



The Montague Reporter

YEAR 14 – NO. 9

also serving Irving, Gill, Leverett and Wendell

\$1

EDITOR@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

DECEMBER 10, 2015

Ballot Question, House Bill Differ In Approaches to Livestock Conditions

By JEN HOLMES

BOSTON – Last week, the Citizens for Farm Animal Protection, a Massachusetts-based coalition comprised of animal rights groups, some family farmers, veterinarians and public health officials, handed in their petition for a Prevention of Farm Animal Cruelty Act to the Secretary of the Commonwealth, in hopes that it will be included as a statewide ballot question in the November 2016 election.

The referendum, also known as the Massachusetts Farm Animal Containment Initiative, is intended to "prevent animal cruelty by phasing out extreme methods of farm animal confinement".

In addition to farms adhering to the outlined standards, businesses would not be allowed to sell eggs,



NINA ROSSI PHOTO

Wendell's Diemand Farm could be directly affected if a proposed state ballot initiative that would regulate laying hens passes next November.

pork or veal from any animal that was "confined in a cruel manner," with "cruel" defined by the referendum as "confined so as to prevent a covered animal from lying down, stand-

ing up, fully extending the animal's limbs, or turning around freely."

The animals the law would cover include egg-laying hens, breeding

see **LIVESTOCK** page A4

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

Lights Finally On Along Avenue A

By JEFF SINGLETON

"By the time you write this, they should all be up," Bruce Hunter of the Franklin Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) told this reporter at the Montague selectboard's December 7 meeting.

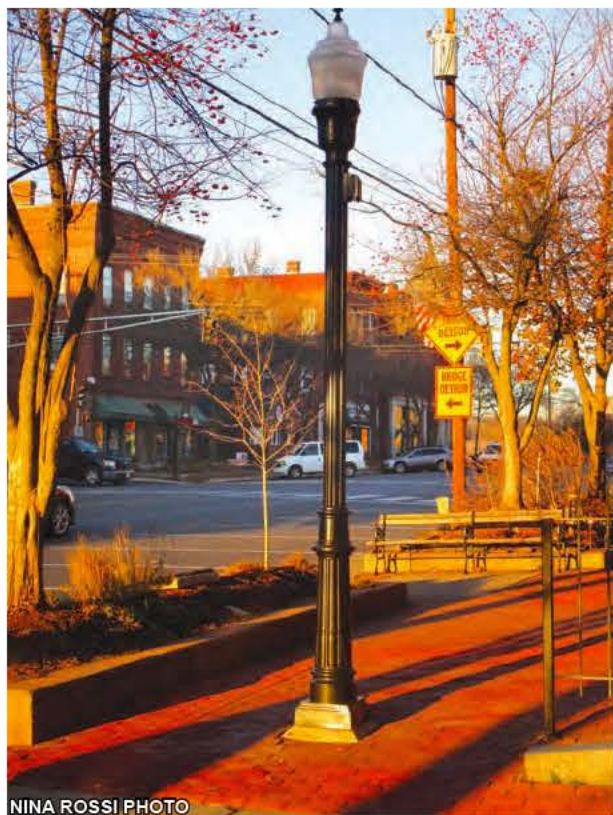
Hunter was referring to the replacement lights on Avenue A, a key element of Turners Falls Streetscape Improvement project, which is funded by a federal community development block grant. The HRA administers these grants for the town of Montague.

Replacing the lights, which were designed to evoke late nineteenth-century lighting, has not been a simple task. Problems securing the light poles to the sidewalk required ordering and refashioning new bases. This, in turn, led to delays in the completion of the Streetscape project, which was scheduled to be finished in October. There were concerns that the lights might not be on by Christmas.

But the lights on the east side of Avenue A were on when the selectboard meeting commenced. Hunter assured the board that the west side would be lit by the weekend, or the beginning of the following week.

The sidewalk bump-out, now called a "pedestrian mini-plaza," on the corner of Avenue A and Third Street will be finished when the wood for benches is installed, reportedly by December 11 as well.

see **MONTAGUE** page A5



NINA ROSSI PHOTO

The new street lamps were installed this week.

LEVERETT SELECTBOARD

School District Eyes Change in Formula

By TIA FATTARUSO

Shutesbury has requested phasing out the regional agreement method the Amherst-Pelham Regional School District has been using to make its budget since FY'08, according to Leverett selectboard member Julie Shively.

Shively attended last Saturday's school committee meeting, where representatives for Shutesbury apparently put forth a suggestion that the district return to the state's statutory method of town assessments over the course of five years.

According to Shively, the current regional agreement method, where each town pays the same amount for each student, is more equitable. It also makes it hard to predict an annual cost and results in years of greater expense for different towns, in turn, she said. Each town must approve the formula annually at town meeting.

Using the regional agreement, according to estimates provided by the district, Shutesbury's share of the \$19.54 million FY'17 budget would increase by 4.3%, Leverett's 2.3%, and Amherst's 2.5%, while Pelham's share would drop 7.9%.

see **LEVERETT** page A6

Beacon Hill Solar Gridlock Could Stall Montague Project

By JEFF SINGLETON

Montague town planner Walter Ramsey has raised concerns that gridlock in the state legislature over state solar policy could negatively impact Montague's plan to construct a 6.4-megawatt (MW) solar array in a former landfill. In a recent letter he sent to state representative Stephen Kulik and senator Stan Rosenberg, Ramsey wrote:

"With the proposed changes in the [state solar] Net Metering program, including reducing the net metering credit rate to wholesale market prices, this project may be in jeopardy..."

Kulik responded that he had met with the developer of the Montague project, Kearsarge Energy. "I agree with you about the importance of timely action and the need to continue our strong support of policies that enable projects like Montague's," he wrote in an email to Ramsey. "I have conveyed that to the conferees on the House side and hope that this will be addressed favorably in the final version of the legislation."

see **SOLAR** page A8

Downtown Friday: Turners Falls Celebrates A "Wonderful Night"

By REPORTER STAFF

TURNERS FALLS – RiverCulture presents its annual December event, "It's A Wonderful Night in Turners Falls," this Friday, December 11 from 3 to 10 p.m. Family activities are planned throughout downtown: children's crafts, live music, restaurant specials, performances and unique gift buying opportunities and fundraisers.

Children and adults alike are encouraged to put a wish list in the **Magic Mailbox**, as well as notes of hope for themselves, friends, family and the world! Santa will arrive at Spinner Park to collect the notes at 6:30 p.m.

Bring your children to the Great Hall at the Great Falls Discovery Center between 3 and 6 p.m. to craft **bird feeders** for our feathered friends. Which birds are going to show up? What do they like to eat? Find out at the free "make and take" event. Workshop continues on Saturday from 12 to 3 p.m. if you miss it on Friday.

Stroll over to the Brick House at 24 Third Street to see "**It's A Wonderful Night to Dance**," a performance of the children's creative dance company, *Awesome Art in Motion*. Of course, every night is a wonderful night to dance, but on this night, you are invited to celebrate the wonder of children dancing and creating art for themselves. There will be three pieces, two of them improvised on the spot based on a study, and one of them choreographed and set by the children over the past several months.

The dance company is part of Great Falls Creative Movement, which teaches dancers to discover their own range of movement and freely express themselves while developing physical confidence and skill. Please come support, and be inspired by, the next generation! Dance performance starts at 5:30 in the Movement Studio, upstairs at the Brick House Community Resource Center.

Downstairs at the Brick House from 5 to 8 p.m., you may insert yourself into a variety of classic **holiday winter scenes**, such as the Abominable Snowman, the Grinch, Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer, and the Holly Jolly Christmas elves at the North Pole. John Ancil's locally based company FastLights has loaned the special equipment to RiverCulture to create these green-screen masterpieces, which you can receive by email immediately.

In the little yellow brick building just down the street from the Brick House, at 38 Third Street, a seasonal "**pop-up shop**" filled with local arts and crafts opens for the first time from 4 to 8 p.m. Expect to find fun, funky and whimsical finds in this charming holiday shop.



NINA ROSSI PHOTO

The "Magic Mailbox" in Spinner Park is a receptacle for New Year's wishes. Santa will be on hand to collect them during Friday's event.

The Five Eyed Fox café-bar will have **special holiday drinks** and local fare across the street at 37 Third Street.

STUFF, the shop at the corner of Third and Avenue A, will be open late that night, offering lots of **collectible and vintage household items** and a variety of artifacts from many eras. Just south of the store along the row of storefronts you may find a **video installation** by RiverCulture director and artist Suzanne LoManto, in collaboration with MCTV's Bret Leighton.

This montage of several holiday classic films – including "It's a Wonderful Life" – is interspersed with video art and animation. As this project is still evolving right up to press time, we can't describe exactly what it will consist of, but as with previous RiverCulture projects, it will certainly be unique and not to be missed.

As in previous years, Santa **arrives at Spinner Park** with help from the Turners Falls Fire Department at 6:30 p.m. Live tuba and trumpets will herald his arrival! Enjoy cookies and hot chocolate courtesy of the Montague Business Association while you wait in this little pocket park at the corner of Fourth Street and Avenue A.

The **Magic Mailbox** in front of Spinner Park, constructed by artist Jack Nelson, is ready to receive everyone's wishes, which Santa will collect while he is there. Rest assured that all wishes added to the mailbox after the event will also be forwarded to Santa.

There is no organized caroling group this year, but impromptu song and dance is encouraged on the Avenue. Warm up your voice by singing along with the performers at **Welcome Yule: Midwinter Music, Dance, Songs & Stories** at The Shea Theater, 71 Avenue A at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$12 for adults, \$10 for seniors and children (under 4 free). Reservations: reservations@welcomeyule.org. There will be a Saturday and Sunday performance as well if you miss this one.

see **WONDERFUL** page A5

The Montague Reporter

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Slamming On the Brakes

"It is not up to MBI [the Massachusetts Broadband Institute], a bureaucracy in eastern Massachusetts, to decide what is in the best interests of the towns and their residents in western Massachusetts."
— WiredWest, December 3

Over five years into WiredWest's campaign to help area towns aggregate to build a "last mile" high-speed internet network, the group's activists must feel as if the rug has been pulled out from under them.

Last week the MBI, a division of the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative — which, indeed, keeps offices in Westborough and Boston — dropped a bombshell of a statement, saying that it disapproved of the agreement WiredWest was asking its member towns to sign.

The MBI is sitting on \$40 million, raised by state-issued bonds, that WiredWest hopes very much to tap into. The 2008 legislation that formed the Institute mandated that it "leverage private sector and federal investment" to "promote broadband adoption... particularly among vulnerable or disadvantaged populations that underutilize" broadband.

WiredWest is a mechanism for public ownership — it's been described as a "coop" of dozens of towns, which include Wendell, Shutebury, New Salem and Northfield, though it recently incorporated as an LLC to reflect their direct ownership.

The MBI says WiredWest's draft plan, which member towns had been asked to approve by early next month, "understates challenges and expenses and overstates the amount and timing of anticipated revenues."

That is a technical matter, and this newspaper's editors are unqualified to evaluate it. The two organizations are each pointing to reports by consultants; a recent Columbia Technology Corporation (CTC) review concluded the model "is likely to be sustainable," though it warned the group may be lowballing construction costs.

But there are two other aspects of MBI's criticism that should be subject to public debate.

The first is that the proposed model does not rely on "professional or technical partners" enough, and that a rural broadband project "must include contracting out many administrative, service and maintenance operations."

In a point-by-point rebuttal issued last Friday, WiredWest argues that this is "simply not true," and that its structure would "minimize the costs to towns not maximize the profits to private industry."

Indeed, there is nothing in any economic theory to suggest that a utility locked into a contract with a single "technical partner" would necessarily deliver better outcomes than a utility trying to get the job done in-house. Stripping away the jargon, this seems like an indirect argument over the merits of the local talent pool.

On the other hand, imagine if things went wrong down the line. After all, if anyone has a more questionable track record than urban bureaucrats, it's rural bureaucrats.

WiredWest's rebuttal slipped in an extra punch: The consultant MBI hired to review its business plan, Wipro, is one of the world's largest IT outsourcing companies, "so it is not surprising, if not a conflict of interest, that they would advocate" for outsourcing.

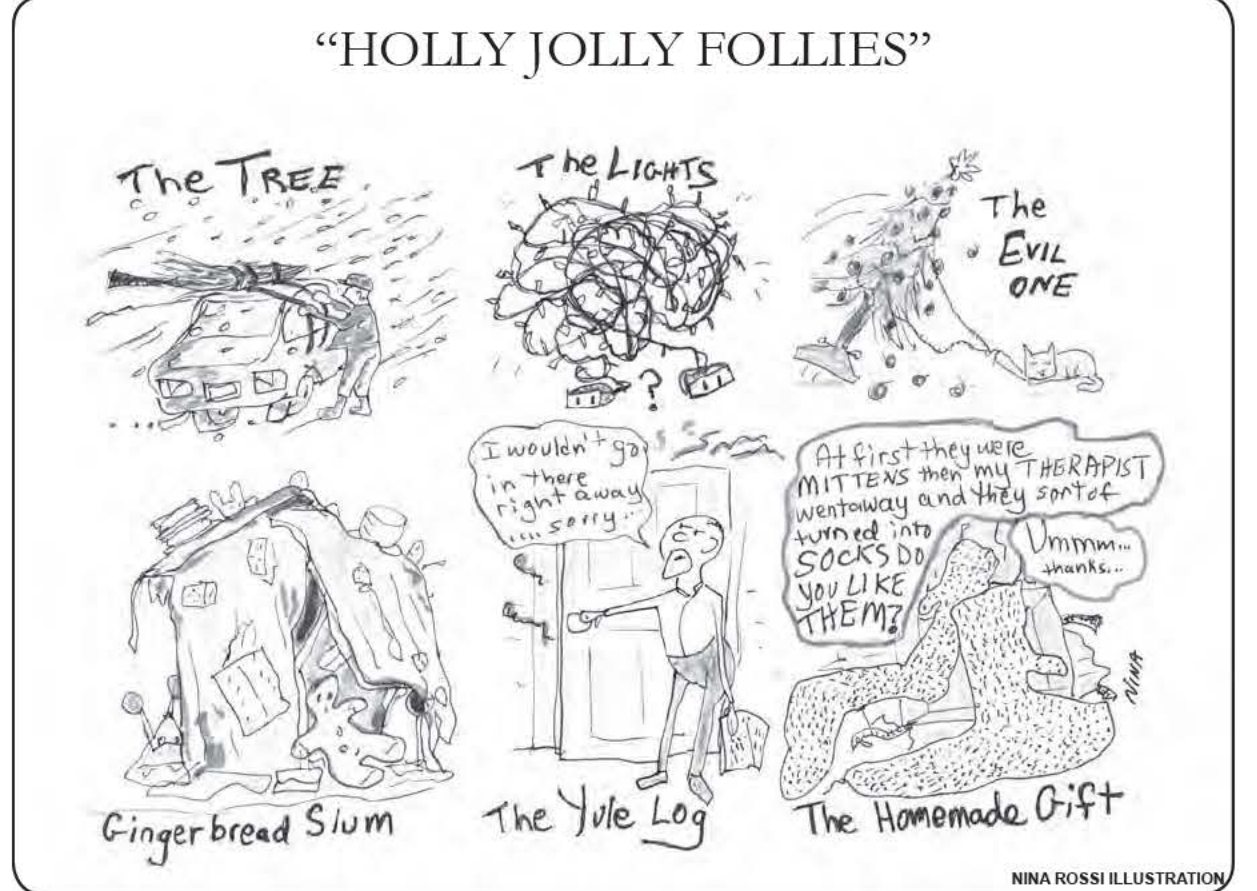
Headquartered in Mumbai, Wipro started out in the 1960s as West India Palm Refined Oils Ltd., now takes in over \$7 billion a year in IT services revenues. It is the kind of entity that knows where money comes from, though maybe not one with a sense of just how many tech professionals would kill for a job in their field in this particularly happening rural Valley.

