

NEWSLETTER

TOWN OF LEVERETT

www.leverett.ma.us

December 2013

Notes From Around Town

- **Plans for accessing your home for the fiber connection** will be available at the Leverett School on **Special Town Meeting night (Dec. 17) beginning at 6:30 pm**. We need you to participate in Town Meeting and it would be so convenient for you to sign the plans while you're there. Additionally we ask that you bring a food donation to the meeting as we are collecting food for the area shelters.
- **Kimball Trust:** Help this season with a donation to the Kimball Trust. The trust was set up in 1909 in the will of Catherine Kimball to provide clothing for Leverett children in need. You may make checks payable to Kimball Trust in any amount and send to Collector, PO Box 300.
- **Hunting Season:** It is deer-hunting season. To keep yourself and your pets safe please wear blaze orange; it has been proven to be more effective than any "bright color." Shotgun season is followed by black powder season. In total they run from Dec. 2 to Dec 31. If you and/or your pets will be outside during this time please remember to wear your blaze orange. For more information go to: http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/recreation/safety/autumn_safety.htm
- Please, keep your **mailbox** clear of snow. The post office will not deliver packages, cookies, or hand-written cards if its driver can't easily reach the box.
- **ALUMINUM FLIP-TAB** (from the tops of soda cans, cat food etc) collection reminder from Les Allen: Keep them coming! Your efforts matter. Leave off at Town Hall and/or bottle return section at the landfill.
- Leverett has a **parking ban: no parking anywhere on the road or roadsides—anytime during a snow storm.**

NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINES:

1 February, 1 April, 1 June 2014

Send news items and magical powers to turn freezing rain into snow to: Lisa Stratford, Box 300, Leverett, MA, 01054 or e-mail to townclerk@leverett.ma.us Call 548-9150 for information and guidelines.

Winter Reminders:

Winter sand is available to all residents, for private use only, at the Safety Complex. If you are elderly or physically unable to get sand, the Highway Department

will deliver a 5-gallon bucket to you. Call Will at 548-9400 for a delivery.

The Select Board adopted the following policies and would appreciate your cooperation in regard to them:

(February 12, 1996)

No person other than an employee of the Highway Department shall **push, pile, plow, or blow snow or ice onto a town or county road** that impedes the flow of traffic. Whoever violates this resolution shall be punished by a fine of not more than \$50 per offense and a public flogging.

(December 29, 2003)

Residents are advised to secure their **mailboxes** against possible movement from snow removal operations. **The Town is not responsible for damage to mailboxes caused by snow removal operations.**

From the Select Board

The budget development cycle will be starting soon. We hope that more town residents become familiar with the way the town spends your tax dollars. Several of the documents I refer to below have been provided in the "Select Board News" section of the Town of Leverett website. The fiscal picture as it stands will hopefully maintain a yearly budget increase under the Proposition 2 ½ funding limit. In Leverett, the Select Board and Finance Committee present a yearly guideline of the percentage increase that the budgets of all town departments should not exceed. As an example, the town budget last year was approximately \$5.5 million. Next year we can raise up to 2 1/2% more than this without an override, or approximately an additional \$138,500. Depending on the rate of inflation, the Personnel Board recommends a cost of living increase for non-school town employees. This increase is approved by the Select Board and Finance Committee. Greater salary adjustments, if needed, for town employees salaries are done in comparison to positions in other similar towns in the county. The FRCOG prepares a yearly salary and benefit guide for towns to use. Town employees received a 2% increase for FY 2014. Town employees do not get regular step increases. The two unionized departments in town, the school and police, negotiate their increases as part of their contracts. The police contract accepts the cost of living increases (also without steps) that the non-union town employees receive. Teacher positions at the school receive a series of step raises and a negotiated yearly cost

(Select Bd. Con't)

of living raise. Copies of all the wage scales and the 2014 Town Budget are available on the Town website.

Several issues have been raised that, if implemented, would require a 2 ½ override.

Teachers Salary Discussion

There has been discussion and recent newspaper articles regarding two issues being raised about the fairness of teacher salaries and their yearly raises. The Select Board has posted on the Town website the teacher salary scales of all the towns in School Union 28 and the scales for the Regional School. In addition, there is a spreadsheet that the Select Board prepared to compare the teacher salary scales side by side with the other schools in Union 28.

