



LAKE PLEASANT MILLERS FALLS MONTAGUE CENTER MONTAGUE CITY TURNERS FALLS

# The Montague Reporter

YEAR 13 – NO. 24

also serving Irving, Gill, Everett and Wendell

\$1

EDITOR@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

APRIL 2, 2015

## Montague Boards Send \$21 Million Budget to May Town Meeting



MARK HUDYMA PHOTO

The appropriations will be voted by town meeting members on May 2.

By JEFF SINGLETON

At their March 18 and 25 joint meetings, the Montague selectboard and finance committee approved a regular town operating budget of \$8,373,806 for the upcoming fiscal year. It also approved assessments for the regional school districts, the budget of the Water Pollution Control Facility (WPCF), and a variety of special articles – mainly capital projects. Total spending endorsed by the committee exceeds \$21,000,000.

Although the bulk of these expenditures are financed by property

taxes, the WPCF and airport budgets are funded primarily from user fees, and a significant portion of the special article spending will be reimbursed by the state. The appropriations will appear as articles on the May 2 Montague annual town meeting warrant.

Here are the highlights of this year's budget discussion.

### Town Operating Budget

After a good deal of wavering, motions and counter-motions, the two committees reduced the police chief's overtime budget request by

see BUDGET page A5

## Franklin County's First Family of Gospel and Jazz

By JOE KWIECINSKI

ERVING – More than two decades have passed since Moonlight Davis and Morning Star Chenven performed their first concert as a duo at the Book Mill in Montague.

During those years these two accomplished musical artists have refined their own distinctive delivery, taking audiences on a guided tour of rich and diverse song stylings.

Whether they're on stage by themselves with their son, pianist Miro Sprague, or with their own group, they deliver singular interpretations of jazz standards, rhythm and blues favorites, gospel, Jewish

soul, along with spoken word collaborations and original songs.

"We want to reach out and touch as many people as we can," said Davis. "That's why we say our audiences range from ages 2 to 92."

Moonlight and Morning Star's next local appearance is scheduled Wednesday, April 8 at the All Soul's Unitarian Universalist Church in Greenfield. The husband and wife duo will sing and play at the mid-week music program, starting at 12 noon.

They will also present their music following the formal program at the Freedom Seder, Multicultural and Interfaith's 16th

see SINGERS page A7



PHOTO COURTESY MOONLIGHT & MORNING STAR

Davis (left) and Chenven (right) have been playing together for over twenty years.

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

## Assessor Transition Hits Snag

By JEFF SINGLETON

The current director of the Montague Assessing Department, Barbara Miller, has resigned, effective April 2. The board of assessors has recommended a replacement, W. David Zagorski. However, the Montague selectboard at its Monday meeting put the appointment on hold due to concerns about the selection process and the qualifications of the appointee.

The issue may be resolved at a non-public executive session on Monday, April 6. Until that time, Zagorski will serve as a "trainee."

The discussion of the transition began innocently enough, with the selectboard accepting Miller's resignation. The board was told that she had found a job closer to home. Then Paul Emery, chairman of the board of assessors, approached the front table to introduce Mr. Zagorski. Zagorski has served in various capacities, including assessing director, in the towns of Hatfield, Granby and Becket.

Town administrator Frank Abbondanzio asked about Zagorski's certification, which apparently has been allowed to lapse. Zagorski

see MSB page A7

## GMRSD Considers Expanding Winter School Bus Service

By ELLEN BLANCHETTE

TURNERS FALLS – At the Gill-Montague school committee meeting on March 24, members continued a discussion about providing additional transportation for students in the winter months. With the very cold temperatures and large quantity of snow built up on sidewalks this winter, there was concern over students deemed close enough to walk to school under state guidelines, but facing weather conditions that perhaps put them at risk.

Joanne Blier, director of business and operations for the district, reported back to the committee on questions they had posed to her. She said she had spoken to Darlene Kuzmeskus and found there was no easy way to provide additional transportation without it costing the district a good deal of additional money.

Blier provided two suggested routes that could be considered. Her initial conclusion was that this was too complicated and expensive. The cost of picking up students outside the area the state is willing to reimburse must be shouldered by the school district.

Regarding the 11th Street



MARK HUDYMA PHOTO

The district may choose to add bus runs for safety reasons.

bus stop at the Patch, Blier said the bus driver reported no kindergarten students getting on at that bus stop, and as far as the driver could remember, no kindergarten children at that bus stop during this school year. This concern was one raised by a resident who complained to the school committee about young children having to walk the long distance out of the Patch to the bus stop in the cold.

The committee members still pressed the matter. April Reipold said she wants buses for winter months, when the sidewalks are not plowed so children walk in the streets.

Leslie Cogswell pointed to the district's concern over

attendance rates. She said children on the Hill are walking in the street with cars and buses going by. "It's not safe," she said.

Blier said "the state says if it's a safety issue, sure, send a bus, but it's not reimbursable." The issue of reimbursement complicates this issue. Students are entitled to a school bus at a certain distance and then not if they are closer to the school, but the risks and concerns over dangers in severe winter weather seemed to be of more concern to the committee members.

Superintendent Michael Sullivan speaking of the state guidelines said, "It's not illegal, doesn't violate

see BUSES page A8

## Film Production Continues in Former Saint Anne's Building

By TIA FATTARUSO

TURNERS FALLS – Pews lined the walls of Swift River Studios, in the nave of the former Saint Anne's church, last Sunday as producer David Horgan and a team of interns shot a music video for the New England-based band Earthbound.

The J Street building houses Fastlights, a lighting grip rental house that provides gear for such reality television programs as *Wicked Tuna* out of Gloucester, *Kitchen Nightmares*, and *Boar Rescue*. Fastlights has been owned and operated for about 20 years by John Ancil, though the ownership of the church building is currently subject of dispute.

An extensive aluminum truss rig held a giant green screen, which allows the band's performance to be filmed in the studio, and for a separately filmed background to be added later. Ancil said he and his crew were very

careful in its construction, intending to keep the "historic fabric" of the building intact.

"You'll never know we were here," he said, adding that the historic appeal of Turners Falls is one of the things that draws people to the town.

### Hands-On Experience

David Horgan found Ancil's studio while looking for a space to shoot the Earthbound video, but was also there to cultivate a relationship for his Summer Film Institute. Horgan, of Northampton, has been running that program for six years out of other venues.

This July, according to Horgan, students ages 10 to 15 are slated to come to the studio in Turners Falls to "make their own movie, experiment with music videos, and shoot commercials."

"They get some real Hollywood exposure

see STUDIO page A4



PHOTO COURTESY SWIFT RIVER STUDIOS

James Woodbury (left) operates the dolly as Ben Knight and Sam Lusted (right) film a music video for the band Earthbound in the former Saint Anne's Church last Sunday.



# The Montague Reporter

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## Magical Mystery Tour

Montague’s selectboard race is down to three: incumbent Mark Fairbrother, and challengers Jacobo Roque and Richard Kuklewicz.

The expected fourth candidate, Christopher Menegoni, did not turn in nomination papers. He told the *Reporter*, “I talked with Mr. Kuklewicz, and I was comfortable that we had similar feelings, and he has a lot more experience. I’m going to work to support him.”

There seems to be special interest in the town election this year, though we will wait for the voter turnout to see if this is true. There will be at least three public forums for candidates to discuss issues.

A group of town meeting members has organized two forums at the Public Safety Complex on Sunday, April 12 and Sunday, April 19 (see Letters).

And the *Montague Reporter* is partnering with Montague Community Television to sponsor a moderated debate at town hall on the evening on Tuesday, May 5. All three events will be televised.

This spring presents a unique opportunity for residents to have a focused, public discussion of the condition of our town, and its direction. If you have questions for the candidates, you may send them to [info@montaguereporter.org](mailto:info@montaguereporter.org).

## Strawberry Fields Forever

Last Thursday, just four hours south of San Diego, tens of thousands of mostly indigenous, striking farmworkers marched fifteen miles to capture the attention of media – and consumers of strawberries, raspberries, tomatoes and cucumbers – north of the border.

The march came two weeks into a strike, and four months into a widespread movement for justice in the fields of Baja California, where workers live in company camps, working 12-hour days to earn an average of \$10 and as little as \$6.

They are demanding an increase in the minimum wage, access to medical care, and an end to the sexual harassment of female workers and the bullying of older ones.

On Friday, many were back to work – drawn by the carrot of a 15% raise, and driven by the stick of a threatened blacklist – but according to the National, State and Municipal Alliance for Social Justice, which has been representing their interests across the table from agribusiness, the campaign, and the conditions that provoked it, continue.

We are sure some of our readers only eat fruit grown within sixty miles of Wendell, Massachusetts, and we love and admire them for it. But those of us who succumb to the temptation of fresh strawberries out of season are being asked to check the label, and watch the news.

One of the region’s largest growers, Berrymex, grows berries sold by Driscoll’s, a hugely popular brand throughout the US, partly because its packages say “Organic” (partly true, but that’s a topic

for a different editorial). You may have seen them around.

In light of the strike and calls for a sympathetic boycott, Berrymex has increased its lowest wages by 20%, though we are left scratching our heads at statements about “high-performing contract workers” seeing larger improvements to their “earning opportunity,” and average rather than median wages.

Hopefully this week’s small adjustments are only the beginning of some very serious changes for workers on Mexico’s megafarms.

We urge our readers to check out a December series in the *LA Times*, “Product of Mexico,” by Richard Marosi and photographer Don Bartletti, to get a sense of the deplorable and often hopeless conditions they have been facing.

And though one solution is to try to eat more food grown closer to here, it will also help to pay attention to the berry pickers’ movement, and if they ask consumers to put pressure on certain brands, to bring those concerns to whoever makes purchasing decisions at our supermarkets, schools, and workplaces.

The strawberry most of us recognize and love, *Fragaria × ananassa*, is a global product: an 18th-century French hybrid of a North American plant with a berry cultivated over the centuries in Chile by the Mapuche people.

A movement for justice in our food systems may require a similar encounter.

Fortunately, solidarity is sweet, withstands shipment, and is always in season somewhere.

# Letters to the Editors

## Meet The Candidates

With the idea of letting the Townspeople get to know more about thoughts and ideas, we have set up two selectboard candidates’ afternoons at the Community meeting room of the Safety Complex on Sunday afternoon, April 12 from 2 to 4 p.m., and on Sunday, April 19 from 4 to 7 p.m.

We have picked this time with the idea that more people will be free to attend than during the work week.

Candidates will be given a set of questions to answer for the April 12 session, which they will be provided beforehand. They also are requested to bring one question of their own, which may be presented to the other two candidates.

The April 19 afternoon will be an open, question-and-answer session. The people present will ask the questions. A time keeper will be provided for each session. Refreshments will be provided to help the flow of thoughts.

**John Reynolds**  
Montague

## Waste Collection

Did you know that anyone living in the town of Montague – and village of Turners Falls – can go to Food City, pay \$3.00, and buy a sticker to place on any garbage bag under 40 pounds?

Place the bag curbside on your regular recycle day, and the driver will pick it up. No questions asked.

**Alice Johnson**  
Turners Falls



## GUEST EDITORIAL

By KATHLEEN LYNCH

**MONTAGUE** – On Friday, Chris Collins wrote in the *Recorder* about GCTV, “New programming is produced on almost a daily and weekly basis and there always seems to be a steady flow of community producers in there working on a wide range of shows,” and “I get no sense that same thing is happening at MCTV, but if it is, somebody there had better start making that case.”

Well, I’m not from MCTV. However, I’ve been making plenty of “cases,” but apparently they all fall on deaf ears. So, I’d like a Plan B.

The entire concept of reviewing the reporting data of MCTV to determine an actual number of shows produced in any given time frame has entirely escaped the Montague Cable Advisory Committee (CAC), and subsequently the selectboard.

Equally elusive is basing a performance review on the actual criteria of the contract. That got skipped too. But that doesn’t stop a committee from voting on a poorly executed review and then putting it forth as if it had any merit whatsoever.

## Big Girls Don’t Cry

The call for CAC member resignations seemed to only address those specific individuals. It is as though a partial remedial action erased all memory of the flawed process.

The correction of the review never happened. Just like the minutes of the same committee were never taken. Just like the apologies for slander were never given.

Now the mantra of MCTV critics is “MCTV doesn’t have local content,” as though saying it more times will somehow make it a true statement. Anyone who has access to the internet via home, work, library or cell phone can see that the content they post online isn’t nothing.

The only “truth” that I’ve witnessed thus far is the undeserved malice perpetrated, then perpetuated, by town officials. And the goal seems only to be to humiliate certain individuals from MCTV. Secondly, if I have a captive audience, I’d like to request that people stop comparing GCTV to Montague.

If a person wants to assess how an access provider is doing, perhaps the task should be to compare it to similar centers.

GCTV is not similar to MCTV. GCTV is larger in every possible way. They have more population, income, resources and government support than Montague ever has. GCTV is the McMansion to MCTV’s one-bedroom ranch house.

Is there any doubt that the *Montague Reporter* is different than the *New York Times*? Would it be fair to compare them, then hold a dialogue about how the local paper doesn’t measure up?

These nonsensical comparisons will only yield unrealistic expectations and prevent real work from getting done. If you don’t believe me, then take a look at what has transpired over the last year.

