

NEWSLETTER

TOWN OF LEVERETT

www.leverett.ma.us

APRIL 2012

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING SATURDAY, 28 APRIL 2012, 9:00 AM, LEVERETT SCHOOL

Positions up for election: With Corrections**

****Assessors:** Jim Hicks, Y (3-year); vacancy (2-year);

Assistant Moderator: Fay Zipkowitz, Y (1-year);

Board of Health: John Hillman, Y (3-year), Claudia Philips, Y (3-year);

Constable: Brain Emond, Y (3-year);

Finance Committee: Greg Woodard, Y (3-year); Tom Powers, Y (3-year);

Library Trustees: Rachel Flint, Y (3-year); Lydia Peterson, Y (3-year);

****Planning Board:** Jean Bergstrom, Y (5-year); vacancy (4-year);

****School Committee:** vacancy, Y (2-year);

Select Board: Julie Shively, Y (3-year);

Tree Warden: Will Stratford, Y (1-year).

**There is a vacancy on the Board of Assessors due to David Palmer's resignation; the Select Board appointed Cat Ford to temporarily fill the position in March. There is a vacancy on the Planning Board due to Gloria McPherson's resignation. Jean Bergstrom was mistakenly elected to a 5-year term but was elected again after just three years; this will fix that error, and no we are not sick of electing her! There is a vacancy on the School Committee to fill an unexpired term; the Select Board appointed Sarah Dolven to temporarily fill that position. PHEW, I think we're straight.

Notes From Around Town

PROPERTY TAX BILLS DUE by 5:00 pm MONDAY, MAY 1. Pay online at the link on the Town website.

Hearing Impaired System

At Annual Town Meeting this year we will be testing a hearing impaired system to determine how well it works before we buy it. If you have a hearing aid or hearing loss, please come Town Meeting and ask for a device to help you test it for us. After the meeting, please give us your feedback as to how well it worked. Thanks.

P.S. We also are testing a system for meetings at Town Hall, so if you want to test a device there and provide us with feedback, please come in and ask for guidance.

NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINES

1 June 2012

1 October 2012

Send news items, Green and Blacks organic chocolate (any kind, this worked so well last April!) to Lisa Stratford, Box 300, Leverett, MA 01054; or leave them in the *Newsletter* box at Town Hall or email to townclerk@leverett.ma.us

Candidate's Statements: Planning Board

Richard Nathorst

I would like to run for a seat on the Planning Board. I have over 25 years experience in managing construction and renovation management. I hold a bachelor's degree in Botany from UMASS Amherst. I believe Leveverett must work to preserve its rural and historic character while adapting to promote sustainable change. I am currently serving on the Leverett Broadband Committee and working with the Planning Board on the proposed change in the cellular communication bylaw.

From the Select Board

Earlier this year it looked as if there would have to be a proposition 2 ½ override in order to meet the budget needs for the elementary and regional schools, especially in light of no increased funding from the state to make up for the decreases of the past few years. Fortunately, due to the diligence of LES and other town departments in keeping costs down along with some changes in anticipated mandated services, there will be no need for an override request this year for the operating budget. Our thanks to everyone who worked so hard on this.

The Mass Broadband Committee and G4S have been measuring and calculating so there will be a proposal at the Town Meeting to fund our own system to bring hi-speed to everyone in town. Please take the time to go the one of the hearings so that you can be informed on the options, the cost, and the payback.

A few months ago Leverett, Shutesbury, Pelham, and Amherst formed a Regional School District Planning Committee (RSDPC) with 3 members from each town; the members from Leverett are Ann Delano (Finance Committee), Farshid Hajir (School Committee) and myself (Select Board). The RSDPC applied for a Community Innovation Challenge grant from the state to

fund expertise for an in-depth study of the educational, governance, and financial impact of some form of regionalization of the 4 towns that would include K-6. Unfortunately the grant request was denied (there were \$21M worth of requests for a \$4M pool!) but we have decided to forge ahead anyway and begin work on the educational and governance issues. We will continue to seek funding for consultants on the financial and legal analysis that will be necessary.

The Well Committee continues to look for solutions to the landfill plume/well contamination issue. They would like to hire a consultant to study viable options.

Use it or lose it! – don't forget to support the Leverett Post Office. The more business they do, the more likely it is that they won't be closed.