The first issue is the insistence by the Select Board that the yearly increase received by the teachers (including the cost of living and step raises), be the same as the 2% yearly cost of living increases given to town employees. This has been the message given to the School Committee. The school negotiates their own salary structure and benefits though contract negotiations between the Teachers Union and the School Committee.

Should the teachers' contract match total yearly increases given to town employees? Should the Select Board incorporate a step raise scale system into the budget for town employees in addition to a yearly cost of living raise?

The second issue is the fairness of the Leverett teachers' salary steps in comparison with the other Towns in Union 28 and with the Regional School salary scale. Should the Leverett teachers' salaries be similar to the other elementary schools in the Union or should we raise the salaries to be equal with the Amherst-Pelham Region?

Fire Department Study

The Fire Department Study Committee completed an informative report based on their work that also contains their recommendations for the future configuration of the Town's fire department (the town's website has a link to the study). If you have not had a chance to read through this document please take the time to do so. Many small towns have the same issues that our town is facing: the retirement of senior department members, too few department members working in town during the day, a small budget, and a volunteer force. One of the concerns raised in the report is the lack of department members in town during the day who could respond to a fire or accident call. A recommendation made in the report is to hire a person with Fire Fighting and EMT training to be available during the day when many of the other members are working. A request for a grant to fund the first two years of the salary and benefits for that full time position has been submitted. The cost estimate for salary and

benefits for the position is \$73,000 per year. An article to fund this position with or without the grant will be on the Town Meeting Warrant.

Should the Town approve hiring a person for the position of a full-time Fire Fighter and EMT first responder?

OPEB Funding and Retiree Medical Insurance

A couple of years ago the Town was required to report how it planned to prefund the retirement medical insurance guaranteed to town employees. The Town set up the trust fund for the money and placed \$30,000 in the account. The estimate of the yearly contribution to this account is \$140,000. This cost varies with the percentage of the medical insurance coverage the town will pay, the types of plans it offers and the number of retirees that are covered. This cost estimate covers the retirees of Union 28 but it does not cover the retirees from the Amherst-Pelham Regional schools at this time. That cost has yet to be included in the payments the Town makes to the regional schools.

Should the Town fully fund this cost as a regular part of our budget?

Community Preservation Fund

Town meeting voted to accept the Community Preservation Act and authorized the Town to fund the program by taxing property, over the first \$100,000 of value, by an additional 3%. To date, Leverett is one of only a few towns in the program to have received the maximum state match each year of 100% of the amount raised. The fund has been used for open space protection, historic preservation, affordable housing, and recreation. A suggestion has been brought to the Select Board that the 3% tax implemented for this program would be better used to fund some of the programs or items listed above. Pulling out of the program would also result in the loss in the yearly matching funds of approximately \$45,000.

Should the Town withdraw from the Community Preservation Program and utilize the 3% tax raised to fund the programs or items listed above?

Resident Participation

These issues all have substantial cost and program impacts associated with them. All require a vote at town meeting to implement with an override vote to fund. The Select Board will not make these decisions alone so town meeting attendees need to understand the issues and the costs associated with each and come to the Annual Town Meeting in the spring (May 3) willing to discuss.

The discussions on the town budget for next year will start soon. Each of the departments will be scheduled to meet with the Select Board and Finance Committee to discuss their budget requests. These meetings are open to the public and we encourage you to attend. The dates will

(Select Bd. Con't)

be posted on the town website and will be listed in future newsletters.

Special Town Meeting December 17th

There will be four articles on the warrant for this meeting. First, the Select Board has requested a wording change to the Solar By-law approved in 2011. The by-law restricts the installation of solar facilities that generate greater than 10,000 kilowatts of electricity in the Rural Village zone. The Town is contracting to install a 15,000 kilowatt producing facility on the slope between the elementary school and the public safety complex. The funding to be used will be from the grant received by the town for meeting the conditions of the Green Communities Program. This is a change to a town by-law that requires a quorum of a minimum of 5% of registered voters or approximately 70 residents present to hold this vote. Please attend.

Second is a request for funding to hire a contractor to remove a collapsed building at 1 Duddleyville Road. The Town notified the owner that the building was in imminent danger of collapse and that it would fall on to the town right-of-way or into the Sawmill River. The owner received the notification but took no action to secure the building. Since our notification, the building has collapsed. This article will fund the removal of the building and will place a lien on the property to ensure the Town recoups the money spent to complete this work.