So it seems more likely that, on this point, Wipro's review offered generally sound, off-the-shelf advice, while underestimating WiredWest's chances at assembling a capable team, than that they're secretly angling for their own piece of our local broadband maintenance / call center action.

The second part of the MBI letter that we think needs more debate and discussion is the whole question of an exit strategy, or a harder look at the risks to its members during a worst-case scenario.

Yoking twenty or thirty quirky small towns together may be the only way to achieve the scale necessary to develop this infrastructure, but it also creates quite a cumbersome system of governance — they'd better hire a hell of a General Manager.

It should not be too difficult to imagine our gut impulse toward mutiny and secession — you know, the one that has us calling people "bureaucrats" for putting stipulations on a grant they're handing us — might one day spur movements



Letters to the Editors

Time For a Quality Talk

Thank you for your articles and editorial regarding Montague Center Water. During that incident, many residents were unaware of the problem for two to three days after detection.

Your last article, "Village Water..." (December 3, 2015) helped explain why there seemed to be such a lack of communication. But it also raises questions about Montague Center water.

We appreciate the efforts Mr. Dion and others have made over the years; the Montague Center Water District is in charge of one of our most important resources.

However, Mr Dion's response at the end of the *Reporter* article, "If anybody wants this job, step right up," suggests he doesn't even want the position of commissioner, and makes us wonder why we still have a Montague Center Water District when we can draw from the Turners Falls Water District?

This isn't just about the *E. coli* event, but about our water quality.

How does our water compare with Turners Falls water? Must

they undergo the same treatment (they are drawn from very different types of wells); is the busy road next to the Montague Center well a concern; would there be a difference in service to homeowners who have questions or problems with their water; do we pay the same in both districts, etc.

We hope these questions can be addressed at the next meeting, which takes place at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, January 6 at the Montague Center Firehouse.

We appreciate the commissioners' willingness to hold this next meeting at the firehouse rather than the pump house; and also ask that they help get the word out about this change, either in this paper or by posting signs at the post office and store.

It may well be that we are best served by the Montague Center Water District, or it may be time to consider a change.

Emily Monosson
Leigh Rae
Julie Kumble
Montague Center

Coop Members: Ban GMOs!

Hundreds of members of the Franklin Community Co-op (Green Fields Market and McCusker's) have been advocating for the elimination of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) and foods containing carcinogenic pesticides from the co-op.

We have been met with up to a year-long delay in our attempts to work with the Board of Directors to remedy this situation.

Since the members of the Board of Directors (BoD) are elected specifically to represent the co-op members, we are asking all concerned members to attend the BoD meeting next Wednesday, December 16 at 6:20 p.m. at the CDC, 324 Wells Street, Greenfield (the north end of Wells near Silver Street).

Please come voice your concerns and vote to establish a policy now, to

eliminate harmful ingredients from our health food. We will vote to reverse the BoD's delays and request to place the GMO/pesticide issue on the annual member meeting agenda in March.

The more members who attend, the more successful our efforts can be!

For more info, please email nonGMOcommittee@gmail.com.

Whether or not you can attend, please also state your concerns by email to the Board of Directors at bod@gfm.coop and the General Manager at john.williams@franklincommunity.coop. Please copy nonGMOcommittee@gmail.com.

Gloria Kegeles
Wendell

Member, Non-GMO Committee

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JESSICA LARKIN ILLUSTRATION

Compiled by DON CLEGG

The Fourth Annual **Shutesbury Holiday Shop** will be held Friday, December 11, from 6 to 9 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. This fabulously magical, three-day event transforms the Shutesbury Athletic Club Function Room at 282 Wendell Road, Shutesbury, into a veritable wonderland of gift-giving options!

This year the shop features an affordable array of handcrafted work from 40 local artisans, artists, crafters, authors and musicians. Unlike a craft fair, most of the creators will not be onsite, but like any great gift shop, information on each will be available in the shop and online.

The Shutesbury Holiday Shop was founded in 2011 to provide a venue for talented local artists, artisans, crafters, authors and musicians of all ages to show and sell their work and to create a one-stop shopping experience for people who enjoy buying handmade for the holidays. Started by Melinda LeLacheur of Dragonfly Designs, it is now run by a volunteer committee of local artisans.

Please join Colleen Campbell of “**Heroes, Horses and Hounds**” at Greenfield Savings Bank in Turners Falls, from 10 to 11 a.m. on Saturday, December 12, as she enthusiastically presents the healing impact of this non-profit organization which strives to improve the community, the lives of folks with disabilities, veterans, children at risk and rescued animals.

Heroes come in many shapes, sizes and colors, and all should be given a chance to improve their life through therapy, education, and training, as well as feeling they really do matter.

Saturday, December 12, will be an evening of song and seasonal celebration at the Old Town Hall when the **Wendell Community Chorus** joins neo-Celtic duo Lady Moon for the second annual Friends of the Wendell Meetinghouse Yule Concert at 7 p.m.

First, the Wendell Community Chorus will be singing songs of Spirit, Light, Mystery and Miracles. The chorus has been singing together for approximately five years at community events and their own concerts under the leadership of

Morning Star Chenven. Their special guest Moonlight Davis will lead them in some Gospel anthems and the audience is welcome to sing along.

Then Lady Moon, a celebrated pairing of Neo-Celtic artists Kellianna and Jenna Greene will take the stage at about 8 p.m. With stunning vocal and Celtic harp, this duo features otherworldly harmonies on centuries-old traditional songs from the British Isles and beyond.

The concert is a benefit for Friends of the Wendell Meetinghouse, with partial proceeds going to the Wendell Community Chorus scholarship fund. The suggested contribution is \$10 for adults, \$5 for kids ages 6 to 17, and free for 5 and under. Refreshments will include sweet and savory treats.

There will be a **drop-in tech day at the Erving Library** this Sunday, December 13 at 4 p.m. For those who want to know the difference between a Kindle, Kindle Fire, iPad, Laptop and Desktop before making a holiday purchase, stop in to see Library Director Barbara Friedman.

The Erving Library owns these items, and Mrs. Friedman will explain the differences.

Back by popular demand, Ray MacIntyre and Robert Lord team up for a **Holiday medley concert** on Monday, December 14 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Turners Falls Branch of the Greenfield Savings Bank.

Kidleidoscope returns to the Great Falls Discovery Center on Thursday, December 17 from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. – and it’s not even spring yet. Come learn about our neighbor, the duck, who shares our home in the Connecticut River watershed.

This program includes a story, interactive games, and a craft to introduce you and your child to wildlife along the river. Meet in the Great Hall. Recommended for ages 3 to 6 with a parent or guardian.

While at the GFDC, check on the **duck stamp drawings** in the Great Hall, and learn about the Duck Stamp Artist program, started in 1949, and the history behind the stamp.

Bev Grant will play on Saturday, December 19, at 7:30 p.m., at the Mount Toby Friends Meeting, 194 Long Plain Road (Route 63) in Leverett. The event is part of the Mount Toby Concert Series.

Grant is a veteran social activist, feminist, labor singer/songwriter, and “cultural worker” from Park Slope, Brooklyn, where she has lived for over 40 years. She is the co-creator of a women’s labor history multi-media presentation entitled “We Were There!” and has recorded six albums.

John Coster will begin the evening with original songs. A contemporary songwriter with deep roots in traditional music, Coster is an accomplished singer and guitarist who is also one of the best Celtic harmonica players performing. He regularly mixes hard-driving instrumentals with his highly crafted yet edgy songs.

Through January 3, at the Sawmill River Arts Gallery at the Montague Mill, Montague Center: “**A Season’s Reflection**” is a members’ group show with a variety of fine art and fine craft items.

A holiday raffle basket has a sample of members’ art works, from fiber to ceramics. Raffle tickets available at the gallery through December 20. For more info, call (413) 367-2885, or visit www.sawmill-riverarts.com. The gallery is open Mondays and Wednesdays from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., and Thursdays to Sundays, noon to 6 p.m. Closed Tuesdays, except December 22.

Just a reminder: *The Montague Reporter* is compiling at list of **Christmas Eve and Day** services for our December 17 edition. If you are aware of your church’s holiday schedule, please pass it along to the newspaper.

Contact info for the church would also be helpful.

So far the newspaper has only received info from Our Lady of Peace Church and Our Lady of Czestochowa Church. Please send the newspaper the info by Monday, December 14. Thank you!

Send your local briefs to editor@montaguereporter.org.

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Great Falls Middle School Students of the Week
week ending 12/4/2015:
Grade 6
Zachary Emond
Grade 7
Kate Graves
Grade 8
Hailey Bogusz

Seeking Citizen Volunteers

Montague Public Works Facility Planning Committee

The Montague Selectboard is seeking residents to participate in a Public Works Facility Planning Committee.

Town Meeting has commissioned a preliminary design for a new facility to be located at Sandy Lane. Working closely with town officials, this group will be responsible for selecting and overseeing the project designers.

Interested parties should address a statement of interest to the Board of Selectmen. Questions can be directed to Walter Ramsey, Town Planner, at (413) 863-3200 ext 207.

Another Letter to the Editors

Why Your Taxes Don't Go Down

A recent letter to the *Reporter* stated, “... it would seem to me if property values go down, taxes should too.” This sentiment is understandable, but it betrays a basic misunderstanding of how municipal taxes work.

Maybe in the old days town officials could simply set a tax rate, and if property values went up so did taxes; and if they went down, taxes did also. But at least since the so-called “Proposition 2½” was passed back in 1982, that has not been the case. That law limited how much each town could raise in taxes each year – that figure is called the “levy limit” – and so fluctuations in property values have a very different effect.

To take a simple example, let’s say you live in a town with two properties: yours and your neighbor’s, each valued at \$100,000. Let’s also say that your town’s levy

limit is \$2,000.

Everything after that is simple arithmetic: the tax rate is calculated by dividing the total valuation by 1,000; then dividing the levy limit by the result. In this case, \$2,000 divided by \$200 gives us \$10/thousand, and your and your neighbor’s taxes are each \$1,000.

In this happy world, let’s now say that nothing changes for next year except that property values plummet – they drop by 50%, so your and your neighbor’s properties are now each worth only \$50,000. Now the total valuation is \$100,000, but the levy limit is still \$2,000, so the tax rate is \$20/thousand, and your and your neighbor’s taxes are still each \$1,000.

In the following year, your valuations quadruple, but nothing else changes. Your properties are now each worth \$200,000, but the calculation yields a tax rate of \$5/thou-

sand, and you each still owe \$1,000.

The key factors here are the town’s levy limit and the relative valuations of your and your neighbor’s properties. As long as your properties are valued equally, you’ll each pay half of the levy limit; as long as that levy limit doesn’t change, your tax bill will be \$1,000. Whether your properties go up or down in value has nothing to do with it.

Things that can affect your tax bill are changes in the levy limit and changes in the relative valuation of your property to your neighbor’s. For example, if the levy limit went up to \$3,000, your tax bills could go up to \$1,500 apiece.

Also, if the levy limit stayed at \$2,000 but your property became valued at \$150,000 while your neighbor’s valuation dropped to \$50,000, then your tax bill would jump to \$1,500 while your neighbor’s would drop to \$500.

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LIVESTOCK from page A1

pigs, and calves raised for veal. Each violation of the initiative by farmers or business owners would result in a maximum fine of \$1,000, enforced by the Attorney General.

The petition, which included over 130,000 signatures, must next go through a verification process to ensure that it addresses a single topic, does not conflict with other proposed ballot initiatives, and includes registrar-verified signatures evenly distributed across all counties.

If verified, the petition will be submitted to the state legislature for consideration, and if they pass it by May 3, the referendum will be included on the November 8 ballot. If not passed by May, another 25,000 unique certified signatures must be collected before June 22 in order for the bill to be considered for the ballot, due to legislative inaction.

Rob Halpin, director of public relations for the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (MSPCA), says that the organization strongly believes the referendum will pass, even if more signatures are required.

“Formal polling shows overwhelming support for these very modest measures,” he says, citing polling that the MSPCA and Humane Society carried out over the past year. “We’re very confident that when people learn more about it, they will say ‘no’ to cruelty.”

House Bill

There is a second proposed law on the table concerning the conditions faced by livestock. Representative Stephen Kulik (D-Worthington) introduced a bill last January, H.713, titled “An Act to Promote the Care and Well-Being of Livestock.”

This bill would establish a “Livestock Care and Standards Board” that would include representatives from the Board of Public Health, MSPCA, Animal Rescue League of Boston, Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation (MFBF), Northeast Organic Farming Association (NOFA), family farmers, and veterinarians, all familiar with the care and keeping of livestock.

At the first official meeting of this board, it would be mandated to address issues similar to that of the Prevention of Farm Animal Cruelty Act – cage hen operations, swine gestation crates, and veal crates – and determine the “appropriate actions to undertake,” including whether “bans, regulations, guidelines, or other measures, if any, are necessary.”

Subsequent meetings, after addressing these topics, would be held at the discretion of board members.

On January 20, the bill was referred to the Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture, who included it in a hearing was scheduled for late October.

That hearing considered thirteen House and ten Senate bills, mostly related to agriculture – hunting; animal shelters; pet grooming; raw milk; wildlife feeding; turkey relocation – and of the 23, Rep. Kulik’s bill was the 23rd item on the agenda.

Rep. Kulik’s office had not answered our request for comment on the progress of this bill as of press time.

The Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation, an organization that would be provided representation on the Care and Standards Board, was instrumental in initiating H.713. The MFBF’s former president, Richard Bonanno, has publicly stated that he feels the establishment of such

a board would give more voice to farmers, and would allow for a system in which “humane issues are addressed in an open public forum.”

Additionally, a ‘care and standards’ board would “ensure decisions impacting local agriculture are also made locally,” according to a press statement from the organization.

