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The Montague Reporter

YEAR 13 – NO. 27

also serving Erving, Gill, Leverett and Wendell

\$1

EDITOR@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

APRIL 23, 2015

SPRINGTIME ON THE HILL



PHOTOS BY G.E. LOMAX, HALLMARK STUDENT



Last Saturday's Franklin County Spring Parade brought revelers out of their winter slumber to celebrate on the Hill in Turners Falls. Above: the Franklin County Technical School band keeps the marchers moving. Below: agricultural and theme entries – this year's theme was "the 70's."

Sullivan Taps Annie Leonard For TFHS/GFMS Principal

By MIKE JACKSON

GILL-MONTAGUE – School superintendent Michael Sullivan announced his selections for the principal and assistant principal of the Turners Falls High School and Great Falls Middle School on Tuesday.

Annie Leonard, who has served as assistant principal at Amherst Regional High School and the American School in London, was tapped for the principal position, and Earl McGraw will be returning to the assistant principal role after a stint at Franklin County Technical School.

"She's a really great fit for our middle and high schools," said Sullivan of Leonard. "She's an expert in student-centered pedagogy, and



Annie Leonard

has a lot of experience in facilitating adult education. She's a really good collaborative leader, and she comes highly recommended from both of her previous schools."

see PRINCIPALS page A5

New Arts Coop Gives Sole Answer to Shea Call

By TIA FATTARUSO

TURNERS FALLS – At 2 o'clock Wednesday, the deadline to submit to the Shea Theater request for proposals, town administrator Frank Abbondanzio opened the one and only non-fee proposal in the meeting room of town hall. It was from the newly formed Shea Theater Arts Cooperative (STAC), and submitted by Turners Falls resident Monte Belmonte, with the support of the Northampton Center for the Arts (NCTA) and its director, Penny Burke.

"We'll try to turn this around fairly quickly. The current leaseholders would like to terminate early," said Abbondanzio.

The recently formed Civic Center

Commission will review the STAC's proposal and make a recommendation to the selectboard, who should see the proposal at their next meeting, and who will make the final decision, Abbondanzio said.

Of the one fee proposal submitted, Abbondanzio said it would not be opened until a review of the non-fee proposal was complete, and that the town would prefer to continue the current \$1 lease for the Shea, acknowledging that community theaters typically operate on the margin.

An Arts Incubator

Belmonte, program director for Northampton Radio Group and morning DJ on 93.9 FM's *The River*,

see SHEA page A4

ERVING SELECTBOARD

Erving Approves Kinder Morgan Pipeline Survey on Town-Owned Property

By KATIE NOLAN

The Erving selectboard voted Wednesday morning to allow Tennessee Gas Pipeline Company to survey the upper end of the town's IP Mill property for the proposed Northeast Energy Direct natural gas pipeline.

Selectboard chair William Bembury said that a Tennessee Gas representative met with him and provided maps showing the survey area. Bembury said the pipeline would go under the Millers River near the IP Mill, and would also go underneath Route 2.

Selectboard member Arthur

Johnson said he favors the pipeline project and saw no problem with the surveying.

Bembury and Johnson voted in favor of giving Tennessee Gas permission to survey.

Selectboard member Margaret Sullivan abstained, saying she wanted to "remain neutral."

Usher Mill Contract

The board awarded the former Usher Mill riverfront park planning and design contract to Milone and MacBroom of Springfield. The contract had been awarded to BCS Group, Inc. at the March 30 meeting. However, BCS returned the town's

contract with suggested minor and major revisions.

At the April 13 meeting, the board decided that if BCS did not sign the contract without revisions, the work would be awarded to the next lowest bidder. BCS declined to sign the contract without changes.

Human Resources

The board classified the part-time recreation maintenance job as a level 3 job, with a midrange salary of \$13.24 to \$15 per hour.

Advertising for the job will be published this week, and applications accepted until May 6 or until

see ERVING page A7

Police-Proposed Graffiti Legislation Goes Before May 2 Town Meeting

By MARK HUDYMA

MONTAGUE – A proposed bylaw going before town meeting May 2 would ban the sale and possession of spray paint by any person under the age of seventeen, as well as require the owner of any building with graffiti to remove it or face a fine.

