

NEWSLETTER

TOWN OF LEVERETT

<http://leverett.ma.us>

FEBRUARY 2012

Annual Town Meeting, Saturday, 28 April 2012, Leverett School, 9:00 a.m.

**Running for Office?*

Elected officials with expiring terms who are running again as well as new candidates for office are asked to submit substantive statements to the *Newsletter* editor at townclerk@leverett.ma.us or leave in Town Clerk box at Town Hall, by **1 March 2012**. Offices up for election are:

Assessors: One three-year term

Board of Health: Two three-year terms

Library Trustees: Two three-year terms

Constable: One three-year term

Finance Committee: Two three-year terms

Assistant Moderator: One one-year term

Planning Board: Two five-year terms

School Committee: Two three-year terms

Select Board: One three-year term

Tree Warden: One one-year term

***If you are interested in running for office (and you are) please take a minute to read the short synopsis of each "job." You may find something that suits you.**

Assessors: Includes three elected Assessors and one appointed half-time Administrative Assessor. The primary responsibility is to assure that property assessments are established and maintained in a fair and equitable manner in accordance with state mandates, and to process warrants for real estate, personal property, forestry, and vehicle excise taxes. The office of the Assessors *is the only elected position in town that has state mandated qualifications that must be achieved within the first term of office*. Qualified individuals can handle razzing about the high taxes in Leverett. **Meetings:** approximately twice per month.

Assistant Moderator: Performs the duties of the Moderator (running town meeting) in his/her absence.

Board of Health: Primary duties relate to the protection of public health, promotion of sanitary living conditions, control of disease, and protection of the environment. The Board of Health oversees soil evaluation and perc tests and approves disposal systems (for new construction, additions, and repairs or replacements of existing systems), applies well regulations. **Meetings:** two or more times per month.

Constable: Responsible for posting warrants for town meetings and elections. Is present during elections to ensure safety of polling place and ensure that the donut plate is out and coffee pot full.

Finance Committee: Oversees town spending. Works with Select Board prior to town meeting on budget issues. Runs the annual budget hearing. Approves (or not) expenditures from the reserve account. **Meetings:** Several per year, more during the months of January-March when the next fiscal year budget is being drafted.

Library Trustees: Responsible for overseeing the library. Establish policies and plans to provide services to the community, determine final budget, and conduct public relations. The trustees value individuals who are team players, have a sense of humor, and are avid readers. **Meetings:** once per month (except in July and August).

Planning Board: Write zoning and subdivision bylaws. Meet with individuals seeking to build or modify homes or divide land, and help decipher bylaws for the confused. The board is in the process of modifying the subdivision regulations as they relate to developments of 6 or fewer homes and make amendments to the conventional subdivision regulations. **Meetings:** once a month (except in summer).

Select Board: Official governing body of the town charged with setting policies and regulations which are not within the realm of town meeting. Makes appointments to ad hoc boards, committees, and commissions. Works directly with police, fire, and highway departments. Authorizes spending, calls town meetings, sets the warrant for Annual Town Meeting, develops town budget in cooperation with Finance Committee. ETC, ETC, ETC. **Meetings:** Second, fourth (and fifth if there is one) Tuesdays of the month.



Don't forget your sweetheart!

Valentines should be **mailed (at our Leverett Post Office)** to ensure the vitality of our beloved Leverett Post Office!

NOTES FROM AROUND TOWN

• **Dogs:** 2012 dog licenses are in. **All dogs** must be licensed by March 31, 2012. Licensed and unlicensed dogs may not “hang out” together.

• **Candidate’s statements:** Candidates for elected office **must submit a statement of intent to the Newsletter by 1 March 2012.**

• **2012 Motor Vehicle Excise bills will be in the mail soon. Demand fee is \$10 plus interest at 12%. Please pay your bill on time to avoid late fees.**

• **Looking for a representative for the Franklin Regional Planning Board—please call 548-9699 for more information.**

NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINES:

**1 March (candidate statements only), 1 April,
1 June 2012**

Send news items and candidate’s statements to Lisa Stratford, P.O. Box 300, Leverett, MA 01054 or e-mail to wlstratford@aol.com Call 548-9150 for information and guidelines.

For Valentine’s Day please go to www.marrow.org/ and click on “Join the Registry.” You could “**Be the Match**” for someone who needs stem cells and should you ever need it in the future, someone could be yours♥♥♥

Email me at wlstratford@wildblue.net I am interested in a Town-wide drive this spring.

