street, Orange, MA

Athol Historical Society
1307 Main Street, Athol, MA

Petersham Historical Society
10 N. Main Street, Petersham

Narragansett Historical Society
1 Boynton Road, Templeton

Swift River Museum
40 Elm Street, New Salem MA

Phillipston Historical Society
80 State Rd., Phillipston MA





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Grout Brothers of Orange Ran First U.S.

by John Burk

At Orange Historical Society, three meticulously restored steam cars produced by the Grout Brothers Automobile Company stand as artifacts of an era when modern automobiles rapidly evolved through efforts of early manufacturers and inventors.



A green 1904 Grout automobile in Orange Historical Society represents the most prosperous era for the company.

photo by John Burk

Renowned for innovative steam vehicles, the Grout Company was a pioneering automaker based in Orange. Brothers Fred, Carl, and Charles Grout established the business in 1896 with support from their father William, a prominent inventor and industrialist who served as superintendent and president of New Home Sewing Machine Company, also based in Orange.

Under the name New Home, the company initially experimented with internal combustion engines, producing roughly a dozen vehicles with bodies supplied by the Hume Carriage Company of Amesbury, Massachusetts. Technical problems related to weight and carburation caused the company to switch to steam, the most reliable, efficient, and cleanest means of propulsion of the time.

On East Main Street in 1900, the Grout Brothers opened the nation's first factory built specifically for production of automobiles. Older manufacturers such as the Duryea Company of Springfield occupied buildings that previously made wagons or bicycles, according to Walter Pollard, longtime Grout historian and member of Orange Historical Society. Later, the building housed Minute Tapioca, Orange Shoe Company and, today, Pete's Tire Barn.

Featuring numerous technological advancements, Grout steam cars utilized two-cylinder engines that provided ample power for travel in hilly terrain and urban areas. Innovations included a condenser that recycled exhaust, significantly extending operational range between refills of water, as well as systems that



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A lightweight, four-seat runabout introduced in 1900, the Model A was the first commercial steam automobile produced by the Grout factory. By 1902, the company offered a range of vehicles including a touring car, delivery wagon, and several Stanhopes, early body styles derived from carriages. One of the most distinctive models, the New Home Coupe, featured a fully enclosed body mounted on a short wheelbase.

Evolution of the Grout lineup continued in 1903 with the Model J featuring a bench seat that unfolded forward of the driver and the Grand Tonneau, a high-end touring car with a condenser mounted behind a large bumper called a cowcatcher. By 1904, the Grout Company thrived while producing as many as eighteen steam cars per week and employing 125 workers the following year. In England, exported Grout steam cars sold under the name Weston.

Grout steam automobiles showcased at exhibitions such as the Philadelphia Automobile and Cycle Show, where a Stanhope won first prize in 1901 for best construction, and the 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis. In competitions including fuel consumption contests, hill climbs, speed trials, and endurance runs, Grout vehicles received accolades. In 1902, a Grout vehicle was the first automobile driven to the summit of Wachusett Mountain in Princeton.

After advances in technology caused automobile markets to shift toward internal combustion engines, in 1905 Grout introduced a touring car with a

four-cylinder gasoline motor while ending production of steam that year.

During a tour of Massachusetts in 1905, noted inventor Thomas Edison visited the Grout factory after

continued on page 49



Grout automobiles included runabouts and touring cars.
photo courtesy of Walter Pollard

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after years of attracting attention, special door

text and photo by Elaine McKay

Just a few doors down from the library, I grew up on the Main Street of Hubbardston. My sister told me how she took me in the carriage walking every day.

Many times, we went to Wheeler Brothers Store on the corner for penny candy or an errand for Mom. Next to the store stood an old house that belonged to the Huckins Family.

For nostalgia, I suppose, through the years, the beauty of that old house and its distinctive front door always attracted special attention from me. The door design, a popular one of the 1800s, takes on the shape of a cross at the top. The door itself carries many legends.

As years rolled by, I frequently stopped to take pictures of the door. I pondered how many times as a child I must have walked past that old house. Over the years, no matter how rainy, snowy, sunny, or cloudy, the cross always seemed to have a special glow about it. When I heard of plans to demolish the old building, my heart sank.

A thought came to mind. I wonder if I could buy that door? I quickly asked myself, "Now what would you do with that old door?"

It kept nagging at me.

Finally, I decided I would buy the door. Demolition had gone swiftly since the beginning of the week, and I arrived none too soon. The front of the house was coming down.

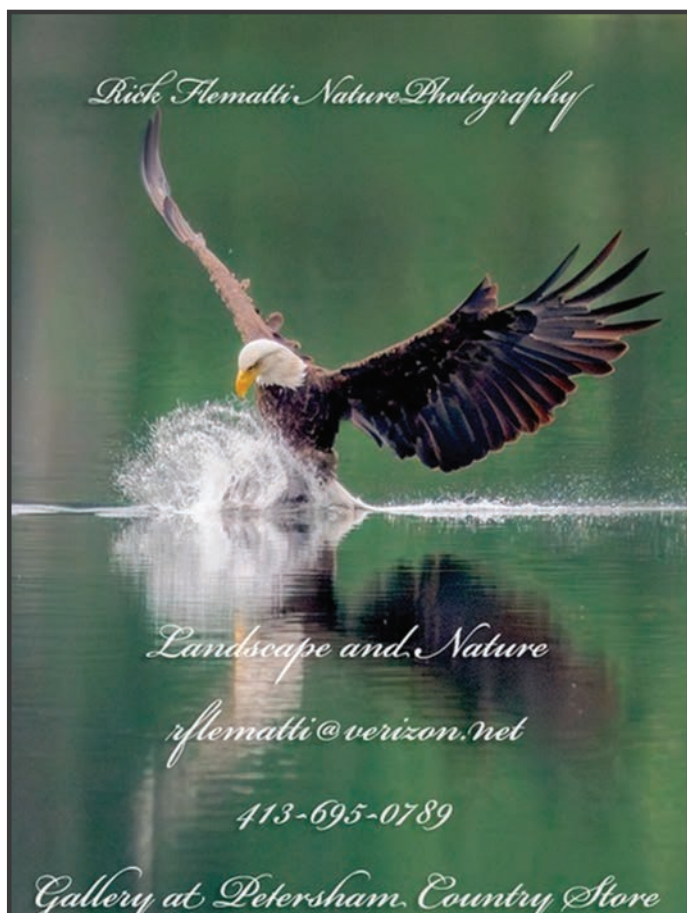
I located the boss of the crew and shyly introduced myself and then I got right to the point. Time was running out.

"What will you do with that front door?" I asked. "I grew up just a few houses down, and that door for some reason holds a special place in my heart."

He paused, looked straight into my teary eyes, smiled, and said, "I'm going to take it down and put it right in the back of your truck."

He must have seen me drive up.

Stunned, I exclaimed, "Wow! Thank you. Thank you so much."



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in Hubbardston finds its meant-to-be home

He immediately directed his crew to remove the door and load it on my truck.

There was no charge.

Driving home proudly, my door hanging off the back of the truck, I began to wonder what my husband Donald would say.

He saw me drive in and came out to see what I had brought home.

"You're not going to believe this honey," I said.

"Oh, yes I am," he replied. "After fifty years, I know what you like."

He got help to unload the heavy door into the barn.

Months went by and we finally decided to hang the door on the side of the barn, much to my delight. It officially became part of our restaurant, Calico & Creme.

I'm so glad I saved that door from my childhood.

Elaine McKay, retired owner with her husband, Don, of Hubbardston restaurant and ice cream place Calico & Creme, is at work on her memoir.



The door with the cross graces the back side of the former Calico & Creme restaurant in Hubbardston.

photo by Elaine McKay



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Ria Windcaller, left, records an episode of the podcast *Cider Chat* with James Forbes, center, a cider maker from England, and Lee Reeve, a cider promoter from Japan.

photo courtesy of Ria Windcaller



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from the Quabbin region to the world of cider

by Ria Windcaller

Long before cider reclaimed its place as one of America's fastest-growing craft beverages, western Massachusetts quietly began laying the foundation for its return.

The four towns of Dana, Enfield, Greenwich, and Prescott and the surrounding region played a part in a rich agricultural tradition where apples and the cider they produced were woven into everyday life.

Massachusetts has a long historical connection to apples and cider as home to the first documented apple orchard in the New World, planted in Roxbury in the 1620s. In a much-quoted remark, Quincy resident and second United States President John Adams said he enjoyed "a tankard of hard cider every morning."

Many people do not realize, however, that western Massachusetts became the epicenter of the modern American cider revival after Prohibition from 1920 to 1933 with production and consumption of alcohol illegal in the United States. That revival didn't begin in a boardroom or a marketing campaign. It began in orchards, where growers looked at their apples and saw a way to preserve both their farms and a centuries-old tradition.

When West County Cider began commercial production in Colrain in 1984, no contemporary cider producers operated in the United States as the revival started not far from the Quabbin Region. As orchards searched for ways to remain economically viable, cider transformed apples from a seasonal crop into a value-added agricultural product, thus helping preserve working orchards while inspiring a new generation of growers and makers.

For me—cider educator, journalist, and founder of *Cider Chat*—the story has unfolded from a front-row seat.