Thirdly, as long as we have a selectboard which demonstratively undervalues facts and propriety by failing to censor its own membership’s temper outbursts, then placing that member on the CAC to present back the “review” authored by personality conflicts above facts, the public access community will

see GUEST ED next page

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**PHONE (413) 863-8666**  
Please note new email addresses:  
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JESSICA LARKIN ILLUSTRATION

Compiled by DON CLEGG

An **Easter Egg Hunt** will take place Saturday, April 4, at 10 a.m. sharp on the New Salem Common. All area children and their adults are invited, and afterwards are welcome to a spring party at the fire station until noon. Diemand Farm of Wendell, whose hunt had to be cancelled this year, is sending candy. Beverages will be provided, but bring snacks if you can.

The **River's Song Project Art Exhibit, "Trash to Treasures"**, is on display in the Great Hall of the Great Falls Discovery Center from April 4 to May 27. The GFDC is open 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays. Come early May the center will be open 7 days a week.

The River's Song Project, conceived as an innovative year-long study combining the arts and the environment, gives voice to a diverse constituency along the Connecticut River basin and highlights its ecology.

As part of The River's Song Project, artwork created from trash

collected in the Connecticut River watershed will be exhibited in the Great Hall for the months of April and May.

A full celebration culminating event and artist reception will happen on Saturday, May 16, 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. at various sites around Turners Falls. Local organizations will celebrate the vital role of the Connecticut River with a unique showcase of art events.

The **Our Lady of Peace Women's Group** is hosting a **"Stash Bash"** on Saturday, April 11 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Our Lady of Peace Church, 90 7th Street, Turners Falls.

The sale will feature more than 25 tables of yarn and knitting needles, fabric and notions, art and craft supplies, rubber stamps, beads, knitting and sewing machines, and much more at bargain prices! There will be baked goods and beverages for sale, and door prize drawings.

The **74th Annual Sugar Supper** at Montague Congregational

Church is Saturday, April 11, at 5:30 p.m. Corned beef hash, baked beans, Harvard beets, coleslaw, homemade bread and donuts, sugar on snow.

Adults \$12, children under 10, \$5. Walk-ins are welcome as space allows. Reservations at 413-863-2398. You can also call for take-out.

Want to learn more about cutting and preparing your wood for heat? Come to a free workshop, **"Heating With Wood,"** on Sunday, April 12, from 9 a.m. to noon. Location will be given upon registration.

We will review and demonstrate what you need to know from selecting and felling trees safely, cutting them up into logs, different splitting techniques, seasoning, stacking and storing.

Depending on the interests of those who register we will go into the details of chainsaw use and safety, including sharpening and maintenance, the various techniques of splitting using mauls, wedges, and power splitters, along with different stacking and storage options. During this workshop we will fell a tree and discuss and demonstrate the various challenges and options for cutting it up into logs and splitting.

Class limited to 15 participants. Participants will be required to sign a liability waiver. Sponsored by the Gill Energy Commission. To register, contact Janet Masucci at [jma-succi@msn.com](mailto:jma-succi@msn.com) or 863-8694.

[succi@msn.com](mailto:succi@msn.com) or 863-8694.

**Sawmill River Arts Gallery**, a collaboratively run fine arts and fine crafts gallery, is seeking new members (no wall artists at this time). They are hosting an informational meeting for interested artists on Monday, April 13, 5 p.m. at the gallery, located at the Montague Bookmill in Montague Center.

Please let them know by Monday, April 6, if you plan to attend and plan to bring several samples of your artwork to the meeting.

This meeting will give artists and craftspeople an opportunity to see the gallery, find out how they operate, and to see if it may be a fit for you and selling your work.

The Sawmill River Arts are all local artists, working in different mediums, who value mutual respect and artistic growth. Check out [www.sawmillriverarts.com](http://www.sawmillriverarts.com).

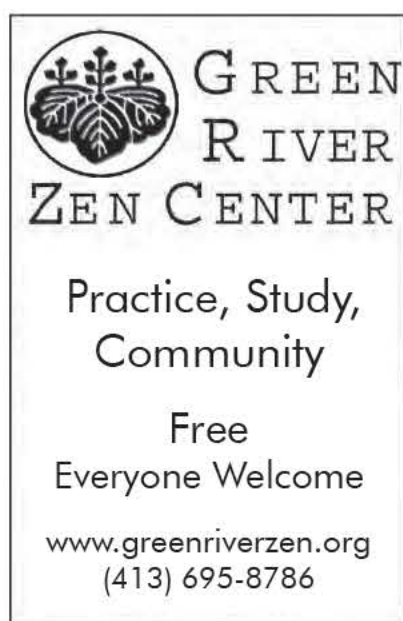
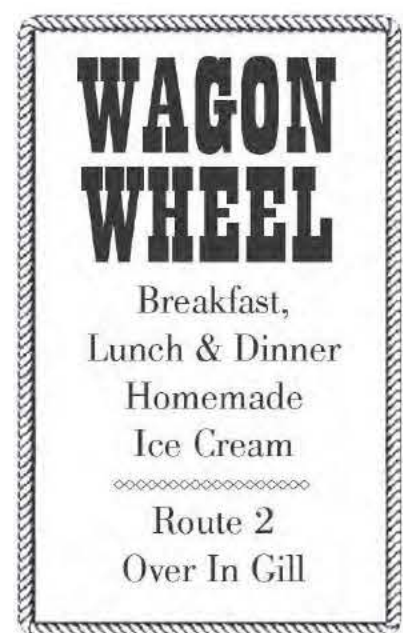
For membership requirements and questions, please contact Kerry Stone at (978)544-5463 or [famstone5@hotmail.com](mailto:famstone5@hotmail.com), or Susan Essig at (413)367-9709 or [sessig@hughes.net](mailto:sessig@hughes.net).

**Music and Movement** has moved to the Montague Center Library branch on Thursdays at 10 a.m., through June.

Send your local briefs to [editor@montaguereporter.org](mailto:editor@montaguereporter.org).



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## Montague Soapbox Derby Update

By MIK MULLER

**TURNERS FALLS** – Over the past eight months I have been contacted by dozens of people asking why the derby did not happen in 2014, and whether it will happen in 2015.

Well, the answer to both questions is the same. The Montague Soapbox Derby needs a sponsor: an organization that is willing to be the fiscal agent, and the administrator of the derby.

MCTV was the owner for the first four years of the derby. They took out the insurance, and set up the bank account where all monies went into and came out of. And they were the beneficiary. If there was any profit, it went towards the station's capital needs for things like cameras, etc.

After running it for four years, the board of directors and staff of MCTV decided not to hold it the following year, and ultimately to divest themselves of it altogether. It was now time to find a new owner for the derby.

I contacted many organizations in Montague. By March of 2014 it was apparent I was coming up empty, so I called it. No derby that year.

I tried one additional organization in January of this year, 2015, but after a month of delibera-

tions, they decided to not pick it up either.

So now I am appealing to the general public, and calling all organizations in Montague. If you enjoyed the derby in the past, or are looking to potentially bring in some money at an annual event, please contact me and let me know if you are interested in being the new owner of this event.



ANNE JEMAS PHOTO

Racers set up on the ramp on top of First Street in this 2013 file photo.

What does it take? At a minimum, you will need to set up a bank account, take out the insurance, and be the official organization associated with the event when meeting with the

police department, fire department, Parks and Recreation, and the selectboard.

You would also need to build a committee of about seven or eight people, each with active participation in building the event. On the day of the event, it takes about 40 volunteers.

I would definitely remain on the planning committee, and would act as a consultant to the event, though I do not really want to be the director anymore. I would actually like to race in it for once!

Although MCTV did not fully maximize all the potential income, we did learn many things over the first four years, and now know what it would take to have the event generate several thousand dollars ... while providing a day's entertainment for everyone.

A full planning document is available from the homepage of [MontagueSoapboxDerby.com](http://MontagueSoapboxDerby.com).

So, if you have Montague pride, and belong to an organization that has active board and member participation, and are seeking potential new income from an annual event, please contact me at (413) 320-5336 about taking on the Montague Soapbox Derby.

You'll be glad you did.

**GUEST ED** from previous page never get a fair shake.

Jeff Singleton asked in a *Reporter* editorial a few months back, "are we allowed to criticize MCTV?" Well, sure! We are all allowed to criticize whatever we like.

But if criticism comes from government, I think it ought to have a foundation in data, rather than personal contempt.

Those criticisms should be presented at an MCTV board meeting, then to the CAC, then to the selectboard, and if still no remedial satisfaction is in sight, to town meeting.

But in Montague, especially from those who self-admittedly "don't watch TV" or "don't have

cable," we go to town meeting first.

Effectively, they are saying, we don't watch you – but you do a bad job. And we can't be bothered to respect the process because we know how to get around it.

There has been zero ownership in the CAC's inability to finally negotiate a cable franchise in almost 3 years, or any acknowledgement that each delayed year costs public access users another \$10,000 to \$15,000 in the gap of capital funds received.

This adds up to roughly \$25,000 to \$37,000 so far, and if the cable contract is not executed by September 2015, the lost income will possibly tally more capital funding

than MCTV has actually received in 13 years.

If we look at the service levels in terms of funding cycles and lost income, which is equal to lost opportunity, is there any question why MCTV would pale in comparison to GCTV? Furthermore, the other component here is a lack of understanding of public access itself. MCTV's critics seem to convey that an access center's job is to serve as the town's personal production company and news media agency.

That's not actually what access is supposed to do. It is what it could do, depending on its resources. Access is really only ever successful when its local government treats the institution itself like a partner. In a

partnership, each side can see the other as a complementary strength, and work together in respectful dialogue to address changes.

I haven't seen any of that happening here, but I'd like to. I'd like to see the insults, however thinly veiled, stop in public meetings. I'd like to see town business carried out like business.

Just because I see meetings in my living room, doesn't mean it's okay to act like you are physically in my living room. I'd like to remain optimistic that communication can still move forward and respectfully.

So, let's all commit to putting on our big girl pants and doing our jobs like other communities do.



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HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD

Board Seeks Town Approval for \$9.3 Million Budget

By KATIE NOLAN

The Erving selectboard approved a \$9.3 million fiscal year 2016 budget, an increase of approximately \$450,000 over last year’s budget.

The budget includes \$2.7 million to fund Erving Elementary School, \$1.1 million for secondary education, and \$852,000 for the stabilization fund.

Assistant assessor Jacquelyn Boyden told the board that the effect of the FY’16 budget on next year’s tax rate is unknown for now, because “there are too many variables” that affect the rate, including this year’s property revaluation. She said she would have more information “in three or four weeks.”

Finance committee chair Jacob Smith said that, because the FY’16 budget increase is similar to the FY’15 budget increase, the finance committee is “comfortable” with the approved budget.

Signing the draft warrant for the May 6 annual town meeting was put off until April 6, because of several late corrections to the draft.

As well as the FY’16 budget, the draft warrant includes a proposed bylaw allowing aboveground liquid petroleum products/tanks in the town’s groundwater protection district by special permit, a “straw vote” was taken to see if the town supports further research on hiring a cook for the Senior/Community Center and authorization to temporarily move items from the Traversari Room in the library to the historical building.

The budget and warrant for the May 6 annual town meeting will be published in a special edition of the Around Town newsletter.

**Potholes and Frozen Pipes**

Highway supervisor Glenn McCrory told the board that the town will receive \$12,647 in “pothole money” from the state, money that must be spent by the end of this fiscal year (June 30). He said that he intends to purchase materials for roadwork planned for this summer.

McCrory reported that the water supply main and the sewer discharge at the Senior/Community

Center remain frozen. Selectboard member Arthur Johnson said he hoped the town would have a “permanent solution before fall.” He observed, “We spent \$2 million on the building, and it can’t be operated in the winter.”

McCrory said that, in original plans for the building, the water main was located under Route 63, but during construction, it was installed in a different location. He said there were various ways to prevent freezing, including digging up the pipes and wrapping them with insulation, re-routing them according to the original plans, or installing a bleeder valve that would keep water running constantly.

The selectboard plans to research different options and costs for preventing future pipeline freezes.

**Usher Contract**

The selectboard awarded a contract for \$24,920 to BCS Group for engineering consulting for the former Usher Plant redevelopment. Usher Plant reuse committee chair Jeanie Schermessser told the board that the committee will hold an informational session, with light refreshments, at Town Hall at 6 pm on April 13.

The committee will hold an open house to present the conceptual design for the former plant on May 6 at 6 pm at Erving Elementary School, one hour before town meeting.

**Medical Leave**

Town administrator Tom Sharp will be on medical leave for four weeks, starting after the end of the workday April 3. Municipal clerk Betsy Sicard will take on many of Sharp’s duties, and selectboard chair William Bembury plans to fill in as a 40-hour per week volunteer administrator.

Boyden said she is available to help Bembury and Sicard during Sharp’s absence.

**Truck Sold**

The board accepted the one bid received for the surplus 1984 fire truck, for \$6,054 from Gas Motors of Brentwood, New Hampshire.

Congregational Church

Easter Services and Community Breakfast

**LEVERETT** – Join us for Easter with your choice of services and a free community breakfast.

Easter Sunrise Service, Sunday April 5, 6:30 a.m., a short service of celebration held in the Emerson Garden beside the church (or inside if conditions are inclement).

A hearty breakfast follows at 7 a.m., in the Leverett Town Hall, free, open to the public, all are invited.

Easter Sunday Service, April 5, 10 a.m., a service of music and readings.

The Leverett Congregational Church has handicapped access and welcomes all; located at 4 Montague Road, Leverett (across from the Leverett Post Office).

Child supervision will be provided. For more information, call Claudia Gere at (413) 359-0003 or email [Claudia@ClaudiaGere.com](mailto:Claudia@ClaudiaGere.com).

Wednesday, April 8: Montague Democratic

Caucus & Democratic Town Committee Meeting

The Democratic Caucus for Montague town elections will be held from 6:30 to 7 p.m., Wednesday, April 8 in the first floor meeting room at town hall, 1 Avenue A in Turners Falls.