The final two articles are financial housekeeping articles. The full warrant is attached to this newsletter.

Food Drive

The Town will be holding a food drive with boxes for donations at the Town Hall, Library, and Elementary School. Many people in the area are in need of food to make ends meet. With the possible reduction in the food assistance programs by the Federal Government it is more important than ever that we do what we can to make up for these cuts. Collection boxes will be placed at the elementary school during the Special Town Meeting. Please bring items that night if you can. Thank you for your help.

Rich Brazeau, Chair Select Board

Use this link to go to "Select Board News" section of the Town of Leverett website to review the following documents:

<http://leverett.ma.us/content/select-board-news>

This section contains links to:

- FRCOG Town Wage and Salary Survey
- Town of Leverett 2014 Employee Salaries (non school)
- Leverett Fire Department Study Committee report
- Leverett 2014 Town Budget
- Teacher salary schedules for the four Union 28 schools

Salary summary comparison spreadsheet prepared for the four Union 28 schools
Teacher salary schedules for the Amherst-Pelham Regional Schools
OPEB fact sheet

**FY2014 Real Estate bills were due by 5pm
MONDAY, DECEMBER 9th.**

Your tax bill shows the amount of real estate and/or personal property tax you owe for fiscal year 2014 (July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2014) based on assessments as of January 1, 2013). Please check your bill carefully and report any errors or changes to the Assessors' Office (548-4945). **By law**, the name of the owner of record on January 1, 2013, **must** be printed on the bill, so if you purchased the property after January 1, the name of the former owner will appear on the bill. Total amount owed can be paid in one or two installments (bills \$200 or less must be paid in full in the first installment). You can pay online, mail a check (write bill# on check), or sign up for "direct pay" (your account will be debited on the due date). If you bring your payment to the Town Hall, please do so during Collector's office hours (Sun M Tu Wed 2:30-9:30 pm; 548-9666). You can also leave your check in the Collector's mailbox to the right of the office. Please do not interrupt other Town Hall staff for accepting payments or requesting receipts. If you have an escrow account, your bank has been notified of the amount due, so keep the bill for your records. Late payments are assessed 14% interest from the issue date printed on the bill until the date received. You will not receive a bill for the balance due; it will be added to your second payment due May 1, 2014. If you plan to pay your bill late, contact the Collector's Office for total amount owed.

On March 18, 2002, Leverett voters accepted CH44B **COMMUNITY PRESERVATION ACT (CPA)** and approved a 3% property tax surcharge (\$100,000 assessed value is exempt). The amount of the surcharge is required to be listed separately; however, it is part of the tax bill and subject to the same interest and penalty charges for late payment. Low or moderate-income households may qualify for exemption from this surcharge. Request application or additional information from the Assessors' Office 548-4945 or assessors@leverett.ma.us.

On April 29, 2000, the town accepted CH60 sections 3C & 3D allowing the designation of a "check off box" on Real Estate and Excise bills whereby a taxpayer can contribute to the local Scholarship Fund and/or Tax Relief Fund. Your donations are greatly appreciated. If you have any questions about these funds, please contact the Treasurer's Office 548-9666. Thank you!

LEVERETT CHILDREN IN NEED

The Kimball Trust Fund is a financial resource established in 1909 as the result of a bequest in the will of Catherine N. Kimball. Ms. Kimball placed \$1,000 in trust, "the income thereof to be used for clothing for poor children". For the past 104 years, the fund has been used to provide basic clothing for children from low-income Leverett families. During the past few years, the Kimball Trust has helped a large number of children who live in Leverett and annually, the funds in the Trust need replenishing. Please consider making a tax-deductible donation to the Kimball Trust Fund. You can send a check, made payable to Town of Leverett (Kimball Trust) to the school or to Town Hall. You can also donate online at (www.leverett.ma.us) "Online Payments." Many thanks for your kind attention in this matter.

Anne Ross LES school principal and Jill Roberts, LES school nurse – Fund Administrators

Broadband Committee Report

Our project is moving along with the expected date of completion of December 2014.

In September and October, our contractor Millennium Communications/Matrix Design visited most homes in town in order to plan for the construction of the fiber connections to each home. As part of the process, each homeowner must sign off on the plan. The plan is to have the fiber follow the path of the existing utilities (electrical, phone) from the road. If the phone/electrical connections are buried between the road and the home, we will bury the fiber, using any conduit that is available. If the phone/electrical connections are aerial between the road and the home, the fiber connection will also be aerial.