We would like to thank Terry Allen, town accountant (retiring) and Chuck Allen – foreman on the highway department (medical retirement) for all their years of service to the town. We wish Terry and Les a thoroughly enjoyable retirement and the very best of luck to Chuck in healing from severe back injuries. We would also like to thank Capt. Tom Eddy who has resigned from the fire department; we wish him well. Finally, thanks to D'Ann Kelty who has been doing a great job filling in for Lisa as Town Clerk.

Hope to see you at Town Meeting on April 28!

Julie Shively

Community Preservation Committee

The Community Preservation Committee (CPC) has funds available for open space preservation, affordable housing, historic preservation, or recreation. If you would like more information on Community Preservation, the Community Preservation Coalition has an extensive web site at <http://www.communitypreservation.org>. The Leverett Community Preservation Report and Plan for 2012 has information about the history and current status of Community Preservation locally. You can read it in the CPC notebook at Town Hall or on the Town website at <http://leverett.ma.us/content/community-preservation-committee>.

We are considering the following **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 local matching funds, and other project, stewardship, and management costs, toward a total project cost of \$434,250 for the Town 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 required funds will come from private donations to Kestral Land Trust. Fundraising is currently underway. The CR will hold the 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 passive recreation, and preventing uses or changes that interfere with these values.

2. From the North Leverett Cemetery Association, an application for \$15,000 to **restore the metal fence on the street side of the Moores Corner Cemetery** located on Rattlesnake Gutter Road near the Leverett Coop (revised request).

3. From the Leverett Cemetery Association, an application for \$27,900 to **restore grave stones in the North Cemetery** located on Montague Road about a mile north of Town Hall (revised request).

An application for funds to restore a private home was withdrawn by the homeowner because it was not supported by the Leverett Historical Commission. The Commission commended the homeowner's desire to undertake this restoration, but stated in part, "...public funding in this instance would likely set an unwanted precedent, since there are so many privately owned homes of historic character in Leverett." Although this proposal was withdrawn before the public hearing, several people who attended stated that they did not think CPA funds should go to private renovation projects.

A copy of the complete text and backup materials for the three proposals is available at Town Hall. Please stop by and take a look. Projects recommended by the committee will be voted on at **Annual Town Meeting on April 28**.

Laurel S. Kahn for the Community Preservation Committee

From the Collector's Office

548-9666, treasurercollector@leverett.ma.us Pay on line at **leverett.ma.us**

2012 Motor Vehicle Excise Bills (for vehicles registered as of January 1) were due March 15. Remember, according to Chapter 60A Section 2 of the Massachusetts General Laws, "Failure to receive notice shall not affect the validity of the excise." A person who does not receive a bill is still liable for the excise plus all interest and fees. If an excise is not paid within 30 days from the issue date, a "demand" is mailed adding \$10.00 plus 12% interest to the tax. If the demand is not paid in 30 days, a \$10 warrant fee and a \$12 deputy fee is added. If you get a demand, please remit the total amount due, not just the amount of the tax since the collector is not authorized to waive these fees. If the late fees are not included, your payment will not be processed and additional fees will accrue. A final warrant is delivered to the taxpayer's residence (address on bill) at a fee of \$17. This final notice warns taxpayer that the Registrar of Motor Vehicles will be notified and you will be unable to renew your license and/or registration. Once an excise is "marked" at the Registry, the tax together with all

interest and fees including a \$20 release fee must be paid before your license or registration can be renewed. So please save yourself all the trouble and expense by paying your bill within 30 days!

If you no longer own a vehicle for which you are billed, do not ignore the bill; contact the Assessor's Office (548-4945) to request an abatement application or print application from website, complete, and mail to Assessor's Office, Town Hall (PO Box 300). If the plate was transferred to another vehicle, include a copy of the new registration. If no second vehicle is registered, send a copy of your plate return receipt and bill of sale or disposal receipt. If the abatement process cannot be completed by the due date, **it is recommended that the bill be paid in full to avoid late fees.** A refund will be processed for any overpayment. If you did not own the vehicle for the entire calendar year and have already paid the tax, you must also apply for abatement if you want a refund.

REAL ESTATE BILLS DUE TUESDAY, MAY 2, 2011. Thank you to everyone who has already paid. The penalty for late payment is 14% interest from *April 1* to date of receipt plus \$10.00 demand fee, so please be sure your payment is ***in the Collector's office*** (*not* in the mail) no later than 5:00 p.m. Tuesday, May 1. You can include **voluntary contributions to Scholarship and Tax Relief Funds** by indicating in the space provided, and adding it to the total amount due. Thank you for your continued support of these programs.