This Caucus selects the Montague Democratic Party candidates for town office elections to be held May 18.

Pursuant to the Committee’s 2003 caucus procedures vote, registered Democrats and registered unenrolled voters may vote in the caucus. Only those registered as Democrats by the end of 2014 may run in this, what amounts to a primary election for local town offices.

Afterwards, from 7 to 7:30 p.m., Democratic Town Committee members and their guests will meet to wrap up the caucus and plan for the September state convention delegate selection caucus (date yet to be determined.)

No absentee balloting is allowed. All caucus candidates must be present at the end of balloting or may not be certified. The first floor meeting room of town hall is handicapped accessible.

The following list reflects all term *expirations*.

**Selectman**, 3 years: Mark E. Fairbrother (Dem.)

**Assessor**, 3 years: Betty L. Waidlich (Unenrolled)

**Brd of Health**, 3 yrs: Christopher M. Boutwell (Dem.)

**Moderator**, 3 years: Raymond A. Godin (Dem.)

**Parks & Rec.**, 3 years: Barbara A. Kuklewicz (Dem.)

**Library Trustee**, 3 years: Sharon Cottrell (Dem)

**Library Trustee**, 3 years: Karen Schweitzer (Dem)

**Library Trustee**, 3 years: Barbara Stewart (Dem)

**Library Trustee**, 1 year: *vacant unexpired term*

**Library Trustee**, 1 year: *vacant unexpired term*

**Soldiers Memorial Trustees (veteran)**, 3 years: Albert L. Cummings, Jr. (Dem)

**Soldiers Memorial Trustees (non-veteran)**, 3 years: Donald H. Girard (Dem)

**Montague Housing Authority**, 5 years: Paula H. Girard (Dem)

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**BUDGET** from page A1

\$30,000. The final decision appeared to hinge on the fact that the chief was reported to have said he could “live with” the cut, as opposed to saying he “couldn’t live with it.”

The policy issue is the potential increase in overtime caused by the need to fill shifts while a new officer is at the police academy for training. Fin com member Lynn Reynolds voted against the cut, producing the comment, “No speeding tickets for Lynn.”

The boards also voted to cut the DPW’s Snow and Ice budget by \$10,000, perhaps banking on a milder winter next year.

**Water Pollution Control**

A cut of \$34,000 in “engineering services” for the wastewater treatment plant was rejected by the committees. The services are payments to a consultant named Grant Lever who has helped the plant develop a capacity for treating sludge, a good deal of which comes from other towns in the region.

This has become a major source of revenue for the plant, but town administrator Frank Abbondanzio expressed concern that because Lever is consulting with other towns, the WPCF might lose its revenue stream, and the rights to the new process it has developed. WPCF superintendent Bob Trombley presented a long list of towns sending

sludge to the plant, arguing that he foresaw “no lack of need.”

Outside the regular WPCF budget, the boards supported a special article requesting \$385,000 to “inspect, clean and slip line critical parts of the sewer and storm drain systems.”

This continues the process which began with the sewer breakdown at the entrance to the airport industrial park, and the subsequent repairs to the system along Millers Falls and Turnpike roads. These efforts focus on decaying transite pipes, which are being lined with a plastic coating predicted to last for fifty years. Much of the work funded by this article will be directed by the Department of Public Works rather than the WPCF.

**Education**

The assessment request from the Gill-Montague Regional School District, \$8,498,343, was endorsed by both boards. The request was deemed in line with the affordable assessment, which is 48.5% of Montague’s projected revenues.

The affordable assessment is part of the long-term fiscal plan adopted by the regional school district and member towns several years ago that ended state fiscal control of the district.

The school district achieved the affordable assessment only after

major budget reductions, including significant staff layoffs, to address a projected budget gap of nearly \$1 million. According to a “budget drivers” summary distributed by the Superintendent early in the process, this gap was caused, in part, by increases of nearly \$336,000 in “insurance/benefits” and \$326,000 in wages.

The document also noted that school choice/charter school costs had been “underbudgeted” this year by \$291,409, and that revenues from the special education revolving fund had to be reduced by nearly \$400,000.

An estimate given to the town committees at a recent meeting projected significant, although smaller, gaps in the next two years.

The two boards voted *not* to recommend two special article requests from the GMRSD. The first was \$42,600 for a one-ton truck with plow and sander; the second was \$41,309 for Montague’s share of a utility trailer.

The committees felt these requests should be part of the GMRSD operating budget, although this would add over \$90,000 (with Gill included) to an already strained budget.

Two other capital requests from the GMRSD, both involving a town-owned building, were approved: \$1,116,674 for window replacements at the Sheffield school gym

and auditorium and \$145,000 to replace or repair one of the Sheffield boilers. The window replacements will be reimbursed by the state, with the final cost to the town estimated at \$200,000.

Both boards approved an assessment request from the Franklin County Technical School of \$760,615. There was a somewhat inconclusive discussion of the proper use of a special fund that has recently been created to stabilize tech school appropriations. The committees chose not to use this fund as a source for the tech assessment.

**Town Records**

A \$46,000 request from the town clerk for “town records retention and storage” was approved. This money would actually go to a company to assess the status of the large number of records in the attic, basement, and various offices at town hall.

According to the draft minutes of the March 25 meeting, the study will evaluate “what records need to be kept forever, what records need to be kept for certain periods of time, and what records can be destroyed.”

**Pole Survey**

Both committees endorsed a \$216,000 request for a “pole survey” from the Broadband Committee. The survey is required for a proposed broadband project serving Chestnut

Hill, Taylor Hill, and Meadow Road, all areas of Montague not served by cable. The project would also link the Montague Center and Turners Falls fire departments.

The boards appeared to have been convinced by the presentation of broadband committee member Lisa Enzer, who argued that the project was a first step in bringing service to the entire town.

Enzer also stated that there was a good chance the funds would be reimbursed by the state, but that an appropriation by town meeting would facilitate state reimbursement.

**Colle, Shea and Center School**

Special articles to fund the Colle building (\$80,350) and repair the Shea Theater roof (\$20,000) were approved by the board. The Colle funding source is “receipts reserved for appropriation,” which is a fund of prior year revenue from the building.

A \$15,000 special article for Montague Center School maintenance was endorsed.

“It is currently expected that this property will be transferred to a new owner in May, but this is not likely to occur before the annual town meeting,” reads the draft minutes of the March 25 meeting. “It was decided that it would be prudent to keep the article on the warrant.”



## Scene Report: Open House at Sirum Equipment

*Two reporters shared pictures and reports, so we figured we'd run both! - Eds.*



JOE R. PARZYCH PHOTO



JOE R. PARZYCH PHOTO

*Above: Attendees rested between presentations.  
Bottom: Joe Farris shows off the top Simplicity.*

By JOE PARZYCH

**MONTAGUE** – Last Saturday’s open house at Sirum Equipment had a very good turnout, according to Ed Sirum.

“It was a bad day, but a good turnout,” Ed said. “We had a good crowd and they polished off the food we set out.

“We’ll be contacting customers who showed interest in equipment until the end of summer. A lot of them are waiting to buy until they get their income tax refunds.”

Adam Sirum had a super day with Stihl equipment: “Sales were good, and the future looks even better. We’ve got six pallets of Stihl equipment coming in. Power brush-ces are a hot item.

“After last winter, everyone needs to get all that sand off their lawns, and no one wants to sweep by hand.”



JOE PARZYCH PHOTO

*Adam Sirum writes up a chainsaw sale.*

By JOE R. PARZYCH

**MONTAGUE** – Even though the calendar said Spring, Mother Nature said differently on Saturday March 28. Snow showers had arrived, but they did not stop people from coming to the Sirum’s annual Open House in Montague.

Featured were the McCormick, Simplicity and Snapper Tractors, and the Gravely line.

The person featured in the photo is Joe Farris, the sales representative from New York State, explaining the top Simplicity Lawn Tractor.

Considered the Cadillac of lawn tractors, it comes with power steering, electric deck lift, traction control, suspension for a smooth ride, and a cool mesh seat for the warmer days.

Which we all hope will be very soon. A good time was had by all.

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## WENDELL ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Dog License Deadline is Fast Approaching

Dog licenses are available at the Town Clerk Office. All dogs 6 months and older must be licensed and tagged every year. Proof of rabies vaccination and the appropriate fee is required. Fee for a neutered or spayed dog is \$4 and \$8 for an unaltered dog.

There is a late fee of \$20 for dogs licensed after the date of the Wendell Rabies Clinic on Saturday, April 4 at the Wendell Town Highway Barn (1 to 2 p.m.). The deadline is fast approaching. Please do it NOW.

Licenses may be purchased on Wednesday evenings 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., or Monday, Friday, or Saturday mornings from 9:30 a.m. to noon. Call (978) 544-3395 x 102 with any questions.

### Town Election

There is a Town Election on Monday, May 4. The polls are open noon to 8 p.m.

If you need an Absentee Voter application, please pick this up before Noon on Friday, May 1.

Nomination papers were signed and certified for Jack Radner for School Committee. The following candidates for re-election are also on the ballot: Jeoffrey Pooser, Selectboard; Ted Lewis, Assessor; Jim Thornley, Board of Health; Katie Nolan, Moderator; Michael Gifford, Road Commissioner; Peter Zera, Tree Warden; Dick Baldwin, School Committee; Kathleen Swaim and Melissa Grader, Library Trustees.

No nomination papers were taken out for the following positions: Planning Board (one 5yr term and one 1yr term to fill a vacancy; Cemetery Commissioner (one 3yr term). If you are thinking of running as a write-in candidate, please see the Town Clerk to make sure you comply with election requirements.

The deadline to register to vote in the Town Election is Tuesday, April 14 and the Town Clerk office will be open on that date from 2 to 4 p.m. and 7 to 8 p.m. to accommodate new voters.

### Town Meeting

Town Meeting will start at 7 p.m. on Monday, June 8 at the Wendell Town Hall. Anyone can petition to have an issue put on the warrant for the Annual Town Meeting.

The warrant will remain open until 35 days prior to the date of the ATM. Please see the Town Clerk if you have an idea and would like to learn more about submitting a petition.

Town Meeting provides an equal opportunity for all voting residents who attend to address a problem, or present an idea to try and make things better. An example on this year's warrant is the issue of whether the Town should vote to appropriate a sum of money for the Town's share of the costs of the construction, installation and start-up of a high-speed broadband network in Wendell.

The deadline to register to vote at Town Meeting is May 19.

## MORE NOTES FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD

# Proposed Senior Housing Cluster Awaits Initiative, and Follow-Through

By JOSH HEINEMANN

On March 25, a night of sleet and freezing rain, the Wendell selectboard met with three scheduled visitors. After the meeting they left and went out to a light rain, a walk, a parking lot and roads covered with small soft and slippery pellets.

The board's first visitor was Jim Meehan who, with two UMass students, Elena Shulman and Chris Goldrick, brought up the ongoing discussion of senior housing and economic development in Wendell in an attempt to move that discussion from talk toward action. Meehan mentioned the interest that has been shown in the idea of clustered housing, possibly with a central community facility, and he said two parcels of land near the town center have been offered as possible sites for such developments.

Grants may be available to help develop plans, but the project would need someone, or a group of people, who will take the initiative and follow through with the details and the process. People in town have come to meetings and discussions, and have shown interest, but no one has taken the idea beyond talk.

Selectboard chair Christine Heard said that Wendell people are already spread thin with other commitments. People here have expressed interest in the idea of a closer town center, but overall and individually they want to stay in the homes they are living in now. But still, as Wendell citizens age they might want to downsize both the size and the maintenance required in their homes.

Shulman said there is some time pressure as the students who have put effort into the idea, drawn plans and made models will be finishing school, and when they move on their knowledge will go with them.

The process of getting a clustered housing area with a common building would not be fast. It would require a public water supply, a public system for waste water disposal, actual construction, grant and loan applications.

As a hopeful note, town coordinator Nancy Aldrich said the town officials went through a similar long process creating the new library, the new office building, the septic system for all town buildings, and the public water supply that serves them.

It took years of saving and planning, a long year of overseeing construction, and now years of paying off the loan, she said.

But before any of that, and while

the work was going on, the town was in an untenable position with offices too small to function well in the old and poorly insulated schoolhouse. The selectboard at the time was the group that stepped forward and guided the project through.

Heard wondered how to find a group of people interested and willing to follow through another process like that.

### Verizon Pole Hearing

Paul Davies from Verizon met the selectboard for a pole hearing. On Morse Village Road, an unguyed pole is leaning toward the house it serves. Verizon intends to straighten that pole and stabilize it, attaching it with a cable to another pole which they will place and anchor across the street.

The company standard for placing the pole is five feet from the road's edge, and in the past, road commission chair Harry Williston had asked for six feet to allow snow plowing.

Williston was among those notified of the hearing, but he did not come to the meeting. No one else came or brought up an objection and so the selectboard approved the plan.

### Former School Property

Treasurer Carolyn Manley told selectboard members that the property of Lake Grove Maple Valley School is in land court, and there is small chance of the property owner paying the back taxes. The corporation has dissolved.

Several years ago, National Grid installed a temporary substation in the back of the property to allow improvements to the Wendell Depot substation. Now that company wants to buy 12 landlocked acres in back, for a permanent substation because the Wendell Depot substation has no more room. Once the land belongs to the town, it would be taxed like any other property in town.

Heard said that it might make the houses nearby less pleasant to live in, harder to rent or sell, but selectboard member Dan Keller said that land in the back corner might be far enough from any house to avoid being a problem. He said electricity use in town is increasing.