In the late 1990s, I began teaching cidermaking classes each November at New Salem Preserves as part of the area's annual cider celebrations. At a time when cider remained largely overlooked in the United States, I introduced home cidermakers to traditional techniques as we witnessed the quiet reawakening of an industry that had nearly disappeared after Prohibition.

The region offered something few places could match. Historic orchards remained in production, and farmers preserved heirloom apple varieties. Growers began looking beyond fresh fruit as they recognized that cider could provide a sustainable future for family orchards while celebrating their agricultural heritage.

Beginning in 2003, I regularly covered breweries, makers, and beverage culture for *Yankee Brew News*, one

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organizations offer neighborly assistance throughout Quabbin region

by Marlene Chaisson



Quabbin region organizations provide neighborly help to residents more than sixty years old.
pen and ink drawing by Brian Fournier

Back in the day—the ‘60s, ‘70s, and even the ‘80s—neighbors helped each other with borrowing a cup of sugar, helping to change a light bulb, providing a ride to the store, watching the neighborhood, or just having a friendly visit on the front porch.

People generally live longer than in earlier decades—a blessing that can carry issues with, for example, adult children both working and perhaps their parents no longer able to drive.

Quabbin region communities offer neighborly assistance through various organizations focused on helping individuals older than sixty.

Athol Kindness Connection, AKC, recently formed to offer old-fashioned help. Among other helping organizations in the Quabbin region, Petersham Partners and Village Neighbors in Leverett, New Salem, Shutesbury, and Wendell serve those older than sixty.

Volunteers cannot immediately handle all member requests, but with a little planning ahead with appointments, AKC and others can offer needed help. Volunteers can, for example, offer assistance with flipping mattresses, seasonal installation of window air conditioners, transportation for medical appointments or social engagements, and more.

Athol Kindness Connection started in 2024 by a ten-member board of like-minded individuals who took care of friends and loved ones when no one else could. The Village-to-Village Network, the model for AKC, started in Boston in 2010 and has grown to more than 250 active communities today. The basic premise aims to assist the elderly to remain in their homes and out of extended care for as long as possible.

AKC has worked closely with Athol Senior Center, LifePath, and Helpful Village to embrace ways to help.

Transportation ranks as a particular need among the elderly. Many organizations do not offer rides but direct ride requests to a local bus schedule. In some instances, an individual cannot easily get to and from a bus stop nor carry in groceries alone, for example, after an errand.

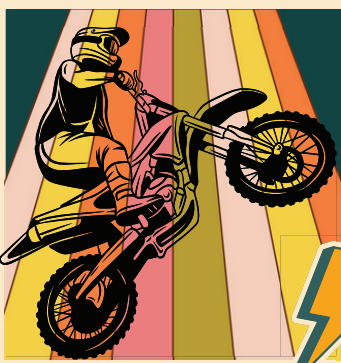
Fully insured, AKC provides volunteers who use their own vehicles to bring an individual to shop for groceries,

continued on page 49



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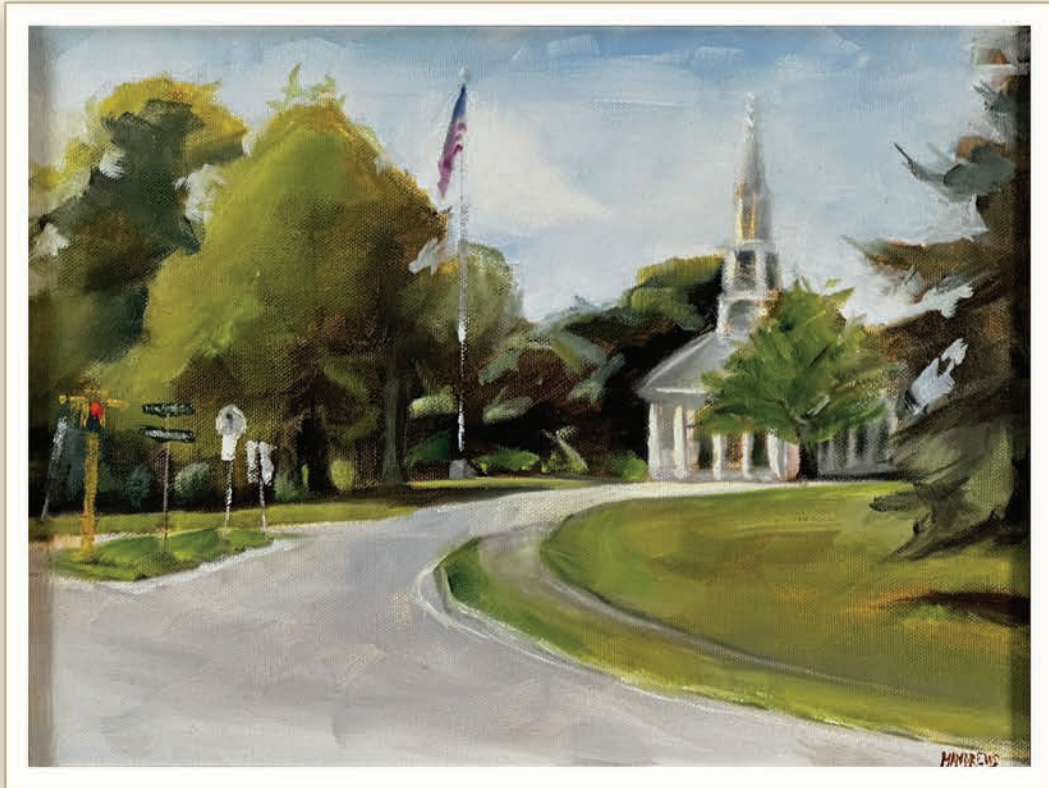
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Victoria Rose Gagnard: a legacy of

by Kristina Hartjens

Inside a local thrift store in the middle of August, shoppers quietly browsed the aisles when an energetic eight-year-old girl decided something was missing.

Christmas.

Victoria Rose Gagnard walked outside, convinced a group of complete strangers to join her, and before long, they stood together in summer sunshine singing “Jingle Bells.”

No one questioned it.

They simply smiled . . . and sang.

That was Victoria.

She had an extraordinary gift for bringing people together. Her infectious joy, fearless personality, and heart for others drew people —whether friends, classmates, fellow dancers, or complete strangers—to her. Funny, bold, and completely herself, the little girl Victoria breathed a spirit larger than life.

No one could have imagined that, years later, she

would once again bring an entire community together through the legacy she left behind.

On March 5, 2016, Victoria and her friend, six-year-old Leena Shea Ciolino, tragically lost their lives in an Orange, Massachusetts house fire mere streets from her home and The Dance Studio of Orange, where she learned and performed.

The loss devastated the town. Neighbors lined Mechanic Street, site of the fire, with flowers, stuffed animals, candles, and handwritten notes. The entire community mourned alongside two grieving families.

In the months that followed, Victoria’s grandmother and guardian, Priscilla Gagnard, searched for a way to honor her granddaughter while helping everyone heal.

She found that answer in dance.

“Starting the Victoria Rose Scholarship Fund was a way to help her grieving family, friends, and community heal from her tragic loss,” Priscilla says. “By making a

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caring and community—and dance

difference in the lives of children, Victoria's memory would live on while also bringing us together as a community through her love of dance."

The decision felt especially fitting because of something Victoria had often asked while she was alive.

She wanted her friends to dance with her.

More than once, Victoria asked her grandmother if they could help pay for dance lessons for children whose families couldn't afford them. Priscilla wished she could, but as with many, she simply couldn't.

Today, however, because of the generosity of countless donors, volunteers, and community members, Victoria's wish has become a reality.

Since its founding, the Victoria Rose Scholarship Fund has awarded \$21,757.75 in dance scholarships to help fifteen dancers each participate in forty dance classes they may not otherwise have experienced. Four years ago, the organization expanded its mission to include college scholarships and has since awarded a total of \$7,000 to five graduating seniors as they pursue higher education.

Each scholarship represents more than financial assistance.

A child discovers confidence through dance.

A family receives hope during a difficult season.

An opportunity remains no longer out of reach.

Recovering from major back surgery and months away from work, the mother of one scholarship recipient described the fund as "a gift from heaven" after it allowed her daughter to continue dancing.

Now studying biology, earth and climate science, and dance at Middlebury College, another recipient credits the scholarship with helping her continue both her education and her dream of one day herself teaching dance.

To Priscilla, those stories manifest exactly what Victoria would have wanted.

"Our team of volunteers is a true reflection of Victoria's spirit and character," she said. "We are a small but mighty team."

As the fund celebrates ten years of changing lives, one thing has become abundantly clear. The tragedy that took her life does not define Victoria's legacy. The lives she continues to touch define her legacy.

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Victoria Rose Gagnard

A scholarship in memory of Victoria Rose honors her enthusiasm, originality, kindness, and her love of dancing.

photo by Kirsten Spencer

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A Drumstick for Thanksgiving chronicles highs and lows

by Bonnie Arnot

In *A Drumstick for Thanksgiving, Please*, mainly set during World War II, Frank T. Waters Jr. chronicles the highs and lows of three generations of his family raised in Orange in northeast Franklin County.