Please include the remittance copy of your bill when making payment and **write the bill# on your check**; if using your bank bill-pay service, **indicate bill#** in the memo/reference field and process at least 5 business days prior to the due date, or pay on the Town website and you will get an immediate confirmation. Payments can also be made in the Collector's Office during office hours, left in the Collector's mailbox next to the office, or dropped off in the mailbox at the back of the Town Hall. **If you signed up for direct pay, do not pay your bill--** your account will automatically be debited on the due date. You can also pay bills on line at the link on the town website leverett.ma.us; there is a fee to process a credit card payment, but no charge to process an ACH (electronic) debit to your bank account. You can schedule the payment for a future date, but if scheduled after the due date, interest/fees will accrue. Call or email this office if you need help with online payments. The Collector's Office is generally open M Tu Th Sat from 2:30-8:30pm (*hours may vary so call ahead if making a special trip 548-9666*).

From the Real Estate Tax Relief Committee:

A sincere thank you to all who have contributed to the Real Estate Tax Relief Fund this past year. Your generosity together with fund raising allowed the Committee to distribute \$4,725 helping to reduce the property tax burden of 17 deserving residents. We would like to provide more, but unfortunately donations to the

fund do not cover the need. When paying your next real estate/excise tax bill (or anytime), please consider contributing to this fund to aid those in our community less fortunate. Thank you.

Fire Department

Did you change the batteries in your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors when we changed the clocks to daylight savings time? If the answer is no, change the batteries - your life could depend on it. Does that detector near your kitchen go off when food burns? A detector that is located within 20 feet of the kitchen or shower must be photoelectric. If it isn't, change it. If you have any questions about home safety or other fire-related, please contact the fire station at 548-9225 and someone will get back to you.

A valuable member of the fire department has resigned. Captain Thomas Eddy Jr. served on the department for 24 years and will be greatly missed. His knowledge and work habits will be hard to replace.

Burning season continues until May 1st, but may be curtailed if dry conditions persist. If you still have brush to burn, do it soon. To obtain a permit either go online at fcburnpermits.com or call dispatch at 413-625-8200.

*Respectfully, John Moruzzi
Fire Chief/Forest Warden*

Leverett Library

75 Montague Rd. 548-9220 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, April 8, Sat, April 28 (town mtg), & Sat-Sun, May 26-27.

Upcoming Events

*Tues, 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.

*Wed, May 2, 7:00-8:00 p.m. Mira Bartok, author of *The Memory Palace*, will read and discuss her book, which was just announced as winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award for autobiography. "A mesmerizing [account of] growing up with a brilliant but schizophrenic mother... Richly textured, compassionate and heartbreaking."—*Kirkus Reviews*. Signed copies will be available for purchase. Supported by the Leverett Cultural Council.

*Tues, May 15, 7:00-8:00 p.m. Raising Chickens in Your Backyard, a talk by John Gerber, who teaches about sustainable food and farming at the Stockbridge School, University of Massachusetts.

The NEW online catalogue, which was originally scheduled to appear in January, is now expected on May 29. Among the benefits, the new catalog will display books, audios, etc. from all of the C/WMARS libraries in Western and Central Mass, so that it will be easier to find

and request items. Patrons who like to place their own holds online, please note: you will not have access to your account on May 26-28. Your password will be reset to the last 4 digits of your library card number. Your "Reading History" and "Wishlists" will not be carried over to the new catalog, so save them before May 26.

Musicians, please contact us if you are interested in performing on a Thursday evening this summer as part of our Music on the Patio series. In past years we have enjoyed music as diverse as folk, Quebecois, Barbershop, classical, and much more.

On display in the community room: Through April, view photographs of East Leverett Trails and marvel at how photographers of all ages have captured the natural beauty of the area. In May and June, see the world through the travel photographs of Susan Stoffolano.

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: *The Unruly Passions of Eugenie R.*, a novel by Leverett resident Carole DeSanti.

Thank you to everyone in town who helped with this year's Read It, Leverett, especially Brad and Seth Hendricks, Dr. Dan Bennett, Cheryl Howland, Anne Louise White and the Leverett Community Chorus, Phyllis Herda, and Maria Toyofuku.