SELECT BOARD

Leverett has been designated a Green Community by the state (thanks Margie and the Energy Committee!). We have been awarded funding of \$138,750 for use in reducing energy consumption by 20%. A lot of these reductions are already underway as a result of the ESCO project. Further reductions could come from lighting retrofitting not done through the ESCO project, hybrid vehicles for the public safety departments and possibly solar installations (solar installations don’t technically “reduce” energy consumption).

The broadband project is progressing. G4S has been hired to draft and cost out a plan that will bring fiber optic cable to everyone’s doorstep that will be capable of providing hi-speed internet access, television, and phone service. It is unclear at this point how the funding will work. Hopefully revenue will help cover a substantial cost of build-out loan payments and, after debts have been paid, the usage fees for the cable will provide ongoing revenue for the town. There will likely be a warrant article concerning this at the spring town meeting.

The Town Hall re-siding project is almost done and looks great. Painting on the front and north sides will be completed this spring. Kurtz Inc. has done a great job putting on the new siding, taking the time to deal with problems associated with re-siding an old building. This is a big improvement for the building and will add to its life. Thanks to everyone who supported the CPA funding for this project.

We are beginning the budget process for FY13. At this point the state does not plan to increase Chapter 70

funding for the school and it looks like a Proposition 2 ½ override would be required to cover the increased budget requests from the Leverett and Regional Schools. It had been hoped that both the Leverett School and the Amherst-Pelham Regional School would get some of the \$146,000,000 in additional Chapter 70 funding for Mass. schools but schools with declining enrollment are not getting an increase. As many additional school costs are a result of insufficiently funded mandated services and not from enrollment fluctuations, this doesn’t seem just. I would encourage everyone who is concerned about this to write our representatives (Rep. Steve Kulik and Sen. Stan Rosenberg) and Governor Patrick.

The Regional School Study Committee (comprised of reps from Leverett, Shutesbury, Pelham, and Amherst) has applied for a grant from the state to fund consultants to do an in-depth study of regionalization options for these schools. The areas to be focused on are governance, finances, and education. We will find out in February if we have been awarded the grant. While there are no immediate plans to regionalize the Leverett School, we would like to have a professional view of what this could look like and what the costs would be.

The well committee has some new members and has been meeting to continue work on options to deal with private wells affected by the plume from the old landfill. We are grateful to everyone in town who takes the time to serve on the many committees and help brainstorm on often difficult problems.

Finally, it is with great sadness that we learned of the death of Fred Bixby, Leverett’s former Chief of Police. Our sympathy goes out to his many friends and family.

Julie Shively, for the Select Board

From the Town Clerk

The annual Street List/Town Census was mailed in early January and many have been returned. It is not too late to return this form!! Returning the form keeps your family information up to date for school and emergency purposes and also keeps you active on the voting list. With the coming elections, it is important to have this information up to date. Several forms were returned to us by the Post Office stating that there was “no mail receptacle” at the street address. If you have not received a form, please call and let us know—another one will be sent out to you. Leave a message with your name and mailing address at 367-9220.

March 6 is the Presidential Primary in Massachusetts. Polls will be open that day from 7am until 8pm. Also on the ballot that day will be elections for State and Town Committee members. If you are registered in a political party you will be given the ballot for that party. If you are unenrolled in any party, you can choose between the Democratic, Republican and Green-Rainbow ballots on election day. February 15 is the last day to register to vote, or to change your political party designation for this upcoming election.

Town Hall will be open that day for special voter registration sessions from 2-4pm and from 7-8pm. You are also free to stop in the Town Hall at any time and pick up a mail-in registration form if the Town Clerk is not there. Some folks think that by changing or adding a political party on their Town Census form that this is sufficient—it is not. You must use official forms for registration and party changes.

Absentee ballots for the March 6 election are available. If you will be out of Leverett during voting hours on Election Day, you may request an absentee ballot in writing. Family members may request a ballot for someone who is out of town. Please include the name of the voter, address where registered, address where ballot is to be sent, and political party (if unenrolled, specify which ballot you would like). The request must be signed by the voter or family member.