The late Frank T. Waters Jr., left, tells of family life during World War II with memories of his service as a P-51 pilot and of his pilot brother Bill's imprisonment during the war.
photos courtesy of the Waters family

Since my father grew up in Orange and I moved there in the 1990s to marry and raise a family, I found description of life in the town during the 1940s especially interesting. Before I read the book, I knew about the Minute Tapioca and sewing machine factories, movie theatre, and train station but not about Leavitt's grocery store and soda bar or two drug stores.

Married to Mahar Regional School teacher of English Barbara, the author's grandfather, Frank, was one of two dentists in town. Together, Frank and Barbara raised five children in their home on South Main Street. Their two youngest sons, Frank Jr. and Bill, became aviators when the US joined the Allies against Germany and Japan. When Frank earned his wings, Mamie Eisenhower, several years away from being First Lady—"some general's wife," according to Frank—pinned his wings on him.

Co-pilot for a B-17 bomber crew, Bill flew only a few missions from England before being shot down, captured, and spending the rest of the war in a prison camp for aviators. The Waters family at first received only a telegram pronouncing Bill missing in action. Many months passed before they learned of his capture and imprisonment.

The family also contended with heartbreak at home. The oldest of two daughters, Laura, became ill with leukemia. Physicians tried to treat the little-known illness with penicillin and blood transfusions. Nothing worked. She died within months at thirty-four, leaving a husband, two young sons, her siblings, and parents. Mr. Waters writes that his grandparents provided a steady bulwark as the family grieved.

Pilot of a P-51 fighter plane with the 339th Fighter Dive Bomber Group, Frank took part in the D-Day invasion by providing cover and protection for the hundreds of ships making their way to Normandy.

In his letters home, Frank continually wished for a turkey drumstick like the family had on Thanksgiving. Frank fulfilled the number of combat hours required to be sent home. The war soon ended, and he got his wish for that drumstick.

With more than a thousand prisoners, mostly British and American aviators, Germany provided thin soup and one piece of bread once a day. The men, including Bill Waters, relied on weekly delivery of Red Cross

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of three generations of the Waters family of Orange

rations. For Americans, the care package contained powdered milk, canned Spam, corned beef, salmon, liver paste, cheese, margarine, biscuits, Nescafé coffee, jam, prunes or raisins, sugar, and eight ounces of chocolate plus four ounces of soap and cigarettes.

Everyone looked forward to packages from home and wrote letters emphasizing the need for warm clothing and personal care items.

On January 27, 1945, two thousand POWs including Bill were moved to a smaller prison. They marched for several days through snow, then were packed fifty men to a boxcar and kept in them for the next forty-eight hours as they moved by rail farther inland in Germany. In April, the German guards left, and American tanks rolled in. Bill had been a prisoner for one year and one day. First sent to France, Bill had more surgery to remove remaining shrapnel German surgeons had left in wounds to his left hand and side, acquired when his plane was shot down.

After the war, the two brothers went to college on the GI Bill, married, and raised families. Bill worked for an insurance company, and Frank became a physical education teacher and coach of several sports at Mahar. Through the years, the brothers often held family reunions at cottages they bought side by side on Lake Mattawa in Orange.

For his inspiration and ability to write *A Drumstick for Thanksgiving, Please*, published by the Radical Women press, the author, Frank Waters III, credits his grandfather, Frank Sr., who saved every letter written by family members during World War II. Deep respect for the men and women who served during WWII and the abiding love of Frank Waters III and appreciation for his family enliven the facts and anecdotes of the book, available in area libraries and online.

Early childhood educator Bonnie Arnot lives in Orange. She is author of the *Destiny of Jasirey* series of romantasy novels.



A young gray fox takes advantage of wild blueberries in North Brookfield's autumn woods.

photo by Tricia Burton



Time to Ride
pen and chalk drawing by Brian Fournier

About Cowgirls

by Brian J. Fournier

Whoever dreamed up the horse
surely had young girls in mind.
It stands a lease on woman-hood!
Any maiden can fall for a steed.
It's an unconditional love, but
for carrots and sugar cubes
or a race around those barrels.
She, like a sail above a boat,
cowgirl hat flapping, braced for the
pull of centrifugal forces, as her
soulmate sends sand in sprayed spires
like water from a lawn sprinkler.
A tiny lass on a thousand-pound missile
with no destination saddled for but
those dreams realized and found on
some grassy field of sweet clover.

Equine conversations so sure, a
private sisterhood finding a language
of pure grace.



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The Hunt

as told to Brian J. Fournier
by Ginger Retriever

The traveling machine is idling in the drive.

I'm so excited, as I saw him today bring out the long tube-like thing that goes bang. We are going to where I can run, swim, and find all the best odors I can possibly smell.

He uses the tube thing to bang a lot. He has me fetch those feathery dead "birds." He calls them "birds." How they tickle my mouth. At home, we practice on a rubbery throw toy. He tells me, "Don't bite down on the 'bird.'"

He says the word "training" a lot to me. Also, there's training with the bang tube, so I got used to the loud noises it makes.

I fetch many "birds" and go for many more. After, he says, "Good girl!" and "Treat!"

I feel happy, and the treats taste good. I swim and run a lot all day, and I love it. It's when I am at my happiest until night by the fire, my belly full and so sleepy. Sometimes I wake myself up running so fast only to find I'm still in my bed, and I'm a little sad to know it may be a while before he will bring out the tube again. But he pats me, and I'm very contented, so I will dream of those hunt days to come.



The Hunt

ink and pastel drawing by Brian Fournier

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from the pens of

poem by

Carla Rabinowitz

Diana

Picking wild strawberries is a kind
of meditation. You kneel, lifting the leaves,
pulling back grasses, parting the moss,
caressing each find.
Impossible red, redder than rubies, redder than
stoplights,
held without touching,
cradled in mind.

And all the while, you are helplessly sneezing
into dish towel or anything else that's handy
and sweating into the red flannel shirt
which someone said would help to ward off deer flies,
and after nearly an hour, you've picked a pint.

But the real challenge is to do it with a two-year-old
squashing the berries, stomping all over your treasure,
and maintain that stillness, that held breath,
embracing
child and berries and deer flies in equal measure.

Some years, they haven't any taste.
No one eats them before they spoil.
Some years, nobody wants your harvest.
Don't let it stop you.
The picking is all.

Carla Rabinowitz is author of *Borderers: Becoming Americans on the Southern Frontier*, a picture of one part of American history as seen through the journeys of four generations of her ancestors as they migrated from Virginia to the Pacific coast. A family and community mediator for most of her career, she has lived in Royalston with her husband, Phil Rabinowitz, for the past forty-eight years.

prose poem by

Jack McClintock

A Terrible Beauty Is Born

There's a terrible beauty in the human heart. Within its bounds, terrifying nights of rage break upon cloudless days of breathtaking tenderness. The capacity for cruelty blends seamlessly with compassion until the distinction between hero and villain blurs. The search to discover who we are never ends, but the enthusiasm for that search ebbs in the wake of fear and disillusionment.

Character is forged in the humdrum of everyday, though it's typically measured in the heat of great passion and adversity. We gain perspective into the misfortunes of our lives only in contrast with the tragedies of others.

Many years have passed since I worked in the House of Pain. Sometimes it seems like a dream—the cursing and threats, the screaming and sobs all still echo in my memory. I was therapist to monsters and madmen, predators and their prey, all living side by side in a place only men could build and only fools would suppose might help anyone become a better human being.

I listened to their stories of blood and lust, vengeance and betrayal, of poverty and perversion, sadism and repentance, and did it all in the hope of bringing peace or repose to lives racked by their own implacable nature. I don't know if it was folly or grace that guided me. But I do know this—all of their stories live inside me, and I have been changed by them . . . changed utterly, a terrible beauty born.

From: *Sin Eater • Memoirs of A Prison Psychologist*, an autobiographical story about life working with the imprisoned. Published as nonfiction on Amazon Books in 2022.

A psychologist in mental health services, Jack McClintock says, "I've experienced every situation a therapist can encounter, an experience that enables me to adopt a healthy respect for life, an appreciation for things that bring joy, and genuine acceptance of how sorrows enable appreciation of joy."

Uniquely Quabbin poets

poem by

Frederick Steinway

Journey to an Inland Sea

We make our journey to the inland sea,
the waiting sea with moving shades
rolled out as some unread scroll—
a friend's eye that turns to deeper blue.

Breezes chase each other over its surfaces
as at the beginning of all things—
the inland sea of many names remains itself,
keeps quick fishes in its sheltered coves.

Rivulets wander down hillside to a pebbled strand
as thunders pass through changing golden light.
Teacher speaks quietly from a dory offshore
while plovers dabble in the reeds.

In sister's gardens, seeds once planted grow
to flower as each evolves toward light.
Every opened heart bears a pattern of one star
so night turns into day and daylight into night.

Evening firelit homes and Lynnea's song—
the words recur on drifting out to sleep:
We do not have to enter into currents of strife.
The Creative Forces are the poem of life.

Acupuncturist and poet Frederick Steinway lives in
Shutesbury.

poem by

Pamela Gemme

Rapture

The hour of darkness separates us,
fuels the inclusion of a thousand shades of green.
No apparent equity,
a field of oat yields the power of breath.