The completed plans from Millennium will be available in the Town Hall for your signatures in mid-December. There is a Special Town Meeting at 7pm on Tuesday, December 17th at the elementary school. We will have the plans at the school before the meeting at 6:30 for your signature. If you cannot make that meeting, the plans will be available upstairs at the Town Hall whenever the building is open.

We have received more than 750 right-of-entry forms so far. If we have not received a form at the time construction has begun, we cannot connect your home. If a connection is requested AFTER the network is complete, there will be an added charge, perhaps in excess of \$1,000, so it is in your best interest to fill out and return the form now. If you have misplaced the form, it is located at http://leverett.ma.us/files/right_of_entry_-_ont.pdf
<http://leverett.ma.us/files/right%20of%20entry%201.1%20-%20ont.pdf>

If you are not sure if you have sent it in, please contact Robert Brooks at robert@brooksresearch.org or 253-0887.

Please visit our web page at <http://leverett.ma.us/content/broadband-committee> to see the latest news of what we are doing. In order to receive ongoing information on our progress, please sign up to join

a Google Groups listserv at <http://groups.google.com/group/leverett-broadband-project>.

The committee meets every Thursday at 7pm at the Town Hall. These are public meetings open to everyone, and the committee invites town residents to attend.

Rob Brooks, for the Broadband Committee

HOLIDAY RECYCLING REMINDER

Happy Holidays! Thank you for your recycling efforts over the past year. Following are some guidelines for recycling during the holiday months and all year long: Please **DO** include the following items in your paper recycling mix:

- _ corrugated cardboard boxes;
- _ paperboard gift boxes;
- _ greeting cards (except those with foil, metallic inks, or glitter);
- _ wrapping paper, gift bags, tissue wrap (except those with foil, metallic inks, or glitter);
- _ paper shopping bags (any type of handle is okay);
- _ catalogs and calendars.

Please **DO NOT** include the following items in your recycling mix:

- _ ribbons, bows, and tinsel (reusable from year to year);
- _ packing peanuts and Styrofoam (accepted for reuse at Greenfield UPS Store);
- _ holiday lights (WtE scrap metal recycler in Greenfield pays .20/lb. for light strings);
- _ plastic bags (clean, dry plastic bags marked #2 or #4 recyclable at some retailers);
- _ blister packaging (formed plastic package used to hold toys and electronics);
- _ photographs.

Leverett Trails Committee

Take a walk and check out our recent work:

Bill Rivers Conservation Area Trail One of the two new bridges funded with CPA money last April is installed. (Thank you volunteers.) The second bridge will be installed when weather permits – you can use the metal bridge until then. The Loop Trail is finished. Enjoy.

East Leverett Trails The trail-bridge area between the 4-H Forest and the Gordon King Life Estate was stabilized. Eighteen volunteers constructed over 140 feet of plank bridges through muck and chilly water. A thank you goes out to everyone who pitched in on short notice, including the generous contribution of gravel from a local gravel purveyor!

Rattlesnake Gutter Loop Trail A new trail connects the Gutter Road with Whitney Road and Old Cave Hill Road. There are also two new trails off the Whitney Road section on the Marvell Family Conservation Area.

Donald H. Bates Sanctuary Trail A trail through this new RGT property can be reached from Shutesbury Road via old M-M Trail through the Town's Roaring Brook Conservation Area (bog bridges will be repaired in the spring) or via Old Lancaster Road.

Poetry Boxes The notebooks in the boxes include both poetry and a Wildlife Reports section at the back. Please add your poems, drawings, and wildlife sightings at any/all of the 8 boxes along the trails.

Need maps? There is a new map display at the Leverett Library or you can go online to either www.leverett.ma.us/content/conservation-commission or www.rattlesnakeguttertrust.org

Coming Soon:

The Trails Committee will be meeting in January to plan for the spring. If you would like to be updated on what is happening and how you can help, asked to be put on the LTC email list (concom@leverett.ma.us).

