

In love with a culture



STAFF PHOTO BY TIM GOODWIN—
Paul Tuller built a traditional Japanese home in the backyard of his Dublin property, bringing the project full circle from when the timber frame was erected outside the Brattleboro Museum in 1987.

Dublin man built traditional Japanese home in backyard

By TIM GOODWIN
Monadnock Ledger-Transcript

For Paul Tuller, his interest in Japanese culture all started with an anthropology class in college. It's hard for him to pinpoint what exactly drew him in, "but it opened my eyes to a very different culture," he said.

And that one course led him to a path of discovery and creativity that has played a major role in his life. For many years, Tuller was the go to person on the East Coast for those looking to create a traditional Japanese space in their home. He spent many years traveling to the Boston area to bring his clients dreams to life – from bathrooms and tea rooms to furniture and shoji screens and doors – and even went as far as Florida for a job.

"All the details that would go into a traditional Japanese room," Tuller said.

It was in 1980 when he learned of the fine nuances of the Japanese hand tools at a wood working conference, and was fascinated with both their simplicity and complexity.

"The tools are just superior quality, but they take more understanding in how to use," Tuller said.

As a kid he grew up on a farm in Connecticut, the same piece of land his family farmed since 1768. It was there where he learned to make and fix things with his hands, a skill that allowed for his deep dive into the art of Japanese woodworking.

After college he was running the family saw mill on the farm, but then he contracted a disease that he suspects was Lyme – although it was never diagnosed – that put his life on hold.

"I was very, very ill and couldn't work for two years," Tuller said. "And it all happened in a few months."

Left with pain, the inability to make a fist and constraints in muscles and joints, Tuller was limited in what he could do. It was then he thought back to that conference where he learned about the traditional Japanese hand tools from a man who used them to make musical instruments.

"I thought maybe I could get into Japanese woodworking, maybe it won't be as hard on my body," Tuller said.

And Tuller is one of those people who wants as much information as possible when taking on a new endeavor. Soon he was seeking out any and all books to learn the finer points of how to use the tools. If he was going to truly make this into his life's work, Tuller knew he needed the background necessary to do it.

"I just learned more and more and got more interested," he said.

It started with Japanese doors and it morphed into so much more.

"I was always pushing the envelope, furthering my skills," Tuller said.

Because of that, he began taking on jobs that he didn't know how to do – like two

Japanese bathtubs as part of bigger bathroom projects – because he wanted to learn.

Now retired, Tuller has never fully gotten away from his Japanese woodworking skills. In fact, his last project took 15 years to complete, but he didn't have to go any further than his backyard to put in a day's work.

It all started in 1987 outside the Brattleboro Museum, when he was really starting to get serious about his work. He had heard that carpenters were planning to build two timber frames outside the museum, one being in traditional Japanese style, in the course of a month. The idea fascinated him and a year later, he was asked to help reconstruct the Japanese frame in Vermont.

"I was the only one around who knew how it went together," Tuller said.

He helped fix errors in the roof structure, but it was never actually erected and sat in storage for 16 years before it was to be auctioned off by a school in Athol, Massachusetts in 2004. Tuller offered to buy the pile of timber as is and brought it back to his Dublin home. The following year, after cleaning and



Paul Tuller

MONADNOCK PROFILES

sorting the materials, he began putting it together on a piece of land that he and his wife Mary Loftis had purchased across the street from their property where they planned to build a new home.

"I worked on it little by little," Tuller said. "I had the plans. That way I could figure out where everything went 16 years after it was built."

But it soon took a back seat to the construction of the new home that spanned two years. He had previously built a large barn on the property that would act as both his workshop and a place for the family horses.

"I always wanted to build a new home," he said.

With work and life taking priority, Tuller pecked away at putting together the Japanese home. Then about three years ago, after retiring from a seven year stretch with Frost Pond Carpentry, Tuller thought it was time to finish it – before he physically couldn't.

"It's a typical Japanese home for a family of four," Tuller said. It includes the en-

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ConVal budget unchanged



STAFF PHOTO BY ABBE HAMILTON—
ConVal alpine ski coach Holly Wilson and ski team captains Rosie Crooker and Noah Krason voice support for approving the budget as proposed.

By ABBE HAMILTON
Monadnock Ledger-Transcript

Residents did not propose any amendments to the ConVal School District warrant at the deliberative session on Tuesday night. The meeting adjourned in an hour and a half, with no voter discussion on the majority of the 10 proposed warrant articles.