D'Ann Kelty for Lisa Stratford

From the Collector's Office:

2012 Motor Vehicle Excise Bills will be mailed within the next two weeks. Remember, it is the responsibility of the taxpayer to pay on time, regardless of when or if a bill is received!! If you own a motor vehicle and don't get an excise bill by February 28, call the collector's office. If you move, be sure to notify the registry of your new address so your bill can be delivered promptly. ***PLEASE DO NOT IGNORE AN EXCISE BILL;*** if you don't think you owe it, contact the Assessors' office 548-4945. Late payment can cost an additional \$71 in fees plus interest, and the bill must be paid in full before you can renew your license or registration.

Market value is NOT considered for the purpose of assessing motor vehicle excise tax. It is based on a five-year decreasing percentage (90%, 60%, 40%, 25%, 10%) of the *manufacturer's list price in the year of manufacture* and billed at a statewide rate of \$25 per \$1,000 of valuation. It is assessed for a *calendar year*; so if you don't own the vehicle for the entire year, file an application for abatement with the Assessors' Office. The excise will be adjusted accordingly or, if already paid, a refund issued. If abatement is not granted by the due date, pay the bill in full and, if applicable, a refund will be processed.

Pay online at the link on the Town's homepage leverett.ma.us. There is no charge for this service if paid from your checking account; but if you pay by credit/debit card (Mastercard, Discover, Visa) a fee is added based on the amount of payment. You can also sign up for direct pay, and your account will *automatically* be debited on the due date. If using your bank's bill-pay service, please enter bill# in the memo section. Mail payment to Collector, PO Box 300, or drop off at the Town Hall. If office is closed, please do not interrupt other town hall staff with questions regarding your tax; you can leave your check (or question) in the Collector's mailbox. Office is generally open

MTuThSat (2:30-8:30pm) but *hours may vary*, 413-548-9666. treasurercollector@leverett.ma.us.

Thank you for your prompt payment!

From the Real Estate Tax Relief Committee:

Thanks to all of you who continue to contribute to the **Real Estate Tax Relief Fund** to help reduce the real estate tax bills of a number of deserving residents. We would like to encourage everyone to consider making a donation of \$1.00 or more when paying your next Excise and/or Real Estate Tax. You can simply add the amount to your payment or send a separate tax-deductible contribution anytime during the year to: Tax Relief Committee c/o Treasurer's Office, PO Box 300, Leverett MA. You can also request that your payment be applied to a specific bill. If you are 60 or older and having a difficult time making ends meet, call 548-9666 to request an application for tax relief.

Personal Property Tax

The Personal Property tax is a relict of the colonial era, when the number of goats, swine, and neat cattle (even the language is ancient) owned was a valid measure of a person's wealth. Today it is often a source of confusion and misunderstanding. However, the law is still on the books, and the Assessors are required to collect property data and bill for qualified property.

Determining what property is subject to the personal property tax can be confusing. The Massachusetts Department of Revenue defines Personal Property as "*...goods, material objects and other things capable of ownership, which are not so firmly attached to, or specially designed for, real estate as to become part of the real estate*"

However, there are numerous exemptions to the tax.

The most significant are:

- Household furnishings and effects at the person's domicile;
- Wearing apparel;
- Motor vehicles, trailers and boats subject to the Excise Tax;
- Farming utensils (hand tools & relatively simple, inexpensive farm equipment);
- Tools of trade of a mechanic (plumber, carpenter, or other tradesman).

So what's left? Typical items Leverett taxpayers need to report are:

- Merchandise and stock in trade. Goods and wares for sale, whether in a store or any other place for sale, on consignment, or in storage or a warehouse.
- Business and professional office furnishings, fixtures and equipment. Computers and other office equipment if used in a business.
- Machinery, equipment and tools not exempted above. Includes stationary tools such as table saws, etc, heavy machinery, farm machinery and restaurant equipment.

- Medical and dental office equipment; professional libraries.
- Animals (Spot and Fluffy appear to be exempt, while Black Beauty, Bossy, Babe and just about any other creature that might reside in a barn, coop, pen or paddock are taxable). Noah would be in big trouble here.
- Unregistered motor vehicles & trailers (includes tractors, snowmobiles, golf carts and all other kinds and types of unregistered vehicles).
- Household furnishings not situated in the owner's primary residence, i.e. furnishings of summer/second homes. (Please file **Form 2HF**).