On March 1 at the Leverett Library there will be a Community Art Project to Celebrate the Trails. LTC will supply large poster boards, colored markers, glue, scissors, fabric, etc. Participants should bring photographs, paintings, poems, materials collected along the trails (leaves, berries, feathers, etc.). Together with local artists, we will create collages to celebrate the trails. The finished poster boards will be displayed in the Library's community room during March and April. (Winter is a great time to create collage materials in preparation for March 1st.)

LTC is co-sponsored by the Leverett ConCom and the Rattlesnake Gutter Trust. For maps of all the trails and other information, check out the Leverett Library and our websites.

Leverett Historical Society

Leverett Historical Society reminds Townspeople that the Leverett Family Museum, 1 Shutesbury Road (former Bradford M. Field Memorial Library) will be closed Saturdays during January, February, and March 2014; open by appointment only. *Please call Edie Field @413-548-9452.*

The Leverett Historical Society submitted two proposals to the Community Preservation Committee on November 25, 2013:

1. To repair and restore badly damaged gravestones in the Moore's Corner Cemetery;
2. To restore the Bradford M. Field Memorial Library building which houses a significant collection of artifacts from Leverett's history.

Leverett Historical Commission recruited Leverett residents interested in helping to celebrate the Sesquicentennial of the Civil War in Leverett at the Harvest Festival on Saturday October 19, 2013. "Civil War Sweets", including apples, ginger snaps, oatmeal cookies (thanks to LHC member Lynn Hall!) and NECCO wafers, were a big hit with the under-10 crowd, who were thrilled to get something "free"! Several possible ideas for programs were generated by conversations including an illustrated talk on Civil War Era illustrators such as A. R. Waud & Brother, who travelled with the soldiers (embedded, much like contemporary journalists and photographers, before the "Instagram-era"). Another possibility is a talk on Civil War photography by two Mt. Holyoke professors. **Do you have ideas? Please contact any LHC member to contribute your request.** (Randy TeVelde, Carole DeSanti, Sue Nagy, Lynn Hall, Silas Ball, Betsy Douglas or Susan Mareneck)

The Historical Commission submitted a proposal to the Leverett Cultural Council to present a staged reading of "Hallowed Ground" by NE playwright Laura Harrington during the summer of 2014. This staged reading of a contemporary play (IRE Best New Play 2002) looks at universal issues raised for families in Leverett 150 years ago: friendship/growth, grief/loss, life/death, peace/war. It has been called "an evocative tone poem about life and death..." (TheaterMirror). It would be performed outdoors, perhaps at the Emerson Garden in Leverett Center. The Historical Commission looks to engage Leverett citizens to appreciate the depth and breadth of history in our small New England town.

Upon receipt of a request from LHC, Leverett Elementary School's Sixth Grade voted unanimously to assist the Historical Commission in its Civil War research. The class visited four local cemeteries to begin their study. Alyson Bull, Sixth Grade teacher, reports that the students were very enthusiastic about what they found. They hope to make three more field trips – to the Moore's Corner School House, the Leverett Family Museum, and Leverett Town Hall – to complete their Civil War Research Project. The cost of transporting the students to these sites has been made possible through a generous donation by Leverett Historical Commission member Sue Nagy and the Historical Society. If you are interested in donating to the "Civil War Study Transportation Fund" please make your check out to the PTO/ LES and send it to Anne Ross, Principal LES. The students took photos and video footage of the gravestones and cemeteries for an interactive map they hope to build. They also participated in a joint choral reading of the Gettysburg Address on Nov 19th--the date in 1863 that it was originally read--at 10 am with another school via Skype.

At the November meeting of the LHC, Betsy Douglas reported that she had completed the missing identification of archaeological parcels needed for the East Leverett National Register Historic District. All three village districts should now be complete. We await word from the National Park Service on approval of the nominations for National Register Historic District designation.

In early December representatives from the Historical Commission and Historical Society will meet with the Leverett Family Museum Advisory Board to host Michelle Barker, of Preservation Massachusetts. Resources for upgrades to the building and collection of the Leverett Family Museum will be the agenda. A sixty-page preservation survey was conducted at the Family Museum in the summer of 2013 by Simmons College graduate student Lisa Lipshire. Plans to implement the recommendations from that report will be discussed.

Lynn Hall will represent the Leverett Historical Commission at the first meeting of the Western Massachusetts Historical Commission Coalition at the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission in Springfield. It is a new venture sponsored by the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, Franklin Regional Council of Governments, Preservation Massachusetts, and the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission in partnership with the Massachusetts Historical Commission.