The Northeast Organic Farming Association is also in support of Kulik’s bill, stating that they believe the board “would be a good thing for us as farmers, and as consumers,” and could allow for a more open dialogue about “the issues which new technologies, new markets, [and] new farmers will force us to consider.”

Competing Approaches

On the surface, it would appear that the two proposed changes in legislation surrounding the treatment of livestock would be compatible. However, the MSPCA is strongly opposed to Rep. Kulik’s bill, fearing that it may set a dangerous precedent for future changes to the living standards and regulations of farm animals.

“Our concern is that H. 713 would not prioritize the welfare of animals,” says Halpin.

Such a board could use “the authorizing language” to “consistently vote against improved standards for farm animals, rationalizing that the potential financial impact outweighs animal welfare considerations,” he argues, adding that “too few of the board members represent animal welfare organizations”.

Halpin states that the MSPCA believes their proposed ballot measure would “obtain timely protections for these animals,” a promise Kulik’s bill cannot offer.

The MFBF, on the other hand, supports the House bill specifically because it provides an alternative to the ballot question. In its argument in favor of H. 713, the group notes that “Washington-based special interest groups are active in MA trying to push their national agenda through legislation and PR.”

Local farmers also feel differently about the proposed ballot measure and Kulik’s bill.

Brook’s Bend Farm, based in Montague Center, publicly showed support for the initiative by signing the petition for the ballot initiative.

According to a listing on the Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture website, the farm raises lamb and sheep for meat, and sells sheep and turkey breeding stock. They were unavailable for comment as of press time.

Clifford Hatch, an owner of Upinngil Farm in Gill, says he declined to sign the ballot petition, because he felt it singled out “certain farms,” and not because he was against the sentiment of more humane treatment of livestock.

“Animals should be raised in a cruelty-free environment, but exactly how we go about that, I’m not sure,” Hatch says.

Hatch explains that his farm would not be affected by the referendum, as none of Upinngil’s livestock fit the specifications of the bill, but that another local family farm, Diemand Farm in Wendell, would be directly affected.

Diemand is currently the only farm in the state with caged hens, and thus is the only egg farm that would be affected by the changes in confinement standards. Owner Peter Diemand says he feels cages are actually beneficial towards keeping the animals safe and preventing disease.

TOWN OF MONTAGUE
NOTICE OF INFORMATIONAL MEETING:
FY 2016 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) APPLICATION

The Town of Montague will hold an informational meeting on
Monday, December 14, 2015 at 7:10 p.m. in the Selectmen’s Meeting Room,
second floor, at the Montague Town Hall, 1 Avenue A, Turners Falls, MA.

The purpose of this meeting will be to discuss and solicit public response to the Town of Montague’s FY 2016 Massachusetts Community Development Block Grant application to the Department of Housing and Community Development. **Local citizens are requested to attend and propose activities** which the Town should apply for in this application. The town is considering applying for the Ave A Phase Two pedestrian lighting, housing rehabilitation, and social service programs.

The Town of Montague will contract with the Franklin County Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) to administer the Community Development Block Grant Program. The HRA will be available to discuss the application process. The Town wishes to encourage local citizens to attend the meeting where any person or organization wishing to be heard will be afforded the opportunity. *The Town of Montague is an equal opportunity provider.*

Board of Selectmen, Town of Montague

“The cages are for the protection of animals,” Diemand says. “It keeps them away from their droppings, and so the eggs are cleaner.”

Hatch also explains that much of the concern surrounding *Salmonella* outbreaks is not actually relevant to smaller egg farms, but to commercial egg farms that sell “cracked products”. These products, which include the whites and yolks of eggs cracked during the collection and packaging process, are pasteurized and sold, often to restaurants, as liquid egg product.

According to Hatch, high-volume factory pasteurization equipment is not always kept clean to a standard that would prevent bacterial outbreaks. “Those are the culprits for *Salmonella* outbreaks,” he says. “The likelihood of a laid chicken egg having *Salmonella* is astronomically low.”

The proposed ballot referendum suggests that current methods used by some farms for confinement do not only affect livestock, but also may “threaten the health and safety of Massachusetts consumers,” and may “increase the risk of food-borne illness.”

On its website, the Humane Society notes that the proposed measure has gained support from food safety advocates, as “intensively confined animals suffer from weakened immune systems,” which can allow bacteria to proliferate.

They cite *Salmonella* as a primary concern for egg operations with small battery cages, but do not cite or suggest any changes to the pasteurization or cleaning process used on larger egg farms, and only focus their changes on operations with “shell eggs”.

“Some of the information going around about chickens in cages is not accurate, in my opinion,” Diemand says, “and people are making decisions based off perceptions that may not be entirely accurate.”

If the ballot initiative were to pass, Diemand Farm’s business would be directly affected. But Peter Diemand argues that it would also negatively impact consumers, pointing out that it includes a stipulation that no eggs from caged hens may be sold in Massachusetts, even if they are from out of state.

“I know about 2% of the eggs consumed in Mass. are produced in Mass. – which means 98% of eggs consumed are from out of state,” he says. “And a majority of them are from farms with chickens in cages.”

“If Mass. didn’t allow that, the price would go up at least \$1 per dozen, if not more,” he estimates.

Hatch and Diemand both ex-

pressed support for Kulik’s bill as a means to better monitor livestock welfare issues.

“A committee like that would look at the question, and would look across the board at all the facts,” Diemand says. “I think that would be a step in the direction that we really should be going. You need to understand all sides of the issue to make a decision.”

Carolyn Wheeler, owner of Wheel-View Farm, a farm in Shelburne that specializes in grass-fed beef, expressed a similar sentiment, stating that “an advisory board like that would be great, especially with animal rights people involved...”

“It would be useful to for them to learn more from farmers and veterinarians, who understand what it takes to care for these animals a little bit better.”

Price Concerns Disputed

Overall, the referendum would affect very few farms in the commonwealth, as many have already adopted the suggested confinement standards for breeding pigs and veal calves, leaving Diemand as the primary focus for the changes to egg-laying hen confinement standards.

The primary issue of contention, for many organizations, is the prohibition of sale of products from such confined animals, which would affect commerce between state lines.

Rich Bonanno, of the Massachusetts Farm Bureau, says he feels strongly that this referendum would have a limited impact on animal confinement methods within the state, and instead would “affect the public cost of food”.

Halpin, of the MSPCA, however, stated that “going cage-free,” or switching to group housing for pigs, could be “less expensive for the industry as whole” and would not necessarily result in higher prices.

While the referendum could set an important precedent for more humane treatment of livestock, the creation of a “care and standards board,” through Kulik’s bill, could lead to similar measures taken against cruel confinement, while taking into consideration the impact such changes could have on production and food costs.

With such a difficult decision potentially going before the electorate next fall, Diemand offered these words of advice:

“What I would like to see, if possible, is that anyone interested in this issue should get all the facts... I would urge each and every person to be sure of all the facts before they make a decision.”



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The board then went into two executive sessions, one to discuss the health of an employee, and another to discuss strategy for collective bargaining.

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Millers River Watershed Council Annual Meeting December 16

ATHOL – The Millers River Watershed Council (MRWC) will hold its Annual Meeting on Wednesday, December 16 at 7 p.m. at the Millers River Environmental Center, located at 100 Main Street in Athol.

The meeting will feature a slide presentation by highly regarded local wildlife photographer William Fournier on “The Secret World of Wetlands.”

Fournier, a former police officer based in Gardner, has been exploring the natural world through photography since an on-duty injury forced him into early retirement. “I turned to Nature and the tranquility I found there to help me on my road to recovery,” he says.

He then “decided to take on the demanding challenges of wildlife photography.” “Nature guards her secrets well,” he added. Come discover some of those secrets on December 16.

A short business meeting will precede Fournier’s presentation. The meeting is free and open to the public, and light refreshments will be served.

For more information, visit the MRWC website at www.millerswatershed.org, or call (978) 248-9491 or email council@millersriver.net.

The Athol Bird and Nature Calendar is Back!



After a 4-year break, the Athol Bird and Nature Club (ABNC) calendar is back, and as before, it is chock full of nature notes, trivia questions and of course, some amazing photos of local birds, animals and plants.

The “Birds and Nature of the North Quabbin” 2016 calendar focuses on the local beauty of this region making this calendar a local treasure. The calendar showcases photos taken exclusively in the North Quabbin region by Athol Bird and Nature Club members. In addition, each month features extensive nature notes that provide very specific information such as when certain birds are migrating into or out of the area, when native wildflowers are blooming, when the peak of several meteor show-

ers occur, and even when to listen for coyotes howling.

In keeping with the local theme, the calendar was printed by Highland Press of Athol, and as in previous years, area businesses paid for advertising in the calendar to help cover the printing costs.

The calendars are now available for purchase through the following local merchants:

Trail Head and Mount Tully Kennels in Orange; Flowerland, Cornerstone Insurance, The Millers River Environmental Center, MacMannis Florist, Agway, and the North Quabbin Chamber of Commerce in Athol; the New Salem General Store in New Salem; The Red Apple Farm in Phillipston; the Petersham Craft Center and Harvard Forest in Petersham; the **Wendell Country Store** in Wendell, **Connecticut River Liquors** in Turners Falls; The Solar Store of Greenfield, and the Wine Rack in Greenfield.

All proceeds from the calendar sales will go to MREC to help keep the Millers River Environmental Center warm and open for use by the community over the winter.

To learn more or to order a 2016 calendar, go to www.atholbirdclub.org.

LEVERETT from page A1

By the statutory method, Amherst’s share would increase by 4.3%, and Leverett’s by 9.8%, while Shutesbury’s and Pelham’s shares would decrease by 12.1% and 16.9%, respectively.

The request is made at a precarious time, when the towns are considering elementary school regionalization, and Leverett is waiting for a ruling from the state appellate tax board over an abatement that would have a significant impact on its own annual budget.

Savings, on Paper

Transfer station supervisor Ananda Larsen told the selectboard that the town has received a \$7,500 Sustainable Materials Recovery Program grant from the state Department of Environmental Protection, which will be used to purchase a paper compactor.

Hauling away paper currently costs the town about \$8,000 per year. The new system should bring savings of around \$2,800 annually, and save space. The unused paper box could be put to good use elsewhere, perhaps for collecting hard rigid plastic as is done in Whately, Larsen said.

In a broader discussion about the transfer station, Larsen said she would like to see an increase in hours in the future, and to shift to one weekend and one week day year round. She said this change could potentially benefit traffic flow and trash hauling.

It was agreed that it was also a more desirable schedule for employees, who currently work back-to-back, short shifts on both week-end days.

The cost of removing bulky waste has doubled in the last year, according to Larsen, who suggested it is time for that increase to be

reflected in transfer station pricing. She has also included an additional \$1,000 in her budget for snow removal labor.

More than Fires

The fire department is at 134 calls this year to date, by comparison to 138 for all of 2014, according to fire chief John Ingram. Ingram expects to be at, or slightly above, last year’s tally by the year’s end.

The board noted that the majority of the calls were medical, which Ingram confirmed is a common trend everywhere. Consequently, it becomes that much more important to train and practice for fires, Ingram said.

Two volunteers have recently graduated from the Firefighter I and II certification course in Montague.

This Thursday the department will be in New Salem learning how to address solar electricity on calls.

After taking a class on social media in Amherst, offered by FEMA, Ingram hopes to expand the department’s presence to Facebook and Twitter.

Leverett has received a Department of Conservation and Recreation grant of \$1,978 for Volunteer Fire Assistance, and Ingram is looking into finding the right vendor for a breathing apparatus that will be purchased with grant money from federal fire service programs.

Ingram hopes to hear back this week from UMass about two vehicles to be purchased for under \$1,000 total, which would allow the department to get rid of two military surplus vehicles he said are overdue for retirement.

He said he is hoping the department can become a licensed first responder agency, and to start carrying insurance for EpiPens and Narcan.

As of January 1, smoke detector and carbon monoxide inspection

fees will go up to \$50 from the current \$25.

Ingram said it would be hard to reduce his department’s budget by 2%, which the selectboard is asking all departments to prepare for in the event that the tax abatement is upheld by the appellate board.

Board chair Peter d’Errico asked simply that a strong case be made for not being able to “squeeze the budget,” should that be the case.

And Ingram expressed concern at the prospect of the town heading into the winter with a new superintendent for the highway department yet to be found.

Search Continues

Board member Tom Hankinson said the hiring committee for the highway superintendent has received two great candidates, but neither took the job.

The hunt continues, but in the meantime the board will take Richie Roberts up on his offer to notify the town when it is necessary to sand and plow, if it is still good.

Conservation

Carol Heim of 13 Amherst Road spoke with the conservation commission on Monday, and the selectboard on Tuesday, about an alleged violation of the Wetlands Protection Act, and its potential repercussions.

Heim expressed concern that potentially illegal tree removal and grading on a back lot at 5 Amherst Road to create a paintball court may have made that lot more desirable for building, despite its supposed restrictions.

While Heim said she was not making a case against the owners of 5 Amherst Road, but was asking specific questions about precedents such alleged violations could set, and how the town might choose to handle such instances in the future.

Cemeteries

Town administrator Marjorie McGinnis had looked into the town’s ability to bestow funds to privately owned cemeteries. Chapter 114, Section 6 does in fact allow town funds in that instance. Board member Julie Shively recommended continuing to allot the \$1,100 annually that has been consistently approved at town meeting.

Hankinson said he would like to see private contributions from folks with loved ones buried in those cemeteries making donations instead, and d’Errico said he reserved his right to suggest reallocating those funds as budget needs become clearer.

School Building

The selectboard signed a letter to the Massachusetts School Building Authority complaining that stipulations attached to a Green Repair Program, originally funded by the MSBA in 2011 for what it characterized as a simple job at the elementary school, made Leverett regret its participation in the program.

The letter argued that the MSBA’s rules significantly limited the pool of eligible building professionals the town could hire, with results in the quality of the project, culminating when a contractor removed load-bearing windows and compromised the structural integrity of the school in summer 2012.

After a lengthy process of repairs and mediation, the project’s costs grew so much that the state did not reimburse it to the proportion it said it would.

“If we had known the rigidity of the project format, the extra layers of inefficient oversight required, and the absence of any building professionals from Western Mass. participating in the program, we question whether we should have undertaken the project with the MSBA,” the letter states, urging the authority streamline the process and recruit professionals in the western part of the state.

Scheduling

The board voted that as of January 1, 2016, it shall meet every other Tuesday, rather than the second, fourth and fifth Tuesdays of the month.

Town meeting will not be held April 30, 2016, and a new date has not been set.

CORRECTION(S):

In last edition’s article on the November 24 Leverett selectboard meeting, we mischaracterized the issuance of a budget guidance letter, which goes out to departments, as a presentation on the budget ready to go before Town Meeting.

It’s early in the annual budget cycle yet.

Selectboard chair Peter d’Errico tells us he did not remember his fellow board member Julie Shively say her household savings of \$50/month had been “wiped out”

by the tax increase.