Linda Wentworth, Library Director

Trails Committee Report

The first three months of 2012 were productive for the new Leverett Trail Committee. We planned a series of trail building events and activities extending from January into April.

Work continued on the East Leverett Trails Network. After establishing the Woodard's Corner and Lower 4-H trails in the fall of 2011, we had a very productive work day in March in which we built a new trail from Gordon King's Christmas Tree Farm conservation area south to the East Leverett Meadow. More than 20 people (from ages 6 to 82!) cleared brush, built bog bridges, and leveled sections of trail. By the end of the day, we had cleared and blazed a trail through beautiful stream-filled land, a hemlock forest, and a stand of partially harvested pines. While most folks worked on constructing the new connector trail, other volunteers felled two 50-foot red pines for bridge stringers to be used across Doolittle Brook (we are looking for bridge builders -- contact us!).

In addition to working on the trails, we also held a well-attended chain saw safety workshop. Everyone learned things that they should (and should *not*) be doing. We also hosted a photo contest; please visit the Library's community room to see photographs from the exhibit. And don't miss the event celebrating the winners on the 10th of April. Another event that we hosted was a

gathering of the community to talk about short and long term plans for Leverett's trails.

In the coming weeks, we will be beginning a trails poetry project with the elementary school and holding a poetry pizza night and workshop on April 10th.

For information about future trail building days, meetings, and events, and to sign up for our mailing list, please visit:

<http://www.rattlesnakeguttertrust.org/trails/leverett-trails-committee/>

David Powicki

Conservation Commission: On Teawaddle Hill Rd. Farm

Teawaddle Hill Farm is one of the last remaining working farms in Leverett. The farm produces hay, maple syrup, and cattle. Leverett Conservation Commission intends to conserve the farm forever by purchasing a Conservation Restriction (or the development rights).

Without this protection, the farm could be carved up into individual house lots along its 2,080 feet of frontage along Teawaddle Hill Road.

In addition to conserving the land for agricultural purposes, the Conservation Restriction will give residents appropriate recreational access that is compatible with farming, including: hiking, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing on designated trails between dawn to dusk. Trails may be closed temporarily for agricultural and forestry activities. Hunting, fishing, mountain biking, and horseback riding is allowed with the permission of the landowner.

At Town Meeting on April 28, 2012, Leverett residents will be asked to appropriate \$170,000 from the Community Preservation Act Fund (these funds have ALREADY been collected for town conservation and historic preservation projects), for the purpose of purchasing the Conservation Restriction on Teawaddle Hill Farm.

LEVERETT ENERGY COMMITTEE

If you don't have your own copy of the Leverett Energy Handbook, please call Portia (548-9737). Current project is implementing plans to use the state money that has come to the Town as a designated Green Community for conservation and alternative energy-saving projects. Our meetings are usually the second Monday of the month at 7:30 at the Town Hall. Everyone is welcome to join, show up to give an opinion, and to help out in ways we haven't thought of yet.

ANOTHER WAY TO BE A GOOD CITIZEN

Please help Les Allen in his ongoing project to help the Shriners Hospital for Children in Springfield. When you open a can of soda or any canned food (cat/ soup/ vegetables etc), with an aluminum (*not* metal) flip top, separate the flip top from the can and put it in a little

container. When the container is full, bring contents to the bottle-recycling station at the dump or to the Town Hall where Dee Ann has a collection jar. Why are you doing this? Because when Les and other volunteers deliver the flip tops, the Shriners hospital folks sell them to a place that re-uses aluminum and money raised this way is used to provide health services and medical equipment for sick kids AT NO CHARGE TO THEM. A tiny effort on our parts actually makes a difference. Do it. Les thanks you.

Community Events:

PLANTS and GARDEN BOOKS WANTED!!

The Annual Leverett Historical Society Plant and Garden Book Sale is scheduled for:

Sat., May 19th 9 a.m. – Noon, Leverett Town Hall.

We need plants and **GARDEN** books (in good condition) to sell! Please contact Dawn Marvin Ward (367-9562 or dmward@crocker.com) or Julie Shively (367-2656) to donate items or for more information.

Plants can be dropped off at the Town Hall on Friday night – please mark them so we know what we are selling!! **Garden** books can be brought anytime to the Lev Library entryway with a note “Plant Sale” on them.

