

# The Goodwill Messenger

Published by the Village Church of Cummington

Ministry: All of us

Church Office: 634-5508

Service 10:00 AM, 1st & 3rd Sundays

Editor & Graphics: John Maruskin • Reporting & Mailing: Pat Keith

Volume LXVIII, Number 1 • February, 2018 • P.O. Box 76, Cummington, MA 01026

[cummingtonvillagechurch.org](http://cummingtonvillagechurch.org)

Village Church—Open and Affirming—You are welcome here

---

---

## Editor's note about History

Please read Mark DeMaranville's appreciation of Stephen Howes on page 2. In the last year or so we have lost three important resources of town history: Bill Streeter, Barbara Goldsmith, and now Stephen Howes. Those of us new to Cummington (that is, we only came here in the last thirty years or so) had a wealth of people from whom to learn about the town's history—people with direct memories. That resource is rapidly disappearing. Who is there who can carry on the memories now?

It's good that we have the two volumes of "Only One Cummington," but I am sure there are a lot of stories that would be good to keep which aren't in those volumes.

---

## Aging Gracefully in the Hilltowns!

A Community discussion group, sponsored by the Council on Aging, focusing on Living Fully, Aging Gracefully, and Befriending Death, open to all residents of the Hilltowns.

The group—always open to new members—meets at the Cummington Community House library, Main Street on the second Tuesday of each month from 1–3.

For further information please contact:

Wynne or Lucy 634 5576 [wynlucy@gmail.com](mailto:wynlucy@gmail.com) or Annie [annieb@crocker.com](mailto:annieb@crocker.com)

Comment:

*Why did I change my tune from "Okay, I should try this group once anyway" to joyfully looking forward to the next session, and the next?*

*What touches me most: the quiet, spacious, caring listening—mostly strangers sharing this awe-inspiring stage of our lives. I might have the exact same experience being shared, yet hearing how another takes a totally different approach is enlightening and often up-lifting.*

*Practical resources: Time to share what we have gleaned/researched regarding community resources to keep our lives vital.*

—Susan Brown (participant)

To rent the church space for classes, concerts, meetings, etc., please call Scott at 413 320-6544. The church charges a very nominal fee for upkeep & heat. We love having the building used!!

For personal, church needs or questions please contact one of the Deacons, John Maruskin at 634-5320, Kathleen Knox at 634-8041, Josh Wachtel at 634-5005 or leave a message at the church 634-5508.

## Christmas Tree Sale

The Clearview Christmas Tree Farm and the Adams Family wish to thank everyone in the Pioneer Valley who supported our efforts on behalf of the Village Church. Due to your generosity and holiday spirit, The Great Christmas Tree Sale generated \$2400.00 for the current operating budget of the church. As for us, we pretty much cleared the lot on Porter Hill Rd while swapping good stories and giving tractor rides to all who asked. Thank you all for making our last year in business a success. A special thank you to the Hampshire Gazette for getting the word out.

—Bill and Jane Adams

---

## Chi Gung

Hilltowns resident Michael Alterman will be teaching a weekly class in Taoist Water Method Chi Gung this spring at the Village Church in Cummington. The Taoist Water Method is an ancient system for developing internal awareness, which includes chi gung, tai chi, and meditation.

Opening the Energy Gates, the chi gung set Michael will be teaching helps people to maintain healthy posture with greater ease, and to release old patterns that cause pain and illness. Consistent daily practice of this form can renew all the major systems of the body, while calming and stabilizing the mind.

Class meets on Tuesday nights from 6:30 to 7:45 PM, and the early spring session begins on March 20. The fee for a seven-week session is charged on an affordable \$20-\$65-\$110 sliding scale, with no one turned away for lack of funds.

Beginners are also welcome to drop in at any time and try a class for free. No pre-registration is required, but it's helpful if people let Michael know in advance that they are planning to attend.

For more information, please contact Michael at 413-358-6919 or [alterman@speakeasy.net](mailto:alterman@speakeasy.net), or visit his website: [gyef2017.tumblr.com](http://gyef2017.tumblr.com).