The bylaw is broken into two sections. The first prohibits the sale of spray paint to minors, and limits possession to when the minor is using it in a job setting.

Stores would be required to check any customer's ID with each purchase, regardless of age, and require a printed public sign in the store explaining the bylaw. Minors would be permitted to use spray paint under the supervision of an adult.

"There's no reason a child should have spray paint," said Chief Charles "Chip" Dodge, whose department submitted the article.

"All these efforts are meant to help the community stay a nice place we're proud of," he said. "We don't want to do it to punish people.... It is our solution to building owners who were unwilling to help us without a penalty."

Dodge explained the town's initial process involved "some research on what other towns do... not re-inventing the wheel. What concerns me is, gangs use graffiti to mark turf and spread messages. If you leave graffiti



REPORTER STAFF PHOTO

The World Iz Yours: Solutions Consulting Group LLC, whose 2013 certificate of organization describes its character as "independent consultants harmonize their specialties to provide creative solutions to individuals," owns this wall on the former site of the Indeck co-generation plant in Turners Falls.

unattended, it attracts more."

Asked what gangs these are, Dodge said, "We don't have a gang problem here in town, but have had gang members moving in and out of town. The graffiti could

see SPRAY PAINT page A7

Traveling the Last Mile

By ANN TWEEDY

LEVERETT – The phone call that the 600 pre-subscribers to LeverettNet, the fiber-optic, high-speed broadband network, are waiting for is from Elizabeth Cranston of Crocker Communications, the network's Internet Service Provider.

Elizabeth explained that as soon as she is given an address by Millennium Communications Group indicating that the house is visible on the network, she will call the homeowner on their land line, then their cell phone, and if there is no answer, she will wait an hour and call back to leave a message.

After a winter that challenged optimism, it is hard for many to believe that this fiber-optic network will actually be available. For some residents on Route 63 who are now live on the network, the promised goods have been delivered, and the response is positive.

LeverettNet speed was robust at the Village Coop, a public beta test site for the service.

The equal upload and download speed of 1 gigabyte per second meant that a 40-minute-long HD episode of a show was on the laptop in 6 minutes, as opposed to the 5

hours or so it takes to download the same episode via a satellite provider during prime time.

There were four other people tapping into LeverettNet during the HD episode download test.

A press release sent by the Broadband Committee via email on April 7 explained that the "Last Mile" work was in the final construction phase by Millennium. This last mile will connect Leverett to the Massachusetts Broadband Institute's "Middle Mile."

The new target date for the municipal fiber-optic project's completion is June 30.

The allusions to a marathon are apt. There were challenges to a logical and efficient process hoped for in the initial stages of planning.

According to the Town of Leverett website, unexpected delays were incurred due to difficulties with the utility companies in preparing poles. There may also have been

see LEVERETT page A4

The Montague Reporter

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Better Homes and Gardens

On May 2, among many more important items, Montague's town meeting has been asked to approve a bylaw that would fine owners of buildings marked by graffiti, posters, or stickers, and criminalize minors in possession of spray paint.

This town does not need this law. Painting on someone else's property without their permission is already quite illegal – under MGL Chapter 266, Section 126A, punishable by fines, jail time, and driver's license suspension.

And there has not been a recent upsurge in graffiti in town.

The bylaw is a cosmetic gesture that does nothing to address the real issues faced by low-income residents of the villages. A landlord neglecting a building's interior will hardly be motivated to invest in renovations, repairs, lead remediation or energy efficiency upgrades by being made to sandblast tags off its skin.

Eradicating graffiti will also not reduce the use, or sale, of illegal drugs. Graffiti is not typically used to sell drugs in 2015. Most people own cell phones.

Graffiti here does not, unless we are missing something obvious, mark gang turf. There are a few old fading Latin King crowns up downtown, but we also see the Wu-Tang Clan logo, and to our knowledge, no members of that 1990s multiplatinum-selling rap collective have ever lived in any of

the villages of Montague.