Both the Historical Commission and Society are open to all interested townspeople. Please contact Susan Mareneck (LHC) or Edie Field (LHS) for future meeting dates and/or to be included on the listserve for all things historical!

Submitted by Susan Mareneck, Leverett Historical Commission (Please contact me with questions/ suggestions @ 413-367-2403 or susan.mareneck@gmail.com.)

Leverett Library

www.leverettlibrary.org

Library Hours *Tuesday 3-8 *Wednesday 10-3 (story hour at 10:30) *Thursday 3-8 *Saturday 10-3 *Sunday 12-5 (closed Sundays Memorial Day to Labor Day).

Special Closings: Wednesday December 25; Tuesday December 31; Wednesday January 1; and Sunday, January 20.

Art in the Community Room

Through December come and see the beautiful Peace Pagoda photographs by Mary Glavin and in January and February see the whimsical paintings of Paul Root.

Leverett Library Film Club

December 13, 2013 at 7:30 Kinky Boots 2005, rated PG-13 Comedy/Drama/Indie

Now a Tony-winning Broadway musical, *Kinky Boots* tells the tale of an unlikely pair who join together to save a failing shoe factory and find they have more in common than they thought. Starring Joel Edgerton, Chiwetel Ejiofor and Sarah-Jane Potts.

January 17, 2014 at 7:00 Lone Star 1996, rated R (note the earlier start)

Drama/Mystery/Suspense/Crime Drama/Romance/Indie Reminiscent of a fine novel in depth and complexity, writer-director John Sayles' acclaimed drama uses the investigation of a 25-year-old murder as the framework for a detailed exploration of life in a Texas border town. Starring Chris Cooper, Elizabeth Peña, Matthew McConaughey, Kris Kristofferson, and Chandra Wilson.

If you are interested in joining the film club please call or register at the library.

Lego Club will meet December 19th from 3:15-4:30; please register at the library. Elementary school age children are invited to join us for a brand new building challenge, led by Phyllis Herda.

Read It Leverett! We are looking for the next book; please add your ideas. A suggestion box is at the circulation desk.

New Beginner T'ai Chi class starts in January on Saturdays at 11am following the advanced class at 10am.

Speakers

Acclaimed author David Gillham will speak December 19th at 7pm about the writing process and his book *City of Women*, a *New York Times* bestseller and one of *Kirkus Review's* Best Books of the Year. "World War II Germany may be familiar ground, but Gillham's novel—vividly cinematic yet subtle and full of moral ambiguity, not to mention riveting characters—is as impossible to put down as it is to forget."— *Kirkus Reviews*, *Star Review*.

In January, mystery writer and organic gardener Edith Maxwell will speak about her new Local Foods Mystery series. *A Tine to Live, a Tine to Die* came out in May and a follow up is coming out next year. The series features organic farmer Cam Flaherty and a colorful Locavore Club.

In February Jake Blais will discuss his work on the Cartoon Network animated show *The Yoda Chronicles*. He will talk about the making of a TV show from concept through to airing. He will also talk about how great it is to work for Lego.

Amnesty for Overdue Fines in December: Bring in a nonperishable food item for the Survival Center; or dry food, kitty litter or liquid laundry detergent for the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society and we will waive your overdue fines on Leverett Library items. Sorry, we cannot waive fines on items from other libraries or on charges for missing or damaged items.

Thanks to Stephen MacLean for his many years of service and dedication as our library webmaster, and to his mother Luchy for all her help. And thanks to our new web guru Jack Dinsmore.

Ashley Blais, Library Director

**Drop off your nonperishable food items at the following locations:
Town Hall, Library, School, Transfer Station.
Thank you!!**

Leverett Energy Committee (LEC) Update

We emphasize the importance of attending the Special Town Meeting (see other references in this newsletter) on Tuesday, December 17 at the school. There will be a vote on a small change in the wording of a town by-law that will make legal the placement of a solar array on town land. Lots of people have been working to bring this energy-saving and climate-friendly idea to fruition; we urge you to support them.