---

## February At the Village Church

February 4—Service 10 AM

February 9—Valentine's Dance, Friday Night Café, 7–9 PM  
with the Lonesome Brothers

February 18—Service 10 AM

February 23—FNC—Sarah Stockwell-Arthen, 7–9 PM

---

## We're on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/CummingtonVillageChurch/>

## THE MAYOR OF SWIFT RIVER

Town historian is an earned title if ever there was one. Even then it's the loosest of designations, lacking offices, certificates, or nameplates. Its gestational period spans decades, and it is rarely if ever achieved by anyone younger than a senior citizen. Gradually, over time, the townspeople begin to recognize that a particular person not only possesses an exceptional degree of knowledge concerning town history, but also actively works in some manner to share or preserve it. When people seeking specific information regarding the town are encountered, they begin to be directed to a certain individual because he or she is a "town historian." As these cases increase, the designation solidifies until it becomes common knowledge.

My friend Stephen M. Howes was one of those rare individuals who rightfully earned the title of town historian.

The first conversation I remember having with Stephen was at Alan Goldsmith's funeral, and after that he began coming into the library. When the beautiful glass-and-wood display case in the library foyer was donated by the Liebenow family in memory of Michelle, who so enjoyed working at the BFL, Stephen volunteered to arrange displays in it. He had a museum's worth of interesting materials, invaluable stuff that he'd pull out of yellowed envelopes and tattered cardboard boxes. Signed photographs of George Gershwin; a signed copy of Calvin Coolidge's autobiography in a nice dust jacket; all manner of signed editions and photographs of Robert Frost. It seemed endless. In between these special displays, he had loads of seasonal greeting cards, postcards, and items that were produced long before the age of plastics. I particularly liked his Halloween display, which he trotted out every year. He always made a point of making sure the noisemakers still worked, which never failed to get us laughing. He had a great sense of humor, a quality that many who dealt with him might not have experienced, and many a night at the BFL we laughed ourselves silly over some funny story.

Except during the cold weather, he tended to come in on Wednesday evenings and would stay the whole three hours. I always greeted him as "Mr. Howes!" when he first walked in, after which he was Stephen. Mike and Peg Daniels were usually there, and Mike always greeted him as "the Mayor of Swift River." Between Mike, Peg, and myself, Stephen was always known as "the Mayor." And Stephen loved conversing with my good friend from Plainfield Pete Harding, a former State Department lifer whose understanding of world history exceeds anyone I've ever met.



League" from *The Cummington Story*.

In the absence of additional information, it appears that I was the last person to speak with him. I was home the Friday after the Thursday snow storm of January 4th, so I gave him a call. He didn't always pick-up his phone, but this time I got a "Hello?" "Well" I said, "you just answered my first question: you're alive!" He laughed and said "I guess so." "How do you like this cold spell?" I asked. He sighed, and I could almost hear him shaking his head as he answered "I don't ever remember anything like this." I asked him if he wanted any help with anything, but he declined my offer. We chatted a bit more. "Thanks for calling" he said, and then "Goodbye"... the last goodbye.

One of the greatest honors for a town historian is to be on the cover of the town report, and Stephen experienced that several years ago along with fellow town historian Barbara Goldsmith. I just wish he'd been at the town meeting when those in attendance gave them a standing ovation.

Stephen, who spent a quarter of a century serving on the Cummington Historical Commission, was very much looking forward to the upcoming 50th anniversary of the Kingman Tavern and the 150th Cummington Fair. Sadly, he won't be there for them. I'm sure all of the folks associated with those events are going to miss him very much. We're certainly going to miss him at the Bryant Free Library. The Mayor of Swift River has left the building.

— Mark DeMaranville

*I would also like to extend a heartfelt thanks to Denny Forgea for having the concern, taking the time, and making the effort to check on Stephen. He and Bernie quietly do this much more than most of us realize as we speed about our busy lives, and they deserve the appreciation of our entire community for doing so.*



Photos by Brendon Connors



## HELP WANTED:

Clerk/Secretary as needed for Planning Board. 4 hours per month. \$15.00 per hour. Meetings are held twice monthly. If interested, please contact Kathy Harrison, 413.634.5631

## Recording Session!

**Save the date.** The Beatnik Jazz All-Stars will have a recording session at the Community House Main Street on Sunday March 11, at 3 PM. Come to hear good music and be part of the audience for their CD.