Personal property subject to taxation must be reported to the assessors on **State Tax Form 2**, known as the **Form of List**. Forms are mailed to taxpayers who have been subject to the tax in past years, or we believe might have taxable property. Any taxpayer who believes (s)he is subject to the tax and does not receive a Form 1 should contact the Assessors office for a copy.

Steve Schmidt, Administrative Assessor

Don Robinson, Dave Palmer, Jim Hicks, Assessors

NOTES FROM THE PLANNING BOARD

In response to requests from many citizens of the town the Planning Board has been working on updating our zoning bylaws regarding **cell towers**. We encouraged people to attend our regular November meeting to get a better sense of where folks are on this issue and to direct our efforts. Over 60 people attended and there was significant sentiment toward more cell towers in town, but with appropriate safeguards. The Board has devoted most of its attention over the past few months to this issue and we now have a draft of a new bylaw which relaxes our current zoning and, hopefully, invites interest in new cell tower construction. We're again looking for feedback and will hold an informal informational meeting on **March 14** to review our ideas with all interested parties. This will be followed in April with a more formal public hearing of the updated proposal. It is our intention to present this new zoning bylaw to Spring Town Meeting. We invite all to attend the March 14 meeting and the public hearing now scheduled for **April 11**. The board meets regularly on the second Wednesday of each month and we welcome your ideas.

Steve Freedman for the Planning Board

To the residents of Leverett

With great sadness I have to report that on December 16, 2011 we lost one of our long-serving Officers of the Leverett Police Department. Matthew Lee passed away unexpectedly. Matt leaves behind his wife of 22 years, Catherine Lee and four daughters, Caylin, Hannah, Emma, and Grace Lee.

There has been a fund set up for Matt's daughters' college education. Anyone wishing to contribute the

address is as follows: The Lee Daughters College Trust Fund, care of Catherine Lee/UMass Five College Credit Union at 200 Westgate Center Drive, P.O.Box 1060, Hadley, MA 01035. The loss of Matt Lee will be felt for a long time at the Police Department. Matt exhibited a tremendous level of compassion and dedication to this Department and to the residents of Leverett. Matt will be greatly missed by all of us.

On another sad note, on or about 1/24/12 former Police Chief Fred Bixby also passed away. At this time there are no funeral arrangements and burial will be at the convenience of the family.

Gary Billings, Chief of Police

Leverett Dog Officer comments

It has been brought to my attention that there are some areas in town that have dog problems. One of the areas is the Lead Mine Road. I am writing this notice to explain the state laws governing dogs. Leverett does enforce these laws.

Leverett dog laws are as follows:

All dogs within the town of Leverett shall be restrained from running at large throughout the year, and shall be maintained and kept under control and supervision of the owner or keeper at all times (Code of Leverett, Chapter 78, Article 1). When you put your dog outside and stay inside you do not have control or supervision of your dog.

Someone walking on the town roads should not have to worry about your dog. Excessive barking is also a great annoyance and neighbors should not have to listen to it for prolonged periods of time.

If your dog bites a person or animal you are financially responsible.

If your dog is in the road and causes an accident, you are responsible.

If your dog kills livestock, you are responsible for the loss.

If you want a dog, take the time to be responsible. Stay with your dog when he/she is outside.

People being barked at or chased on roads should report it to me. Excessive barking should also be brought to my attention. I will take care of any complaint immediately. 549-1213

Roberta C. Bryant, Dog Officer

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

The Community Preservation Committee has funds available for open space preservation, affordable housing, historic preservation, or recreation. We have received the following **new applications** for funding in 2012:

1. From the Leverett Conservation Commission, Kestral Trust, and Rattlesnake Gutter Trust, an application for \$170,000 of Community Preservation funds to provide part of local matching funds toward a total project cost

of \$434,250 to **purchase a Conservation Restriction (CR) on 147 acres of Teawaddle Hill Farm** at 72 Teawaddle Hill Road. Leverett has been awarded a Massachusetts State LAND grant of \$237,600 for this project which requires local matching funds. Additional local fundraising of \$25,000, which is currently underway, is also necessary to meet the required local match amount. The CR will eliminate development rights on the farm in perpetuity for the purposes of protecting agricultural lands and natural resources, maintaining the property in its natural, scenic, and undeveloped condition, providing public access for recreation, and preventing uses or changes that interfere with these values.

2. From the North Leverett Cemetery Association, an application for \$29,950 to **restore the metal fence on the street side of the Moores Corner Cemetery** located on Rattlesnake Gutter Road near the Leverett Coop.