Superintendent Kimberly Rizzo-Saunders explained the major changes in the budget. The proposed gross budget of \$50,565,102.85, which is \$1.422

million higher than the default budget of \$49.143 million. She explained that more than 75 percent of the increases came from salary and benefit costs, and explained the new staff and faculty positions included in this year's budget.

Rizzo-Saunders also described the order in which programs would be cut if the budget increase was not passed, and the school had to revert to a default budget. Although no athletic programs

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GREENFIELD

Winter Carnival is Saturday

By ABBE HAMILTON
Monadnock Ledger-Transcript

Greenfield's annual Winter Carnival is scheduled for Saturday, with a lineup of events going on snow or shine.

The opportunity for getting together and meeting neighbors is the real appeal of the event for organizer Dorene Adams. She recommends starting the day off with breakfast at the Fire Station.

"Visit with old friends over a cup of coffee while they get their cars washed," she said, referencing the Fire Department's by-donation car wash and then peruse exhibits at the historical society or stop into the library, where crafts start on the hour throughout the day. "If we have snow, you can make a snowman on the



STAFF PHOTO BY BEN CONANT—
Fun in the snow at a previous Greenfield Winter Carnival.

library lawn." The cardboard sled race is the big event of the afternoon, she said.

"Each year the kids amaze me with their sled creations and they have so much fun going down a hill or a snow pile, hoping the sled stays together and they make it to the bottom without falling out.

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Farewell Reception for Dr. Michelle A. Urban

Join us as we thank Dr. Michelle Urban for her eight years of service to Monadnock Family Care and Monadnock Community Hospital. Dr. Urban has been a wonderful advocate for her patients in our community and we wish her the very best in her retirement.

Tuesday, February 11
5:00 – 6:30 PM
Conference Room 5
452 Old Street Road
Peterborough, NH
Light refreshments will be served



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Temple to pay proper ambulance share



STAFF PHOTO BY MEGHAN PIERCE
Temple Selectman Ken Caisse and other Temple town officials debate the ambulance budget Tuesday night after budget committee members said the town was paying more than its fair share in a four town agreement.

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joined last year it was decided Greenfield, Lyndeborough and Temple would each pay 16.33 percent, while Wilton dropped to 51 percent. Budget Advisory Committee members said they gladly accepted the 16.33 percent cost last year, because it was part of bringing on the town of Greenfield, which would reduce costs for all of the towns.

“Everybody loves the service and that’s not part of this debate,” Budget Advisory Committee member John Kieley said. “The debate is about what’s Temple’s rightful share it.”

The contract between the towns, however, calls for towns to pay based on calls for service and should have resumed to that formula this year, Temple town officials said Tuesday night.

Wilton town officials, however, set the percentage rates for 2020 at the 2019 rate. So instead of being asked to pay \$40,000 this year, Temple is being asked to pay \$56,000, an extra \$16,000, and the town of Lyndeborough is paying \$5,000 over what it should be paying. While the town of Greenfield is being asked to pay \$21,000 under what it should pay, they said.

“What it says specifically is that the allocation will be based on the number of calls,” Kieley said. “So Temple’s share of the number of calls, round numbers, is about 11 percent. Which translates into \$40,000.”

The Budget Advisory Committee members said it

wouldn’t be fair to Greenfield to ask them to pay an extra \$21,000 after they have set and approved their town budget. And with the Greenfield town budget hearing taking place the very next night action must be taken, the Budget Advisory Committee members said.

Temple Selectmen agreed to change the town’s proposed budget for ambulance services back to \$40,000 from \$56,000 and to notify all the towns first thing in the morning.

Greenfield Town Administrator Aaron K. Patt, said the issue will be discussed Wednesday night, but as of Wednesday afternoon the ambulance budget for Greenfield was still \$57,800, the amount Wilton had set at its Jan. 19 budget hearing. He referred questions to Wilton Town Administrator Paul Branscombe.

Branscombe said Wednesday afternoon that he couldn’t say too much at the moment since he has not had a chance to notify Wilton Select Board members.

He added that Wilton and Lyndeborough both passed their budgets Tuesday night and Greenfield is meeting Wednesday night to set its budget. He said he needs to find out what happens at that hearing before he can comment.

The proposed budgets for the towns are expected to come before voters at their March Town Meetings.

The Temple budget hearing is planned to take place at 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 6, at the Town Hall.