The town is restricted in how it can sell property. In general, it offers tax takings at auction, and so it cannot sell to a specific buyer for a specific purpose, but the town can ask for a request for proposal (RFP), which would limit buyers to groups that would serve the town's stated objective. Keller also mentioned the possibility of leasing the land.

Two questions were unanswered: How feasible is it to move a fenced facility and screen it from neighbors? What alternative does National Grid have if the town does not offer the land?

Manley said the town might own the property by June.

### Grinder Pumps

Both the senior center and the library grinder pumps failed in the winter. Their function is to pulverize solids in the buildings' wastewater, and pump that water over the common and into the pipes that feed the town septic system. As a result of their failure, neither building could drain any of the water used.

Two types of replacement pumps are being installed at the same time, which could allow the town to learn which type of pump lasts longer, but water use in the library is much greater than use in the senior center so the study might not yield conclusive results.

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**According to town counsel, a household served by electric utility poles that chooses not to take a fiber optic connection may not file for an abatement of its property tax on the basis of not having an internet connection.**

---

Aldrich said that the Stantec engineer recommended installing a mechanized switch to alternate the leach fields in the town septic system. Keller said that switching the fields over manually has not been an awful chore, and that the town may not want another fallible automated system.

### Green Community Funds

Aldrich reported the energy committee's response to the town's request to use Green Community money to overhaul the town hall and senior center heating systems. They want measurable improvements that can be documented for cost and energy savings, and so are waiting for an estimate for the town hall furnace and duct repair.

The energy committee feels the senior center is not often occupied and so the best use of green community money would be to replace the light bulbs there with LED's.

The heating system in that building works well, but Keller said it uses a lot of propane.

### Information Security

Selectboard member Jeoffrey Pooser said that he spoke with workers from Left Click when they were here for five hours, getting back on track with backing up town computers and keeping town information secure.

They will return to replace the operating system on the town coordinator computer and will check to make sure that town office computers are connected to the main printer in the building.

### Aldrich Report

Aldrich extended an invitation to attend a public hearing on the proposed Mahar fiscal 2016 budget to be held in the Eileen Perkins Library, in the school, on March 26.

She also relayed town counsel David Doneski's response to several questions that have been given to him. Doneski found no conclusive answer about ownership of the meetinghouse building, but the lot it sits on belongs to the town.

The lot can be surveyed and divided so the town continues to own the leg that extends onto the north common and contains the gazebo.

Doneski said a household that is served by the electric utility poles, but does not choose to take a fiber optic internet connection when Wired West is able to bring that to pass, may not file for an abatement of its property tax on the basis of not having an internet connection.

He compared that scenario to a household without children asking for an abatement of the taxes that go to schools.

### Odds and Ends

Wendell will receive \$28,560 through the state Winter Recovery Assistance Program for road repairs.

The town successfully auctioned two properties on March 14, bringing them back to the tax rolls, and earning \$41,000.

Wendell's Dollars for Scholars has raised over \$3,000 in contributions. The scholarship fund began a year and a half ago, and offers money to Wendell citizens for approved post-secondary education, college, or technical training.

Wendell's representative to the Franklin Regional Transportation Agency, Jonathan von Ranson, expects to miss some of the monthly meetings, and is looking for a temporary replacement. A selectboard member may attend meetings in his absence, but they hope to appoint someone.

The selectboard may establish a permanent committee, one that will keep track of the town hall kitchen once it is in service.

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## SINGERS from page A1

annual celebration, at the Campus Center's Marriot Center at UMass/Amherst. The festivities, inclusive of all religions and races, are scheduled from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. Tuesday, April 7.

In addition, Miro Sprague, their son, will take the stage at the Vermont Jazz Center in Brattleboro, Vermont with the group Holophonor, Saturday, April 18 at 7 p.m. Holophonor has performed at the Kennedy Center and has toured Israel, Japan, Sweden, and Turkey.

The 29-year-old Sprague graduated last year from the Thelonius Monk Jazz Institute Program, a two-year course of study, touring, and teaching, on the campus of UCLA. Holophonor is a group of seven extraordinary jazz musicians who chose to remain together after graduation from the Monk Institute, continuing to perform and teach as a working unit.

Sprague is part of the blended family of Davis and Chenven that numbers nine children and 23 grandchildren. Just this past weekend, father, mother, and son traveled to New Jersey to play for family and friends at the 95th birthday celebration of Chenven's dad.

Moonlight Davis made an auspicious debut in the world of music at the age of four. Born and raised in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Davis was placed on the offering table in the Pentecostal church, where he sang the Lord's Prayer.

"That was the start of my musical career," said Davis. Since then Davis has, as they say, "shared the same stage" with such powerhouses as saxophonist Charles Neville of the Neville Brothers, the fabled Billy Preston, and the sublime Samirah Evans.

Singing gospel in church each Sunday, though, and as often as three times a week plus volunteering in church, provided the impetus for his gifts as a showman and as a man deeply devoted to social justice and



Davis and Chenven, at the Loft Lounge at Northampton's Clarion hotel.

daily acts of kindness.

A quarter century ago, Moonlight met the love of his life, Morning Star Chenven. The two sang while Chenven played her beautiful Fender Rhodes piano. "I want to thank her," said Davis, "for bringing out the self that was hidden in me, and helping me express myself even more authentically."

Raised in the heart of New York City in a middle-class Jewish family, Morning Star Chenven attended the High School of Music and Art, the academy that was prominently featured in the film and television productions of *Fame*. She went on to earn a bachelor's degree in English and a minor in dance from Oberlin College in Ohio.

With roots in classical and folk music, Chenven became a modern dancer, embracing the strenuous physical demands of that career. Slowly, though, her focus turned to singing and

oral interpretation, where she could capitalize on her warm, evocative voice and her ability to figuratively "paint" verbal pictures.

In addition, she can adapt her song stylings, being equally comfortable whether she's singing a children's tune, a civil rights anthem, or a jazz standard.

Moonlight Davis, meanwhile, started his academic work at Greenfield Community College before transferring to UMass/Amherst. Davis majored in visual art (photography) and minored in music at the university.

Chenven plays not only piano, but hand drums and other percussion instruments. Davis is a keyboardist and also plays hand drums. When they sing together, their harmonies are deeply heartfelt and consonant, blending his resonant voice with her lilting tones. To get an idea of the powerful nature of their music, listen to "Hunger in the Land" at *moonlightand-*

*morningstar.wordpress.com*.

Davis and Chenven have recorded two CDs, *Thank You to Life* and *Fantasy*, on their own label, Soul/Art Productions.

"I've learned a lot from my husband and my son," said Chenven. "Moonlight introduced me to gospel, and Miro brought me to jazz. The three of us have played together extensively since Miro was 16 years old. I've moved from a classical mode, learning how to write songs and play piano well enough to provide accompaniment."

The two performers are very committed to preserving the environment. Chenven wrote "It's the Right Time to Stop the Pipeline", which they performed at an anti-pipeline fundraiser at the Arts Block on March 15 in Greenfield.

Meanwhile, Moonlight Davis is entering a new phase of his life. Appointed in January, he's been serving on the Town of Erving Planning Board. "I'm very excited by this opportunity," he said. "I've always cared about community and it's a wonderful chance to serve. I feel I bring a different perspective."

The couple also conduct Personal Care Attendant training under the auspices of the 1199 SEIU, the health care workers' union. Among the offerings are orientation, body mechanics, communication, nutrition, and care of diabetes, Alzheimer's and dementia.

Chenven has taught courses on world music and the music of social protest at Western New England College in Springfield. She is currently serving as choral director of the Wendell Community Chorus. She directed the women's singing group known as Wings! for 10 years. The name of the chorus stood for "women inspired by the never-ending gift of song."

"If it weren't for living in the Pioneer Valley," said Chenven, "we wouldn't be doing all these things. The Valley encourages those who wish to get involved."



## MSB from page A1

stated that he had "all the credits" for the certification, and that the issue would be resolved by mid-April. He noted that "nobody notifies you" when the certification ends, although he took responsibility for the mistake.

Zagorski emphasized his past experience in the position, and Emery stated that Zagorski was significantly more qualified than the one other candidate the board had interviewed.

Everything seemed to be going relatively smoothly until selectboard member Mark Fairbrother proposed to table the appointment for two weeks. He expressed general concerns about the hiring process and the "background" of the applicant. These should be discussed, he argued, in a non-public executive session.

Selectboard member Mike Nelson stated that he "wished there could have been an executive session tonight," but one was not on the agenda.

Emery pointed out that a two-week delay would cause a problem because Zagorski was scheduled to begin training the next day, and Miller would be leaving on April 2.

This created a serious quandary for the board until police chief Chip Dodge, who was at the meeting to

address other matters, came to the rescue. Dodge suggested that Zagorski be appointed as a trainee for two weeks, giving the selectboard time to review the hiring process.

In the end, a motion by Nelson provided for an appointment as trainee until April 4, the next selectboard meeting.

In a related action, the board approved the appointment of town accountant Carolyn Olsen to replace Miller as the town's IT administrator. Olsen will receive a stipend of \$2,000 for the work.

## Leadership Criticized

Montague Center resident Kathy Lynch, director of community access television in Easthampton, began the meeting on a somewhat contentious note.

She sharply criticized the selectboard for failing to show proper "leadership," which she defined by a list of standards from an article on *Inc.* magazine's website: "awareness, decisiveness, empathy, accountability, confidence, honesty, focus, and inspiration."

Poor leadership, she stated, had been shown during the previous week's selectboard discussion of a new contract for the Montague local access station, MCCI, where her spouse, Dean Garvin, is employed as station manager. A new thirty-month contract with MCCI

has been approved by the board and will be discussed at the annual town meeting in May.

Lynch, reading from a prepared statement, also criticized the selectboard for its long delay in responding to her written requests to be appointed to the town's cable advisory committee. She stated that she had been "personally insulted" by members of the board, and that her treatment "feels like" what she termed "institutional racism," although she also said she felt this might not be intentional. Lynch, who is Asian, also criticized the board's treatment of African-American store owner Rodney Madison.

"Stop it! And knock it off!" Lynch declared at one point, calling for greater personal accountability.

Nelson said, for the record, that the board's treatment of Madison had to do with his "actions and inactions," and not with "the color of his skin."

## Trombley

Water Pollution Control Facility superintendent Robert Trombley approached the board to sign letters executing the agreement between the town and Baltazar Contractors for upcoming work on two pump stations. The pump stations are located on Poplar and First Streets.

Baltazar, which has been involved in litigation with the town

over previous sewer work, is also the chief contractor on the long awaited Greenfield Road project. The board signed the letters.

## Dodge

Police chief Chip Dodge gave the board an update in his efforts to address the dangerous corner where Route 63 and Millers Falls Road meet in Millers Falls. Trucks attempting to make the turn south onto Route 63, or west onto Millers Falls Road, frequently jackknife and even cause major accidents or delays.

A sign just before Lake Pleasant Road urging trucks to take this detour south to avoid the intersection is often ignored. Dodge suggested the problem may be caused, in part, by a tendency to rely on GPS.

Dodge said he had been in communication with a man named Bao Lang of the state Department of Transportation and had developed several options to deal with the problem.

He recommended "Option 2," which involved several "stacks of signs" warning drivers about the intersection and directing them to take Lake Pleasant Road south. In addition, a sign would direct northbound traffic on Route 63 to the same road. Dodge presented a letter to the state to accomplish this goal, which was signed by the se-

lectboard.

The board approved requests from Dodge to accept the resignation of Claude Lapointe as the police department's part-time custodian and appoint Barry Kratz to serve in his place.

The board also officially removed officer Richard Suchanek from 111F, or "injured on duty," status, effective retroactively to March 15.

## Other Business

The selectboard made progress in resolving the boundary confusion surrounding St. Anne's Church and its rectory. The church has been the subject of an ownership dispute which, according to Abbondanzio, has now been resolved.

The rectory is owned by the town, which wishes to sell it. The board approved a motion stating that "Planning Board approval under Subdivision Control Law is not required."

The board executed an agreement with the state for funds to be received under the so-called "winter recovery program." This involves Montague's share, totalling \$74,970, of funds distributed by Governor Baker for road repair.

A one-day beer and wine license requested by Marina Goldman for an event at the Shea Theater on April 25 was approved.



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# MONTAGUE REPORTER



*John Mackin reads the Reporter at the "Grand Canyon of the Pacific," Waimea Canyon, while visiting his son and family in Kauai.*

*Located in Kokee State Park, the canyon is 10 miles long and up to 3,600 feet deep.*

*Going somewhere? Bring us along, and send photos to [editor@montaguereporter.org](mailto:editor@montaguereporter.org), or drop them by the office.*

## ON THE ROAD

**BUSES** from page A1

anything, it's only policy. I think it is something that could be done. We need to have a policy that's defensible."

Blier said it would require two to three buses. The idea of having a second bus run rather than adding a bus was discussed. Blier said an additional bus would cost \$50,000 for the year, but that it might only cost an additional \$5,000 for a bus to make a second run.

It was suggested they do this from December through March. Sandra Brown said mornings were more important, when the temperatures are so low. Blier suggested the possibility of a bus picking up high school students first, then going back out and getting the elementary students.

No decision was made but it seemed there was agreement that solving the problem was a priority.

### Other Business

Sullivan told the school committee that the search for a principal and assistant principals was closed. Dates for the first round of interviews are being set. He said the search committee were "dedicated folk" and appreciated their hard work. Sullivan said they will likely select the principal first before hiring an assistant principal as they would want people with complementary traits.