Buttercups, ghost pipes, and silkworms abide
in twilight's humid truth.
Stones stack up like a treasury.
What scale can balance that?

Beyond the iridescence of crows,
the sun hopes for coywolves,
black plums, moose hooves, moss to the extreme,
and beguiles what is still free—

Cherry blossom light
no accident of nature
all this winter left—

Pamela Gemme of West Brookfield works with poets writing
about personal trauma. An editor of *Worcester Review*, she
co-edited *Essential Voices: A Covid-19 Anthology* published
by West Virginia University Press. Her chapbook *Making My
Madonna* is forthcoming from Finishing Line Press.

Submit poems for *Uniquely Quabbin*

to marcia2gagliardi@gmail.com

Ware standby Janine's Frostee bring variety, contrasting styles,

text and photos by Chris Coyle

Any restaurant that's been around for seventy years has earned its place of honor among culinary institutions.

I recently enjoyed a fine lunch at a seasonal, family-friendly drive-in restaurant at 149 East Street in Ware—Janine's Frostee, founded in 1956. I ordered a drive-in classic cheeseburger with Swiss cheese, a



Founded in 1956, Janine's Frostee serves it up at 149 East Street, Ware.

couple of pickles, and a little ketchup. Instead of the usual French fries with a cheeseburger, I opted for fried mushrooms, something I don't see on other menus. I chose lemonade as my beverage.

Nothing disappointed me. Courteous staff took the order, and the food appeared quickly. As a child of the 1960s/1970s, I enjoyed hearing many favorite songs playing over loudspeakers in the dining area.

To top the meal off, I ordered a hot fudge sundae with maple walnut ice cream. Served with whipped cream and a cherry, it made a perfect ending to my lunch.

Janine's offers an extensive food and dessert menu. Online reviews mention must-try dishes such as lobster rolls, clam fritters, and onion rings. Ample covered outdoor seating makes for a pleasant dining experience during times of inclement weather or hot sun. Online

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and Orange newcomer Casa Amigos and good food to regional dining out

reviews frequently mention cheerful and friendly staff.

On my next visit I plan to opt for some of Janine's popular seafood and perhaps a malt, something I enjoy but don't see on many menus elsewhere.

The menu notes gluten-free food and uses dedicated gluten-free equipment. The wheelchair-accessible facility provides plenty of parking for many guests on a busy day.

Everything at the restaurant appeared scrupulously clean—the dining area, the kitchen area visible from ordering and serving windows, and the restrooms. Janine's obviously takes pride in serving quality food in a clean and welcoming atmosphere.

Janine's is open from early spring through October during most years. It's always best if traveling from a distance to telephone first to be sure the restaurant is open when planning a visit.

Friday evenings and Sunday afternoons have live music during the warm months, and Janine's hosts car shows from time to time.

One online review sums it up as "Janine's Frostees continue creating cherished memories through tasty offerings all season long."

Casa Amigos Mexican Restaurant and Cantina is the latest place to go in the Athol-Orange area. Located in what many readers will remember as Batch's Red Rooster, the new restaurant opened at 437 East Main Street in Orange on March 1 this year. Its name in Spanish means "house of friends."

A cantina is a casual bar or tavern. The proprietors also own Los Agaves Grill in Athol. The menus of the two restaurants, while similar, offer something unique to each location.

continued on page 56



Opened in March 2026 at 437 East Main Street, Orange,
Casa Amigos serves varied Mexican fare.



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Chestnut Hill Chili

text and photos by Chris Coyle



Ground turkey browns, left, and onions sauté as part of preparing Chestnut Hill Chili, right.

Chestnut Hill Chili, a name derived from the street where I reside, makes a hearty meal for any time of year, especially on a crisp, autumn day.

I prepare chili in a slow cooker. I find that using a slow cooker frees me to do other things while the meal cooks and usually provides my home a very fragrant aroma.

The word chili generally refers to a hot, spicy pepper or a hearty stew seasoned with those peppers. Chili is short for chili con carne, a Spanish phrase that translates literally to chili with meat.

I normally make chili using ground turkey, but others can make it with ground beef with equally good results. I enjoy the milder, heart-healthy ground turkey generally lower in saturated fat than ground beef.

Railroad enthusiast, historian, and retired research technician, Chris Coyle lives in Athol. He is author of the memoir *We Lived in the Woods* about family summers in Maine. His new book *Trains and Me* will be out this autumn.



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PREPARE MILD OR WITH SPICY BLEND

serves 4

Start by emptying two cans of beans into the slow cooker. I like to use two different types of beans for maximum flavor—I especially like to use both small white kidney beans and small red kidney beans.

Next, sauté onion in some olive oil in a cast-iron skillet. I like Vidalia onions, as they seem easier to digest. Use about a quarter of a medium-sized onion chopped to preferred size. Soften onions to a translucent state.

Then add the ground meat and brown it to add flavor. As it browns, I typically season the meat with a little salt and pepper. Once the meat has sufficiently browned, add the onion/meat mixture to the slow cooker.

Then add bay leaves, sugar, vinegar, and other seasonings. I always add two bay leaves to any recipe that calls for them. That way, I always remember how many bay leaves to remove prior to serving. Summer savory makes the beans more digestible. Finally, add diced tomatoes and tomato soup to the slow cooker. I frequently use fire-roasted diced tomatoes.

Fill slow cooker to from half to two-thirds, leaving a gap between the food and the top of the kettle for proper cooking. I use a four-quart slow cooker, and a different size may require adjusting ingredients to end up with a proper volume.

Cover the slow cooker and cook on high for three hours. Don't stir ingredients after setting up the slow cooker and never remove the lid until the chili has finished cooking. Check the slow cooker's setting and make sure that it is warming up after 15 to 20 minutes.

After three hours, remove the bay leaves, stir, and check the flavor. If needed, add any additional salt or pepper. Ladle the chili into bowls and garnish with fresh parsley, grated cheese, or a favorite choice of topping and serve with pride!

Omit the chili and cumin for those who do not like spicy foods. The resulting dish should be quite mild. On the other hand, to make the chili even hotter, consider my spice blend offered after main ingredients.

CHRIS'S SPICE BLEND

to jazz things up for those who like foods hot and spicy

1 tablespoon chili powder
1/2 tablespoon cayenne pepper
1/4 teaspoon smoked paprika
1/4 teaspoon HOT Old Bay Seasoning
a shake of Adobo Seasoning
a shake of Umami Bomb Seasoning
a shake of seasoned salt
Combine ingredients and place in a shaker
or small dish to dispense with meal.

INGREDIENTS

1 can small white beans
1 can red kidney beans
1/4 onion, chopped
1 pound lean ground turkey or beef
2 bay leaves
1 tablespoon brown sugar
1 tablespoon cider vinegar
1 teaspoon dried oregano
1 packet sodium-free beef bouillon
2 good shakes paprika
1 teaspoon Italian seasoning
1 tablespoon chili powder, optional
1 tablespoon cumin, optional
1 teaspoon dried summer savory
1 can diced tomatoes
1 can tomato soup



SEASONAL IMAGES

Photos and Prints by Photographic Artist

David Brothers

Many local North Quabbin images to choose from.

All Photos are printed using

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The Way We Were—a visual haiku by Ami Fagin



Grocery stores are an endless source of curiosity and inspiration for a Visual Haiku moment. Visual Haiku #235: The Way We Were came of age during the COVID pandemic when masks were mandatory and distance between shopping carts was carefully choreographed. Gone were casual trips to the market with shelves brimming with groceries, where waiting in the checkout line was uneventful. Visual Haiku #235: The Way We Were expresses a quiet nostalgia for the extraordinary within the ordinary before COVID distance and masking—those overlooked moments that often become precious only after they are gone.

ami fagin

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Reishi shelf fungi grow on region's hemlock trees text and photo by Sue Cloutier

Reishi shelf fungi, *Ganoderma tsugae*, grow on a downed eastern hemlock, *Tsuga canadensis*, that grew in a New Salem backyard.

The particular shelf fungus perhaps has health benefits in tinctures and teas, according to scientists who found that, in mice, the fungus promotes healing and may impact cancerous growths.

Humans should not consume Reishi, since science has not verified that they provide benefits to humans.

An infestation of hemlock woolly adelgid insects, *Adelges tsugae* looking like innocent white tufts on hemlock branches, killed the hemlock mushroom host. United States hemlocks have not evolved defenses to the particular adelgid, native to Japan. The insect sucks the life out of native American hemlock branches.

A native tree dies while providing food for the invasive insect, and then a native Reishi shelf fungus benefits by living on that dead native tree.

Experienced nature center director Sue Cloutier specializes in biodiversity and educational programs.



Thanks to an infestation of hemlock woolly adelgid insects, Reishi shelf fungi grow on a dead tree in a New Salem backyard.



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QUABBIN CURRENTS:

Metropolitan District Commission created in 1919

by J. R. Greene

An 1895 report by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health included the first proposal for a reservoir in Swift River Valley. To solve the shortage of drinking water in metropolitan Boston, it suggests construction of what became the Wachusett Reservoir north of Worcester. Other potential future water sources mentioned in the report include Ware, Swift, Millers, and Deerfield rivers.