The suggestion that removing graffiti would interrupt the logistics of criminal organizations is laughable. People are actually using heroin here, and dying from it. Making the walls nice and blank and the planters plant-only won't address that. Let's at least be honest that the goal is aesthetic.

Here's another reality check: As of this newspaper's publication, 103 days have passed since someone, possibly not a minor, spraypainted "F--- Islam" on the side of a building owned by the town of Montague, at its busiest intersection.

It has been too cold for the DPW to properly remove it without damaging the building. For a private building owner, this would mean \$2,000 in fines and counting.

And the Prospect Street bridge has borne graffiti for two years despite many requests by neighbors for the town to remove it.

More important than any of this is the signal the paint ban sends. Treating our youth as criminals, making it clear that we don't trust them, and that in fact we blame them for vandalism and material decay – this is a step in the wrong direction.

These are problems that need work, not legislation. We need to be building relationships, not extracting fines. Send this warrant article back to the drawing board.

Family Circle

Congratulations to Annie Leonard, who a selection committee headed by superintendent Michael Sullivan has offered the combined job of principal for the Great Falls Middle and Turners Falls High Schools.

During her public site visit to the schools, Leonard was – we have heard – asked by a school committee member on the search committee how she thought she could manage being a principal and a mother at the same time.

This is an inappropriate question to ask of a prospective hire.

Massachusetts does not yet have a law banning family responsibilities discrimination (FRD), though a number of other states now do, and three of its cities (Boston, Cambridge and Medford) have passed local statutes of their own barring employers from such lines

of questioning.

Asking this question of mothers, but not of fathers, is sex discrimination and could open the district up to a lawsuit under the state's Fair Employment Practices Law. No school committee member should be exposing the district to this kind of risk.

Sharing the experience of parenthood and caregiving can be a great asset to any educator. We are sure it was an innocent question, meant to learn more about the candidate, and even more sure of that now that Leonard has been offered the position.

We hope she will forgive the gaffe, which need not be taken to represent attitudes in Montague, and we look forward to seeing her get to work, in a school system facing an exciting mix of challenges and transformations.

CORRECTION

In our coverage of the April 8 meeting of the Wendell selectboard, we published a rumor, circulating in that town, that Leverett's municipal broadband project is "over budget and behind schedule." This is not correct, and no one at that meeting said it.

While Leverett's project (see "Traveling the Last Mile," page A1) is going live some months behind its initially projected schedule, Leverett broadband committee member Peter d'Errico points out that this was due to its longer-than-expected "make ready" phase, and that "[e]very project involving cables and poles owned by others" – in this case, Verizon, WMECo, and National Grid – "will face such delays."

We have no reason to believe it is over budget.

Our apologies to our readers. We will do our best to attribute statements or verify them, and we will always set the record straight where we have erred.



Letters to the Editors

91.2% of Montague Lacks Credibility

Over the last weekend I was part of a couple of conversations about Montague's annual town election, coming up on Monday, May 18.

One comment that came up was the consistently low turnout we see, well below the levels at state and national elections, so I looked back at the results for last year's town election. The overall turnout was 6.8%, with turnout ranging from 5.2% in Precinct 2 to 8.3% in Precinct 1.

I thought the low participation might be explained by the fact that the headliner race, for selectboard, was not contested – as this year's will be – so I went back to the contested election in 2013.

That year, the overall rate was 8.8%, ranging from 4.1% in Precinct 3 to 11.1% in Precinct 1, so there must be another explanation.

When it comes to impact on residents, day in and day out, elections at the town level have at least as much influence as other elections, but we don't seem to recognize this each May.

Town meeting members (our "legislative branch") decide

what values and services are important to us, reflected in where we spend our budget and what we do with town-owned property; the selectboard (our "executive branch") influences what activities are allowed in neighborhoods, what we can do for economic development, etc.

If we don't participate in elections, we leave direction-setting to others, and lack credibility if we complain later on.