Blier told the committee she attended a joint Gill selectboard/finance committee meeting. Concerning the increase in Gill's assessment, she said the state says Gill can afford \$28,000.

She pointed out that Gill is getting an increase in both the minimum contribution and enrollment.

Regarding a previous discussion of a new boiler and generators, and the new window project, Blier told the committee all of these have been passed onto the towns. The maintenance manager is looking into surge protectors for the high school in light of difficulty rebooting the boiler after a power outage this winter.

Sullivan said the principals have spent hours getting ready for the PARCC testing, and commended them on their hard work.

The next regular Gill-Montague school committee meeting will be held on April 14 at Sheffield Elementary School at 6:30 p.m.



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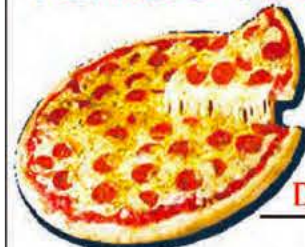
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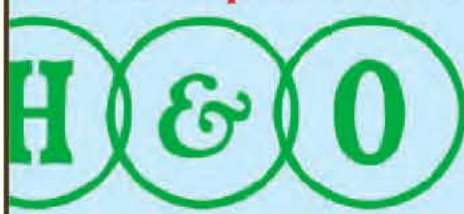
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## SPECIAL COLLECTIONS TOUR: THE DICKINSON LIBRARY

By NINA ROSSI

**NORTHFIELD** – Northfield's Dickinson Library was always meant to be both a museum and a library, with books downstairs and a large art gallery flanked by smaller relic rooms taking up the entire second floor. Like many libraries of its time, it was designed more as an impressive and elegant monument than an efficient place for storing, organizing and retrieving materials.

Fitchburg shoe factory mogul Elijah Marsh Dickinson built the library in tribute to his family's Northfield roots for what seems today a small sum: \$20,000. This was 1897 though, and the 1,200 pairs of shoes made in the Dickinson shoe factory every day had made this former Northfield farm boy a very rich and successful man, and it was indeed a large investment. In his eightieth year he was establishing a legacy to the town with this Romanesque style library-museum.

The public library stood alongside Town Hall, embodying democratic ideals and therefore a perfect landing place for historical objects. It was a way for early industrialists like Elijah Dickinson to immortalize themselves in the community.

Dickinson gifted art and artifacts from his private collections, but many of the relics were collected by townspeople who answered an urgent appeal by the Trustees. Records of this process have been preserved by the library.

On April 9, 1898, trustees placed an ad in the *Greenfield Gazette & Courier* looking for:

"works of nature and art, loaned or contributed...The trustees would



Branches, quilts, eggs, rocks, and Nabisco sugar wafers: a Cabinet of Wonders.

be glad to place in the building, wither permanently or temporarily, such old time articles as a spinning wheel, a flax wheel, a hand-loom, a reel, a tin kitchen, a foot stove, a warming pan, and a pair of irons.

"Old coins, old china, old pewter, old military dressers, arms and accoutrements, silhouettes, autographs, samplers, and articles of clothing worn by those of earlier generations, Indian relics...are particularly desired."



This stuffed seagull guards letters from Whittier and Longfellow.

The following years were full of appeals in speeches, circulars, and advertisements. By 1901 the trustees were concerned with finding a "suitable table and case for...further accumulation of curiosities and relics."

In 1902, the year of his demise, they noted that Elijah Dickinson "rarely came empty handed, having placed many valuable relics in the relic room and hung the walls with valuable portraits and pictures."

In 1923 a Northfield Historical Society was founded and granted a room upstairs for their property, and six years later the Society appealed to trustees to expand into a second room.

By 1940, the Society recommended to the library Trustees that the collection be kept locked up and staffed by society members when open.

see **LIBRARY** page B6

## A Good Festival Makes A Good Neighborhood

By LEE WICKS

**MONTAGUE CENTER** – When Nicole Nemec and Matthew Duncan first moved to a house in the woods of Montague, they would stand on their porch and literally hear music wafting through the trees. A fiddle here, a banjo there; soon Matthew Duncan got out his accordion and began playing along. The other musicians responded. For two people who grew up in suburbia, Nemec from Texas and Duncan from St. Louis, this seemed miraculous.

It sparked an idea that will manifest itself on Sunday, May 17, when all of Franklin County is invited to a community music festival in the living rooms, barns and porches of Montague Center. The event will be free, but there will be donation cans for the musicians.

Funded in part by a grant from the Montague Cultural Council, the event, said Nemec, will celebrate the breadth and depth of the music community in Montague.

Duncan added, "We already have fiddlers, rock and roll musicians, jazz musicians, the Contra Dance folk and a pennywhistle. I'm still looking for some chamber music, and hoping a string quartet steps forward."

Community music parties of this sort are not new. In August of last year, the *Christian Science Monitor* reported on porch parties in Jamaica Plain, Boston. Some think the movement began in Ithaca, New York in 2007. The *Monitor* reported that 19 "Porchfests" have been organized since 2009 across the US and Canada. For a complete list, visit [porchfest.org/porchfests-elsewhere/](http://porchfest.org/porchfests-elsewhere/).

[fest.org/porchfests-elsewhere/](http://porchfest.org/porchfests-elsewhere/).

The Montague festival has a Facebook page called "Good Music Makes Good Neighbors" and the posters around town carry that headline, too. The page provides updates, because this is truly a community event. It will not succeed without help.

Nemec said, "We are hoping for four or five venues with two or three performances at each."

There is no scheduled rain date, so those venues need to be indoors. If you have a spacious living room, a barn, or ideas for a good space, this is the time to come forward.

Nicole Nemec and Matthew Duncan also want to have maps and programs available, and volunteers to help people find their way. Any graphic designers, mapmakers or helpful greeters should contact them.

And music makers: if you want to play for your neighbors, meet other musicians, and have a good time, sign up now. You do not have to live in Montague Center to participate in this event as a musician or audience member.

Like the Maypole festivities on May Day, trick-or-treat entertainment on Halloween, and the Fourth of July bonfire, this could become another tradition in Montague.

For more information, call (413) 367-2823 or send an email to [montaguemusicfest@yahoo.com](mailto:montaguemusicfest@yahoo.com).



## Debut Reading: As You Write It, Volume V

By LAURA RODLEY

**TURNERS FALLS** – You are invited to a debut reading of *As You Write It: A Franklin County Anthology*, Volume V, edited by Laura Rodley, featuring writers Estelle Cade, Patricia Carlisle, Lillian Fiske, Frances Hemond, Robin Panagakos, Laura Rodley, and Joseph A. Parzych.

Listen to stories about first apartments, graduating from nursing school, watching raptors soar, and learn of recipes for resilience, where freedom is knowing that you will and can get things done.

Relinquish your cares and wonder at purchasing Cushman Bakery bread for ten cents a loaf, or living on the cusp of the change-over from gas lighting to having electricity, and building a snow fort with the hired man or a boat in your own backyard.

The reading is free, and delicious refreshments will be served.

Sunday April 12 at 1 p.m. at the Gill Montague Senior Center on Fifth Street in Turners Falls.

Here are two stories by Gill's own Joe Parzych.

### TURNING A RUSSIAN BEAR INTO A TEDDY BEAR

By Joseph A. Parzych

When my daughter Debbie was just a few years out of college, she was promoted to Supervising Engineer in charge of 165

workers, all of whom were much older than she. Her secretary was old enough to be her mother. Debbie had been promoted over two of her supervisors, who were now under her supervision.

Boris, a gruff Russian engineer, made no secret of disliking being supervised by a female. He referred to Debbie as, "Dat girl." Meanwhile, somehow, everyone in her family got the mistaken idea that Debbie liked Peeps, the yellow marshmallow chicks that emerge at Easter time like the sparrows at Capistrano. Everyone sent Debbie Peeps, but not wanting to hurt anyone's feelings Debbie could never figure out how to tell generous relatives that their gifts were not welcome. So, Peeps kept coming.

She brought an overflowing quantity of Peeps to work one day, figuring she could unload them onto fellow workers. But before she was able to palm any off, Boris the Difficult came into her office. He looked at the basket of Peeps and brusquely demanded, "Vot iss diss?" pointing to the marshmallow chicks.

"They're Peeps, Boris. Here, try a few," and she handed him a handful.

Later that day, Boris came back. "You hef more dem Peeps?"

"Why, yes, I do have just a few more Peeps," she said, not revealing she was inundated with them. She doled out a few more of the tender morsels to him. After that, when she wanted Boris to do some engineering,

see **WRITE IT** page B4



MARY AZARIAN WOODBLOCK PRINT

By LESLIE BROWN

**MONTAGUE CITY** – As I write this, we are just a few days shy of the new month, and it is snowing. This is no longer what we want to see. The sloppy inch of wet snow which fell a few days ago was the requisite poor man's fertilizer, free nitrogen slowly dissolving into the soil, so we are all set with that.

We are impatient now for Spring: for temperatures fifty and above, for clear, sunny skies with birdsong, for the signs of the first bulbs breaking the soil. Winter's back is broken, for sure.

The thick slabs of ice have separated on the river and floated on southwards, the voles are tunneling in the semi-thawed lawn, the Redwings and Song Sparrow have returned. Not to mention the thick, viscous mud on our favorite back roads and walks.

Spring is a reluctant season, a flirt. The occasional warm day is followed by chilly winds and grey skies. Still, we are hopeful. In the

## THE GARDENER'S COMPANION April Fools

sunroom the cat tans herself and the tomatoes are energized by these bright, clear days when the temperature reaches seventy and eighty. Miraculously, they are not put off by the cool nights and grey days when the room barely rises above fifty.

Just over a month ago we tucked the tiny tomato seeds into the soil. At two inches, they moved from their one inch starter cells to three inch pots. Now all of the plants are showing off their true leaves and are a good inch taller. The sweet peppers planted a couple of weeks later are starting to break through the soil.

These temperature variations in the sunroom seem to mimic the uncertainty even in late May outdoors and may do much to harden these tender plants in preparation for garden planting.

In this limbo season we long to be out in the yard, raking away the detritus of the season past, clearing out mulch and eventually, planting such cool weather crops as greens and early peas. But while the snow pack is peeling back, there's still snow and ice out there making it tricky just to amble out and look for the tip of a flowering bulb or the new tops of

garlic showing in the raised beds.

Some winter chores still remain: bringing in the end of the stove wood for early morning and evening fires, pruning the fruit trees and burning the brush in the snowy hollow. It may be brash, but we've put the snowshoes and snow shovels away and scheduled a visit from the chimney sweep in a couple of weeks. If the weatherman makes a fool of us, we can take it.

I was never a great fan of April Fool's Day, although when I worked in the school system, it was often cute to hear the tricks the kids thought of to fool us older folks.

One classic April fool's day hoax pulled off by the BBC was the broadcast featuring gardeners in southern Scandinavia reporting an unusually large crop of spaghetti from their spaghetti trees. Because spaghetti had not yet come into wide use in the UK, hundreds of viewers called in inquiring about how they might grow these spaghetti-producing trees.

Well, after all, there is spaghetti squash.

Mother Nature probably still has plenty of jokes in see **GARDEN** page B3





# Pet of the Week



## ROMAN

I am Roman, a young, charming and adorable rabbit in need of a home.

My ancestors are brave mini-lops and English Spot rabbits.

I would like to settle in someplace nice with good companions, sunbeams and safe from raptors!

Please visit me and the gang at the Leverett Dakin and let's chat over some fresh spring greens!

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

## Senior Center Activities April 6 to 10

**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.

**Monday 4/6**  
10:10 a.m. Aerobics  
10:50 a.m. Chair Exercise  
1 p.m. Knitting Circle  
1 p.m. Scrapbooking

**Tuesday 4/7**  
9:30 a.m. Chair Yoga  
Noon Lunch  
1 p.m. Painting with David Sund

**Wednesday 4/8**  
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 4/9**  
9 a.m. Tai Chi  
10 a.m. Coffee & Conversation  
10:10 a.m. Tech Tutor  
Noon Lunch  
1 p.m. Pitch

**Friday 4/10**  
Reflexology by Appointment  
10:10 a.m. Aerobics  
10:50 a.m. Chair Exercise  
1 p.m. Writing Group

**LEVERETT**  
For information, contact the Leverett COA at (413) 548-1022, ext. 5, or [coa@leverett.ma.us](mailto:coa@leverett.ma.us). Take-It-Easy Chair Yoga – Wednesday

days at 10 a.m. at the Town Hall. Drop-in \$5 (first class free). Senior Lunch – Fridays at noon. Call (413) 367-2694 by Wednesday for a reservation.

**WENDELL**  
Wendell Senior Center is at 2 Lockes Village Road. Call Nancy Spittle, (978) 544-6760, for hours and upcoming programs.  
Call the Center for a ride.