To construct Wachusett Reservoir, the Metropolitan Water Board was created to supply water to any city or town within ten miles of the Massachusetts State House. The Water Board completed and filled Wachusett Reservoir in 1908, but found the system running low a decade later during World War I.

In 1919 as the war ended, the board combined with the state parks system as Metropolitan District Commission (MDC). That agency along with the state department of public health, was tasked that year to

come up with a further solution to the metropolitan water shortage.

The so-called joint board report, issued in 1922, recommends diversion of water from Ware River in Barre and Millers River above Athol as well as flooding Swift River Valley to create a reservoir with an aqueduct to Wachusett Reservoir. After several years of legislative wrangling, detailed in my book *The Creation of Quabbin Reservoir*, the legislature passed the Ware River Act in 1926 and Swift River Act in 1927 to authorize building the Quabbin Reservoir.

The body created to carry out the project, the Metropolitan District Water Supply Commission or MDWSC, consisted of three members appointed by the governor. The solution represents a compromise, as both the MDC and health department had expressed interest in overseeing the project.

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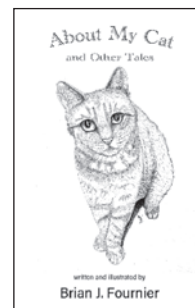
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*About My Cat
and Other Tales*

selected poems 1970-2020

written and illustrated by Brian J. Fournier

Barely camouflaged in the rhyme and meter of Brian Fournier's verse in About My Cat are profound glimpses of a boy emerging from a painful childhood as he finds his true creative spirit in adulthood and changes his family legacy once he becomes a grandfather. Through inspirations born of pain, conversations with his feline companions, and sharing of his inner reactions to deeply moving human experiences, Brian's poems truly take the reader on a journey to discover what one finds in between each and every line.

*—the Reverend Candi Ashenden, DMin
pastor at Athol, Massachusetts, Congregational Church*

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to address water shortages in Boston area



The Metropolitan District Water Supply Commission, MDWSC, appointed Frank E. Winsor in 1926 to serve as chief engineer for building dams on Swift River to create Quabbin Reservoir.

photo courtesy of J. R. Greene

The MDWSC appointed Frank E. Winsor as chief engineer. He had just finished managing the Scituate Reservoir project for the water supply of Providence, Rhode Island. Most who worked for him thought him to be a “fair” man, “straightforward” and “human,” who did not “force his ideas” on others. His assistant was Karl Kennison, another experienced water engineer.

R. Nelson Molt served as secretary for the MDWSC. Many did not remember him fondly during his long tenure in part, perhaps, due to his signature appearing on eviction notices sent to Swift River Valley residents in 1938 and 1939. One project engineer thought Molt “bossy,” a man who

“magnified himself,” often “playing god with his position.” A project worker called him “outspoken . . . , dictatorial . . . “ He “interfered with the engineers.”

MDWSC established field offices in 1926 in Enfield and Barre and began purchasing property in both the Ware and Swift river valleys. Initially, to increase the water supply as soon as possible, MDWSC focused on construction of the Ware River diversion part of the project, even though there would be no required destruction of the villages of White Valley in Barre, Coldbrook Springs in Oakham, and West Rutland in Rutland.

The State of Connecticut sued Massachusetts over the project in 1928, as it would take about two percent of water flowing into and through their state from the

Connecticut River. The engineers did not stop work on the diversion project, correctly predicting that Massachusetts would win the case. The 1931 decision handed down by the United States Supreme Court favored Massachusetts, resulting that year in water diverted from the Ware River into the system. In 1932, the MDWSC decided to name the water body Quabbin Reservoir, as suggested by the engineer, Kennison. He had learned that the old Native-American name for the area means “great waters” or “place of many waters.”

At the behest of Democratic Governor James Michael Curley, the MDWSC conducted a premature clearing project in 1936. Curley got two members of the MDWSC board to approve the action. The

continued on page 54



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random encounters lead to seeing world as a

continued from page 4

Sometimes, someone remarks about my dog and shares a touching story about their dog. Such exchanges make me teary eyed as people reminisce about a cherished friend.

Last December, I returned to Boston after a week away with family. The day before, Boston had experienced a two-foot snowfall. I arrived at North Station to take the commuter rail to Wachusett Station where I had parked my car outside some fifty-four miles away.

With trains all delayed, the board listed no departure times. For more than an hour, travelers gathered and stared at the marquee. A young man picked up a conversation with me. He complained about lack of information and the long wait.

I agreed and shared with him my misadventure. I told him I had left my backpack in a taxi that drove away, so I lost my iPad, medications, book, and sundry travel items. Fortunately, I had my wallet and keys with me. Eventually, the train arrived, and we boarded. Before we got into our separate cars, he wanted me to have his number in case I had trouble with my car.

I said I would be fine and not to worry.

Wachusett is the last stop on the line. I arrived past nine in the evening. With snow up past the tires, the shape of the car was barely discernable. Somehow, I managed to force open the driver side door.

I started the car and got out the large scraper and got to work. Half an hour later, I had made some progress. My hands had turned numb with the parking lot empty except for me.

A car drove in and parked near me. I assumed it was driven by someone waiting for the next train.

But, no! The young man, Matt, I had spoken with in Boston had driven from Shirley to help me out with his snow shovel.

It brought a tear to my eye, perhaps two. He dug me out, drove the car clear, and even cleaned the buildup off the wheel hubs.

Of course, Matt refused any consideration except my many thanks. He followed me out of the parking lot. We honked goodbye and drove our separate ways.

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caring place

All that kindness happened as a result of a random conversation. We all have friends, acquaintances, and perhaps a range of people we know. Then there are those we recognize but can't quite remember in what context we knew them.

When a stranger takes time to listen to our situation and even does something to make our lives better, that kindness really stands out. We see the world as a more caring place.

It is good to get out into nature and experience quiet times, quiet thoughts. And along with that, random encounters with strangers enrich us and underline our shared lives whatever they may be.

Actor, lover of language, and retired teacher of French, Sally Howe lives in Orange.



Autumn energy animates Leverett's Revolutionary War-era sawmill.
oil on canvas by Louise Minks



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count populations in future Quabbin region towns

Resolve for numbering all male inhabitants “from sixteen years upwards” except for those “of the denomination of Christians called Quakers, Indians, Negroes, and Mollatoes.” That is, it reverted to counting polls to determine the potential for military service.

However, two sources do report results from the Massachusetts census of 1776. In his pioneering 1845 history of Massachusetts’ population, Joseph Felt printed results of both the 1776 total census and the 1777 count of polls from “a manuscript of credible authority,” which, unfortunately, he does not identify. The Massachusetts Archives in Boston holds a small manuscript volume of early date, Massachusetts Archives Collection (MAC) 322, 99, which contains the “Number of Inhabitants in the State of Massachusetts, March 1776.”

Although the two documents substantially agree, the manuscript list does not quite match Felt’s. For Quabbin region towns, Felt lacks numbers for Tardis Ware and for Athol, while MAC 322 supplies both but lacks a number for Warwick, which Felt includes. The

differences could be clerical omissions, but they may also result from different sources. That is, both Felt’s “credible” manuscript and MAC 322 may have been compiled independently from original town returns possibly never officially tabulated.

Felt is quite definite that his numbers included White persons only, whereas MAC 322 has no such exclusion and counts only “Persons.” Both 322 and Felt, however, give Black totals for each county: 245 in Hampshire and 432 in Worcester. A recently constructed table compares 1776 numbers from both sources and Felt’s 1777 poll count for all towns eventually part of the Quabbin region.

The January 2022 edition of *Uniquely Quabbin* carries an article by Carl Hammer with more information about the 1765 census.

Carl Hammer lives in Easthampton and Pittsburgh and contributes regularly to *Uniquely Quabbin*. His latest book is *A Greater Noise: Liberal Religion in Early Western Massachusetts from the Revolution to the Unitarian Controversy*, 2025, from Levellers Press in Florence.

lost town of Prescott buildings featured across Massachusetts

continued from page 17

In 1930, silk magnate Joseph Allen Skinner moved the former Congregational Church of Prescott Hill to South Hadley, where it serves as an art museum for Mount Holyoke College.

At the Eastern States Exposition in West Springfield, the Atkinson Tavern functions as a restaurant in historic Storowtown Village. In Petersham, the town hall was rebuilt at a private residence.

For use as a repository, in 1949 members of Prescott Historical Society rebuilt the former Methodist church of North Prescott in Orange. Again relocated in 1985 to the grounds of Swift River Valley Historical Society in New Salem, it houses artifacts of Prescott and other towns abandoned during the creation of Quabbin Reservoir.

Find information about Swift River Valley Historical Society at swiftrivermuseum.org

Writer and photographer John Burk lives in Petersham.



Travel Journaling

photography, pencil, white chalk, watercolor, and pen and ink
by Elizabeth Callahan



Traveling provides for new inspirations, and art journaling offers a wonderful creative outlet for capturing those thoughts, feelings, and impressions with words, photos, and art. My trip to a small hill town, Monte Castello di Vibio in Umbria, Italy ended much too soon. Fortunately, my journal allows me to visit whenever I like and still provides inspiration for future paintings. All along the outer edges of the town ran a very private walkway—all stone. Ancient homes rose up on one side and walls with small doorways on the other. I never saw a single person during my many hours sitting near this magical doorway.