3. From the Leverett Cemetery Association, an application for \$28,000 to **restore 90+ stones in the North Cemetery** located on Montague Road about a mile north of Town Hall.

4. From Ted Goodnight and Katherine Theodore, an application for \$23,222 to restore the sills, beams, joists, and roof of the 1806 house at 21 Still Corner Road in East Leverett.

A copy of the complete text and backup materials for each of these proposals will be available at Town Hall by February 20 as will a draft of the 2012 CPA Report and Plan. Please stop by and take a look, and **plan to attend our public hearing on March 7.** We need to know what you think. Those projects recommended by the committee will be voted on at Annual Town Meeting in April.

Laurel S. Kahn for the Community Preservation Committee

Library Happenings

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)

The library will be closed Sun., February 19; Sun., April 8; & Sat., April 28 (town mtg).

Upcoming Events

*Tuesdays, February 14, 21, 28, & March 6, 10-12 a.m. Introduction to the Computer. Details below.

*Wednesday, February 15, 7:00-8:00 p.m. The Politics of Global Warming in the United States, a talk by Leverett resident Raymond Bradley, author of *Global Warming and Political Intimidation*. (Snow date: Monday, February 27)

*Tuesday, February 21, 3:30-4:30 (school vacation week) Kids, come and meet Fletcher, the friendly pink pig and his owner Janice Tyner.

*Sunday, March 11, 3:00-4:00 p.m. Civil War Medicine, a talk by re-enactor Norbert Rieke for adults and older children. A Read It, Leverett! event.

*Wednesday, March 21, 7:00-8:00 p.m. Book discussion of March dessert/fruit potluck. A Read It, Leverett! event.

*Sunday, March 25, 3:00-4:00 p.m. Author Harriet Riesen will discuss her book *Louisa May Alcott: The Woman behind "Little Women,"* and show clips from the award-winning new documentary of the same name. A Read It, Leverett! event.

*Tuesday, April 3, 7:00-8:30 p.m. Showing of the documentary *Louise May Alcott*.

*Tuesday, April 24, 5:30-7:30 Que Sera, Seurat! How to Pastel Paint Optically with Color. A workshop with Greg Maichack. All materials provided. Space is limited. Sign up at the library. Supported by the Leverett Cultural Council.

Read It, Leverett! Don't miss our annual community reading event. See separate page for info.

An Introduction to Computers: Did you make a New Year's resolution to get more comfortable on the computer or get started using one? Join us for a 4-week class and learn how simple it is to explore the online world (including e-mail). Open to all ages. Sponsored by the Leverett Library and the Leverett Council on Aging. Space is limited, so sign up at the library. \$20 fee due at first class.

On display in the community room through February: Collection X, photos by Max Abramowitz. A 5th grader at Leverett Elementary School, Max took the photos using a digital camera and edited them using iphoto and photo booth. Come see the world through the eyes of a talented 10-year-old!

Digital books and audios may be borrowed for free by library card-holders who own Kindles, Nooks, I-pads, and other devices. At www.leverettlibrary.org, click on "Digital Catalog." Or sign up at the library to borrow our Kindle for 2 weeks.

New items of interest to Leverett residents: Two new children's books illustrated by Micha Archer, *Lola's Fandango* and *The Wise Fool: Fables from the Islamic World*.

Thank You to Jan Stewart for donating brand-new DVDs for our collection.

Linda Wentworth, Library Director

Council on Aging News

The Leverett Council on Aging is the town body charged with doing the best we can for the seniors in town. As you can imagine, with the diversity in our small town, that charge is difficult to meet. We sponsor the **Friday mealsite**, and board members Judy Hobart and Sue Swartz oversee and volunteer weekly at the lunch. We also offer take-it-easy **yoga** for \$4 on Wednesdays at 10:00 at Town Hall, help arrange **SHINE talks**, and hopefully will help arrange for **future flu clinics**. We had hoped to help create a list for the town of seniors that would need support during an emergency like the one we had last Halloween but only one person responded. We try to be available as a resource, although navigating the world of resources for the elderly is quite an undertaking, especially when no-one can figure out exactly what the right questions are.