Be sure to come to the sale itself – besides plants and books, there will be **garden ornaments** for sale created by the **Lev. School children** to raise money for their greenhouse project, along with handcrafted garden accessories by Hope and Hugh Davis.

Thank you, Dawn and Julie (LHS Plant Fairies)

LES PTO 3rd Annual Family Hike-a-thon

Sunday, April 29, 2012

- Rattlesnake Gutter Road –

- LES students and families will be seeking sponsors to make a pledge for their hiking efforts up & down Rattlesnake Gutter. **We encourage you to sponsor an LES student** – call us and we’ll connect you with a hiker.
- The **Hike-a-thon is open to the general public** – we are respectfully suggesting a contribution of \$10.
- Hike-a-thon parking will be at LES and a bus will transport hikers to/from the school parking lot and both ends of Rattlesnake Gutter Road from 2:00 to 5:00PM.
- Join us at 2:00 at LES for an official Hike-a-thon photo and kick-off ribbon cutting.
- The Family Hike-a-thon will help fund the programs, purchases, and activities of the PTO that support and enhance the curriculum and school environment at LES: *field trip bus transportation; performance artist assemblies; the garden program; 3rd Grade dictionaries; Get Fit Program; field trip admission fees; musical instruments; playground equipment; Medieval Feast performances; visiting storytellers; School Directory and*

Calendar; Staff Appreciation Luncheon; 6th grade yearbook; and so much more...

For more info, contact Hannah at hartlh@arps.org or Kate at 549-4840.

Qigong at the Leverett Library

Thursdays, 6:00 to 7:15 Teacher: Rema Boscov

Qigong is an ancient Chinese health maintenance practice, growing in popularity throughout the western world. *Qi* (chi) is "life force" or energy and *Gong* means long time study or cultivation. It is said that a daily practice of *qigong* may lead to longevity.

Acupuncturists work with *qi* to effect healing and promote well-being, but you can move this energy yourself, by learning simple movements, breathing practices, and self-applied massage, seated or standing.

Wear comfortable clothes and shoes. *Qigong* is often done outside, as another way to connect with nature's energy. So come prepared to be outdoors on nice days.

Don't worry--if the bugs are out, we'll be in.

Free Introductory Class: April 26

First session: May 3-24, 4 weeks. Cost: \$45

Second session: May 31-June 28, 4 weeks (no class June 14) Cost: \$45. For more information, call Rema at 548-9635.

Herbal Allies

Herbal Classes at the Leverett Library
Taught by Leverett Herbalist, Jean Bergstrom

April 15th, Sunday, 3 to 4:30pm **Herbal Relief for Allergy Sufferers**

Learn what you can do to strengthen your immune system and help relieve the misery of allergy symptoms.

May 19th, Saturday, 1 to 2:30pm **Medicinal Properties of Culinary Herbs**

Help a cough, lower high blood pressure, reduce your cholesterol and so much more with help from the common herbs in our spice cupboard, garden, or local market.

June 3rd, Sunday, 3 to 4:30pm **Weed Walk**

Get to know your neighbor plants. Take a ramble and find out what gifts the everyday “weeds” have to offer us.

Each class is \$15, sign up for all 3 for \$40. There may be a small materials fee.

Please register before the deadline, one week prior to class, 413-367-2842 or Blueskyberg@hughes.net

LEVERETT LITERATURE GROUP

We are reading everything from *Huck Finn*, Greek tragedy, William Faulkner, James Joyce, Flannery O'Connor, and Dante. We have pretty lively discussions. We meet on the third Tuesday of each month at 6:30 at the library. We have room for a few more curious readers who have been thinking it would be cool to re-read (or read for the first time) some the great literature that has endured over the years and centuries. Current project: Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* and *Antigone* Call Portia (548-9737) if curious.

TOWN OF LEVERETT
April 2012 NEWSLETTER
LEVERETT, MA 01054

PRSRT STD
US POSTAGE PAID
LEVERETT, MA 01054
PERMIT NO 3

Annual Town Meeting
Saturday, April 28, 2012, 9 AM
Leverett Elementary School
Draft Warrant and Budget enclosed!

LEVERETT RESIDENT
LEVERETT, MA 01054

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, **proof of rabies immunization, proof of rabies immunization, proof of rabies immunization**, *proof of spaying, and a **business-size self-addressed stamped envelope** to Town Clerk, Box 178, Leverett 01054. Documents will be returned with license.

Terry's Party announcement