Elizabeth Callahan creates art using oil, watercolor, pastels, pen and ink, and colored pencil.
She lives in Rutland.

in early 1900s, Orange showcased Grout automobiles

continued from page 21

his car broke down in Templeton. Impressed by a ride in the new Grout gasoline vehicle, Edison ordered a 1906 model. In subsequent advertisements, the company highlighted Edison's visit and ownership of a Grout.

From 1907 onward, financial difficulties and a contentious family dispute caused the Grout company to fall into disarray. A global economic crisis, the Panic of 1907, adversely affected small automakers with limited resources. Dissatisfied with management by his sons, William Grout took over the company shortly before his death in 1908. After losing their funding and inheritance, Fred, Charles, and Carl left the area. Reorganized as the Grout Automobile Company, the factory continued production until closing in 1912.

Approximately thirty Grout automobiles exist in museums and private collections around the world, including a 1901 Model B and 1904 runabout displayed at Orange Historical Society, which also stores a beautifully restored 1904 model owned by Pollard. Discovered at a barn in Vermont by Pollard and subsequently acquired by late local electrician Dick Phillips, the Model B is one of only two known 1901 Grouts in existence.

Pollard, who has researched Grout automobiles for thirty-six years, plans to write a book about the company and compile a registry of extant vehicles. Contact him at wrp@physics.umass with information about the Grout company.

Writer and photographer John Burk lives in Petersham.

AUTUMN EVENTS SPONSORED BY SWIFT RIVER VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

**Saturday, September 26
2 p.m. at Whitaker-Clary House
ANNUAL FRIENDS MEETING**

**Sunday, September 27
11 a.m. FALL HIKE
to DANA PLANE CRASH SITE
Meet at Gate 43**

**11 a.m. Sunday, October 18
HIKE to UNDERHILL ROAD and MILL SITE
in PRESCOTT
Meet at New Salem Common**

**978-544-6882 • swiftrivermuseum@gmail.com
swiftrivermuseum.org/ • [facebook.com/swiftrivermuseum/](https://www.facebook.com/swiftrivermuseum/)**

organizations offer neighborly help

continued from page 26

eye appointments, tests at the hospital, or to pick up prescriptions before returning them home, possibly to help with carrying things inside.

AKC, which charges fees for membership, and other regional organizations invite members, volunteers, and donors. Village Neighbors and Petersham Partners do not typically charge fees.

Volunteers may set their own lengths of participating time. Volunteering requires no special skills. Even short visits or phone calls to check on someone after a weather event or when the member has surgery helps.

Greeting card designer Marlene Chaisson prizes fitness.

Contact

AKC at (978) 285-7550

Village Neighbors at (413) 345-6894

Petersham Partners at (978) 724-0078

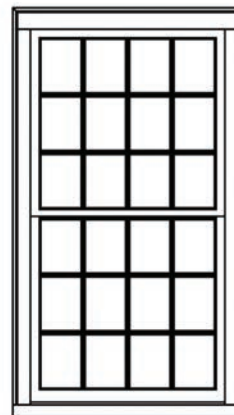
or at websites

atholkindnessconnection.org/index2

villageneighbors.org

townofpetersham.gov/petersham-partners/

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NATURE'S NUANCES

Harvesting Seeds

text and photo by Clare Green

The faith, waiting in the heart of a seed, promises a miracle of life which it cannot prove.

—Rabindranath Tagore

A seed—a nugget of confidence and precision, a scientific delight, a marvel, a wonder.

A seed has three parts including its tiny embryo, a protective seed coat, and
an endosperm, its food supply for nourishment

Imagine. Each seed holds its mystery of growth. Care, water, sunshine, and proper nutrients nurture it.

Ever since a Warwick neighbor Tracey Dawn gave me heirloom Italian fava bean seeds, I have been growing them. Heirloom seeds are open pollinated, that is fertilized by natural mechanisms like wind, birds, insects, or human hands, allowing them to produce seeds that reliably grow true to type. Key features of heirloom seeds include genetic diversity, seed-saving reliability, and distinction from hybrids, bred for specific traits and not necessarily bred true each year.



A bounty of fava beans with freshly picked carrots offers scrumptious nourishment.

Fava beans rank among my favorites to grow, eat, and freeze for winter meals and soups. The plants require a tall stick tripod to climb.

Years ago, another neighbor and farmer, Eugene Witham, introduced me to favas. Absolutely delicious! Flat, wide, tender green beans. I love to prepare them simply steamed and then dabbled with butter.

I always harvest some indigo blue fava bean seeds and allow them to dry on a paper plate so I can sow them for the next summer's growing season. Stored, dried bean seeds keep well in a small tin or jar until placed in a plastic bag away from extreme temperatures. They will remain vibrant until planted.

Harvesting and keeping seeds from favorite flowers or vegetables makes them available for planting the following year? Marigold, sunflower, morning glory, or nasturtium seeds respond well to drying and storage for future use.

How about planning a seed swapping party with friends or helping to create a seed bank at a local library?

May readers feel inspired to harvest seeds for the next growing season. Start small, like a seed. Share with a friend. Attend a festival.

Consider visiting Seeds of Solidarity Education Center at 165 Chestnut Hill Road in Orange. The nonprofit organization grows several varieties of garlic for seed to encourage everyone to grow their own.

Seeds of Solidarity offers workshops at the annual North Quabbin Garlic and Arts Festival scheduled for September 26 and 27 this year. An annual event organized by neighbors in community, the Garlic and Arts Festival grows alongside Deb Habib and Ricky Baruc, the energy behind Seeds of Solidarity. Their motto is, "Growing Food Everywhere" with the Seeds farmstand open from mid April to November.

Educator and naturalis Clare Green of Warwick invites folks to visit the Woodland Labyrinth and Fairy Cottage. She suggests stopping by to try some fava beans. She offers morning glory seeds to those who provide a self-addressed, stamped envelope mailed to her at 71 Athol Road, Warwick, MA 01378. Find her books at claregreenbooks.com

Let's Botanize encourages focus on individual forest plants

continued from page 7

learning in the field one quest at a time. The authors provide scientific details on each quest. While botanizing, they suggest that plant detectives carry a hand lens or magnifying glass to help reveal details of things they focus on.

Even before their doctoral studies at Harvard, the authors always enjoyed plants. As many do today, they shared their interest in plants on Instagram. At first, they posted videos of their observations and discussed what was happening with followers. Then, followers added to the site by sharing their own discoveries.

With hundreds of enthusiastic followers, Goulet-Scott and Suissa realized the engaging nature of botanizing as a hobby. To cap their efforts to spread the word on botanizing, the *Let's Botanize!* authors formed a nonprofit organization and collected their quests in their book.

In spring and summer 2027, the *Let's Botanize!* authors plan events about their book at Harvard Forest in Petersham. Their project *letsbotanize* develops on Instagram and TikTok.

Harvard Forest offers trails, dioramas, and more

continued from page 7

signs of interactions of a plant with other plants or animals and surrounding landscape. Botanizers make a connection with plants and place.

Hikers at Harvard Forest may also go to Fisher Museum on premises. Small dioramas line the museum walls and depict changes in New England forests since the arrival of European colonists. The dioramas show the standard forestry practices of the 1930s, when Richard T. Fisher designed and created them. Redesigned by Native American researchers, exhibits will open in summer, 2027 to include interviews with tribal leaders and storytellers who speak of their relationship with forests.

Trails start behind Fisher Museum. Trail maps are available in the Museum entryway and online. Find more information at harvardforest.fas.harvard.edu.

Experienced nature center director Sue Cloutier specializes in biodiversity and educational programs.



A pair of barred owls survey surroundings from a tree near West Brook in Athol.
photo by Rick Flematti



workshop13.org

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Ware, Massachusetts 01082**

(413) 227-6072

Cider Chats and Cider Tours bring Quabbin apples around the world

continued from page 25



Ria Windcaller, right, leads a Totally Cider Tours visit to Mont Saint Michel in Normandy, France.

photo courtesy of Ria Windcaller

of the nation's longest-running craft beer newspapers. Craft beer dominated headlines, but I persuaded the editor to make room for cider stories each fall during harvest season. Annual features introduced readers to local orchards, cider makers, and the growing cider movement while inviting readers to visit an orchard, meet the maker, and discover cider.

I watched the popularity of cider steadily gain momentum. Orchard owners explored cider as a value-added agricultural product. Historic farms found new ways to remain economically viable. A movement that had quietly begun in western Massachusetts steadily spread across the country.

I often returned to New Salem Preserves. As New Salem Preserves evolved, so did its cider program. Through *Cider Chat*, I documented that journey by

interviewing Carol B. Hillman, who transformed a neglected orchard overlooking the Quabbin Reservoir into the museum-quality orchard visitors enjoy. I also interviewed Robert Colnes, who built the cider house that helped make New Salem Preserves a destination for cider lovers.

By 2015, after years of teaching, writing, and documenting the growth of cider in western Massachusetts, I recognized a much larger story unfolding. That November, I launched *Cider Chat*, a podcast devoted to cider, orchards, and the people who make them thrive. *Cider Chat* has grown to more than five hundred episodes with orchardists, cider makers, historians, educators, and enthusiasts representing more than thirty countries.