We receive a formula grant from the state of \$3500 which we have trouble spending on items that will benefit a large number of seniors in town and is also allowed under the grant. Last year, with our formula grant, we bought a Wii game. A newer TV was donated to the town and an unused TV stand was found at the school. It would be fun to get some bowling matches going—maybe with a few kids to help teach us how to play. Anyone interested in helping to implement this idea?

We also bought a **blood pressure monitor**. For quite a while, a nurse came to the mealsite once a month to take blood pressure and sometimes perform other services. The grant for that position ended and we had a volunteer for a while, but it did not work out. We would love to have a volunteer nurse come once a month to have lunch and stay a little while after on a Friday afternoon. We also could possibly pay for this service out of our formula grant. Liability is something we would need to figure out.

We have bought a **movie license** which allows us to show movies in public. However, we did not get great results when we offered some movies last year and we hate to go through the trouble of scheduling this kind of thing if no-one is interested. If you would like to take on running some movies at the library, please contact us. We are also in need of new members. What could you offer?

Circuit Breaker Tax Credit. If you are over 65 and your property tax is over 10% of your income, you may be eligible for this credit. You will need to file a Massachusetts Form 1 tax return to claim the credit, which is worth \$980 for 2011.

Computer Classes. Sign up now for the upcoming Introduction to Computer for Adults at the Leverett Library. The class will be held from 10:00-12:00 on Tuesdays, February 14, 21, 28, and March 6. Learn how simple it really is to explore the online world (including tips on e-mail). Small fee. Registration required; 548-9220.

Gordon King will be honored at senior lunch on February 10th for being the oldest man in town. He will receive the gold cane pin and will hold the original Boston Post Gold Cane for a few pictures.

*Submitted by Tanya Cushman, COA Chair
548-1022x5 coa@leverett.ma.us*

Leverett Trails Committee (LTC)

Photo Contest deadline is February 15. To remind you: pictures must be taken on/near the Trails in East Leverett. There are youth and adult categories. You can pick up the entry form (which also has the rules and the map of trails) at the school, library, town hall, post office, Village Co-op, or on-line at rattlesnakeguttertrust.org (click on Trails, then on Photo Contest).

If you have never used a **chain saw** and are planning to, or if you are an occasional user, this class is essential. Even if you have been using one for years, you are still guaranteed to come away with some new knowledge to keep you sawing safely for many more years to come. If you own a saw, bring it and we will do safety and maintenance inspections on them as part of the class. March 3, 9am-noon, Town Hall.

Instructor: Walker Korby, North Quabbin Superintendent, The Trustees of Reservations, and certified chain saw safety instructor.

Join us on Sunday, March 4, 2-3 PM at the Leverett Library to review what has been accomplished and decide what else needs doing: trail work? mapping/information? trail stewardship? Bring your ideas. LTC is co-sponsored by the Rattlesnake Gutter Trust and the Leverett Conservation Commission.

For information on other programs and workdays, go to rattlesnakeguttertrust.org, click on Trails.

Mary Alice Wilson for the Rattlesnake Gutter Trust

Rattlesnake Gutter Trust: Programs

- The Trail of Time at Grand Canyon: Talking and Thinking about Geologic Time in Context, Michael Williams, Sunday, Feb. 5, 2-3 PM, Leverett Library
- The Trails of Leverett, March 4, 2-3, Leverett Library. (See LTC entry in this newsletter.)
- Chainsaw Safety and Maintenance, March 3, 9-noon, Leverett Town Hall (See LTC entry above)
- Moths: Better than Butterflies, Ted Sargent, A close look at some of the thousands of moth species in Massachusetts, Sunday, April 1, 2-3 PM, Leverett Library

The May and June programs are already on-line (www.rattlesnakeguttertrust.org/events/ or www.leverettlistings.net) New programs will be posted on both sites.

Mary Alice Wilson for the Rattlesnake Gutter Trust

Teawaddle Hill Farm Conservation Restriction Update

The Leverett Conservation Commission and Kestrel Land Trust in partnership with Rattlesnake Gutter Trust, have an exceptional opportunity to acquire a Conservation Restriction (CR) on the 147-acre Teawaddle Hill Farm. Just to remind you of the timeline: October 25, 2011. Voters at the Special Town Meeting approved the temporary borrowing of funds contingent on funding from the state (\$237,600), the town (CPA \$170,000), and private sources (\$25,000).