Meanwhile, committee members, in the interest of providing lower-rate and higher "green" energy to town residents and buildings through a third-party energy provider, have been seeking a connection with any town non-profit entity to help channel funds from this arrangement to causes important to Leverett residents. Examples include: funds for low-income residents to offset their tax responsibilities; funds to support additional energy-saving projects; contributions to efforts being made for miscellaneous town needs such as school activities or fire-fighting equipment (as described elsewhere in this newsletter); or support of projects we haven't thought up yet. The energy-brokers we are considering offer profit-sharing with a town when residents sign up to participate. Once again: this may sound too good to be true...but it IS true and, of course, we will share all details with anyone coming forward. Please help us take advantage of this idea by suggesting non-profit entities in town or helping us form our own non-profit.

Finally, seasonal energy-saving suggestions: When it won't kill you try shoveling your snow instead of using gas-powered machinery, rake your leaves instead of mechanically blowing them around, and finally, to reduce consumption and have way more fun, arrange with family and friends to exchange gifts from "free" places (Take-It-or-Leave-It), tag sales, local vendors/artisans, second-hand stores, your own closet, etc! For any related inquiries, contact Portia (548-9737 or pweiskel@post.harvard.edu) who accepts responsibility for the friendly editorial "nudging" of this column.

The LEVERETT LITERATURE GROUP invites all to its annual CHRISTMAS READ-ALOUD event at the library on December 17 from 6:30-8 p.m. Featured readings include Dylan Thomas' *A Child's Christmas in Wales* and Truman Capote's *A Christmas Memory*. We offer these traditional readings and accept new ideas from participants; we also offer holiday treats (sometimes-literature-inspired) and very good company. The group has just completed a nearly year-long study of James Joyce's *Ulysses* and will be starting a new project in January. We welcome new participants so if any of this interests you, call Portia (548-9737).

IMPORTANT DETAIL: As it turns out, the read-aloud event is scheduled for the same night as the important Town Meeting vote on the solar bylaw--too late to be changed. If a quorum is not present at the meeting, we will be informed and anyone wishing to help make the quorum can--quite conveniently--make a fast trip between the library event and the school event.

Leverett Peace Commission

On Tuesday, December 10, at 7:00 PM at the Leverett Library, the Peace Commission will host a meeting to discuss questions arising out of the performance at the Leverett Elementary School of "Project Unspeakable," a new play by Wendell actor and playwright, Court Dorsey.

On Friday, Nov. 22nd, the fiftieth anniversary of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, the Leverett Peace Commission presented Court's powerful play based on evidence that elements of the government were involved in the assassinations of John F. Kennedy, Robert Kennedy, the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr, and Malcolm X. The cast included Leverett residents Tim Bullock, Jenny Danielle, Peter Danielle, Pat Fiero, Paula Green, Gary Gruber, Jim Perkins, Alice Scheffey, Barbara Tiner, Portia Weiskel, and Tom Wolff, joined by Barry Brooks, Rose Sackey Milligan, Amilcar Shabazz, John Sheldon, and Carlie Tartakov of Amherst. Ingrid Askew of Amherst directed. Gary Gruber, who was well prepared to play Robert Kennedy by his years of service as Town Moderator, estimated the audience at over 300. Tom Wolff, who played Jack Kennedy, judged that over 400 people were present. The cast, inspired by the size and intense concentration of the audience, played its parts well, receiving standing ovations after both the first and concluding acts.

The inspiration for the play came from James Douglass who wrote the book: John F. Kennedy and the Unspeakable: Why he Died and Why it Matters. The Leverett connection arose because Douglass spoke at the 25th anniversary celebration of the Peace Pagoda in 2010. Douglass later returned to lead a workshop at Rowe Conference Center, attended by Jim Perkins and Court Dorsey. Court and his associates affirmed and encouraged by the spectacular success of the Leverett roll out, hope that *Project Unspeakable* will receive hundreds of performances over the next two years.

About 50 audience members signed up to participate in discussion groups to further explore the themes of the play and the relevance for today. The Leverett Peace Commission has contacted the audience members who expressed interest in this follow up, and invites all who are interested to take part.

Jim Perkins, for the Peace Commission

Union #28

Community Network for Children

The *Community Network for Children (CNC)* is a program that is funded by a grant from the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care. The CNC supports all families with children from birth through 3rd grade in our school union (Erving, Leverett, New Salem, Shutesbury, Wendell). Some programs for families include: weekly playgroups and story hours, parent/guardian workshops and events, opportunities to meet other families in our community, support in accessing child care or assistance in paying for child care, new baby gift bags and home visits, and newsletters with current programs and events. If you are interested in being on our mailing list to receive monthly newsletters of events and workshops, please call or email Gillian Budine, Coordinator, (978) 544-5157 or Budine@erving.com.