Shively did not reply when we contacted her to confirm that we had misquoted her, but in any case, d’Errico, chair of the town broadband committee, provided us with a reference chart showing that even a household in the 75th percentile in assessed property should expect their average monthly payment on the 20-year bond to be \$22.88.

We thank Peter for his diligence, and apologize for any misunderstandings we’ve promulgated.

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NOTES FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD

WiredWest Bombshell; Solar Array Assessment

By JOSH HEINEMANN

Shortly before the Wendell selectboard met on December 2, the Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI) sent town coordinator Nancy Aldrich an email that essentially shot down the draft operating agreement that WiredWest submitted for towns to authorize in early January. Aldrich sent that email on to selectboard members, but only Jeoffrey Pooser had time to review it and even he said he should re-read it. His comment as the meeting started was as if the floor had been dropped from underneath area broadband committees, which have been working to get a fiber-optic internet system built and operating in western and central Massachusetts.

Assessment

Wendell citizen Dave Arsenault and Haskell Werlin met the selectboard in an effort to get a firm figure on the tax burden they would face when and if they build a solar array on land owned by Arsenault. They are proposing an array of up to 2 megawatts (MW), and want to be ready to get their application ready so it can go in immediately when and if the state lifts its net metering for large solar farms. Assessing them at their full cost is prohibitive for the owner or operator, but giving them an assessment too low would cost the town. Wendell’s assessors have been checking to find out what has worked for other towns, and Chris Wings came into this meeting with their decision. The finance committee also accepted their choice. The number she gave, which took Amherst as a model, was \$12,500 per MW per year, with no escalator for twenty years with two optional five-year extensions. Without hesitating, Werlin said they could work with that. Selectboard members also accepted the figure that Wings gave, but the actual decision has to be made by a town meeting vote. Selectboard chair Christine Heard suggested having a special town meeting in late January. Werlin said he preferred early January. The warrant for a special town meeting must be posted two weeks in advance, and the meeting has to fit in with the prior commitments of the town moderator and town clerk.

Aggregation

Bernard Kubiak, the regional services consultant for the Hampshire Council of Governments (HCOG), and Leo Sullivan from Colonial Power met the selectboard with a second attempt to get Wendell residents an opportunity to lower the cost of electricity they buy through

aggregation. Massachusetts rejected the first attempt made by the HCOG alone, but the process has been streamlined, and Colonial Power has a willingness to work with small communities. Sullivan said he anticipated a savings, on the order of 8.9 cents versus 12 cents per kilowatt-hour. Customers would be included by default, so if someone wants not to participate, they must make that active choice known. Colonial Power would notify each meter owner with a direct mailing and an email. The written plan is too long to fit in the posting board outside the town offices, and so it will be made available at the library. Delineation Although she said she is no longer chair of the Friends of the Meetinghouse board of directors, Nan Rietschlaeger met with the board in the continuing effort to clarify ownership and borders of the Meetinghouse lot. She said the Friends is willing to pay for a survey that would separate the building lot from the cemetery lot behind it, but that would put the building on a newly created, non-conforming lot. That change would require a variance by the zoning board of appeals. A survey is not needed to separate the Meetinghouse lot from the gazebo lot across Center Street, because those two lots were once separate, and then were joined. She also said that they found no written evidence that the Meetinghouse and its lot were separately owned, and so no town meeting vote is required to cede the lot to the Friends. Subjectivity Board of health chair Nina Keller and building inspector Phil Delorey met the selectboard next in their continuing discussion regarding a junkyard bylaw. Keller said that the board of health has no concern unless a collection of junk poses a health risk. She said that beyond that, junk is subjective: one person’s junk is another person’s gold. They mentioned, but were not firm about, a size limit of 100 square feet, but then they questioned if that is one pile, or several piles totaling 100 square feet. Delorey said the town does not want to discourage creative works in progress, and Nan Rietschlaeger said we do want to discourage large and growing accumulations. Delorey said there has to be some defined quantification. Keller suggested that members of the selectboard can offer help to people

NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD

Erving Employees Get 2% COLA

By KATIE NOLAN

At its December 7 meeting, the Erving selectboard approved a 2% cost of living adjustment (COLA) for town employees for fiscal year 2017. The board noted that the federal consumer price index showed a negative cost of living increase, and that federal employees and social security beneficiaries were receiving a 0% COLA. Selectboard chair William Bembury recommended a 2% adjustment for Erving employees, and selectboard member Arthur Johnson countered with a recommendation of 1%. Assistant assessor Jacquelyn Boyden told the board that unionized teachers at Erving Elementary School, in the third year of a 3-year contract, are receiving a 2.25% adjustment, and remarked, “Too much disparity causes grief.” After further discussion, the 2% COLA was approved unanimously. Propane Confusion The board sorted out a mix-up in propane contracts for the senior/community center. According to Boyden, when senior center director Paula Betters was preparing the center’s FY’17 budget, she discovered that the Dead River Company had delivered propane under a pre-buy contract signed by the board in 2014, which ran from October 2014 to

May 2015. However, when the new senior/community center was constructed, Osterman Propane installed a 1,000-gallon underground tank for free, with the agreement that the town would purchase propane from their company, for life. If the town decided not to buy propane from Osterman, it would be required to buy the tank. Otherwise, Osterman would remove the tank from the property. Boyden said she spoke with both companies, telling Dead River that the town does not want any more deliveries to the center. She said that the Osterman representative was unhappy that their agreement with the town had been violated. She said that she explained that both the town administrator and senior center director who worked on the contract with Dead River had retired, and that the town was “trying to make it right.” The board decided to review the costs and benefits of buying the underground tank from Osterman. Paper Mill Fuel Julie Hubbard and Nate Haley of Erving Industries asked the board to amend the paper mill’s fuel storage permit, allowing the company to store a larger amount of #2 fuel (similar to home heating oil). Currently, the company is licensed for two 30,000-gallon tanks for #6 fuel, a heavier oil, and

one 20,000-gallon tank of #2 fuel. The company would like to use one of those 30,000-gallon tanks for #2 fuel. Fire chief Philip Wonkka told the board that the change in the amount of #2 fuel storage would not require additional fire department equipment. The total amount of fuel stored will not change. The board approved the permit change unanimously. FY’17 Budget Boyden reported that most town departments had submitted budget requests for FY 2017 using the spreadsheets she had prepared. The board set March 7 as the deadline for finalizing the FY’17 town budget. The annual town meeting will be held Monday, May 2. Two Executive Sessions The selectboard held a half-hour executive session with police chief Christopher Blair, in attendance “to investigate charges of criminal misconduct or to consider the filing of criminal complaints.” The board did not provide any public comment on that discussion. The board will also hold an executive session at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, December 10, with representatives of Erving Industries in attendance, “to consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real estate...”

FCTS Adams Award Winners

TURNERS FALLS – Franklin County Technical School winners of the 2015 John and Abigail Adams Scholarship and their parents and guardians recently attended a breakfast in their honor at the FCTS Apprentice Restaurant, prepared by the school’s Culinary Arts program staff and students. Thirty-three seniors were awarded the scholarship, which provides a tuition waiver for eight consecutive semesters of undergraduate education at a Massachusetts state college, community college, or university for students who score at the advanced and proficient levels on the grade 10 MCAS tests in English and Math. To qualify students must also have a combined score in the top 25 percent of all scores in their district. Automotive Collision & Repair: Amber Whitmore (Orange) Automotive Technology: Clay Kelley (Buckland) Business Technology: Aubrey Klerowski (Colrain) Carpentry: Daniel Chabott II (Northfield); Jeremy Durant (Deerfield) Cosmetology: Victoria Howes (Orange); Lindsey Mailloux (Erving)

Culinary Arts: Fallyn Adams (Gill) Electrical: Jarod Brown (Montague); Laurel Cooke (Warwick); Steven Easton (Bernardston); Mitchell Mailloux (Erving); Christopher Porrovecchio (Bernardston); Gabriel Vorce (Orange) Health Technology: Kaitlin Churchill (Shelburne); Ivy Cross (Montague); Kamryn Frost (Orange); Teagan Valeski (Buckland); Mallory Willis (Charlemont) Landscaping & Horticulture: Emily Sullivan (Colrain) Machine Technology: Jonathan Boston (Northfield); Brandon Boudah (Deerfield); Hailey Lowell (Wendell); James Miller (Greenfield); Timothy Momaney (Montague); Justin Thompson (Orange) Plumbing: Nicholas Baranoski (Greenfield); Austin Burdick (Shelburne); Kyle Johnson (Ashfield) Programming & Web Design: Catherine Landers (Montague); Bradley Sawyer (Greenfield); Colton Tarbox (Wendell) Welding: Walter Piela (Deerfield)

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SOLAR from page A1

Kulik's response refers to a House-Senate conference committee that was established on November 18 to iron out significant differences between the two legislative bodies over the state solar reimbursement policy called net metering.

However, that conference committee has only met once since November 18 and, according to senate minority leader Bruce Tarr, its members have not exchanged proposals or ideas to bridge the gap.

A key leader on the Senate side, Benjamin Downing of Pittsfield, is in Israel until December 13 and, according to the State House News Service, ten senators are scheduled to travel

to Colorado this month to study the legalization of marijuana.

"Solar Talks Turn Cold Over the Winter Recess," reads a News Service headline of December 7.

Net metering is the state program that allows solar producers, ranging from small rooftop solar to large-scale ground-mounted projects, to receive credits for energy sent back to the electrical grid. Massachusetts has one of the most ambitious and generous solar credit programs in the country, producing a remarkable expansion of the solar industry in the state.

The original program target of 400 MW was reached in 2014 and a new target, 1,600 MW by 2020, could well be achieved several years early.

However, critics of the program, including electrical distributors like Eversource, which serves much of Franklin County and manufacturing interests, have argued that the program is too expensive. Their argument has been that the costs of the solar credits are passed on to non-solar electric ratepayers, resulting in some of the highest electricity rates in the country.

Solar advocates and producers argue that the program brings broader benefits for all citizens, including non-solar producers, which can be quantified in so-called "value of solar" studies.

This debate has remained unresolved on Beacon Hill for nearly two years. A lengthy study produced last

spring by a legislative "Net Metering Task Force" failed to resolve it. But the issue has moved to the front burner, because the total amount of solar eligible for the credits is "capped" at a percentage of each electric utility's total output.

The cap is currently set at 4% for private projects, and 5% for public ones. The largest utility in the state, National Grid, reached its cap last March, creating a large backlog of proposed projects. Eversource, whose territory includes Montague, could reach its cap soon. The Eversource cap in Franklin County correlates with the territory of the former Western Massachusetts Electric Company, so it is technically a WMECo cap.

The net metering issue has created a significant division between the houses of the legislature on a key policy issue. Aware that the cap on solar projects had been reached in National Grid's territory – and was about to be reached in those of other electric distribution companies – the state Senate passed a bill in late July that would have lifted the cap until state solar production reached 1,600 megawatts (MW), the current target of state policy.

In August, Governor Baker proposed to lift the cap by a lesser amount, 2%, and to reduce the payback rate for net-metered projects.

On November 17, one day before the legislature was due to recess for the holidays, the House passed a bill to increase the caps by 2%. But they

also voted to change the reimbursement rate for net-metered solar for all projects approved after the 1,600-MW cap is reached.

Solar advocates cried foul. They argued the 2% increase would mean that National Grid would reach its new cap in the spring, starting the debate all over again. More importantly, they argued, the House was using the cap emergency to implement significant changes in the reimbursement program, which could significantly slow solar development in the state.

They also questioned why the House, which had received the Senate bill in July, had waited until the day before the November recess to unveil this major policy change.

On Wednesday, November 18, the House bill moved to the Senate, which accepted the 2% cap increase but rejected the reimbursement proposal in favor of more modest reductions after the cap is reached. The House rejected that proposal later the same day.

As legislators headed home for Thanksgiving, a joint House-Senate conference committee was established to iron out the differences between the two bodies. The committee is comprised of Reps. Brian Dempsey, Thomas Golden, and Brad Jones and Sens. Downing, Marc Pacheco and Bruce Tarr.

At the time, these officials expressed optimism about their ability to reach an agreement before New Year's. According to Senator Benja-

min Downing of Pittsfield:

"I think the timeliness is important. We want to make sure we take advantage of the federal investment tax credit. I know that's a goal that both sides have, and every day that we don't that's a missed opportunity, but I know everyone wants to get something done, so we'll keep working on it."

But three weeks later, the conference committee has only met once, on the last day of the formal legislative session.

The impact of the state-level debate on Montague's proposed solar project could be significant. The capacity remaining under the Eversource/WMECo cap is estimated at 14.3 MW for public projects and 14.7 MW for private ones.

The Montague project, which would generate nearly half of that remainder, still needs the approval of the town's conservation commission, as well as that of the state Department of Environmental Protection.

In addition, an "interconnection agreement" between the developer and Eversource must be completed before the project is eligible under the cap.

Several solar advocates interviewed for this article, including Claire Chang of Gill, co-owner of the Solar Store of Greenfield, complained that the electric utilities are deliberately "dragging their feet" on making these agreements.



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A Life in Many Media



Edith Bingham

By NINA ROSSI

SHELBURNE FALLS – “I do so many different things it’s ridiculous!” exclaimed Edith Bingham at the start of our interview, in her studio space behind the Dancing Bear Bed and Breakfast, which she runs in Shelburne Falls.

In the past few years, Edith added egg tempera paintings to the things she displays and sells at the Shelburne Arts Cooperative Gallery; this, in addition to the cut paper illustrations and woven scarves she has displayed there since 2003. She hesitated about adding the paintings, knowing that wall space was at a premium, but coop members there were persuasive about including her new paintings.

Previously she painted in oils and watercolors, but was inspired by an exhibit of tempera artists at the Brattleboro Museum and Art Center five years ago. She contacted one of the artists, Koo Schadler, and took lessons with her.

The paint is a mixture of powdered dry pigment, water, and egg

yolk in 1:1:1 proportion. Each batch is mixed at the time of application, and can’t be kept without drying out. The surface has to be genuine gesso, made from rabbit skin glue, chalk and gypsum, spread in sanded layers on a Masonite board. She no longer spends additional time applying her own gesso preparation, but buys prepared boards instead, since this step was very time-consuming.

Tempera is quite different from other painting methods, in that tiny strokes of color are used to build up layers of color – sometimes 50 layers in one painting. There are no glazes or washes; the process is exacting and painstaking.

Her pieces are small but take several weeks to finish. Edith says she cannot work more than 3 hours at one sitting without her “brain going crazy so I can’t look at it anymore.” Taking a break helps keep the work fresh. Once the paint dries, there is no going back in to it, it is final, and it does dry quickly.

The paper cut pictures Edith makes also demand attention to fine

see **BINGHAM** page B4

MONTAGUE’S NEW CLAIRVAUX ARTS AND CRAFTS SOCIETY

PART II: NEW LIFE IN DEAD PLACES?