December 22, 2011. The town received the state grant! (\$237,600 or 60% of the cost of acquisition and closing costs);

Late January 2012. Residents received a letter describing the project and asking for assistance in raising the \$25,000 needed from private contributions. (If you misplaced your letter, you can contribute anyway! Send your check to Kestrel Land Trust, P.O. Box 1016, Amherst, MA 01004.)

March 7, 2012. The Community Preservation Committee will hold a public hearing on this year's CPA proposals including \$170,000 for the Teawaddle Hill Conservation Restriction.

April 28, 2012. Town Meeting will vote on the CPA funding.

June 2012. Purchase of the Conservation Restriction

Summer 2012. Reimbursement of funds to the Town Questions? Question and Answer packets (including information on costs and funding sources) are available at the town hall, the library, or online at www.rattlesnakeguttertrust.org. Thank you for your help.

Mary Alice Wilson for the Rattlesnake Gutter Trust

Thank you from the Kimball Trust

Many thanks to all the kind and generous folks in Leverett who have sent contributions to the Kimball Trust fund. Since all residents received flyers about the Trust in their tax bills, we have received donations that add up to more than \$2200. The balance in the Trust is now much healthier and we have been able to resume providing funds for clothing for children from low-income Leverett families.

Contributions are always welcome and appreciated. If you wish to make a tax-deductible donation to the Kimball Trust, you can send a check made payable to the Town of Leverett (FBO the Kimball Trust Fund). You can also donate online at the Town website www.leverett.ma.us click "online Payments", "Donations", and then "Kimball Trust."

With great appreciation from the Fund Administrators;
Anne Ross, Principal, Jill Roberts R.N., School Nurse,
Leverett Elementary School

Thank you from the Leverett School Library

To honor the memory of Michele Leaf, a former Leverett parent and beloved community member, the Leaf Fund was established in 2008. Each year Michelle's book group generously gives a donation of \$100.00 to the Leverett School Library. Michele loved living in the beautiful environs of Leverett and was fond of outdoor activities. The book group has requested that the donation be used to purchase books related to the outdoors and outdoor activities. Bookplates will be placed in the chosen books. We wish to thank the book group members: Judi, Linda, Jeannie, Rhea, Beth, and Pat, for contributing to our school library as a way of remembering Michelle. For this year's donation, the following titles from "Go Green" series have been purchased in her honor:

*Having the Energy
How Shall We Travel?
Reduce, Reuse, Recycle
What Shall We Eat?
Wonderful Water*

LEVERETT FAMILY FIELD MUSEUM

The Family Museum will open for the year on March 3, 2012, with two new exhibits. One is entitled "Remember These?" A collection of memorabilia from the 40s and 50s. Some of the objects will be more familiar to you than the ones shown in the exhibits of 100, 150, and 200 years ago! However, those will still be on display in smaller form.

The second exhibit will be of equipment used in the maple sugaring industry during the 1800s and early 1900s. A member of the Field family will be on hand to describe how each article was used. The sugar industry has been a big part of Leverett's industrial history for many years. The season begins in late February and lasts through March. SWEET is the key word! Samples may be available!

The Museum is open on Saturdays from 10:00 till 2:00, or by appointment by calling 548-9452.

The museum was recently given a photograph by Les Campbell which depicts an aerial view of Quabbin Reservoir in autumn with an eagle in flight. It was donated for use as a fundraiser for the museum.

Those wishing to win the photograph may enter their names, and if they desire, give a donation to the museum (not required). The winner will be drawn prior to the date of the June town *Newsletter* and will be announced therein. It will be on view when the Museum is open.

Edie Field

Leverett Historical Commission

The work on the three new Historic Districts at North Leverett, Moore's Corner, and East Leverett continues. Our consultant, Bonnie Parsons, is concentrating on East Leverett at the moment. She will meet with John and Georgana Foster who accumulated so much information and wrote so many articles about the mills and people who lived in East Leverett during their fifty-plus years living at 21 Still Corner Road. Then on to the other two villages.

Did you see the article in the *Montague Reporter* telling about the treasures we have inside the Town Hall? Did you notice that the reporter said about the portrait of John Leverett, "no one in town hall seemed to know where it came from."

Well, now we do know that the oil portrait is a copy of an original 17th century painting at the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, and, in 1983, it was brought to the attention of the Leverett Historical Society by Gordon Howard. A fund-raising effort was initiated by Louise Minks, Annette Gibavic, and Lois Feldman, with the portrait on view at the Harvest Festival. Along with a grant of \$100 from the Arts Council, enough money was raised to purchase the portrait. A dedication took place in March 1984 in which Perky Greely gave a talk on Governor John Leverett's life and Suzanne Flynt, curator of the Memorial Hall Museum in Deerfield, spoke about the portrait.