## Kill Your Cabin Fever at the Friday Night Café

On January 12th, Blue Jazz returned. This mellow group plays very good jazz and is always a crowd pleaser. It consists of Dave Bartley, keyboards; Jeff McCrae on drums; Aaron Dean on sax; and Dave Christopolis on bass.



Rachel Laitman came back to the Café on January 26! There was a large crowd which came to hear her intimate songs and evocative voice. Sean Kimball accompanied on bass and vocals. Excellent live music right here in Cummington!

Advance notice: Come be lonesome with us on February 9 for an early Valentines Day dance party with The Lonesome Brothers.



Ray Mason and Jim Armenti intend to warm things up and get you moving in fine "hick rock" road-house style. We are hoping to raise a little extra at this event. There is no charge, but a \$10 donation is suggested. Of course, snacks are provided, and BYO drinks. It's gonna be a fun, mid-winter party! Hope to see you.

## Ice Rink

The Cummington Ice Rink has returned! Open to the public daily with evening skating Friday and Saturday nights with lights till 9:00. Our rink is maintained by volunteers like you, so bring a shovel if you've got one to help keep it clear! Safety equipment is highly encouraged. Thank you and happy skating!



✂️ Clip and Save

Friday Night Café  
at the Village Church  
Shows 7<sup>00</sup>-9<sup>00</sup>



2018

Jan 12	David Bartley - Blue Jazz
Jan 26	Rachel Laitman
Feb. 9	Valentines Dance w/ The Lonesome Brothers
Feb. 23	Sarah Stockwell - Arthen
Mar. 9	Radio Free Earth
Mar. 23	Louise Mosrie
Apr. 13	Sean & Heather
Apr. 27	Larz Young
May 11	One Part Luck & friends
May 25	Jack Swindlehurst
June 8	Season Finale "1968 - 50 years later"

www.cummingtonvillagechurch.org  
413-634-5398 and on Facebook

This program is supported in part by a grant from the Cummington, Plainfield, Windsor, Worthington, and Gosport Cultural Councils, local agencies which are supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency.

The Goodwill Messenger, deadline for the March issue is February 25, 2018. Any personal news, an event, a business to promote with a paid advertisement or anything else worth noting please send to John at mrblooz@verizon.net or Pat at patakeith@gmail.com, mail to VCC, PO Box 76, Cummington, MA 01026 or leave it in the drop box, marked GWM located in the back entry-way of the Village Church. Please be sure to include all the details, and a contact number in case we have questions.

Goodwill Messenger  
P.O. Box 76  
Cummington, MA 01026

*Schedule of Ongoing Events – all at the Community House unless specified*

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Admin. Assistant Hours 9–11 AM	Admin. Assistant Hours 9–11 AM	Family Center Play Group 9:30–11:30 AM	Finance Office (Tax Collector, Treas., Acct.) open 6–7 PM	Admin. Assistant Hours 9–11 AM	Transfer Station open 7–11 AM
Veterans Agent 9–11 AM	Board of Health 1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Tues. 7 PM (2nd floor)	Council on Aging Office Hours 9–noon (C.H. Annex)	Town Clerk 6–7:30 PM (2nd floor)	Family Center Play Group 9:30–11:30 AM	Bryant Library open 8:30 AM–12:30 PM
Assessor Office Hours 9:30–11:30 AM (upstairs in C.H.)		Bryant Library open 6–9 PM	Selectboard meets 7 PM		
Bryant Library open 6–9 PM		Transfer Station open 5:30–7:30 PM	Building Inspector 7–9 PM (upstairs in C. H.)		
		Planning Board 2nd, 4th weeks 7 PM	Board of Assessors meets 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 4 <sup>th</sup> Thursdays 6–8 PM		

If you would like an electronic copy instead of a paper one, include your email on the form below and we will email the Goodwill Messenger to you.

**Free computer services offered by Ken Graf to Cummington senior citizens**

634-8860

<http://kensstuff.blogspot.com>

Yes! I would like to subscribe to the Goodwill Messenger.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Town \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is my donation of \$10.00 for a one year subscription.

Please make checks payable to: Goodwill Messenger and mail your payment with this form to:  
Village Congregational Church, PO Box 76, Cummington, MA 01026