By JERI MORAN
and MIKE JACKSON

MONTAGUE – In 1901, E.P. Pressey and his wife Grace set out to develop an Arts and Crafts community in Montague Center using Pressey’s position – and small stipend – as the town’s Unitarian minister.

They adopted a three-pronged approach. The farm at Prospect Point would be the base of a “plantation school” at which E.P. would showcase a progressive educational approach. Grace would help develop a local society for handicrafts. And the group would print a journal with which to publicize its efforts, and thereby attract like-minded settlers.

A July 1901 edition of the *Turners Falls Reporter* noted that “Wednesday afternoon, at the church parlors” of Montague’s Unitarian society, “[a] Women’s Alliance was formed with Mrs. E. P. Pressey, president, Mrs. Ada Ross, secretary and treasurer.”

Grace Pressey would go on to start an Arts and Crafts committee of the Women’s Alliance, and then reorganize it outside of the church as the New Clairvaux Arts and Crafts Society. This was the core organization that people joined who wanted to participate in the New Clairvaux ideas.

At the group’s outset, the handwork, such as embroidery and knitting, was done by women, many of whom lived here prior to the Presseys’ arrival. Other writers of the time mention that women in this group had contact and shared ideas with the Deerfield Society of Blue and White Needlework, a

famous group in that field.

E.P. Pressey traveled throughout the East and Midwest, looking at other Arts and Crafts communities that were developing. In East Aurora, New York, he visited the Roycroft community in 1901. He found he was at odds with the unabashedly commercial philosophy of its leader, Elbert Hubbard, but he found some inspiration in *The Philistine: A Periodical of Protest*, the lovingly assembled, hardbound monthly journal the Roycrofters published.

He also saw the publications of other societies, including *Handicraft*, published by the Boston Society of Arts and Crafts, and the Chicago Arts & Crafts Society’s periodical *Brush & Pencil*.

Horace Traubel and others at Rose Valley, a community in Pennsylvania, put out *The Artsman*, though unlike Pressey, they sought to reconcile

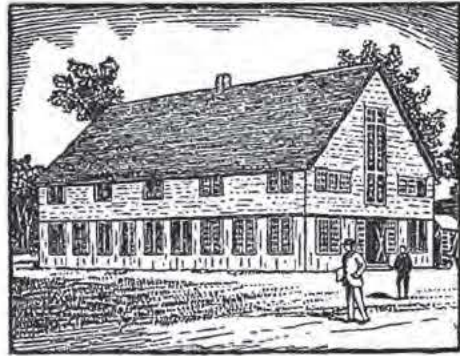
mechanized industry with the crafts rather than replace it.

Realizing the value of such publications in the spread of ideas, Pressey purchased a printing press, which he outfitted to run on the power of a stream that ran behind his little parsonage, and in 1902 launched a journal of his own, *Country Time and Tide*.

Every edition of this journal combined moral teachings, news on arts and crafts, “sketches of altruistic experiments and propositions for the country,” and updates on “the progress and principles of New Clairvaux, a plantation for social industry and education at Montague, Mass.” The journal also solicited families to send their boys to the “Plantation and Crafts School” at Montague.

Also in 1902, the group built a Village Shop just off Main Street to

see **CLAIRVAUX** page B5



A 1905 New York Daily Tribune article on the community featured this photograph of E.P. Pressey (at left) and Grace (second from right) at Prospect Point.

Be Present—Cliché, or Prescription for Living?

By JEFFREY WEBSTER

To be in the moment means giving up preconceived notions, fears, expectations, essentially being free of ego-driven desires. Otherwise it’s hard to be truly empathetic.

— Scott Charles, researcher/writer.

Live in the moment. We hear it all the time. Usually, the person saying it receives a positive reaction and everyone nods in agreement. We smile and feel good for a moment, then we go back to worrying about tomorrow; nursing our wounds over some perceived slight; or regretting something from yesterday, or last year, or from childhood.

Live in the moment. Live for today. Be present. Be mindful. What do these phrases even mean?

Many survivors of illness or injury or emotional trauma know. So do most of those facing terminal illness. Every second becomes precious when you know those seconds are approaching their limit.

Why wait? Everyone’s lives are limited. From the moment of your birth, the clock is ticking. Is that depressing? Hardly, it is liberating! It gives you license to

see **BE PRESENT** page B8



WEST ALONG THE RIVER:

BATTLEFIELD STUDY: END OF PHASE I

By DAVID BRULE

TURNERS FALLS – The most definitive effort ever attempted to compile the multiple histories of the events that occurred at the falls on May 19, 1676 is arriving at the end of its first phase.

The National Park Service is funding an unprecedented collaboration of five Historical Commissions (Gill, Montague, Greenfield, Northfield, and Deerfield), four Native American tribes (Nipmuck, Stockbridge-Munsee Mohican, Aquinnah Wampanoag, and Narragansett), expert archaeologists and military terrain analysts from the Mashantucket Pequot Museum, and numerous local history experts (Peter Thomas, Howard Clark, Ed Gregory, Gary Sanderson, and Bud Driver).

This collaboration has been ongoing for more than a year and a half. The result is an encyclopedic draft report, now available on the Town of Montague website.

The Pequot Museum Research Team has scoured the primary sources and the archives relating to the massacre at the Falls in 1676, and to the entire socio-political-historical context of King Philip’s War.

They have culled as much relevant information as possible and woven it into the draft report, which is still a work in progress, as hundreds of comments and corrections have been flowing in.

Another dimension in the study will be the narratives developed by each of the four tribes relating to their ancestors’ experiences in the King Philip’s War, and especially the aftermath and impact on tribal existence in the valley. It is proving a challenging task, since they will not be able to develop a day-by-day, hour-by-hour recounting of

that battle and war as the Yankee/American historians were able to do in the histories printed over the last three hundred years.

Important cultural differences are at play here: tribal histories, and the ways of preserving tribal memory, are different from the Euro-centered way of recording events in black and white on paper.

As told by the tribal representatives, the land holds the peoples’ histories, and the tribal peoples have been separated from this part of the river; their 10,000-year chain and cycle of their history has been broken. It is difficult for them to write of that day in May 1676, to put those words onto paper.

One tribal representative has been consulting with the Elders and the spirits of those lost that day, and does not yet feel permission has been given to re-open those wounds and pain of long ago. They do agree, however, that this will be a necessity, as

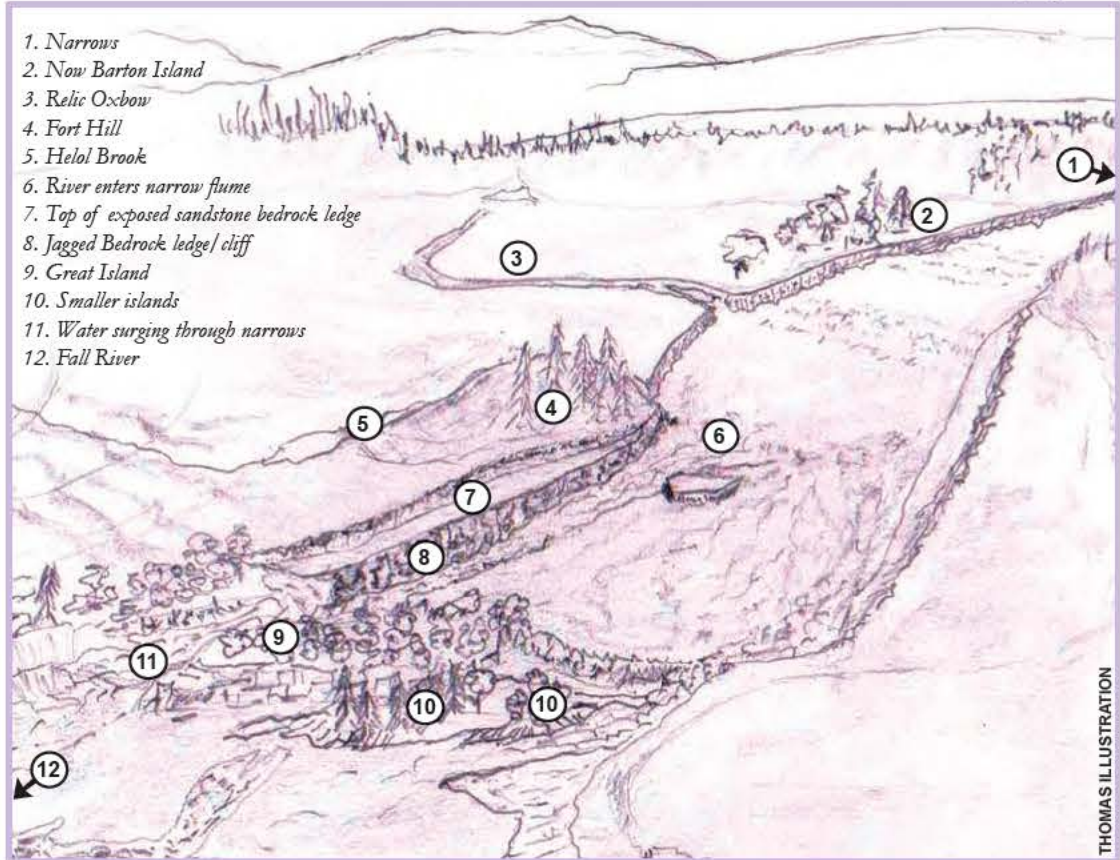
part of the healing this study is facilitating.

Howard Clark of the Nolumbeka Project has also been contributing some of his thirty years of research on the King Philip’s War period and tribal presence in the valley in collaborating with the research team. He has coaxed out of his documentation the cynical pattern of deliberate behind the scenes manipulations of some key players of this war.

Men such as John Hull and John Pynchon parlayed settlers’ passions, and tribal resistance to white encroachment, into a very profitable enterprise for the slave-trading, land-grabbing capitalists of early New England.

Another revelation among the volunteer participants has been local historian and professional archaeologist Peter Thomas. Back in the ‘70s, Thomas participated in extensive archaeological

see **WEST ALONG** page B3



Peter Thomas contributed this sketch of the topographical context of the 1676 massacre.

Pet of the Week



“MOONSHINER”

Moonshiner is a sweet mellow boy who came to us from Georgia. We believe he would do best in

a home with children over 13. Another dog or two would be fine, we could check about cats. His ideal home would have some activity and be able to provide him with daily exercise. If you think Moonshiner might be the dog for you please ask about him!

Contact the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society at (413) 548-9898 or at info@dpvhs.org.

December 12: Wendell Yule Concert

WENDELL—Saturday, December 12 will be an evening of song and seasonal celebration at the Old Town Hall when the Wendell Community Chorus join neo-Celtic duo Lady Moon for the second annual Friends of the Wendell Meetinghouse Yule Concert at 7 p.m.

First, the Wendell Community Chorus will be singing songs of Spirit, Light, Mystery and Miracles. The chorus has been singing together for approximately five years at community events and their own concerts under the leadership of Morning Star Chenven. Their special guest Moonlight Davis will lead them in some Gospel anthems, and the audience is welcome to sing along.

Then Lady Moon, a celebrated pairing of Neo-Celtic artists Kellianna and Jenna Greene, will take the stage at about 8 p.m. With stunning vocal and Celtic harp, this duo features otherworldly harmonies on centuries-old traditional songs from the British Isles and beyond. Prepare to be transported to magical realms by the vocal styling of this exquisite duo.

The concert is a benefit for Friends of the Wendell Meetinghouse, with partial proceeds going to the Wendell Community Chorus scholarship fund. The suggested contribution is \$10 for adults, \$5 for kids ages 6 to 17, and free for ages 5 and under. Refreshments will include sweet and savory treats.

Friends of the Wendell Meetinghouse recently oversaw completion of a “historic structures report” that details our plans for restoring the building and provides documentation for state historic grants. We are currently raising funds to match state grants.



Neo-Celtic artists Kellianna and Jenna Greene will collaborate as Lady Moon at this Sunday's benefit for the Meetinghouse at Wendell's Old Town Hall.

Please also support our efforts to re-open the Wendell Meetinghouse for public use for historical, cultural, spiritual, and community programs by starting or renewing your annual membership for \$10 or more at the concert, or visit our website www.Wendell-meetinghouse.org.

Senior Center Activities December 14 to 18

GILL and MONTAGUE
Gill / Montague Senior Center, 62 Fifth Street, Turners Falls, is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Congregate meals are served Tuesday through Thursday at noon. Meal reservations must be made one day in advance by 11 a.m.

All fitness classes are supported by a grant from the Executive Office of Elder Affairs. Voluntary donations are accepted. Council on Aging Director is Roberta Potter. Kitchen Manager is Jeff Suprenant. For more information, to make meal reservations, or to sign up for programs call 863-9357. Messages can be left on our machine when the Center is closed.

Tues, Wed & Thurs Noon Lunch
Monday 12/14
8 a.m. Foot Clinic (appt.)
10:10 a.m. Aerobics
10:50 a.m. Chair Exercise
1 p.m. Knitting Circle
Tuesday 12/15
9:30 a.m. Chair Yoga
11:30 Holiday Lunch at Tech Schl
Noon Lunch at Senior Center
Wednesday 12/16
10:10 a.m. Aerobics
10:50 a.m. Chair Exercise
11:15 a.m. Friends' Meeting
Noon Lunch
12:45 p.m. Bingo
Thursday 12/17
9 a.m. Tai Chi, Veterans Outreach
10 a.m. Coffee & Conversation
Noon Lunch
1 p.m. Cards & Games
Friday 12/18
10:10 a.m. Aerobics
10:50 a.m. Chair Exercise
1 p.m. Writing Group

ERVING
Erving Senior Center, 1 Care Drive, Erving, is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. for activities and congregational meals.

Lunch is at 11:30 a.m., with reservations required 24 hours in advance. Call the Mealsite Manager at 423-3308 for meal information and reservations.

For information, call Paula Beters, Senior Center Director, at (413) 423-3649. Transportation can be provided for meals, shopping, or medical necessity.

Call to confirm activities, schedule a ride, or find out about the next blood pressure clinic.

Monday 12/14
9 a.m. Tai Chi
10 a.m. Osteo Exercise
Tuesday 12/15
8:45 a.m. Chair Aerobics
10 a.m. Stretching & Balance
12:30 Painting, Friends Meeting
12:45 p.m. Jewelry Class
Wednesday 12/16
8:45 a.m. Line Dancing
10 a.m. Chair Yoga
Noon Bingo, Snacks
Thursday 12/17
8:45 Aerobics
10 a.m. Healthy Bones
12:30 p.m. Card Games
Friday 12/18
9 a.m. Quilting Class
9:30 a.m. Bowling
11:30 a.m. Holiday Party

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Flexibility and Balance Chair Yoga – Wednesdays at 10 a.m. at the Town Hall. Drop-in \$6 (first class free). Senior Lunch – Fridays at noon. Call (413) 367-2694 by Wednesday for a reservation.