You can also access information at our website:
<http://sites.google.com/site/communitynetworkforchildren>

SHUTESBURY STORY HOUR

MN Spear Memorial Library, 10 Cooleyville Road, Shutesbury, Mondays, 10:00-11:00am;

ERVING PLAYGROUP

Erving Elementary School, 28 Northfield Road, Erving, Wednesdays, 10:00-11:30am;

WENDELL PLAYGROUP

Wendell Free Library, 7 Wendell Depot Road, Wendell, Wednesdays, 10:00-11:30am;

LEVERETT TALES AND TUNES

Leverett Library, 75 Montague Road, Leverett, Wednesdays, 10:30-11:30am;

NEW SALEM NURSERY RHYMES AND TALES AND TUNES

New Salem Public Library, 23 South Main Street, New Salem, Wednesdays, 10:00-11:00am

SHUTESBURY PLAYGROUP

Shutesbury Elementary School, 23 West Pelham Road, Shutesbury, Fridays, 9:00-10:30am

UPCOMING SPECIAL PROGRAMS!

Beneski Natural History Museum Trip at Amherst College, 11 Barrett Hill Road, Amherst. Saturday, December 14th from 11am-12pm for children 3rd grade and younger and a parent or caregiver. Please pre-register with Gillian or Jessica at (978) 544-5157, Budine@erving.com, or Carlson@erving.com.

“Snowy Stories” PJ Story Hour with Jon Ploof at Swift River School, Enchanted Forest Room, 201 Wendell Road, New Salem. Thursday, January 9th from 6-7pm for children 3rd grade and younger and a parent or caregiver. *Please be in touch to register for programs, if you need more information or to be put on our mailing list!*

Community Events

Leverett Crafts & Arts

Holiday Store & Open Studios

Fabulous gifts...pottery, sculpture, glasswork, botanical prints, ceramics, silk screening, paintings pastels, collages, jewelry, weaving, fiber arts...

Saturdays and Sundays 10-4
December 14 & 15 and 21 & 22
13 Montague Rd. Leverett
www.leverettcrafts.org

Tai-Chi at the Leverett Library

This is the seventh year that the leverett Library will be hosting free weekly Tai-Chi classes. Tai-Chi is an ancient form of Chinese exercise which promotes strength, balance, flexibility and relaxation. A new beginner's class will start on Saturday January 4 at 11:00 am. The class is suitable for all ages. If you're interested in participating please call Dennis at 367-9760.

Leverett Community Chorus Winter Concert

The Leverett Community Chorus will present our annual Winter Choral Concert on Sunday, January 26th at 4 pm at the Leverett Congregational Church. Please come and help us celebrate community through song!
(Snow date: Friday, January 31 at 7pm)

Yoga 2013

Thursday Eves at the Leverett Library
Bliss Yoga 5-6 PM (Basic Gentle class)
Evening Yoga 6:15-7:30 PM (Moderate level)
Session 1: January 3 -February 14
Session 2: February 28 -April 11
Bliss Yoga: \$77 for 7 weeks, \$150 for 14 weeks, drop-in \$12 each.
Evening Yoga: \$84 for 7 weeks, \$160 for 14 weeks, drop-in \$14 each.
Please register with Lisa Enzer 413-367-2658 or enzer@earthlink.net

The Newsletter is affectionately published by the Town of Leverett 6 times per year and mailed to each address in Leverett (about 850) and subscribed to worldwide. It is the official publication of the Town and accepts articles from Town boards and committees. No politicizing or editorializing is allowed. When space is available, items from nonprofit organizations may be included. No advertising for the sale of goods or services for personal gain is allowed.

*Cover art by Margaret Nutting.
Compiled and humorously written by Lisa Stratford
and expertly edited by Portia Weiskel.*

LEVERETT RESIDENT

LEVERETT, MA 01054

Special Town Meeting, December 17, 7:00 pm, Leverett Elementary School
Warrant Enclosed



FOOD DRIVE!

Please Leave Canned or Dry Food at the
Town Hall, School, Library or Transfer Station.
We will deliver all donated food to the
Amherst Survival Center and the Franklin Area Survival
Center just before December 25th.
Thank You! The Select Board