Occasionally someone will say voting is inconvenient, or meaningless, but here's a quote I ran across several years ago: "One of the penalties for refusing to participate in politics is ... being governed by your inferiors."

I am a conscientious voter, so I'm uncomfortable being cast as one of the "inferiors." Please consider your choices at the town and precinct levels, and join me at the polls to be part of the "governors."

Registration is open through April 28, and is easy to do.

John Hanold
Turners Falls

Skate Park Is Coming

Unity Skatepark supporters and enthusiasts will be glad to hear that Jon Dobosz, Montague recreation department director reported in a phone conversation that the project is on target.

The architect, Berkshire Design, is compiling a bid ready packet. Once completed, the contract for building the skatepark

will be put to public bid.

As long as bids come in, on or under the target construction price, the contract will be awarded and the cement skateboard elements will be poured this fall.

Gratefully,

Ellen Spring
Turners Falls

A Matter of Freedom

I've always thought that owning land offered both freedom and safety; a place to construct my life the way I wanted it to be, and also, a daily retreat from the wider world. Like many in Franklin County, I invested a lot of money in a place that embodied my vision of peaceful existence with the woods.

If the pipeline is constructed through our area, all that will be taken away.

How can we maintain neighborly relationships when a few of us sell out and grant easements for cash, while the rest of us see our property values decrease along with our tree cover and wildlife habitats? If a compressor station is built in Northfield, what will happen to our way of life in this quintessential New England town?

What good is an historic district if it's overshadowed by the constant whine of industry, or an environmental conservation area if its watershed is bifurcated by a metal pipe full of gas?

The fact that our government is complicit in this theft of our freedom, hurts. It feels deeply unfair to me that a corporation's desire to make profit could trump my and my neighbors' investment in, and choice to, live rurally.

Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness – these are not apparently strong enough ideals to stand up to corporate greed.

What does your land mean to you? If your land is threatened by the pipeline, if the thought of a corporate entity being granted permission to install a toxic conduit through your town seems wrong to you, then join us Saturday May 2 from 10 a.m. to noon, at the Great Falls Discovery Center in Turners Falls for a landowner rights forum.

Experts will be available to answer our questions about what to do to preserve our rights.

Lisa McLoughlin
Northfield

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Compiled by DON CLEGG

Come shake off the winter blues and join **Story Hour at the Slate Library**, 332 Main Road in Gill, for fun spring stories, interesting animal facts and an art project appropriate and fun for all ages. Every Friday at 10 a.m.

There will be an **Erving Town-Wide Tag Sale** on Saturday, April 25, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. The tag sale will be held at various homes throughout Erving.

Maps are located at the following locations: Erving Library, Freight House Antiques, Crooked Tap Café, Pocket Saver Market, Box Car Restaurant, Prondecki's, French King Bowling Center, Weatherheads Convenience Store. Rain date is Sunday, April 26.

The Friends of the Erving Library will hold their **annual book and plant sale** on Saturday, April 25 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Rain date April 26.

Books for sale include a wide range of topics and interests; mysteries, cooking, art, children's stories and gardening. A coffee can raffle will also be held with items such as gift certificates, desserts, games and paintings.

The sale will continue during open library hours through May 3. All proceeds go to support library events and programs

And there will also be a **used book sale** this Saturday, April 25, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Carnegie Library in Turners Falls.

All books and VHS tapes are \$2 a bag. Audios and DVDs are \$1 each. New this sale, much of the fiction is organized by author.

Proceeds benefit the Friends of the Montague Public Libraries. The Library is not accepting book donations at this time.

The 4th Annual Giant Western Massachusetts **Remote Control Flea Market** takes place on Saturday, April 25, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Franklin County Technical School, 82 Industrial Boulevard, in Turners Falls.

Come and browse, sell, or swap at the largest remote control flea market in Western MA. Anything remote control – boats, planes, or cars – can be sold. For more info and tables contact David at (413) 695-2191.

There is a **new date for the Spring Preschool Program** on Bird Migration at the Great Falls Discov-

ery Center. It is now Friday, May 8, at 10:30 a.m. (It was previously scheduled for April 25.)