By FRED CICETTI

Q. My doctor says it's time for a colonoscopy. Please tell me I shouldn't worry about this exam.

You definitely shouldn't worry. I've had the three major tests for colon cancer: sigmoidoscopy (very uncomfortable), the barium enema (a nightmare), and the colonoscopy. I was given anesthesia for the colonoscopy, and all I recall is getting on the examining table, feeling like I had a cocktail, and waking up in recovery as rested as if I had a late-afternoon nap on the beach.

The colon, or large bowel, is about a five-foot tube that connects the small intestine to the rectum. It removes water and nutrients from digested food.

The colonoscopy is the gold-standard procedure for colon-cancer detection. The colonoscope is a slender, flexible, lighted tube with a video camera at its tip. The examining physician inserts the tube into

THE HEALTHY GEEZER Colonoscopy Pep Talk

the rectum. The scope inflates the colon to provide a better view. The camera sends pictures of the inside of the colon to a TV monitor. The exam takes 30 to 60 minutes.

During the procedure, a doctor can remove most abnormal growths such as polyps with tiny tools passed through the scope. Most polyps are benign, but some can turn into cancer. By getting the polyps early, a colonoscopy can avoid a major operation.

Patients are given pain medication and a moderate sedative. Discuss sedation with your doctor in advance. People I know who've had the procedure have experienced different degrees of alertness, recall and discomfort.

After the exam, you might feel some cramping or gas, but it should stop within an hour.

By the next day, you should feel normal. You'll probably need someone to take you home because it takes a while for the sedative to wear off.

If no abnormalities are found, you'll probably be told to come back for another exam in three to five years. If there are abnormalities, you may have to return more often.

Now for the bad news: The preparation for a colonoscopy is awful. Preparations vary. You take either pills or liquids to purge the colon completely. You may need an enema. You will spend a lot of time on the throne.

My doctor prescribed the liquids; they taste awful, and you have

to drink a lot of them. Next time, I plan to ask if I can take the pills.

During the 24 hours before the exam, you have to drink only clear, nonalcoholic liquids. You can eat only soft foods such as Jell-O. And nothing can be red because it could be confused with blood.

Your diet may permit liquids up to two to four hours before the exam. My doctor required total abstinence on exam day.

There are other colon exams available. These include CT colonography ("virtual colonoscopy"), sigmoidoscopy and barium enema.

CT colonography uses computed tomography ("CAT") scanning, a minimally invasive procedure. CT colonography is an alternative for patients who are at risk of complications from colonoscopy such as patients who are frail. If a virtual colonoscopy finds significant polyps, they have to be removed by conventional colonoscopy.

Like a colonoscope, a two-foot sigmoidoscope is a slender, flexible, lighted tube with a tiny video camera linked to a monitor. In a sigmoidoscopy, the doctor inspects only the lower parts of the colon.

A barium enema, or lower gastrointestinal (GI) examination, is an X-ray procedure.

To make the intestine visible on an X-ray image, the colon is filled with a contrast material containing barium, a silver-white metal.

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WEST ALONG from page B1

research in the Riverside neighborhood of Gill, which had been the site of thousands of years of Native encampments, as well as the site of the horrific massacre of 1676.

In collaboration with the local historians mentioned above, plus Peter Miller, David Bosse, Mitch Mulholland and Kit Curran, he has investigated the actual topographical context of the Falls area of 1676 to attempt to determine what the landscape would have looked like back then, and how that would have impacted that historical event.

This unexpected facet of the study has revealed a fascinating depiction of our region's landscape that allows one to time-travel back to the days when the familiar docile pool backed up behind the dam was a raging, dangerous cataract. Thomas's visualization and interpretation of the landscape adds a fascinating dimension

to this study.

The Battlefield Advisory Board is already working on the Phase II application, being prepared by Montague town planner Walter Ramsey. The residents of Gill, in anticipation of the new application, have been exceptionally cooperative in granting permission to the research team to conduct investigations on their properties using metal detectors.

Having such strong community buy-in will be a vital element in the NPS' consideration of further financing and funding for the next phase of this study. In addition, the Greenfield Historical Commission is working on securing landowner permission to do the same in the core areas of interest at White Ash Swamp, Cherry Run Creek, and the Nash's Mills neighborhoods.

The Phase II application will be submitted in January 2016.





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At Greenfield's Salvation Army

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

Greenfield has a Salvation Army Family Store in it, at 56 Hope Street. So does Turners Falls, at 220 Avenue A. In Greenfield the group also runs a community center at 72 Chapman Street. In front of the Post Office, a Salvation Army bell ringer is trying to get people to put money into a bucket that is next to her.

According to its website, the Salvation Army is an organization that helps people through "food distribution, disaster relief, rehabilitation centers, anti-human trafficking efforts and a wealth of children's programs. Our work is funded through kettle donations, corporate contributions, and the sale of goods donated to our Salvation Army Family Stores." There are 7,546 centers in this country.

The Salvation Army seems to bring forth a good opinion about working there, and of the organization itself. The Family Store and Community Center in Greenfield at least do that.

A Community Center volunteer named Mary Flagg said she started volunteering there because she likes the people she volunteers with, and likes to help the homeless and those who are hungry. As for her opinion on the Salvation Army, it's this: "I enjoy the Salvation Army because they are a giving, God-loving place."

Captain Scott Teady, an ordained minister at the Community Center, has a similar opinion about working at such a place, and of his organization. "I love working here. I enjoy it very much," Teady says.

"It's a front line organization that is loving, caring and compassionate

that helps all."

When asked why he started working there, Teady refers to his ministry as "a calling," saying that at one point he had been doing work with at-risk youth.

A man named Steve Sweeney, an assistant manager at the Family Store, said he wanted to work for a non-profit group. His opinion of the organization is about the same as the others, and he mentions that he's "glad to work for them."

The bell ringer in front of the Post Office is named Carol Soddard. In connection with why someone would want to be a bell ringer for Salvation Army, here are her feelings: "If I couldn't give them money I give them time." She also had this to say about being in the rain and cold when being a bell ringer: "It makes it more challenging, but it's a good challenge."

"It's a blessing to make a difference in the community," Soddard said.

Various people doing different things with the Salvation Army have given us a portrait of an organization that is generally well liked and thought of as good.

These people's thoughts on the Salvation Army seem to show us the true spirit of charity, which means "voluntarily giving of help, typically in the form of money to those in need." People at the Salvation Army's locations in Greenfield are definitely putting themselves out there when it comes to helping with people's needs.

It could be a sign for people to support the organization in what they do to help out; no matter what season comes along that people celebrate.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

The Life of a Repo Man is Always Intense; Grown Man So, So Angry They Card You For Cigarettes; Three Cars Hit Deer; Teeth Knocked Out By Unchill Person

Monday, 11/30
2:19 p.m. Caller from Old Sunderland Road reports that all four of her vehicle's tires were slashed on Saturday night. Report taken.

Tuesday, 12/1
8:50 p.m. Caller from Second Street requests an officer as there is a vehicle that has been sitting outside for 10-15 minutes. Caller did not recognize the vehicle, and caller's dog is very upset about a car being there. Caller called back to advise that the vehicle took off; requests extra patrols this evening/overnight.

Wednesday, 12/2
7:36 a.m. Report of broken gas line on Poplar Street. TFFD, Berkshire Gas, and officers advised. Officer advises gas line does not appear to be operational anymore. Berkshire Gas on scene.

10:44 a.m. Jewelry and boxes reported stolen on Griswold Street. Report taken.

11:55 a.m. Caller reporting of suspicious vehicle parked on Turners Falls Road for past 1.5 hours. Officer checked on vehicle. Operator had pulled over to take an important phone call and did not want to drive into a dead spot and lose service. Caller advised.

12:22 p.m. Report of suspicious activity on Seventh Street; one male seen climbing through window of house and letting a second male inside. Officers confirmed it was the resident's 2 sons that entered the house; advised they locked themselves out.

3:50 p.m. Received a notice of repossession of a vehicle on Vladish Avenue. Dispatch later received a call from a resident reporting an unmarked tow truck with a vehicle on the back. Spoke to party at repossession company, who confirmed that they did tow this vehicle.

5:47 p.m. Report of vehicles traveling at high rates of speed in the area of Greenfield Road and Hatchery Road.

10:54 p.m. Caller reports hearing a loud crash on Federal Street and can now see someone in the road with a flashlight. Debris located nearby; mailbox was struck. Vehicle believed to be white and would have extensive front end damage. State police notified. Officers checked area; unable to locate vehicle.

Thursday, 12/3
12:46 a.m. Report of a vehicle that is "hanging" on the stone wall across from

Food City. Officer out near Our Lady of Czestochowa with two parties that may have been involved. Officer requests tow for vehicle and Med-Care for possible injuries.

[REDACTED] was arrested and charged with operating under the influence of liquor; failure to operate a motor vehicle within marked lanes; and negligent operation of a motor vehicle.

8:34 a.m. While on a detail, officer observed a sinkhole on North Street. Hole is approximately 2 feet deep and 3 feet wide. Officers will mark hole for now until DPW is able to respond.

9:06 a.m. Report of a female walking two pugs on G Street. Female was observed yanking one of the dogs up by its leash/harness after it started pulling on the leash. Animal control officer checked area; negative contact.

1 p.m. Report of a younger black male spray painting on the side of a building in the alley next to the Pizza House. Officer spoke with male party who stated he was the owner of the building and was allowing his son to paint some artwork on it.

3:24 p.m. Three-car collision at Avenue A and Third Street. No steam, smoke, or fluids. Report taken.

4:47 p.m. Caller very upset that when he goes to a store in Montague/TF to purchase cigarettes, he is always carded. Caller became very agitated, stating that he is a grown man and his privacy is being invaded. He further stated that this was all due to the police department. Caller spoke for several minutes. It was offered that an officer would call him back and speak to him. Caller declined this offer.

Friday, 12/4
7:06 a.m. Car vs. deer at Turners Falls Road

and Hatchery Road; no smoke/fluids/injured humans. Deer still alive but badly injured.

11:29 a.m. Party into lobby on behalf of parents who are being harassed by someone claiming to be Publishers Clearing House. Officer advised party of options and to ignore the documents he has been receiving, which are fraudulent.

3:04 p.m. Caller reports that her service dog, a black and white Great Dane named Oreo, just ran out the door. Later called back to advise that Oreo has returned.

5:07 p.m. Written warning issued for failure to stop for pedestrian in crosswalk near the Post Office on Avenue A.

6:05 p.m. Caller advising of deer struck by vehicle partially in the road on Federal Street, still alive. Second caller advising of same. Officer advised animal has been dispatched and removed.

Saturday, 12/5
4:25 a.m. Caller reporting loose horse in yard on Federal Street; same has been in and out of traffic. Caller remaining with horse to attempt to keep it safe. Officers en route. Messages left for possible owner. Possible owner checking for her horse at home. Officers have horse secured. Units clear; horse reunited with owner.

10:05 a.m. Caller from K Street complaining of a large amount of trash and debris around the house across the street. Caller concerned about impending winter weather and this being a traffic hazard. Officer checked area and advised there is no immediate traffic hazard. There are some items strewn about: broken kids' toys, leaves, etc. Dispatch left a message for the Board of Health.

10:17 a.m. Caller reports that he was driving in the area of Pine Street when he struck a deer. Caller advises he was "shaken up" and didn't know what to do, so he drove to Amherst. Officer viewed damage to vehicle, including hair from deer stuck in damaged area. Caller now advising officer that this accident occurred in Amherst. Party directed to Amherst PD.

Sunday, 12/6
10:34 a.m. Caller from Greenfield requesting her options regarding how to get her cat back from a friend who was holding onto it for her since September while she had her apartment treated for bugs. Caller has tried to contact this person several times and they keep telling her they are not home but the caller believes otherwise. Caller referred to Greenfield PD. Caller called back inquiring if a Montague police officer could accompany her to the residence in Millers where her cat is in an attempt to retrieve it. Officer out on Federal Street. Kitty returned to owner.

5:21 p.m. Caller reports she was assaulted by a female, unknown last name. Caller stated the female confronted her about who she was speaking to on her cell phone, then tried to take the phone from her, knocking her down and causing her to strike her head. Party then reportedly punched the caller in the face, knocking out teeth. They struggled, then the party exited the house followed by the caller, both parties yelling at each other. The party then reportedly hit the caller in the face again and left on foot headed toward Scotty's. Medcare on scene. Officer checked area; female party not located. Report taken.

11:14 p.m. Caller reporting fight in progress on the porch at the Rendezvous. Officers on scene; caller evasive with answers and could no longer describe people involved. Officers will watch area.

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MODERN VOIDS

BY MADELINE LAPORTE



BINGHAM from page B1

detail, lots of time, and much patience. She usually starts the process of paper-cutting with a paper that is black on one side, white on the other, and draws her design on the white side. After taping it to a piece of glass, she uses an Olga cutting knife to cut away the sections she wants to appear white, starting from the middle and working outwards.

Sometimes, she cuts a figure out and flips it over to apply it in white on top of the black, but most often the white parts are formed from negative space. There are many styles of paper cutting: Polish, Chinese, Jewish and Swedish. Edith's style is closest to the Swedish because it has a lot going on and tells a story.

Edith is also enthused about Swedish weaving methods, something she learned at the Vävstuga, Swedish weaving school in Shelburne Falls. She started weaving belt strips on a little inkle loom during her post-collegiate era of homesteading in New Hampshire. In the mid-'80s she wove scarves to generate income, during a time when she was a single parent with young kids and scrambling to find small jobs on a daily basis.

The Swedish methods she learned more recently are far more efficient than American weaving, and she is thrilled to be able to weave faster and finer material more comfortably on her Swedish loom.

In fact, she has been creating yardage from yarn spun from her

own sheep on her son's farm in Charlemont, and sewing warm coats with it. "It's such a good technique, you can do fine things that take a lot of threads. Winding a warp is ten times as fast as the way Americans do it. The American way would take 8 hours to wind 10 yard warp, and the Swedish way only 45 minutes!" explained Edith, modeling a beautiful coat she created from her sheep's wool yardage.

Edith has lived the life dedicated to creative expression and family – and one might argue that making a family is itself a creative art. As a youngster she was encouraged to DRAW DRAW DRAW! by a great-aunt who was a painter, and whose late husband, M.L. Blumenthal, was a noted *Saturday Evening Post* illustrator. Edith suspects this aunt

public forum and information session put on by the selectboard and the building committees to discuss major municipal improvements to town center, including a new town office building, a new library, a new septic system and a new public water supply. In addition to the selectboard, Steve Mason from the engineering firm of Dufresne and Henry, and Margo Jones, architect for the two new buildings were also in attendance.

None of the designs are final, but work is continuing, and the plan is to have them go out for bid in mid-February, with construction starting in the spring. Steve Mason said the septic system should be done by the end of June.