**ERVING**  
Erving Senior Center, temporarily at 18 Pleasant Street, Erving, is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. for activities and congregare 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 Betters, interim 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 4/6**  
9 a.m. Tai Chi  
10 a.m. Osteo Exercise  
12:30 p.m. Movie & Popcorn

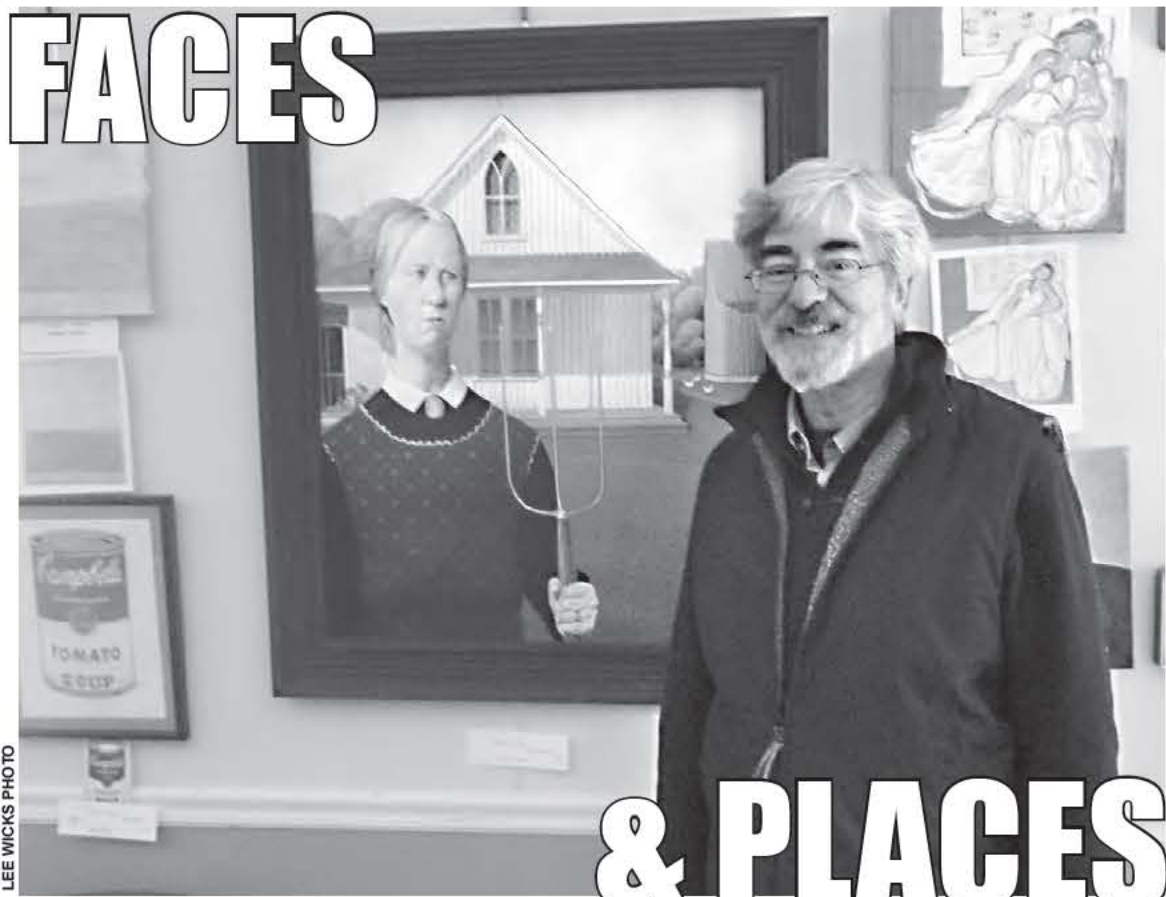
**Tuesday 4/7**  
8:45 a.m. Chair Aerobics  
10 a.m. Cardio Toning  
12:30 p.m. Painting

**Wednesday 4/8**  
8:45 a.m. Line Dancing  
10 a.m. Chair Yoga  
Noon Bingo & Snacks

**Thursday 4/9**  
8:45 a.m. Aerobics  
10 a.m. Healthy Bones, Muscles  
Noon Pitch Card Game

**Friday 4/10**  
9 a.m. Bowling  
11:30 a.m. Out To Lunch

# FACES



## & PLACES

*A More Perfect Replica: Last Sunday the Leverett Library enjoyed the final event in a series dedicated to reading about art forgeries, and attempting to produce them. The pieces were auctioned off in a silent auction, and the proceeds – over \$1200 – will go to additional programming at the library. Here is Steven Stroud with his version, not quite a forgery, of Grant Wood's American Gothic.*

### HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ERVING POLICE LOG

## Two Suspicious Vehicles; One Suspicious Individual; Facebook Threats

**Monday, 3/23**  
7 p.m. Report from Mountain Road resident of threatening messages on Facebook.

**Tuesday, 3/24**  
4 a.m. Suspicious vehicle parked at Freight House Antique, found to be a state worker, all clear.

10:10 a.m. Assisted disabled tractor trailer unit at Route 2 bypass. Same removed by tow company.

**Wednesday 3/25**  
10:15 a.m. Report of illegal dumping at High Street residence, report taken.

**Friday 3/27**  
8:40 a.m. Report of suspicious individual at French King Bridge, gone upon arrival.

**Saturday, 3/28**  
11:15 a.m. Mutual aid to Northfield PD for motor vehicle collision on Gulf Road in Northfield.

8:01 a.m. Suspicious vehicle observed in Erving-side following a female subject. Reported and under investigation.

1:35 a.m. Report of barking dog at Weatherheads Apartment, quiet on arrival.

10:35 p.m. Report of barking dog at Weatherheads Apartment, dog okay.

### THE HEALTHY GEEZER

## Bypass Side Effects



By FRED CICETTI

*Q. I may have to undergo bypass surgery and I heard that it can really mess up your mind. Is that true?*

If you have coronary bypass surgery, you could suffer from what some in the healthcare professions call “pump head.”

During traditional surgery, a patient is put on a heart-lung bypass pump to oxygenate and circulate blood. This machine may create clots that could harm the brain. In addition, a surgeon handling the aorta – the main heart artery – can free bits of accumulated plaque, and they can block blood vessels in the brain.

Some patients report a memory loss. Or, they say they are confused. Some feel that they just aren’t as mentally sharp as they

had been. These side effects seem to be more common among people who are older, drink too much, or suffer from high blood pressure or lung disease.

But there’s a lot of disagreement among experts over the entire subject of the mental effects of bypass surgery.

One study indicated that only half of those undergoing bypass surgery developed memory or thinking problems within days after the operation, and that these problems continued for five years. However, other researchers found that mental deficiencies are common after bypass surgery, but that most people recuperate in 3 to 12 weeks.

The pump-head phenomenon led to the development of “beating-heart bypass.” It’s done without using a heart-lung machine. About one in five bypass operations is now done with a beating heart.

In a bypass, an incision is made down the center of the chest to expose the heart.

The surgeon takes a section of healthy blood vessel, often from inside the chest wall or from the lower leg, and attaches the ends above and below the blocked artery so that blood flow is diverted around the narrowed portion of the diseased artery. This eases angina, the chest pain that comes when there is an insufficient supply of oxygenated blood.

Because the heart beats constantly, it needs a steady flow of fuel. If a fuel shortage is serious, you have a heart attack and muscle begins to die. Heart attack is known officially as “myocardial infarction.”

The surgery usually takes between three and six hours. On average, surgeons repair two to four coronary arteries. After surgery, patients spend a day or two in the intensive care unit. Recovery takes 6 to 12 weeks.

About half a million Americans a year have coronary bypass surgery. For every 100 Americans who undergo it, one to two die within a month and two to three have a stroke. The long-term results of the surgery are excellent.

Among the techniques in development is minimally invasive heart surgery which uses smaller incisions (about three inches) and has many benefits. It may be an option for some patients.

*If you would like to ask a question, write to [fred@healthygeezers.com](mailto:fred@healthygeezers.com).*

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**GARDEN** from page B1

store for all of us wishing for spring. We hope these do not include another massive snow storm, a three-day deluge, or a widespread lengthy deep freeze. I'm a New Englander, though, and I haven't packed away my long johns yet.


As soon as it shows up in the store, I'm going to grab a bunch of fresh rhubarb and enjoy one of my favorite spring tonics, rhubarb pie.

Make it mouth-pinchingly tart and enjoy this astringent fruit.

**It's almost spring Rhubarb Pie**

Two pie crusts  
Fill one with: 3 cups of cut rhubarb stem mixed with:  
¾ cup sugar, 2 T flour and one egg.  
Cover with a lattice top sprinkled with cinnamon sugar.  
Bake at 425 degrees for about 40 minutes.

Enjoy your favorite spring tonics, think warmth and sun, and happy gardening!



**April 8: Big Chicken Run**

**ATHOL** – A “Big Chicken Run,” also called a “Grouse Grand Slam” – is a journey in search of as many members of prairie-dwelling grouse as can realistically be fitted into a single trip.

The Athol Bird and Nature Club invites the public to go on such a trip at its next free meeting, Wednesday, April 8 at 7 p.m. at the Millers River Environmental Center (100 Main Street, Athol).

Tour guide will be Hampshire Bird Club president Scott Sumner, who will describe the ten days he spent quartering the windswept prairies in Colorado and Kansas for greater and lesser prairie chickens, greater and Gunnison's sage grouse, and sharp-tailed grouse.

These are all lekking species, meaning that males put on often bizarre displays in mysteriously well-defined areas (leks), fanning their feathers, puffing out their chests, strutting about, hopping, jumping, even dancing with each other. Females don't participate, but they come to observe and choose a mate.

The trips to find these birds involve grueling travel itineraries and a lot of huddling in blinds near the

leks in the predawn. A trip to make (or break) friendships....

Scott Sumner is a founding member of the Hampshire Bird Club and has had more terms as president than the Bush and Clinton families combined (though the math may need to be re-checked in 2016). He has led field trips both locally and across the country and is the current teacher of the annual Hitchcock Birding Class, which brings many new people to birding every year.

The Athol Bird and Nature Club is an active group of people sharing an appreciation of nature's many forms. The club manages the Millers River Environmental Center and maintains a natural history collection there, holds meetings featuring members or outside speakers, offers field trips all over southern New England, hosts intensive workshops and institutes on specific natural history topics, and organizes regional biological inventories, including biodiversity surveys, bird counts, and butterfly and dragonfly records.

More information about the ABNC is available at [www.athol-birdclub.org](http://www.athol-birdclub.org). New members are welcome.

**10th Annual Peter Cottontail's EGGstravaganza**

**Saturday, April 18 11:00 a.m. SHARP Unity Park, Turners Falls**

**TURNERS FALLS** – Due to the amount of snow and ice we still have at Unity Park, we will need to change the date of the event to the 18th.

Children ages 4 to 12 are invited to take part in this great community tradition! Kids will have an opportunity to get their pictures taken with Peter Cottontail, enter into a bunch of raffles and of course enjoy our

Egg Hunt where they will have the challenge of finding approximately 5,000 candy and toy-filled eggs strewn throughout the park.

Participants must bring their own basket/bag for the eggs. We will also have a bake sale!

We would like to thank our event co-sponsors; Hillside Plastics, The Montague Elks, Greenfield Savings Bank & Sirum Equipment Company.

For more information, contact MPRD at 863-3216.

**LEVERETT LIBRARY NEWS**

**Civil War Event**

The Leverett Historical Society and Historical & Peace Commissions invite you to join them in commemorating the 150<sup>th</sup> year of the conclusion of the Civil War.

An episode of Ken Burns' *The Civil War* will be shown, and Dr. Dan Bennett will read contemporaneous letters from a Leverett family, the Watsons of Moore's Corner, concerning that war.

Dialogue facilitated by the Leverett Peace Commission. Free, with refreshments.

Sunday, April 12, from 2 to 4 p.m. at the Leverett Library.

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**HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG**

**Pooper Scooper Dispute; Pit Bull Sneaks Out; Sheltie Rescued from Ice; Idling Trains; Stolen Mail; Drugs**

**Monday, 3/23**

7:34 a.m. Report of chimney fire on Grout Circle. Caller advised to evacuate; TFFD advised.

7:41 a.m. While en route to chimney fire, officer nearly involved in accident when vehicle failed to yield to cruiser. Area later checked for vehicle; unable to locate.

8:09 a.m. Verbal warning for impeded operation (build up of trash in the front of the vehicle/dashboard) issued to operator in Turners Falls.

9:08 a.m. Caller from Fourth Street reports that several pieces of mail have been stolen from her mailbox since December 2014. Investigated; advised of options.

9:42 a.m. Report of a train idling for over a half hour near South Prospect Street. Pan Am railways advised. Subsequent call advising that there are 4 engines idling in the vicinity of the caller's residence; the fumes are coming into his residence and exacerbating medical conditions that he and his wife have. Referred to an officer.

5:42 p.m. Caller reports that trains are still idling in South Prospect Street area and have not moved since this morning. Spoke to Pan Am; they do have 3 trains moving in and out of this location. It will be a couple more hours.

5:48 p.m. Officer responding to possible fight at Sheffield Elementary School. Incident was verbal only; parent was attempting to intervene upon arrival. Gathering dispersed.

5:54 p.m. Caller reporting loose pit bull or pit mix, friendly, no collar/tags, in her yard on Worcester Avenue. Owner of dog later called to advise that the dog had escaped. Officer dropped dog off at its home. Officer advises that owners do have a good fenced yard; dog just happened to sneak out.

9:16 p.m. Caller advises that she can hear her next door neighbors yelling/screaming and throwing things in their apartment. Responding officers found verbal argument only.

**Tuesday, 3/24**

8:32 a.m. Party reports that the rear window of her vehicle was smashed overnight. Officer spoke with party and also advised her regarding the condition of her vehicle (dashboard, passenger side, and entire back seat area filled with trash). Report taken.

1:57 p.m. Neighbor dispute on T and L Streets regarding pooper scooper law violations. Officers will keep an eye out while patrolling area.

2:52 p.m. Received what seemed to be a 911 misdial from Turners Falls. Database note shows that the resident has booby trapped the rear screen door. Officer spoke with caller, who was concerned about water contamination and trying to place a call to the FBI to ask them to test the water. Officer offered caller contact information for the Turners Falls Water Department.