The program is appropriate for ages 3 to 6 and is sponsored by the Friends of the Great Falls Discovery Center.

Sunday, April 26 is the Opening Day of baseball for the **Newt Guilbault Youth Baseball League** in Montague.

The day kicks off with a parade starting at the Turners Falls High School at 11 a.m., and it travels down Turnpike Road and up Montague Street to the ball fields.

There will also be opening day ceremonies after the parade followed by opening day baseball games starting at approximately 1 p.m. Everyone is invited to enjoy this wonderful day.

Greenfield Community College will hold an Open House on Thursday, April 30, beginning with registration at 8:30 a.m. and conclude with a 5:30 p.m. hands-on FAFSA Completion Workshop.

Prospective students and their families are invited to explore GCC's degree and career certificate programs, learn about the admission and financial aid processes, and complete enrollment steps needed for Summer and Fall classes.

Do you have what it takes to be the first **Tech Trivia Titan**?

On Friday, May 1, Franklin County Technical School Athletics will be running their first trivia competition. Located at the Greenfield Elks Club.

Come and enjoy a night of 6 rounds of wits and will to take home cash and bar prizes that range from 1st to last place.

Topics will cover a variety of categories including, but not limited to, sports, pop culture, literature, history, and science. Proceeds will benefit FCTS Athletics.

Bring your own snacks and food,

a cash bar provided for your enjoyment. Teams should consist of up to 8 people, with a \$10 entry fee per person. Trivia starts at 6:30.

Contact Daniel to reserve your team a spot at (413)863-9561 x233.

The 39th annual **Gas Engine Show and Flea Market**, sponsored by the United Church of Bernardston, is looking for crafters, vendors, school and church groups, and businesses looking to raise money or awareness, to rent booths at the event.

Sites are \$35 if rented before May 1, and \$40 if reserved afterwards.

This event takes place on Memorial Day weekend, May 22 to 24. For more information, please call the church office at (413) 648-9306.

To reserve a site, please call Harvey at (413) 648-9551.

The Massachusetts PipeLine Awareness Network is sponsoring a forum, **"The Pipeline and Your Rights – A Forum for Landowners, Municipalities, and Citizens,"** on Saturday, May 2, from 10 a.m. to noon at the Great Falls Discovery Center.

Panelists will include Scott Cote, Franklin County registrar of deeds; state representative Paul Mark; regulatory attorney Richard Kanoff of Burns & Levinson, LLP; Rosemary Wessel, founder of No Fracked Gas in Mass; Leigh Youngblood, executive director of Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust; Meg Burch, Conway board of health chair, Conway Pipeline Task Force member and FRCOG Pipeline Advisory Committee member.

Many topics will be discussed, such as how to protect your rights as landowners, municipalities, and communities, as well as how to engage in FERC and state regulatory proceedings.

Send your local briefs to editor@montaguereporter.org.

TOWN OF ERVING

Seeking a Park Maintenance / Highway Position for 19.5 hours a week. This position is non-benefits year around. Range of pay \$13.24 - \$15.00/hourly. This position is for the maintenance and repair of parks, grounds, park buildings & play structures. Responsible for the aeration, seeding, weeding, clean up, watering and preparation of park grounds, baseball fields, soccer fields, line painting of fields, leaf removal and mowing etc.

For Job description & application contact Town of Erving, 12 East Main Street, Erving, Ma. 01344 at 413-422-2800 X 100 or download application/job description at www.erving-ma.org. Application deadline is May 6, 2015 or until the position is filled.

The Town of Erving is an AA/EOE employer.

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GUEST EDITORIAL

Rumbles of Dissatisfaction

By PATRICIA PRUITT

Rumbles of dissatisfaction regarding MCTV's perceived lack of current programming and community outreach at the station have been rolling out from the cable advisory committee (CAC), from the board of selectmen, and from various community members. MCTV, quite naturally, has gone on the defensive, stressing its capabilities.

This has resulted in a few developments. First was the forced resignation of Eileen Dowd and Garry Earles from the CAC. Next was the extension of the MCCI contract for 30 months by the selectboard unanimously. And third was the recent wish-granting appointment of Kathy Lynch to the CAC's cable contract negotiations.