Five Arrested at Vermont Yankee

They call themselves the *Shut it Down Affinity Group*. Several members from the *Citizens Awareness Network*, *Shut Down Vermont Yankee Now* and the *Traprock Peace Center* gathered for a rally at Vermont Yankee's corporate headquarters in Brattleboro, Monday

morning, December 5. The group was protesting the facility's continued operation, and want Entergy to shut the reactor down and replace it with "sustainable energy that will bring safety, jobs and prosperity to our communities."

Five women were arrested including Paki Wieland of Northampton, Claire Chang of Gill, Frances Crowe of Northampton, Marcia Gagliardi of Athol, and Dorthée of Wendell.

This was a first-time arrest for Dorthée and Chang. Dorthée says she has been following the efforts to shut down the reactor and finally "push came to shove" and she felt she had to take direct action.

Chang indicated her frustration with the ineffectiveness of going through conventional methods to facilitate change including contacting her representatives. "It makes no difference... they don't listen," she said.

The women crossed on to Entergy property with a padlock to symbolically shut down the plant, and are cited for trespassing. They have an arraignment set for January 10.

MONTAGUE COMMUNITY TELEVISION NEWS

Holiday Cheer and More

By ABIGAIL TATARIAN

Turners Falls is bustling with activity this December! There's much to look forward to, and MCTV staff & producers are working fast to bring the fun your way.

Looking for an art break? Check out this week's exhibit *Community: A Photo Exhibition* by Josh McElhone and Joey Parzych at the Carnegie Library, 201 Avenue A, Turners Falls. The show runs from December 7 to 10, with a closing reception on Thursday, December 10 from 4 to 5 p.m.

For some seasonal fun, don't forget to check out the many activities going on as a part of *It's a Wonderful Night* in Turners Falls, a Turners Falls RiverCulture event featuring shopping, dining, and seasonal cheer. There was a mistake in the day listed in last week's MCTV News, but make no mistake: this will take place on *Friday*, December 11 from 3 to 10 p.m.

Festivities will include a kids' bird feeder crafting event at the Great Discovery Center (3 to 6 p.m.), the arrival of Santa at Spinner Park at 6:30, and a performance of the children's creative dance com-

pany "Awesome Art in Motion" at 5:30, upstairs at the Brick House Community Resource Center.

Also at the Brick House: holiday green-screen photo fun from 5 to 8 p.m.! Many shops will be open late, as listed at www.turnersfallsriverculture.org/its-a-wonderful-night-in-turners-falls. All to be followed by an After Party at the Rendezvous at 9:30 p.m.

Welcome Yule is now in its 31st year! Don't miss the traditional passing of the yule log with wassailing songs, carols, puppets and more: the Abbots Bromley Horn Dance and a retelling of the myth of Halcyon.

This year's show will bring us to a seaside village where nautical songs and a sailors' jig celebrate the safe return of fisher folk on the eve of the winter solstice. Check it out at the Shea Theater (71 Avenue A, Turners Falls), December 11 and 12 at 7:30 p.m., or Sunday, December 13 at 2 p.m. General admission is \$12; seniors & children \$10; children 4 and under are FREE; and it's just \$40 for families of 4-5.

You can reserve tickets by emailing reservations@welcomeyule.org with your name, the date of the

performance you plan to attend, and number of tickets for reservation.

And don't forget to check out recent additions to our TV schedule & available online:

- Montague Finance Committee, 12/2/15
- Gill Selectboard Meeting, 11/30/15

Local producers are bringing more coverage coming your way. Bret Leighton has filmed the *Fossil Tracks* event at Greenfield Savings Bank, as well as the recent *Montague Reporter Holiday Gala Benefit* honoring the contributions of Patricia Pruitt and Chris Sawyer-Lauchanno.

Mik Mueller will be covering *Welcome Yule* once again, and Ken McCance will be covering the *Brass Band Ensemble* for the next three weeks.

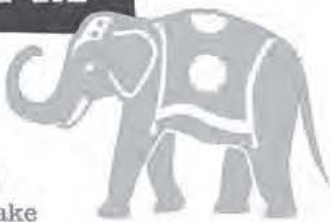
Something going on you think others would like to see? Get in touch and learn how easy it is to use a camera and capture the moment!

Call (413) 863-9200, email infomontaguerev@gmail.com, or stop by 34 Second Street in Turners between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Friday. We'd love to work with you!

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CLAIRVAUX from page B1

showcase its wares. Pressey reportedly built it almost single-handedly, despite his “minor building skills”.

Today, “dilapidated” isn’t too far off for a description of it, but at the time, it provided space for a few new business ventures, the way a contemporary “business incubator” functions. There was a display area for everyone’s products, and a shared educational space in which to advocate for New Clairvaux’s principles.

Back to the Land!

The community began to garner outside press coverage, which tended to emphasize Pressey’s “vision” over the realities taking shape in Montague. A February 1903 article in *The Outlook* magazine, written by Radcliffe graduate and society reporter Mary Caroline Crawford, titled “A Country Church Industrial,” began:

A cure for the disease called hill-town degeneration has been prescribed by the present minister of a Unitarian church in Massachusetts. He believes that the cure is simply to get back to the combination of agriculture and industry from which the small towns have lapsed.

He is trying, therefore, to bring home to the consciousness of Massachusetts farmers that gospel which Prince Kropotkin has so thrillingly preached. “Back to the land!” cries our Prophet of Montague, Massachusetts.

But he adds, “Let us also spiritualize the country and revive the ancient industries.”

Crawford’s fawning article related that Pressey was “succeeding most encouragingly” in his goals, first in his own expanded household of eleven members, and soon in two other houses. She visited the printing office and village shop, and noted that “rhapia basket work, embroidery, lace-making, cabinet-making, and agriculture” were also being attempted.

Among the “college-bred men and women, endowed with a good sense of humor” Crawford encountered, she mentioned that a “boy, who has just graduated from the high school, is at New Clairvaux for the purpose of learning scientific agriculture,” and that “applications are being received from other interested young men...”

Pressey traveled frequently, leaving Grace to mind the burgeoning work at home. He brought products of Montague’s crafters with him for marketing purposes, delivering talks and sermons and proselytizing for this small but growing community. He soon found that he needed someone to run his printing press, and advise him about setting up a course of printing in his new school for boys.

Contacts in Boston recommended a young, Harvard-educated, socialist printer named Carl Purington Rollins, who came to New Clairvaux in 1903. Years later his widow Margaret Rollins, in a talk she delivered titled *Carl Rollins at Montague*, recounted that Rollins loved Montague, and decided to stay.

He had the printing stock and tools transferred to him – in August 1903 the *Turners Falls Reporter* noted that “E.P. Pressey has sold to Mr. Roland [sic] the New Clairvaux printing plant” – and he wrote to friends that he had plenty of work to do but was bidding his time, hoping to take in more aesthetic printing jobs.

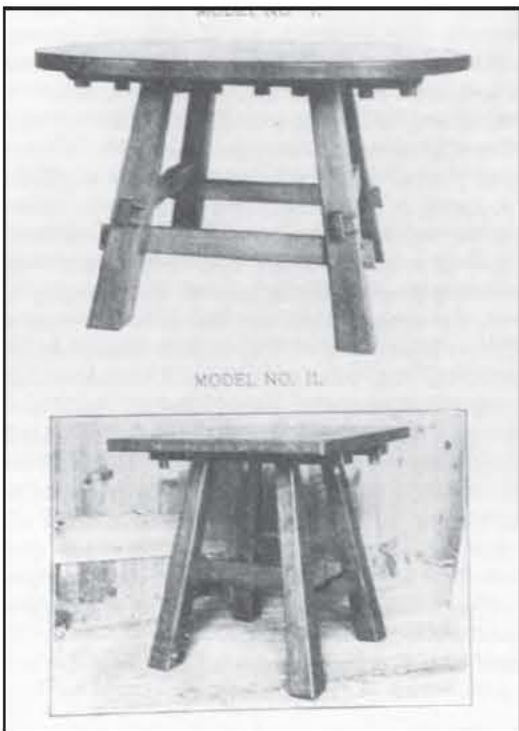
Cooperation In Its Proper Sphere

1903 and 1904 were years of growth for New Clairvaux. The Boston *Globe* ran an article on the community in November 1904 that highlighted its progress.

Pressey informed the *Globe* that “approximately 12 pupils,” between the ages of 5 and 14, from various parts of the country were being taught and boarded at Prospect Point Farm at a tuition of \$200 a year.

The students, it said, have not only “book learning but helpful and instructive work according to their talents,” including farmwork and printing. Pressey’s progressive, “new educational” approach was based on the writings of John Dewey.

Moreover, Pressey had by then recruited three other ministers who shared his vision, with whom he rotated duties preaching or lecturing at the Unitarian society. Two, Waldo B. Truesdell and George Nahum Holcomb, were single men who had studied at Harvard (though Holcomb was an Episcopalian). Truesdell lived at a farmhouse he called Twin Maples.



New Clairvaux tables from Country Time and Tide, November 1902

The community’s fourth minister, Rev. George Willis Solley, was a Congregationalist who had converted to Unitarianism, then left his Dorchester pulpit to join the settlement house movement. His wife, Sarah Dickson Solley, was an educated woman from a wealthy family in Ireland. She had been working with textiles and dyes at the Dorchester Arts and Crafts Society before the couple decided to try their lot out at New Clairvaux.

The Solleys bought a farm at Montague, which they named Spring Farm. This house still stands at the bottom of Court Square, locally known now as the Flanders’ house. Rev. Solley and another man started an “Antiquary Shop” in the village for furniture repair.

Sarah Dickson Solley worked with a local woman, a “Mrs. Frank Benson,” to develop colorfast dyes, and established the Spring Farm Dye Works. Mrs. Solley used these to dye her hand-woven textiles, some of them inspired by the Book of Kells, which she had seen at Trinity College in Dublin, where her father worked.

Two talented woodworkers, Frank C. Cross and Charles Kimball, had also joined up, and the two started a Cabinet-Makers Guild. Cross built the looms on which Mrs. Solley wove her textiles. Kimball lived with his wife and

large family, together with Rev. Holcomb, at the “New Clairvaux Egg Farm.”

For at least one summer, Pressey ran a summer camp to help raise funds. Writing about it in *Country Time and Tide*, he provided an hourly schedule of the campers’ activities, including five hours a day of work on his farm, six days a week. There was an opportunity for ghost stories around a campfire at night, but evening hymns as well.

The string of good press continued in April 1905, in the form of a lengthy *New York Daily Tribune* feature. “NEW LIFE IN DEAD PLACES,” the headline shouted, on page 4 of a Sunday edition, over a picture of Pressey the patriarch and eight other household members posing around a sturdy New Clairvaux table laden high with books.

“In the remote little old village of Montague,” this article began, “in Northwestern Massachusetts, there is quietly going forward a movement which may spread until it entirely removes the stigma of ‘decadence’ from which so many communities in New England suffer.”

The feature reprinted, in its entirety, a piece Pressey had written several years earlier to market his “Vision” – describing “large buildings grouped around spacious quadrangles” that “became a special resort for skilled mechanics, artists and authors.” “If there was an unappreciated musician, he found a chance to make a living at something at New Clairvaux, if it were only at gardening,” Pressey described.

The *Daily Tribune* feature then abruptly switched tracks, to quote at length a description Pressey gave of what was actually taking place in Montague: Spring Farm; bayberry candles; a non-sectarian intellectual ferment at the Unitarian church; the summer camp; Prospect Point, Twin Maples, and the Egg Farm; and of course, the press.

“The arts and crafts movement interests fifty families...” he wrote. “[M]ost of the neighbors have been most wonderfully kind and take to cooperation in its proper sphere as the natural and obvious thing.” To “the days of Jesus of Nazareth” and “the days at Plymouth,” Pressey said, “a third passage yet to be” was developing right here in Montague.

Just what sort of involvement constituted an “interest” in Pressey’s head count was unclear. As he put it in *Country Time and Tide*, “[a]t the very least a hundred individuals have actively co-operated with us in our activities in the town.”

These may have been inflated by families enrolled in the Sunday School, local crafters who exhibited at some point with the Society, and temporary helpers who had visited over the group’s first four years.

An Indulgent Smile

The overbrimming optimism of his evangelism – and the blurring of lines between his vision of a world that could be and the group’s actual accomplishments at Montague – began to attract critics. The editor of *New England Magazine*, Winthrop Packard, set out to see what was really happening at New Clairvaux.

Packard’s article, which ran in February 1906 under the wry title “Country College Settlements: Will They Succeed? The Lesson of a Specific Instance,” would prove a major embarrassment to the New Clairvaux group.

First of all, Packard, an MIT man himself, noted that the town actually had “a population of seven or eight thousand – perhaps more – and this population is steadily increasing in

two active manufacturing centers...”

Second, he noticed that Montague Center itself was “as pretty a country village as you will find in the state.... Decadence is the last thing you would lay against it.... I asked the villagers how much of this prosperity was due to the Clairvaux movement and they gave me an indulgent smile; told me to hunt up the Clairvaux people and find out.”

From there Packard’s piece turned ugly. Carl Rollins, who had taken an extended leave from printing after his eyes gave out, had left Montague – though he would later return – and the print shop was no longer doing so well. The printer who had succeeded Rollins complained that Pressey had misled him about his wages at the print shop, and then cheated him of his work on the farm.

As for the others, Packard wrote,

there are three other settlers at New Clairvaux besides the founder. All these occupy old farmhouses and two of them are also Harvard graduates, teachers and ministers by profession. Both teach and preach elsewhere when they have the opportunity and life at the settlement seems to me to be entirely a secondary issue with them. I do not find that they or their farms have half the air of success and neatness that those of the country people possess...

Pressey, on the other hand, he described as living very successfully on his 75-acre spread,

like Tolstoy, clad in rough garments, he works part of the time in his fields and among his crops, putting in the balance in his cosy library writing his message to the city-pent thousands of the joy and peace of an ideal country life.

A chastened Pressey sent the magazine a letter, which ran that August, objecting to his treatment and presenting, for once, an unadorned description of what he and Grace were doing in Montague.

“The Arts and Crafts Society grew out of an earnest and modest desire to help our ‘Ladies’ Aid Society’ to nobler usefulness,” he explained, and they had initially purchased the printing press in order to print lessons for their Sunday school classes.

“As minister and wife we felt under certain simple obligations to society which we have modestly striven to fulfill,” he said.

In any case, he wrote, traveling to sell goods made by the Arts and Crafts Society umbrella “keeps a considerable group of home workers interested in developing their skill and knowledge for the greater work that is ahead for Arts and Crafts Societies. This is success.”

This mature and wounded letter differed markedly in tone from the brash narratives of New Clairvaux as the seedbed for a new, more spiritually aligned society which Pressey put forth each season in the pages of *Country Time and Tide*.

For all that they were accomplishing, the Presseys and their friends seemed to simply be educated hobbyists who had found a convenient home base in Montague. The dream of resettling and redeeming New England’s rural wastelands gradually gave way to promoting the private benefits of growing food, building furniture, and weaving baskets with one’s hands.