In 2026, I expanded that mission with *eCiderNews*, an online publication dedicated to reporting on cider developments from around the world. Cider is really about place. Every orchard has a story.

The conversations didn't end when the microphones turned off.

Those stories have taken me far beyond New England. Through interviews and cider-focused travel, I have explored cider regions in Canada, England, France, Spain, and Hungary. Conversations naturally expanded into *Totally Cider Tours*, giving listeners an opportunity to walk through the very orchards and cider houses they had first discovered through *Cider Chat*.

The whole story has always been about orchards, agriculture, community, and the people dedicated to preserving them. Cider takes you places.

Founder and host of the podcast *Cider Chat* and publisher of *eCiderNews*, Ria Windcaller has done international consulting in conflict management. With cider work and *Totally Cider Tours*, she has visited orchards and cider houses throughout North America and Europe.

Ria Windcaller especially recommends the following episodes of the podcast *Cider Chat*

Episode 3 – “Robert Colnes: Building the Cider House at New Salem Preserves”

Episode 72 – “The Lost Apples of Quabbin”

Episode 190 – “Carol B. Hillman: Cider Revitalizes a 1750 Colonial Orchard”

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Goodnough Dike, actually a dam, retains water at the southeastern end of Quabbin Reservoir.

photo courtesy of J. R. Greene

Quabbin Reservoir filled for first time in June, 1946

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project involved bringing in many unemployed men from the Boston area to do hand-clearing of parts of the future reservoir basin. Many of them had no experience with such work. Accounts from the time report that some got drunk where they boarded in nearby towns such as Palmer and Ware. In 1938 and 1939, the commission hired professional crews to do the work properly. Evacuation of the future reservoir basin took place as the 1930s went on, and the dam and dike arose at the southern end of the valley.

A lawsuit brought by a contractor accused the engineers of underestimating the cost of a contract. When the chief engineer Winsor returned early from a vacation in January 1939 to testify at the trial, he died of a heart attack on the witness stand.

While the initial ruling went against the MDWSC, the commission won on appeal. The MDWSC voted to name the nearly completed dam after Winsor and in 1941 saw to erection of a monument with a bronze plaque overlooking the reservoir. Kennison succeeded Winsor as chief engineer until the project's completion in 1947.

In late summer 1939, water began backing up behind recently constructed Winsor Dam and Goodnough Dike named for X. Henry Goodnough, chair of the Boston Metropolitan Water and Sewer Board during 1921. Metropolitan Boston began drawing water from the reservoir as early as 1941. Bombing practice took place on Prescott Peninsula during World War II, with artillery tested at the reservoir at the war's end.

The commission filled the reservoir for the first time in June, 1946. In the late 1940s, the commission added Chicopee, Wilbraham, and part of South Hadley to communities receiving water from the Quabbin.

In 1947, the legislature abolished MDWSC, with its functions assumed by the water division of the MDC. In 1984, the Metropolitan Water Resources Authority took control of the water system. In 2004, the legislature abolished MDC and made the Watershed Management Division of the Department of Conservation and Recreation manager of watershed lands.

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

Elizabeth Ware Packard advances 19th-century women's rights

continued from page 18

In the Midwest, Elizabeth found more freedom than she had known in western Massachusetts to read about other religions. Her authoritarian husband did not approve. As a church leader, he objected to the wide-ranging religious discussions Elizabeth led in bible study classes.

When US women married in the early/mid nineteenth century, they became the property of their husbands and lost freedom of independent action. Theophilus's objections to Elizabeth's outspoken behavior became extreme and, after twenty-one years of marriage, he had Elizabeth committed for a cure in 1860 to Jacksonville Insane Asylum in Illinois.

Once confined, Elizabeth was not allowed to communicate with anyone outside the asylum nor to keep a diary. She rebelled, however, and scrounged paper and pencils to keep written records of how attendants abused her. She recorded instances of abuse of other inmates.

In the asylum, it was not easy to manage Elizabeth. She pushed the limit of rules and frequently complained about her care. After three years of torture there and in keeping with the pleas of her children, asylum directors deemed her incurable and released her.

At home, Elizabeth continued outspoken behavior. Theophilus tried to control her by locking her in the nursery room for a year. Elizabeth's friend intervened, and in 1864, a judge ordered a hearing on her case. After the hearing, the jury took just seven minutes officially to find her sane. When Elizabeth got home, she found the house occupied by another family and her children and husband gone.

Motivated, though penniless, Elizabeth started her fight for married women's rights and safe asylum conditions. She made a living as a human rights activist. She wrote pamphlets and books about her experiences and changes needed. At events across multiple states, she spoke about women's rights and freedom of speech. She worked with other concerned women to form the Anti-Insane Asylum Society to monitor health and safety in asylums.

Elizabeth advocated for a change in laws that restricted a woman's right of ownership and control of their own actions after marriage. The movement resulted in changes in women's rights laws and/or regular monitoring of safety in asylums in Iowa, Illinois, Maine, and Massachusetts.

Print notices and announcements for lectures often identified her as E.P.W. Packard, perhaps because initials

provided some cover as to her sex. Publishers frequently dismissed female authors in that time.

In her final years, Elizabeth lived with her son and his wife in California. E.P.W. Packard died at eighty-one after a life that made a difference. Many women are safer today because of the dedication of Elizabeth Parsons Ware Packard.

Experienced nature center director Sue Cloutier specializes in biodiversity and educational programs.

Victoria Rose Scholarship benefits those who love to dance

continued from page 29



Cora Mehr, Victoria Rose Gagnard, and Lana Sullivan waited in costume for their recital time on stage.

photo by Priscilla Gagnard

Every child who walks into a dance studio because of the Victoria Rose Scholarship Fund lives the dream that an eight-year-old little girl carried in her heart.

She wanted everyone to dance.

Today, because of an extraordinary community, they can.

The Victoria Rose Scholarship Fund accepts donations that provide both scholarships for classes at The Dance Studio of Orange and for graduating seniors of TDS Orange. Donations gratefully received at

The Victoria Rose Scholarship Fund
34 North Main Street, Suite 2
Orange, MA 01364

Kristina Hartjens is a technology executive and strategic leader with expertise in Solution Consulting, AI innovation, and enterprise software. A founding member, she serves as president of the Victoria Rose Scholarship Fund.

Janine's in Ware and Casa Amigos

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Janine's outdoor table area under cover accommodates those who prefer to dine on site.

On my first and several subsequent visits, staff warmly greeted and ushered me to a comfortable booth. The restaurant boasts all new furniture and has been done over in a most attractive fashion.

"Step into Casa Amigos and be transported to the heart of Mexico," says the restaurant website. "Our vibrant atmosphere combines authentic décor with modern elegance, creating the perfect backdrop for unforgettable dining."

The owners have committed to bringing the bold flavors, rich traditions, and vibrant culture of Mexico to Orange, the website says.



Janine's features a lively order and pick-up window.

A logo for Family Pet Veterinary Services. It features a white outline of a house on a dark red background. Inside the house outline, there is a white silhouette of a dog and a cat sitting together.

Family Pet Veterinary Services
Dr. Sue Ellen Mowcomber, DVM
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Dr. Maddie Redd, DVM
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697 Templeton Road • Athol, MA

in Orange offer variety and comfort

Not familiar with the names of most entrees, I appreciated descriptions of the various dishes. I decided to order fish tacos, which consisted of three soft corn tortillas filled with tilapia fillet, sautéed onions, shredded cabbage, and cilantro and served with a jalapeno cilantro sauce. On the side arrived guacamole along with rice and refried beans.

I sipped a delicious virgin margarita after placing my order. The meal arrived in an attractive fashion. Our server checked with us several times to see what, if anything, we needed.

The clean and attractive restaurant welcomes the hungry diner. Daily open hours vary with details provided on the website to confirm open hours at desired times.

Railroad enthusiast, historian, and retired research technician, Chris Coyle lives in Athol. He is author of the memoir *We Lived in the Woods* about family summers in Maine. His new book *Trains and Me* will be out this autumn.



Casa Amigos dining areas include sumptuous booths.



In a cozy room, traditional chairs and tables await diners at Casa Amigos.

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Stage on Main
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Sept. 13, 2026 - Tim Van Ness - Original songs, best categorized as uplifting contemporary folk, speak to the resilience of the human spirit, our connection to the earth and its mysteries, and the pursuit of human and divine love.

Oct. 4, 2026 - Melanie Blackbird
This Massachusetts-based singer-songwriter's performances blend soulful vocals, intimate storytelling, and a timeless acoustic spirit.

Nov. 8, 2026 - Joanna Katz
Originals, timeless Americana, and popular folk songs we all know and love, all straight from Joanna's heart to yours.

Jan 10, Feb 7, March 7, 2027
Musicians to be announced.

Apr. 4, 2027 - The Terry, Matt, and Ann Trio
Terry Reed, Ann Reed and Matt Hickler - often joined by guest singer Vivian Eliza - perform their own rhythmic renditions of early American blues, roots and popular music.