3:20 p.m. Walk-in party ran out of gas at intersection outside of the Public Safety complex. Chief Dodge gave party the gas can from the sally port to use; party will refill it and return it later today. Gas can returned and placed back into sally port.

3:59 p.m. Caller reports seeing a male party on/in the remaining part of the house that burned down on Ninth Street. [REDACTED], was arrested and charged with trespassing, disorderly conduct, and larceny from a building.

6:26 p.m. Shoplifting at Rite Aid. Report taken.

**Wednesday, 3/25**

10:12 a.m. Caller reports seeing what appears to be a woman's legs/feet sticking out of the trunk of a car last seen heading from Fourth Street to Avenue A. Responding officers found that this was the result of some kids fooling around while waiting for their grandmother, who was inside the survival center. Units clear.

12:23 p.m. Caller reports that a party known to her is driving without a license with party's children in the vehicle. Caller is concerned for welfare of children, who are reportedly often in the vehicle when their mother is driving in an unsafe manner. Officers advised and will be on lookout.

1:56 p.m. Report of dog running in and out of traffic at intersection of Route 2 and Main Road in Gill. State police advised.

2:14 p.m. Officer out at Franklin County Technical School following up on report of FCTS students throwing things out their windows at other students running with the track team. Officer called away early due to water rescue (see next call).

2:18 p.m. Copied that TFFD was on scene near Avenue A and First Street performing a water rescue of a dog that fell through the ice. Several subjects were out on the ice attempting to rescue the dog; chief requesting assistance with crowd control. TFFD retrieved dog from water and administered first aid. State police inquired whether the dog might be a Sheltie, as they had a report of a loose Sheltie in Gill earlier. Officer reported that it appears it could be a Sheltie. Animal control officer transported dog to emergency vet in Deerfield. Owner located and advised; she is on her way.

2:19 p.m. Report of shoplifting at Aubuchon Hardware. Subject identified from video. Report taken.

5:56 p.m. [REDACTED] was arrested on a default warrant.

6:43 p.m. Suspicious activity reported at People's Bakery on Bridge Street. Investigated.

7:15 p.m. Assisted Greenfield PD with a male threatening to jump from the train bridge on River Street. Party brought down safely.

**Thursday, 3/26**

9:26 a.m. Report of ongoing problem with illegal dumping at a Turners Falls Road business. Several shipping labels found in trash, all from same person (a Gill resident). Officer advised.

**Friday, 3/27**

12:21 a.m. Needle removed from men's room at Cumberland Farms.

4:41 a.m. 911 hangup call from Millers Falls Road residence; calls back unsuccessful. Officer en route. On third call back, reached startled elderly female party, who stated that she was asleep and hadn't called. Party instructed to go speak with police at door. Officer advises no problem, must have been a phone issue.

9:41 a.m. Officer stopped by motorist reporting an "out of control fire" in the Chestnut Hill Road area. State police advised to tone MCFD.

10:44 a.m. Assisted with removing student who had threatened staff and another student at Franklin County Technical School.

12:54 p.m. Report of ongoing traffic hazard in the Patch, where the operator of a blue Jeep Cherokee Laredo reportedly speeds through the area on a regular basis and almost always runs the stop sign at Eleventh Street and G Street. Caller has witnessed an older male nearly struck by this

vehicle. Referred to an officer.

2:53 p.m. [REDACTED] was arrested and charged with operating a motor vehicle with a suspended license and two counts of possession of a Class B drug, subsequent offense.

9:33 p.m. Assisted drug task force with execution of a search warrant on Seventh Street. Per officer, they will be on the lookout for a female party; probable cause for arrest for possession of a Class A drug with intent to sell.

**Saturday, 3/28**

7:54 a.m. Caller from Fifth Street requests that an officer speak with his upstairs neighbors, whose child has been running around since 6 a.m. (ongoing issue). Caller states that his landlord refuses to address the issue and told him to call the police. Officer spoke with involved parties.

**Sunday, 3/29**

2:27 a.m. Report of loud party on Wentworth Avenue. Quiet upon arrival.

4:05 a.m. Caller from Millers Falls Road reports that his car was egged sometime overnight; only wants incident documented at this time.

9:01 a.m. Caller from Federal Street reports that a temporary water source installed due to frozen lines is not working and he is without water today. Notified on-call Water Department worker, who will be responding.

11:20 a.m. Caller inquiring about options regarding situation with downstairs neighbors, who have complained about caller's daughter's children making too much noise. Advised of options.

1:46 p.m. Lockout request on Bridge Street; baby inside vehicle. Services rendered.

3:43 p.m. Report of car stuck near Springdale Cemetery. Services rendered.

4:38 p.m. Caller advising that on his way to the bike path to walk his dog, he passed by 4-5 bags of household trash (cans, milk bottles, etc.) in the driveway area of Great Falls Discovery Center. Will leave message for Department of Conservation and Recreation.

8:07 p.m. Caller advises that she found a small female dog running in and out of traffic on Third Street. Caller will hold on to dog until owner calls.

PLACE YOUR BUSINESS CARD HERE FOR ONLY \$9.00 PER WEEK 12 WEEK MINIMUM).

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LOOKING BACK  
10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Here’s the way it was on March 31, 2005: News from the *Montague Reporter’s* archive.

Strathmore Consultants  
Get to Work

The team of Feingold Alexander and Associates are the consultants hired to develop a feasibility study for redeveloping the Strathmore Mill in Turners Falls.

The team is expected to come up with an analysis of the market potential for reuse of the mill, an evaluation of the structural integrity of the vast complex, a plan for improving parking and access to the Strathmore, and an estimate of what partial or complete demolition of the site would cost should redevelopment plans fail. They’ve been given an eight-week timeline to complete these tasks.

Feingold Alexander will work toward completing their feasibility work in time for a large public forum toward the end of May.

Mariamante Study  
May Not Be Needed

The future of the former Mariamante property on Main Road in Gill is still uncertain, but the town should decide what type of development it wants before a determination is made of the need for archaeological studies.

According to Professor Mitchell Mulholland, Director of the Ar-

chaeological Services Department at UMass-Amherst, it is uncertain whether or not any studies are even required.

On March 24, in a presentation before the ad hoc advisory committee, Mulholland outlined the available options, based on what is currently known about the land. At this point, it appears the land can be developed without detailed archaeological study if the town does not seek federal or state money for the project.

However, Mulholland advised the town to consider doing an “intensive locational survey” to map out areas in need of protection from development. If the survey finds nothing significant, the process ends there. If areas in need of protection are identified, it is possible to design around them.

Zukowski Works with  
Greenfield to Win Grant

Montague police chief Ray Zukowski announced his department, in cooperation with the Greenfield Police Department, had been awarded a highly competitive state grant worth \$29,735 to run a number of community outreach programs on topics including substance abuse prevention, juvenile fire setting prevention, and “Raising Our Children.”

The funds will be divided between the two towns to run programs for two years.

WENDELL LIBRARY NEWS

Seed Saving: Movie and  
Discussion, April 10

*Open Sesame: the Story of Seeds.*  
**Friday, April 10 7p.m. Wendell Free Library. Free.**

The Wendell Free Library and the Wendell Agricultural Commission are pleased to host this free screening of *Open Sesame: The Story of Seeds* at the Wendell Library. It was recently screened in Greenfield by the Greening Greenfield group with rave reviews.

“One of the world’s most precious resources are at risk. This timely and emotionally moving film illuminates what is at stake and what can be done to protect the source of nearly all of our food: seeds. Seeds provide the basis for everything from food, to fabric to fuels.

“Seeds are as essential to life

as the air we breathe and the water we drink ... but given far less attention. Over the past 100 years seeds have shifted from being common heritage to sovereign property. This film tells the story of seeds by following the challenges and triumphs of some of their most tireless stewards and advocates.” *From the website www.opensesamemovie.com.*

Discussion after the Wendell Library screening will be led by Gail Mason and Nina Renshaw, coordinators of the Wendell Seed Saving Project. Gail and Nina will also hold a follow-up Seed Saving workshop at the Wendell Library on Saturday, April 18, 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. They will also be available for seed-saving questions from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Black Lives/Black History:  
Free Program in Greenfield, April 11

Mass Slavery Apology’s free monthly program series will feature Gloria DeLayne Matlock and her son, Adam Matlock with a program called Black Lives/Black History.

Through conversation and performance, Adam & Gloria will share stories about their lives – as a Black boy and man, as a Black mother raising a Black son, and as performers.

They will also talk about how

historic happenings like the 1921 Black Wall Street massacre in Greenwood, Oklahoma relate to events affecting Black lives today.

The program, at the First Congregational Church, 43 Silver Street in Greenfield, will be from 10 a.m. to noon. Doors open at 9:30.

Admission is free; donations are welcomed. To reserve childcare, RSVP with number and ages of children to (413) 625-2951.

WRITE IT from page B1

“So! Vat do you vant?” he’d gruffly ask.  
“I just brought you some Peeps, Boris. But, as long as you asked, I do need some engineering,” she’d say.  
Then, one day, after bringing Boris some Peeps, she asked him how he happened to come to the U.S. He opened up to her and told her all about how he’d fled Russia, alone, leaving all his family and friends behind. He was not able to get any of his family out of the country to join him, as he’d hoped, and he dared not return.

“He was just a misunderstood man,” Debbie told me. “He was really a nice man who had become lonely and depressed at the intolerable position he had gotten himself into.”

Whenever Debbie approached Boris, she had a handful of Peeps and a smile for him. The two became good friends, and Boris turned out to be not at all the grumpy uncooperative person everyone held him to be. He even told Debbie that he admired her for having been promoted to such a demanding job at such an early age and admired her for her ability to get cooperation from a workforce of people old enough to be her parents. He no longer referred to her as, “Dat girl.” He even began to smile again.

AND WHERE WERE YOU?

By Joseph Parzych

When my daughter Joann was born, it was the custom of hospitals to withhold discharge of mothers and newborn babies until the bill was paid, especially when the family did not have adequate health insurance, as in our case.

I had started a construction business during a recession and I was barely keeping the wolf at bay. Peter Mackin, owner of Mackin Construction, had helped me get started by renting equipment and a truck from me.

I parked my truck at the company yard when I wasn’t using it. When a customer called for a delivery of sand or gravel, a Mackin employee would use my truck to make deliveries, for which I was eventually paid. The problem was that during these times of tight money, it was customary for contractors to withhold payments for months.

I’d spent half the night at the hospital waiting for my wife to give birth. In the morning, the nuns at the Farren Hospital assured me that my wife was not going to give birth any time soon, and suggested I go home to get some rest. I figured it was an opportune time to go ask Mr. Mackin for money.

I was soon at the company yard. Alas, Mr. Mackin was not in yet. Just then, an employee called to say that their steam-shovel was out of gas in a gravel pit in Millers Falls, six or eight miles away.

“We need someone to take some gasoline out to the pit to get the shovel going; trucks are waiting to get loaded. Quick, take your truck, and bring back a load of gravel, a customer has been waiting all morning for it. By then Mr. Mackin will probably be in his office.”

I drove as fast as I dared, delivered the gasoline to the shovel, the shovel operator loaded my truck, and I drove back to the yard. “Mr. Mackin’s not here, yet.



Masters of Diplomacy Joann (Parzych) Olsen  
and Deborah (Parzych) Lambert.

Run the gravel up to High street. An irate customer has been waiting all morning, for it.”

At the address, I threw the truck in reverse, roared into the man’s dug out driveway, quickly dumped the load and drove off before the dump body had completely come back down, leaving the customer puzzled, because the truck had my name and not Mackin on the doors.

As I drove into Mackin’s yard, I heard the public address system blare. “Your wife just had a baby girl, Joe Parzych, and where were you?!!”

Peter Mackin was smiling as he signed a check for me. I thanked him and drove back to the hospital to pay my wife and daughter’s ransom.

Joann had a full head of jet black hair sticking straight up. An Irish nun said, “Tis very unusual for a baby to have so much hair.”

Since my wife had auburn hair and mine was nearly blonde, I wondered if it was our baby. The nuns appeared to be wondering, too.

A few weeks later the black hair all fell out and light brown hair began to grow back in its place.

Joann was a delight and rarely cried when hurt, even when cut and bleeding, or when she fell on the concrete patio, but when she woke hungry at night, she gave her lungs a workout.

My wife would poke me with her elbow, saying, “Your baby’s crying,” and I’d get up. Feeding Joann sometimes didn’t quell the howling, so I bounced her in my arms and sang to her.

If crooning lullabies didn’t work, I tried singing “God Bless America” louder and louder, until I drowned out her crying. When she stopped, I’d stop. When she began to cry, again, I’d begin to sing again. The threat of my terrible singing voice ended crying during the night.

Joann is still a delight and I love her, still, even without the jet black hair.



Great Falls Farmers Market  
2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Poster Art Contest

Design a colorful, eye-catching poster to advertise the Great Falls Farmers Market for the 2015 season. Winner will receive a \$50 prize, and see their art displayed all over town! What you need to convey: Locally grown healthy food, fun atmosphere, community.

POSTER MUST INCLUDE:  
Great Falls Farmers Market  
2:00 – 6:00 pm Wednesdays May through October  
Rain or shine  
Avenue A, Turners Falls, near the Discovery Center  
SNAP, WIC, and Senior Coupons accepted.

Most of the posters for display will be sized at 8 ½ x 11 inches. Poster concept and design and any artwork used must be original work. All entries must be received by April 15, 2015. Please send hard copies to Donna Francis, 130 Meadow Rd. Montague, MA 01351. Digital artwork can be sent to [greatfallsfarmersmarketurners@gmail.com](mailto:greatfallsfarmersmarketurners@gmail.com). The contest is open to all artists. Questions? Contact Donna at (413) 687-1288 or at the email above. Winner will be selected by members of the Montague Agricultural Commission.