This was a majority vote of the

BOS. Ms. Lynch's role is limited to negotiations with Comcast in an effort to avoid the obvious conflict of interest which would ensue from her acting as evaluator of staff performance, as her husband is the station manager. There are those who do not think the conflict of interest problem has been eliminated entirely.

MCTV being Montague's station means there are many views on its chosen mode of operation of the station. Jeff Singleton, among others, has urged the MCCI crew to come up with a concrete plan for the 30 months of foreseeable future. He has been discouraged by the lack of response from MCCI.

Granting that the station has gone through a difficult period, with the tragic loss of its chief cameraman and their outreach person on long-

term leave due to ill health, still the viewer is dismayed at how much of the broadcast schedule is taken up by videos filmed years in the past.

Two possible solutions exist. One is for Town meeting to accept a call for a request for proposals (RFP) and open up the possibility of MCCI or another entity offering their services to Montague viewers. The second would be for MCCI and its board to appear at town meeting with a fully-formed new plan with which to go forward.

This could be developed by MCCI consulting with active parts of the community, for example, idea people such as Suzanne LoManto of RiverCulture, or Jamie Berger, or folks at the Discovery Center, and other active cable viewers.

What many are looking for is a rededication to the service of pro-

viding cable programming to our community. For more than five years after regaining the contract with the town, MCTV showed how well they could run a station, involve our community, and air local programs.

Who better to do this now and in the future than folks with a stake in Montague and a desire to contribute to the town? If there are staff who, for whatever reasons, are no longer enthused by the work of a cable station, the MCCI board must do the hard thing and find interested as well as capable replacements.

The reality is, change is needed. It would be best if change could come from within the organization, rather than through an RFP and a new entity taking over our local cable station.

Great Falls Middle School Students of the Week

week ending 4/17/15:

Grade 6
Mckailya Popkowski
Isabella Allen

Grade 7
Kaitlyn Miner

Grade 8
Sarah Waldron

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LEVERETT from page A1

difficulties with the electrical companies contracted by Millennium Communications Group to wire the individual homes.

The goal of connecting the town all at once and having all subscribers synchronously visible to the network, originally estimated for January 2015, is no longer viable. Now, some areas and residents will complete the Last Mile before others. However, these sites and homes should be considered "beta test sites" that may be subject to interruptions until the project is officially completed.

The new target date for completion is June 30.

Technical Matters

As word spread that some homes were lit, some residents rushed to check their own status. It was rumored that if the Transport light was lit in the Optical Network Terminal – a wall-mounted grey box with cords running in and out – this meant you were good to go.

If you put off buying the cables and jacks and drilling the holes in walls, and intend to DIY, there is good advice on the Town of Leverett website, at the bottom of the page titled "Homeowner Preparation Information."

There is also a schematic display at the town hall of how the connection between the outside terminal and the inside tech (wireless router, land line phone) should be done.

The display features a bit of plastic with two connectors on it, an R11 jack for the phone line, and an R45 jack for the network cable. This connector piece is hard to find as is, and will send you on a multi-store mission around the valley to find it as featured in the schematic.

A representative of the Broadband Committee clarified this connector display as the components needed if you are routing the phone line and the network cable using shorter cables into the home and then connecting them to other cables throughout the house.

For example, if you drill a hole into the home near the outside terminal and mount those connectors inside the house, you are able to run other cables from that connector to where you have your router and phone physically located in your home.

However, you could also purchase a longer cable, 100 ft CAT 6, for example, from the outside box, through a hole to the interior, and plug it directly to the router.

The CAT 6 network cable is recommended, according to the Committee representative, as it is stiffer and less likely to kink than the CAT 5 or 5e cables, which translates to lower margins of error. It is the newer version of network cable and can better handle the 1 gigabyte stream.

Crimping It Yourself

One potential problem that DIY homeowners might have is connecting an older phone line to the configuration in a modern com cable. There is a diagram of how the individual wires need to meet each other on the "Homeowner Preparation" page on the Town of Leverett.