Stage on Main is sponsored/supported by: The Orange Court LLC, Orange Revitalization Partnership (O.R.P.), Legacy Unlimited, Orange/Mass Cultural Council

Uniquely Quabbin Calendar Listings

PLEASE DOUBLE CHECK DETAILS FOR EVENTS

September 25, Friday

A Revolution of Her Own! Deborah Sampson
7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.
Williamsville Chapel
4 Burnshirt Road
Hubbardston
Deborah Sampson/Sampson, the first woman to enlist, fight, and be honorably discharged from the American military, relates to audiences in an hour-long program chronicling her life. Performed by Judith Kalaora of History at Play Performing Arts Group.

September 26, Saturday

Moonlight Paddling
6:00 p.m. - 11:00 p.m.
Orange Community Boathouse
25 East River Street
Orange
[Facebook.com/billygoatboats](https://www.facebook.com/billygoatboats)

September 26 and September 27 Saturday and Sunday

North Quabbin Garlic and Arts Festival
10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Forster Farm
60 Chestnut Hill
Orange

September 26, Saturday

Festival of Forgotten Arts
10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Rutland Town Common
Central Massachusetts Irish Festival
12:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.
Winchendon Community Park
Maple Street
Winchendon
Irish entertainment on three stages with bands, vendors, food options, and kids' activities.

Little Lies: A Tribute to Fleetwood Mac
7:00 p.m.
Center at Eagle Hill
242 Old Petersham Road
Hardwick
A night of romance, drama, and rumours.
thecenterateaglehill.org

September 27, Sunday

Fall Hike
11:00 a.m.
Gate 43/Fishing Area 3
Hardwick
Hike via Comee and Dana-Greenwich Roads to site of plane crash in Dana.

September 30, Wednesday

Nefarious New England with the Geekgal
5:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
Athol Public Library
Athol
An hour and a half of stories and slides as well as questions and answers about all things weird and spooky in the six New England states through a wealth of spooky tales known throughout the Northeast. Funded by the Friends of the Athol Public Library. Registration required.
athol.librarycalendar.com

FIND INFORMATION ABOUT TOWN BOARD AND ANNUAL MEETINGS AT WEBSITES BELOW

Athol • athol-ma.gov
Barre • townofbarre.com
Belchertown • belchertown.org
Brookfield • brookfieldma.us
East Brookfield • eastbrookfieldma.us
Erving • erving-ma.gov
Hardwick • hardwick-ma.gov
Hubbardston • hubbardstonma.gov
Leverett • leverett.ma.us
New Salem • newsalemma.org
North Brookfield • northbrookfield.net
Oakham • oakham-ma.gov
New Braintree • newbraintreema.us
Orange • townoforange.org
Pelham • pelhamma.gov
Petersham • townofpetersham.weebly.com
Phillipston • phillipston-ma.gov
Royalston • royalston-ma.gov
Rutland • rutlandma.gov
Shutesbury • shutesbury.org
Templeton • templetonma.gov
Ware • townofware.com
Warwick • warwickma.org
Wendell • wendellmass.us
West Brookfield • wbrookfield.com



Uniquely Quabbin listings

continued from previous page

October 3 and 4

Saturday and Sunday

32nd Annual Back Roads Studio Tour
Multiple locations in Petersham,
Barre, Gilbertville, New Braintree,
North Brookfield, and Spencer
Visit nine artists in their studios
exhibiting art and fine craft including
watercolor, ceramics, basketry, paste
paper, turned wood, leather, and more.
Map and addresses at
backroadsstudiotour.org

October 9, 10, 11, and 12

Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and Monday
Quabbin Days

A celebration of everything unique in
the Quabbin Region extraordinary—
rich history, breathtaking landscapes,
and vibrant communities. From
historical tours and outdoor
adventures to local arts, food,
and culture, Quabbin Days shines
a spotlight on the area while
welcoming visitors.
details at quabbindays.org

October 16 and 17

October 23 and 24

Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30 p.m.

October 18 and 25

Sundays at 2:00 p.m.

Barre Players Presents
A Murder is Announced
64 Common Street
Barre
barreplayerstheater.com

October 16, Friday

New England Digital Orchestra
7:00 p.m.
Center at Eagle Hill
242 Old Petersham Road
Hardwick
Sam Falcetti presents his digital
accordion orchestra, the first of its
kind. thecenterateaglehill.org

October 17, Saturday

Comic Book Fest
10 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Athol Town Hall
584 Main Street
Athol
Athol Public Library and Hero Shack
Press host the Fifth Annual Comic
Book Fest. Athol Town Hall and the
library will feature comics, drawing
demonstrations, draw off, vendors,
cosplay contest, games, crafts, and
more.
Free admission for all ages.
athollibrary.org

An Infinite Variety of Fruit
1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Williamsville Chapel
4 Burnshirt Road
Hubbardston
Christie Higginbottom tells about
historic New England apples. Apple
tasting included, including the
Nonesuch.
RSVP hubbhistory1767@gmail.com

October 18, Sunday

Rutland 250th Exhibit
1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Rutland Historical Society
232 Main Street
Rutland
Exhibition shows life of founding
fathers and early residents during the
American Revolution.
Light refreshments.
rutlandmahistoricalsociety.org



October 30, Friday

Paint Night
6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
Launchspace
131 West Main Street
Orange
LaunchSpace plans a night of painting
with artist Bill Dolan!
Registration required.
launchspace-orange.com

November 7 through December 6

Saturdays and Sundays

Country Roads Christmas
North Quabbin regions
Weekend drives down New England
country roads for shopping at sixteen
stores for all month from the first
weekend in November through the
first weekend in December!
Countryroadschristmas.com

November 5, Friday

Edwardian Era!
6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
Athol Public Library
568 Main Street
Athol
Dressing from corset to gloves,
the Victorian Lady will present
period fashion and humor with
audience participation and questions
encouraged. Registration required.
athollibrary.org

November 6 • December 11

January 8 • February 5

March 5 • April 2

Fridays

7:00 - 10:00 p.m.
Open Mics in Royalston
Sign up to play at 6.45 p.m. to play for
a 15-minute set.
Sponsored by Royalston Cultural
Council.

continued on next page

events compiled by Emily Boughton

Please submit listings for the next issue before November 20, 2026 to UQCalendar@gmail.com

Uniquely Quabbin listings

continued from previous page

November 7, Saturday

Forty-second Annual Central
Massachusetts Postcard Show
9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
Saint Joseph's Roman Catholic
Church
29 South Street
Barre
\$3.00 donation benefits Saint Joseph's
and the show.

November 8, Sunday

Vietnam War Exhibit
1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Rutland Historical Society
232 Main Street Rutland
rutlandmahistoricalsociety.org

Cinderella

2:00 p.m.
Center at Eagle Hill
242 Old Petersham Road
Hardwick
The classic tale comes to life with hilarity,
modern songs, and a happy ending!
thecenterateaglehill.org

November 11, Wednesday

Community Demo Night: Hardware
Store Jewelry
5:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.
Launchspace
131 West Main Street
Orange

Make a simple pendant or charm to
take home. Everyday hardware-store
finds like washers, nuts, and other
materials become unique jewelry.
launchspace-orange.com

November 21, Saturday

Rani Arbo and Daisy Mayhem
7:30 p.m.
Full Moon Coffeehouse
6 Center Road
Wendell
Harmony, rhythm, indelible songs:
the hallmarks of Rani Arbo and Daisy
Mayhem, the New England-based folk
quartet in its twentieth year.
wendellfullmoon.org

November 27 - December 31

Winter Lights 2026
4 p.m. - 8 p.m.
Red Apple Farm
455 Highland Avenue
Phillipston
Lights transform the Red Apple Farm
orchard into a holiday escape with
more than 200,000 twinkling lights,
treats, and farm charm for family
nights, date nights, and memories
under the stars.
Tickets required.
Redapplefarm.com

November 21 and 22

Saturday and Sunday

Thanksgiving Harvest Festival
10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Red Apple Farm
455 Highland Avenue
Phillipston
Local vendors, fresh pies, hard cider,
pumpkins, and autumn adornments
for the Thanksgiving table. Run the
Iron Farmer and a full weekend of
hometown fun on the farm!
Redapplefarm.com



November 22, Sunday

Farmer's Market and Bake Sale
12:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Williamsville Chapel
4 Burnshirt Road
Hubbardston
Farm fresh products for the holiday
include baked goods, pies, bread,
meats, cheeses, jams, jellies,
vegetables, and more.

December 11 and 12

A Christmas Story
Friday and Saturday at 7 p.m.

December 13

Sunday at 2 p.m.
Center at Eagle Hill
242 Old Petersham Road
Hardwick
thecenterateaglehill.org

December 31, Thursday

New Year's Eve
Starry Starry Night
downtown Orange
Musicians and performers in several
venues throughout town plus gorgeous
ice sculptures in Memorial Park, a
bonfire by the fire station, and a walk
down Main Street for the Parade of
Stars with midnight fireworks over
Millers River.

Country Roads

A scenic back roads experience
of New England charm through:

**WINCHENDON
PHILLIPSTON
TEMPLETON
HUBBARDSTON
GARDNER
BARRE
PETERSHAM
BALDWINVILLE**

Explore unique country shops,
family farms & boutiques

SHOPS OPEN YEAR ROUND

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

November 7th - December 6th
**21st ANNUAL
HOLIDAY
TOUR**

**PRIZES!
SPECIALS!
SALES!**