The General Court in Boston selected the name of Leverett for the new town in 1774 as we separated from Sunderland. The portrait hangs to the right of the Treasurer's office. Please visit the Town Hall and see it, the other collections of photographs and paintings, and the wonderful stage screen painted by Thurston Munson in the 1930s.

Submitted by Betsy Douglas

Hi Shutesbury and Leverett Friends –

I've been notified that mountain- bike and cross-country skiers and their organized groups are chain-sawing new trails on Cows and other private land in Leverett and Shutesbury. When an abutting landowner of ours asked a chain sawing mountain biker to stop cutting trees on his land, he was told that it was "public land" so it was "OK." It would NOT be OK if it were public land, and it is not OK on private.

Cows does not allow any trail-building on its land. We allow only the Porcupine Ridge Runners to maintain existing snowmobile trails. Trees are Cows' crop and we do not want them cut down by recreationists who enjoy using our private property. In fact we are prepared to prosecute if our crops are destroyed or any of our forest resources are taken.

Interestingly, one condition of our CR is that while we do allow recreation on our woods roads, *no trails are allowed to be built or maintained* on the Paul C. Jones Working Forest (except maintenance by F&W/Cows, permission on each occasion by the snowmobile club's specific named representative).

I don't know if you know the bikers and xcountry skiers and associations who cut trails on private land, or if you have a way of reaching all residents, but we would really appreciate your help getting the word out about this upsetting situation.

Thanks in advance for your help.

Cinda Jones, Cows

Yoga Classes

Sponsored by the Leverett Recreation Commission
Spring Yoga at the Leverett Public Library, Thursdays, March 1 to April 12, 2012. For more information: 413-367-2658 or enzer@earthlink.net

Bliss Yoga: 4:45-5:45

An hour of basic yoga for health and relaxation
\$77 or \$11 drop-in

Evening Yoga: 6-7:15 PM

A moderate-level class dedicated to inner and outer alignment of body, mind and spirit
\$84 or \$13 drop-in

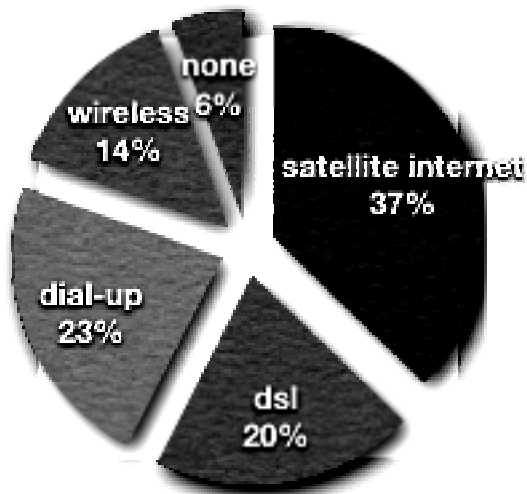
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Broadband Committee News

Nearly 60% of all Leverett households responded to the MBI Grant Broadband Survey, making it a very useful source of information as we evaluate options for building a fiber-optic local network for telecommunications services. **Here are two charts of results:**



Internet Access



As I write this, **MBI has already begun installing "middle mile" fiber optic connection points in Leverett.** These will be the nodes where the local network connects to the world. A local fiber optic network means Leverett households will link to the global network at state-of-the-art bandwidth speeds.

The Committee is preparing a FAQ (frequently asked questions) about fiber optic networks—to send to all households in the near future. Stay tuned.

Peter d'Errico, for the Broadband Committee



APPLICATION FOR A 2012 DOG LICENSE Renewal _____ or New _____ license

Name of owner _____ Phone _____

Address _____

Name of dog _____ Age _____

Breed _____ Color _____

Male (\$10.00) _____ Neutered Male (\$5.00) _____ Female (\$10.00) _____ Spayed female* (\$5.00) _____

Send check payable to Town of Leverett, business-size self-addressed stamped envelope, proof of rabies immunization, and *proof of spaying to Town Clerk, Box 300, Leverett 01054. Documents will be returned with license.

Dogs must be licensed on or before April 1st! Thank you.