Steyer to campaign at Keene State College Thursday

Democratic presidential candidate Tom Steyer will host a town hall in Keene on Thursday, Feb. 6 at 5:30 p.m. Doors open at 5 p.m.

The town hall will be held in the Lantern Room in the

L.P. Young Student Center at



Tom Steyer

Keene State College, 229 Main St., Keene.

To register, visit www.mobilize.us/nhfortomsteyer/event/215689.



JAFFREY-RINDGE
COOPERATIVE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Child Find Screening

The Jaffrey-Rindge Cooperative School District will sponsor an area Child Find Program. This program is designed to identify and screen children from age 2.5 through age 5 who are suspected of having disabilities that may interfere with later school progress. The screening is free and available to all families living in the towns of Jaffrey and Rindge.

Children will be screened in the areas of learning, speech and language, as well as fine and gross motor skills. Results of the assessments will be mailed to the parents within three weeks. All information will remain confidential and will only be released to other professionals, i.e. school system or physician, with parental consent.

Please Contact Samantha Lewis at 603-532-8122 X 389 to make an appointment

**Jaffrey Grade School Child Find
Wednesday Feb 12, 2020
9:00 - 11:00 am**

Fire department seeks approval for ventilation

FIREFIGHTERS FROM PAGE 1

cals when they burn. And exposure to those chemicals does not stop when firefighters leave the scene. Their protective gear, even their trucks, carry it back with them.

In Lyndeborough this year, Smith said the fire department is taking steps to limit the risk to firefighters with the purchase of a ventilation system for the fire station, expected to cost \$21,000, and the washing machine, expected to cost \$5,000, to help remove and protect firefighters from cancer-causing contaminants.

The department has the funds for both in its capital reserve for firefighter equipment but needs March Town Meeting voters to approve the purchases.

The industrial-grade washing machine would allow firefighters to wash their protective gear. Because of its size the machine would have to be housed at the highway department, Smith said. Regulations only require gear to be washed once a year, but its become clear that is not often enough, between contaminants and the break down of the fabric which can be caused by leaving grit on the gear, Smith said.

The ventilation system would filter the air in the fire department’s bays, and purify it. The department has been looking for a ventilation system that would work with their small space, Smith said.

These two pieces of equipment, while not eliminating all the risk, will be a step forward, Smith said.

“We have these firefighters coming in, and they’re all volunteers,” he said. “It’s my job to protect them as best I can. It’s time to step up and give my guys what they need.”

Firefighters on the crew said they’ve been getting bet-



STAFF PHOTO BY ASHLEY SAARI
Firefighter Shane Meltzer dons his turnout gear.

ter educated about the risks of chemical remnants. Last year, the department had a training on the rising risk of cancer among firefighters, and ways to protect themselves.

“It’s important to clean your gear,” firefighter Hunter Mills said. “The materials they use in building are changing. That residue can cling to you, and then you can bring it with you. I think of it as a virus. If you bring your gear in your truck, you can pass it on to your family.”

Shane Meltzer of Lyndeborough, another firefighter with the department, said he’d never considered the risks of chemical residue until he joined the service.

“I never knew anything about it. I never even thought about it,” he said, adding he is not detoured by the additional of firefighting. “It doesn’t change it for me. ... I still want to serve. I’ve just come to realize we need different equipment.”

“I know what I’m walking

into,” agreed Mills. “We just need to get the right equipment and do what we can to minimize the risk.”

Town Meeting ballot voting is scheduled to take place Tuesday, March 10, at Citizen’s Hall 10 a.m. and 7 p.m. The open session of Town Meeting is planned for Saturday, March 14, at Citizen’s Hall at 10 a.m.

Ashley Saari can be reached at 924-7172 ext. 244 or asaari@ledgertranscript.com. She’s on Twitter @AshleySaariMLT.

ConVal budget moves forward to district vote

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were specifically named, the high school’s alpine and Nordic ski teams were present and stood as alpine ski coach Holly Wilson and Peterborough resident Ken Phillips spoke in favor of voting in the budget as recommended to avoid program cuts.

“Sports do build good citizens,” Wilson said.

Phillips acknowledged that some residents may have good financial reasons to resist a budget increase, but as a parent of a student, he saw it as crucial to support the budget as recommended by the school board.

“The things we will lose if we default are the things that will make our students the kinds of people that we want to lead this community in the future,” Phillips said, citing his daughter’s participation on the high school’s Nordic Ski team.