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## ARTS &amp; ENTERTAINMENT



JACK COUGHLIN ILLUSTRATION

## ONGOING:

## EVERY SUNDAY

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

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *TNT Karaoke*, 9 p.m. to 1 a.m.

## EVERY MONDAY

Montague Center Library: *Evening Story Time*. Young children and their families are invited to wind down at the end of the day with stories. 6:30-7 p.m.

## EVERY TUESDAY

Slate Memorial Library, Gill: *Story Hour*, stories, popcorn, and a hands-on craft project. We welcome new families, 10 a.m.

Leverett Library *Spanish Conversation Group*. Brush up on or improve your Spanish in a casual and friendly environment, 4 to 5 p.m.

## EVERY WEDNESDAY

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

## EVERY THURSDAY

Montague Center Library: *Music and Movement with Tom Carroll & Laurie Davidson*. Children and their caregivers invited. 10 a.m.

The Pioneer Tavern (Formerly The Rt.63 Roadhouse), Millers Falls: *TNT Karaoke*, 8:30 p.m.

## EVERY FRIDAY

Between the Uprights, Turners Falls: *Karaoke with Dirty Johnny*. 9 p.m. to midnight. Free.

## EXHIBITS:

Avenue A Storefront Galleries, #106-#112 Avenue A: *In Like a Lion, Out like a Lamb: An Exhibition That Anticipates Spring!* Art that addresses the change of seasons, transformation, re-birth and hope. Artists include Gary Smith, Ann C. McDonald, Louise Minks, Patricia Hayes, Kerry Stone. On display through April 12th.

Nina's Nook, Turners Falls, *Promenade of Shoes - Belinda Lyons Zucker*. Paper shoes and diorama box shrines by Belinda Lyons Zucker and paintings by Nina Rossi. Opening reception during the April 16 Third Thursday event "A Night of Conversation about the Arts". Work on display 4/2 to 5/2/15.

Deerfield Academy, von Auersperg Gallery, Deerfield: *The Art is the Cloth: A Series of Reflections*. Weavers from Canada, Mexico and the US explore tapestries that call attention to themselves as cloth. Through 4/30.

## CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS:

Wendell Free Library invites artists to submit applications for two-dimensional work to exhibit in the Herrick Meeting Room gallery. Applications accepted at any time. See [www.wendellmass.us](http://www.wendellmass.us)

Seeking Cool Cats for a special feline feature at Nina's Nook in Turners Falls June-July 2015! Fantastical, floppy, funny, frumpy, foolish, just let the fur fly for this show of fine art and craft. Also seeking practical cat items such as treats, toys, collars, etc. Interested consignors please contact Nina Rossi, [naban@verizon.net](mailto:naban@verizon.net) (413) 834-8800. [www.ninasnook.com](http://www.ninasnook.com)

Sawmill River Arts, Montague Center hosts an informational meeting on Monday, April 13 at 5 p.m. for artists interested in joining their collectively-run gal-

lery. Please respond by April 6 if you are interested in attending. For more information and membership requirements: [www.sawmillriverarts.com](http://www.sawmillriverarts.com) and Kerry Stone: (978) 544-5463/ [fam-stone5@hotmail.com](mailto:fam-stone5@hotmail.com) or Susan Essig at 357-9709.

## EVENTS:

## THURSDAY, APRIL 2

Mocha Mayas, Shelburne Falls: *The Collected Poets Series* featuring poets Laura Foley & Chloe Honum. Poetry Reading. Suggested donation. 7 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *The Roosters*, classic rock by Bruce Scofield & Mark Feller, 8 p.m.



"Detritus Carrier" by Jane Beatrice Wegschieider. Mixed media. Part of "Trash to Treasure" exhibit at the Great Falls Discovery Center. Artists include: Carolyn Bessette, Candace Bradbury-Carlin, Phyllis Labanowski, Nina Rossi, Laura Iveson, Allen Fowler, Barbara Milot, Beryl Salinger Schmidt, Jane R. Cohen, Jose L. Santos.

Brick House, Turners Falls: *TBIBTO, Fine Fins Flop, Steph Germaine, David Russell*. 8 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Falltown String Band*, 8 p.m.

## FRIDAY, APRIL 3

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Drew Patton's 1940s Hit Parade*. 7 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *39 Steps* Dramatic mystery presented by The Misfortunates \$ 7 p.m.

Mocha Mayas, Shelburne Falls: *Show of Cards* Show of Cards was formed as a trio of Cardozo siblings: singer-songwriter Karen (of *Chattering Magpies*), bassist Joe (of *Cold Duck Complex*) and

lead guitarist Mike. With drummer Makaya McCraven and engineer Justin Pizzoferrato, they released their debut *Leap Year* in 2009. 8 p.m.

Arts Block Cafe, Greenfield: *Jim Matus & Larry Deryn: Laoutar & Piano*. Laoutar plays beautiful melodic lines with some dissonant twists and trancey rhythms; pianist plays original compositions incorporating elements of jazz, modern classical, folk, world and improvisation, \$, 8 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *The Equalites*, 9:30 p.m.

## SATURDAY APRIL 4

Great Hall, Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Trash to Treasure: The River's Song Art Project Exhibit* An exhibition of artwork created from trash collected along the CONnecticut River watershed. Work selected for the show integrates trash with sculpture, painting, and textiles. Weekends in April, daily in May. 10-4 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *39 Steps* Dramatic mystery presented by The Misfortunates \$ 7 p.m.

Mocha Mayas, Shelburne Falls: *Brook Batteau (with full band) with special guest Kalliope Jones*. \$ 8 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Jukin'*, 9 p.m.

## SUNDAY APRIL 5

Winterberry Farm, Colrain: *Farm Open House*. Come join our very simple celebration: greet and pat lambs, chicks and ducklings and enjoy the longed for Spring. The farm will be open from 2: - 4:30 p.m.

## MONDAY APRIL 6

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Quiznight featuring the debut of new Quizmaestro Michael. 8 p.m.

## TUESDAY APRIL 7

Neilson Library, Smith College, Northampton: *Natalie Diaz H.S. Prize Poetry*. Poet Natalie Diaz writes with a "dancer's grace and a mechanic's oil-stained hands" (The Rumpus). The winners of this year's High School Poetry Prize will read their winning poems prior to Diaz's reading. 7:30 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: First Comedy Open Mike, 9 p.m.

## WEDNESDAY APRIL 8

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Shout Lulu*, Southern string band. 8 p.m.

## THURSDAY APRIL 9

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Scott Lawson Pomeroy, *Fear No 80s*. 8 p.m.

Brick House, Turners Falls: *Care, Carinae, Death Savings Flag, Old Pam*. 8 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Surly Temple and Friends*, 8 p.m.

## FRIDAY APRIL 10

Pothole Pictures, Shelburne Falls: *When Things Go Wrong: Robin Lane's Story*, along with a musical performance by Lane and friends and a discussion with the film's director Tim Jackson. Lane's remarkable life includes romances with famous rock stars like Neil Young and Andy Summers (The Animals and The Police), hit recordings with her own band The Chartbusters, immersion in counterculture trappings of drugs, politics, family and religion, and finally emerging as a Shelburne Falls resident and leader of songwriting workshops for women trauma survivors. \$, 7:30 p.m.

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LIBRARY from page B1

They thought this would encourage donations of more valuable items. The library was not in favor of this plan.

Shortly after that, the elementary school burned down, and the upstairs served the purposes of many different groups as a result.

In 1942 the collections were valued at \$500 for pictures, and \$500 in relics.

In 1958 there was a kerfuffle over whether the library would give or loan items to the Historical Society, by then in a separate location. The Trustees' board notes noted that the president of the Society had "bats in the belfry."

A unanimous vote decided that it be "a general policy of the Library that if any antiques or historical relics are offered to the Library, with the exception of books or other printed matter, it be recommended that they be placed in the museum of the Historical Society." The collection was revalued at \$2,000 to \$2,500.

It has been culled since then, but the remains are very visible throughout the library, with selected documents brought out from storage and framed in recent years. Library director Deborah Kern put the original blueprints of the building on the wall of the stairwell and they are beautiful to look at.

Off the main lobby downstairs, if you walk towards the new art gallery in the addition – this for showcasing local artists' work – you will find a most unusual engraving. A label says "chances are you have never seen any thing like it before." I found this to be true.

Titled *Chronology Delineated to Illustrate the History of the Monarchical Revolutions*, this piece was printed in 1813. It shows a timeline in the form of various labeled trunks of history that climb through the centuries, starting with the "Creation of Adam" in year 4004 BC. Each monarchical revolution is shown as a branching or division of the trunk, making a very odd chart, likely the product of an obsessive and compulsive revolutionary ruminator.

Of course, there's a large portrait of founder Elijah Dickinson in the main reading room. In a small side room there are four statues on top of the bookcases, "stone gods of India" donated by Catherine MacRoberts in 1937.

Deborah Kern related that one statue was missing for many years, and when the nearby Northfield Mount Hermon campus closed, it was returned sheepishly. It had been in a dor-



A wooden shoe form from founder Elijah Dickinson's factory displays the "comfortable" style of the time.



Mrs Polly Dickinson Holton looks unimpressed with the relic room.

mitory for 20 years. Apparently stealing one of these statues was a ritual of earlier generations of students.

Climbing the stairs is to rise into the building's past. Original milk-painted walls bear the white scars of recent crack repairs to the old sand plaster. A generous donor has provided for a conservator to repair and repaint the five rooms and hallway, with help from Smith College interns. Meanwhile, pornographers of decay may delight in the aura created by the faded paint up here.

In the small Trustees Room, a colonial tin kitchen, or "hastener," sits in the fireplace. It was a small half-barrel shaped reflective oven, fitted with a spit, with a basting door in the rear. Juices would collect in the bottom while meat roasted.

An antique case in the hallway is a "cabinet of wonders" guarded by a large stuffed bird on top. Small, disc-shaped stones displaying perfectly concentric sedimentary layers cover the top shelf. The label says "Indian Quoits."

I searched in vain for mention of Indian Quoits, then e-mailed local geologist Richard D. Little a photo of the stones for identification. He wrote back that they are concretions formed by

"groundwater seeping along the horizontal clay-silt layers of the old lake [Hitchcock] bed. Calcium carbonate (limestone) starts to deposit around some component of the silty

layer, and thereafter it grows outward like a pearl in an oyster. The shapes are controlled by the flat layers, so the 'pearls' become disc shaped. Sometimes they inter-grow into interesting shapes. They can also form along roots penetrating the sediment, and have a more linear shape. They are also known as 'clay babies.'"

Before people knew how they were made, the stones were a curiosity. Maybe they didn't know what they were when this label was written. Or maybe it was just a bit of a joke, "quoits" being a ring-toss game that sometimes used steel rings similar to discs with a hole in the center.

The original "art gallery" is now a large and lovely children's room with tall arched windows and a skylight. An historic document room and a teen room are on either side of this.

Across the hall from the Trustees Room is a Relics Room, painted in a unique manner called ombré, where one color fades into another.

The display case in this room holds photographs and other memorabilia. Above the case is a large oil painting by G.W. Beaman (1858-1937) who, according to the label, once lived with a hermit on a Northfield mountain.

Information about Beaman from *liveauctioneers.com* indicates that he had formal training, but struggled to find the right op-

portunity. He traveled the country and gained commissions with the help of his second wife, who held studio teas in resort hotels to promote his work.

He once traveled to Paris after escorting a wealthy cousin's daughter to England, studied painting there for a year, and then worked his way home on a cattle boat.

Mrs. Evelyn True of Northfield is quoted in the auction house description saying that he "augmented his art sales by operating an Americana shop in Princeton and earned the nickname of 'Antique' Beaman. The artist is described by his daughter as being an impatient man, and toward the end of his life, neighbors described him as cantankerous."

On the opposite wall, Mrs Polly Dickinson Holton's ornately framed black and white visage looks un-impressed by Beaman's seascape. Elisha Holton's musket, dated 1763 and used in the Revolutionary War, hangs above the door.

The last display case upstairs, in the newer addition, is guarded by a stuffed seagull and is a glass case originally furnished in 1897.

A wooden shoe form from the Dickinson shoe factory looks anatomically improbable in a very pointed way, although the slogan near it boasts "It's Comfortable." There are rock and mineral collections, and framed letters written by John Greenleaf Whittier and Henry Wordsworth Longfellow donated by a "loyal Patron." A very large antique map of Franklin County covers the other wall.

This was a world without Ken Burns and the form of the documentary, which combines the story and image in a shadow-play library-museum with voice-over. Documentaries are sometimes embellished with dramatic episodes that bend truth to serve entertainment, and sometimes they're even founded on imaginative interpretations of past events.

What stories were the relic rooms meant to tell? Library artifacts present mysteries as well as simple truths; there's no voice of authority explaining how and why the ostrich egg ended up on the mantelpiece of the Trustees Room, but I am invited to have a one-on-one relationship with the object because it is there with me. Out of context, I'm to accept its humble presence and its unknowable story.

Unlike modern museums, the pieces haven't been assembled into stage settings with official narratives fed to us by pressing a button or wearing ear phones or carrying around iPads as we walk the pre-determined path. At libraries, objects on dusty shelves and in musty rooms dive into geologic layers, or open up into far off countries, or collapse time and space around a well worn kitchen item from an old house we've passed, one block away.

All is at once important, curious, mundane. The hodgepodge assembly of items from various times and places, known and unknown, are unified and may be considered "local" by placement in the public library; they've been made, in that way, peculiarly American.



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