To be continued.



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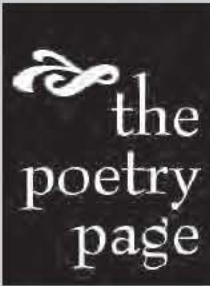
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yet men die miserably every day
for lack
of what is found there.

- William Carlos Williams

edited by Patricia Pruitt
Readers are invited to send
poems to the Montague Reporter
at: 177 Avenue A
Turners Falls, MA 01376
or to: poetry@montaguereporter.org

A FALL Walk

You walk out the door, you get Overwhelmed, for all the
sights to see: The golden orange, yellow and red maple trees.
The sweet smell of sap and apples is quite overwhelming me

A fall walk, a fall walk now I'm having writer's block, a
fall walk, a fall walk, and now I think it's time to STOP.

Julian Bailey

CANDY LAND

Prison bars made of candy canes
are old and ugly,
their once magical illusion
a fungus-smeared blur
of speckled sweat and tobacco stains.
Before I learned to walk,
these bars gave me strength.
I clenched them, like an amulet
into a different world,
and rattled my cage
with new-found power.
Now I am prone again,
the bars an opaque mirror
of self-mystification
and the horror
of no illusions.
When everything breaks down
except the bars,
and my eyes are deserts,
I am reborn
as stale living death.
My only defense
is no defense,
the frail power
of helplessness
and candy canes.

Kevin Smith

Four Autumn Haiku

Deciduous skeletons
crowd morning mist.
Sorrows lie unburied.

Nuts rat-a-tat
my car.
Leaves drift this way, that.
Hickory journeys home.

Leaf-swirled road
Gusts stir silvery shards.
Drizzle stings cheek.
Hornets long gone

Forest drops her skirts.
Late-day pink
and gold
sweep through.
Sidelight: sexy legs.

Woody Bliss

Massachusetts

She first lived in a forties built apartment
with her Dad a Boston lawyer.
Formica tabletop staring into the eye
of a smoked fish on Sunday morning as
he read the paper, smell of cigars
her mother's heels on the linoleum.
Massachusetts calls to her across three
thousand miles of highway, across the
desert where the sun bleaches bones
white of those who went before
across flash floods and droughts of
America, a map of roads and holes in
the endless brown desert.
Across cities like scattered dumps of
human waste all the way to Massachusetts
with its corn stalks and fireflies
its lakes and rivers and bubbling creeks.
The Massachusetts she never knew
with cows munching summer green
horses goats and sheep, chickadees,
finches, song sparrows and thrush.
Massachusetts where the pilgrims landed
and made their way west to build salt box
houses with stone walls and wipe out
the Indians with disease.
With its deep soil humus smelling of
earth, its white rock crystal and white
churches. Where at night the stars and
galaxies appear overhead reaching down
to dark sleepy earth.

Jean Varda

Massachusetts #3

It's in the warning call of the
Eastern Blue Jay
ringing through grey damp skies
It's in the Connecticut River,
wide and deep and cold
It's in the birch trees their smooth
white skin that leaves a sticky
powder on my hands
It's in the white quartz gracing the
New England country side
with ice crystals
It's in the leaves, the way they
change from gold to orange
then magenta
and the Barred Owl, his four
distinct hoots calling out
to the forest in moonlight

Jean Varda

Poets of December

Julian Bailey, age 9, of Turners Falls, answered our call for a kid's poem.
We hope he'll send more!
Woody Bliss is making his first appearance in the Poetry Page with his
Autumn Haiku sequence. He lives on Taylor Hill, Montague.
Kevin Smith of Turners Falls has appeared in the MR many times.

Jean Varda lives in Greenfield. She has self-published five chapbooks of
poetry, hosted open mic venues for poets in other states, and works as a
collage artist. This is her first appearance on our Poetry Page.
We thank all our December poets for their poems. January starts a New
Year. Put your hopes, fears, visions, and any other thoughts for the New
Year in your poems, and share them with us!

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ONGOING EVENTS:

EVERY SUNDAY

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: *Celtic Sessions*. Musicians of all levels welcome to play traditional Irish music, 10:30 a.m.

FIRST MONDAY EACH MONTH

Wagonwheel, Gill: *Wagon Wheel Word*. Monthly poetry reading, often with special guest poets. 6 p.m.

Montague Center Library: *Outside the Lines!* 1st Monday of each month. Adult Coloring Group. Supplies provided. 6:30 p.m.

People's Pint, Greenfield: *TNT Karaoke*. 9 p.m.

EVERY WEDNESDAY

Carnegie Library, Turners Falls: *Story Time*: Thematic stories, projects, and snacks for young children with Mez, 10:15 to 11:30 a.m.

Leverett Library, Leverett: *Tales and Tunes Story Hour*. For ages 0 to 5 and their caregivers. 10:30 a.m. to noon.

EVERY THURSDAY

Millers Falls Library: *Music and Movement with Tom Carroll & Laurie Davidson*. Children and their caregivers invited. 10 a.m. Through 12/17.

The People's Pint, Greenfield: *Derek Bridges*. Live acoustic guitar. 7 p.m.

Pioneer Tavern, Millers Falls: *Watchdog Open Mic*. All musicians, comedians, and

magicians are welcome! 8 p.m.

EVERY FRIDAY

Slate Memorial Library, Gill: *Story Hour*. Stories and hands-on arts & crafts. 10 a.m. to noon.

The Pioneer Tavern, Millers Falls: *TNT Karaoke*, 8:30 p.m.

EXHIBITS:

Artspace Gallery, Greenfield: *Grok This Art*. Exhibit of new works by current visual art students at GCC. Gallery talks 12/18. Through 12/31.

Deerfield Arts Bank, S. Deerfield: *Portraits: Revealing & Concealing*. 36 local artists explore the puzzle of the portrait. Portrait sketch session with Elizabeth Stone on 12/3, 6-8. Participants welcome. Exhibit through 1/14.

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Junior Duck Stamp Exhibit*. 12/6 through 1/31. Hours for Discovery Center have been expanded (yay!) to Wednesday-Sunday for the winter, 10-4 p.m.

Leverett Crafts & Arts, Barnes Gallery, Leverett: *LCA Residents Group Show*.

Little Big House Gallery: Shelburne: *The Erection*. Ongoing exhibit chronicles the creation of Glenn Ridler's Little Big House. Photographs, printed text and video help tell the story. info@littlebighousegallery.com

Salmon Falls Artisans Gallery, Shelburne Falls: *Peggy Hart: Wool Gathering*. Collection of local wool and linsey woolsey blankets woven on antique industrial looms. And *Explorations in Felt* by Liz Canali and collaboration guest artists. Exhibit runs through 12/31.

Sawmill River Arts, Montague: *A Seasonal Reflection*. Special December exhibit from local artists through Jan. 3. Includes holiday raffle of donations from gallery artists. www.sawmillriverarts.com

Shelburne Falls Arts Co-op,

Shelburne Falls. *Mystery and Magic*. December sale of Special Items by member artists. Opening on 12/19 at 4 p.m. Group show through 1/25.

Wendell Free Library, Wendell: *Paintings by Mari Rovang*. Nine of Rovang's oil paintings, several of local scenes, are on exhibit at the library until 12/31. Artist's reception 12/5, 3-5 p.m.

UMASS Hampden Gallery, Amherst: *Contemporary Landscape/Two Views*. Karen Evans of Turners Falls, and Jenny Tibbets of Northfield have a painting exhibit featuring many local scenes as their subjects. Exhibit through 12/13.



Jeffrey Foucault finishes up his East Coast tour debuting his new CD *Salt as Wolves* at the Memorial Hall in Shelburne Falls, on Saturday, December 12 at 7 p.m. Described by the New York Times as "immaculately tailored..." Also described as a tough, spare collection of darkly rendered blues and ballads, like a field recording of a place that never existed.

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS:

Dickinson Memorial Library, Northfield: Seeking artwork for their Doug and Marty Jones Art Space. Artists of any age from Franklin County can submit application found at bit.ly/1SfZh78 or contact library.

Sawmill River Arts, Montague Center: Seeking artists for co-operative gallery. For more information see www.sawmillriverarts.com.

Wendell Free Library invites artists to submit applications for exhibit in the Herrick Meeting Room gallery. See www.wendellmass.us.

EVENTS:

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10

Deja Brew, Wendell: *The Surly Temple*. Jim Henry, Guy DeVito, and Doug Plavin. 9 p.m.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11

Turners Falls: *It's a Wonderful Night in Turners Falls*. Something for everyone in multiple venues: kids' crafts, dancing, magic mailbox, green screen photo shoot, singing and stories and more. 3-10 p.m.

Yankee Candle Theater, S. Deerfield: *Ja'Duke presents A Christmas Carol*. Also on Saturday, and next weekend. 7 p.m. \$

Rendezvous, Turners Falls:

Uncle Hal's Crabgrass Band. Americana-ana. 6:30 p.m.

Mocha Maya, Shelburne Falls: *Chickenyard*. Root Rock. And special guest, *Emily Barnes*, singer/songwriter 8 p.m.

Brick House, Turners Falls: *Booker Stardrum, Prints, Andrew Bernstein, Bonnie Kane, and Tom Crean/Mike Barrett Duo*. All ages, \$, 8 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Barrett Anderson*. Hyno Boogie Blues. 9 p.m.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12

Carnegie Library, Turners Falls: *Gingerbread Party* for kids of all ages. Make a house! 10:30-noon.

Memorial Hall, Shelburne Falls: Signature Sounds presents *Jeffrey Foucault*. Full band CD release show. 7 p.m. \$

the ArtsBlock, Greenfield: *The Happier Valley Show* with The Ha-Ha's and special guests! Musical improv, *Pat & Misch Break Up*, and *The Fourth Wall*, with audience participation. 8 p.m. \$

Mocha Maya, Shelburne Falls: *Henning Ohlenbusch*, singer/songwriter, and *Lines West*, Americana rock. 8 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *The Reprobate Blues Band*. Blues Baby Blues! 9 p.m.

Pioneer Tavern, Millers Falls: *Ruby's Complaint*. 9 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Kinks of Kamel*, (gypsy and R&B), 1 p.m. *Groove Night w/dj Drew*. 9:30 p.m.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Crow's Rebellion*. Warped Americana. 8 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *TNT Karaoke*. 9 p.m.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 14

Trinity Church, Shelburne Falls: *20th Annual Concert of Vocal and Choral Music*. Includes grade school children up to community adult members. Donations to benefit the Hilltown Food Pantry. 7 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Nora's Stellar Open Mic Cabaret*. 8 p.m.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 17

Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Kidleidoscope!* This week it's ducks. Activities for ages 3-6. 10:30-11:30 a.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Half-Shaved Jazz*. 7:30 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Tommy Filiault Trio*. Original guitar music with Doug Plavin and Klondyke

Koehler. 8 p.m.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 18

Artspace Gallery, Greenfield. *Grok this Art*. Mini-talks discussing their work from students exhibiting. 7 p.m.

Mocha Maya, Shelburne Falls: *Ray Mason*, indie rock, and special guest *Robert La Roche*, singer/songwriter. 8 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Josh Levangie & the Pistoleros*. Outlaw Country. 9 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Solstice Bloody Solstice*. Black Sabbath Tribute Night. 9:30 p.m.



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— at least convincingly — unless you are paying complete attention to what is happening on stage. An authentic performance is dependent upon receiving and understanding information, both spoken and unspoken.

Only then can you react honestly. The craft demands honesty. An audience will quickly stop believing an actor who is not present in the moment, one who is simply waiting for the cue for her next line.

What if that line is dropped and never spoken? What if her mind wanders and she misses the cue? It happens, and it colors an audience's perception of the performance.

BE PRESENT from page B1
squeeze every moment of joy from this life.

Of course, you have to first notice those moments. When you are being present for yourself, you become aware of the simple things that make life wondrous and joyful. Those may include interactions with others, the playfulness of a pet, or a spectacular sunset.

Eventually, you realize that ALL sunsets and sunrises are spectacular. Every one of them. While some shout "look at me," others quietly caress the sky before gradually dimming to a soft glow.

In the complexities of our minds and lives we easily forget the power of attention, yet without attention we live only on the surface of existence.

— "Stories of the Spirit, Stories of the Heart," Christina Feldman and Jack Kornfield, editors.

Being mindful is something many people aspire to. For two groups — actors and caregivers — it is essential. Actors, by definition, are pretending to be someone they are not. However, when they accept a role, they must try to find the truth behind that character and react as the character would in that situation.

Acting, in fact, is not "acting," it is "reacting." And you cannot react

If I try to "be present," my eye is still on myself, as I struggle to find some elusive perfect state of being. When I turn my attention to the other — whether it's my fellow actor, the audience during a soliloquy, or my mother when we share time together — I'm receptive to what that person gives me back. I listen. I absorb. I respond. It's a state of openness.

— Colette Rice, actress and caregiver

Audiences simply cannot trust an actor who is not authentic, just as patients cannot trust a caregiver who is not mindful. It is the duty of a caregiver to listen honestly and fully.

It matters not at all if you are

MONTAGUE REPORTER



SUBMITTED PHOTO

ON THE ROAD

Turners Falls resident Nancy Currie Holmes (far left) visited Dingle, Ireland this past October, and brought the Montague Reporter along for the trip. Her traveling companions, Ellen Currie Mackin, Mary Currie Reid, and Michelle McCord, all grew up in Turners.

The crew spent time in the southwestern peninsula with Reid's husband, Gerry, who runs a study-abroad program there through Sacred Heart University.

Going somewhere? Send your photos to editor@montaguereporter.org!

carrying for a loved one in your own home or a complete stranger in a facility. The most effective caregivers offer the patient their full attention. The key is to listen and feel the words that may not be spoken.

Hospice workers know this and practice it. It is one of the tenets of the profession.

Both in acting and caregiving, one of the major elements to being present is listening with your mind and heart.

Not focusing on your response, but truly being aware of the other person's energy, and hearing what they are trying to communicate beyond the words spoken. With that, an honest interaction can take place.

nest interaction can take place.

— Gay Cooper, actress and healthcare facilitator.

Does being present mean never thinking about the past? Of course not. The past has molded who we are. But there is a huge difference between "remembering" and "dwelling."

As Ol' Blue Eyes sang, "Regrets, I've had a few, but then again too few to mention."

There are many articles online about how to train yourself to live in the moment.

However you achieve mindfulness, you will be rewarded every day with the pleasurable sights,

smells, sounds and tactile sensations of your world.

In life we get too comfortable and before we know it the ride is over. Don't get comfortable.... don't autopilot your life. Live every moment. Don't get comfortable.

— Dougie Pieper, actor and patient.

Jeffrey Webster, a native of Turners Falls, is an actor, writer and Hospice volunteer with Carondelet Hospice and Palliative Care in Tucson, AZ. He and his wife, Susan, a Greenfield native, are avid sunset watchers.



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