“It’s a sad state of affairs that we no longer have a dialogue about spending \$50 million,” Hancock resident Tom Weldon said.

He voiced concern that the



STAFF PHOTO BY ABBE HAMILTON
State Senator Jeanne Dietsch speaks in favor of the ConVal budget.

school’s budget was increasing as the student population was declining, and reminded the board that decisions had to be made when building maintenance was required on some school buildings populated at less than 50 percent capacity. A Frankestown resident later said that he suspected many people in the audience “sat quiet for 50 million” because they “trust what’s happening.”

No voters commented on Articles 5 and 6, which concern the development of a rooftop solar array at the high school. Board members clarified that the Energy Projects and Efficiency Fund proposed in Article 6 would fund an eventual buyout of the solar

array, and would not be funded by the same capital reserve fund process that contributes leftover monies at the end of the year.

Former School Board Chair Myron Steere spoke to his rationale for petitioning Warrant Article 9, a petitioned article that seeks to resolve what he described as currently “unfair” costs accrued by the School District when using facilities owned by town recreation departments, such as in Peterborough and Antrim. He cited instances in the past where the School District paid for maintenance of town-owned facilities, or received bills with no explanation, and said the article would start the process of develop-

ing a fairer exchange.

State Senator Jeanne Dietsch spoke in favor of the budget proposed by the School Board, and said that, although it was not soon enough to include in this year’s budget, the state legislature was currently fast-tracking a measure that would reinstate access Medicaid to Schools, a source of revenue the District abruptly lost in August 2019 to the tune of \$300,000.

The meeting ended with a resolution thanking two school board members with expiring terms who would not be running again. Crista Salamy, one of Antrim’s two representatives, served on the Board for nine years and Kristen Reilly, one of Peterborough’s four representatives, has served for four. Alan Edelkind of Dublin, Stephan Morrissey of Frankestown, Katherine Heck of Greenfield, and James Fredrickson of Sharon are all running for reelection this year.

Residents can vote on the School District’s warrant articles on March 10 at their town’s polling place.

The art of Japanese woodworking

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trance area, where guests remove their shoes, a large granite stone meant for cooking he found at Peterborough Marble and Granite, tatami mats for a portion of the floor, a table that sits low to the ground with a well underneath for legs to hang in and what would be considered a family shrine.

First it was one day a week, then the following year it was two days. With the help of Alef de Ghize, who was his apprentice about two decades earlier, the two completed the project last summer, just before Tuller’s daughter Laura’s wedding on the family property.

“I would have never finished without him,” Tuller said. “Well maybe, but I’d be 80.”

The only thing that remains to be done is a

Japanese garden, which Tuller expects will take shape over the next couple years.

Tuller grew up in a family that was very community oriented.

“I grew up seeing that as part of normal life,” Tuller said.

And over the years he has been involved with many endeavors. He was the head of the committee that got the Dublin Recycling Center off the ground and served on the board that helped start the Dublin Community Center. He spent six years as a member of the Dublin Historical Society, helping with the project to move the old schoolhouse.

“I’ve always appreciated the power of people working together,” Tuller said. “You can do so much if you organize people into action.”

On a broader level, he was co-founder of the Guild of New Hampshire Woodwork-

ers in 1990, an organization that currently has more than 550 members. He saw the benefit of woodworkers from around the state coming together.

“We would always talk about how wouldn’t it be great if we got together and could learn from each other,” Tuller said. “The idea was everybody would get better together and that has carried through for all 30 years.”

He also helped found the Monadnock Art tour, which will celebrate 25 years this fall, and was a juried member of the League of NH Craftsmen.

Currently, Tuller serves on the board for the Cornucopia Project because “I have some background having grown up on a farm.”

Later this month, Tuller will teach an introductory class in the use of Japanese hand tools and joinery tech-

niques at the MAXT Makerspace. He has been involved with MAXT for a number of years, helping to set up the woodworking shop at the Vose Farm Road location and is involved with safety training for those looking to use the area.

He also did some video production work for about five years, taking a break from his Japanese inspired woodworking.

Tuller and Loftis have two children, Laura, who lives in Sacramento, and Andy, who is in Seattle.

He loves antiques and art, and is the vegetable gardener of the family.

What might be a surprise is that Tuller has never been to Japan. He’s always wanted to go, but for one reason or another the trip has never happened. But that will change when he and Loftis go in May – bringing his life’s work full circle.