Bill Stathis at Crocker Communications said that most homes will likely have two situations regarding the phone line.

The first is simple: Verizon's external box will be close to the ONT

box and have an existing wire with an RJ 11 connector that can be detached and moved to the ONT box and clipped into the slot marked telephone.

The second, and one that Stathis believes about 75% of the homes have, features a Verizon box with a hardwired wire with no jack to unclip. The line runs into the house and becomes a twisted nest that runs to all the other phone jacks in the house.

This situation will require some skill and a crimping tool. The line in the house needs to be disconnected and an RJ11 jack crimped onto it. A bisquit block with a female port will need to be put in so the male RJ11 jack can be plugged in. The line then needs to be attached to the external ONT box once it is configured properly.

If this stumps the intrepid DIYer, Crocker Communications can send someone to the home to help with the installation, and this service is "less expensive than you drilling a hole into your existing electric service panel," according to the website's Preparation Page.

Stathis said Crocker is recommending the services of local businesses that charge significantly less than they do for connecting an older phone line to the modern cable.

Stathis said Crocker Communications' standard rate for internet and phone, or just one or the other, is \$295. Stathis said Crocker is recommending the services of local businesses that charge significantly less, probably around \$150.

These businesses are the Audio Visual House in Turners Falls and Grace Electrical Services in Leverett. The work will need to be done once Crocker "green lights" that the phone service is ready for the home.

Municipal Internet

There are over 600 subscribers to the broadband service, which the April 7 press release from the Broadband Project identifies as a rarely-achieved 70% of potential subscribers.

Some of these subscribers chose Internet-only service, which will cost \$24.95 a month. Others opted for a combination of telephone and Internet service, at \$44.95 a month.

All subscribers, regardless of variation, will pay the town's Municipal Light Plant (MLP) \$49.95 per month, which is a divided rate among subscribers to pay for the annual cost of maintenance. The MLP cost should decrease as more subscribers sign on.

A deal between the Internet Service Provider, Crocker Communications, and the MLP will keep the ISP cost of \$24.95 per month static for three years.

When it is up and running, LeverettNet subscribers will have local response to problems or concerns, rather than the long wait for customer service with national satellite Internet providers, where technical help has become an opportunity for upsell.

SHEA from page A1

said he would like to "see [the Shea] remain a community theater," while also "bring[ing] it into the community in a real way."

"Two of my kids are part of the Young Shakespeare Players. Being someone who works in entertainment and event promotion, it's sort of like coaching their little league team," said Belmonte of his motivation for submitting a proposal.

According to Belmonte, the idea of the STAC would be to "incubate a new non-profit for Turners Falls with the guidance and fiscal sponsorship of the Northampton Center for the Arts," who, he said, have a proven track record.

The STAC proposal touts NCFCA's "30-year track record for facilitating arts events in Northampton, including First Night and Arts Night Out," and its relationships with resident companies such as the Happy Valley Guitar Orchestra, the Lisa Leizman Dance Company, Paintbox Theatre, and Show Circus Studio.

"[Penny Burke] has some time on her hands to dedicate to the stewardship of the Shea," Belmonte said, as the NCFCA is in transition to a new space while their previous home, the Arts Trust Building at 33 Hawley Street, Northampton, undergoes renovation.

"About ten years ago, NCFCA developed a strategic plan for its own successful 'comeback' as a community arts center. This simple model might well serve as the foundation for an initial business plan at the Shea."

The center would only be acting as, "a short-term fiscal sponsor and volunteer its stewardship until such a time as STAC has attained non-profit status, developed a permanent Board of Directors and crafted a long-term business plan that includes the hiring of an Executive Director," according to the proposal.

"The goal is not to burn anybody out," said Belmonte of the need for a paid director but also of the need for community support.

"We want people to bring their small piece of the puzzle," he said, be it money, experience or ideas.

"Let's put this picture together. But together is the real key here."

Parting Ways

When the theater's current operator, the nonprofit Shea Community Theater Inc., did not notify the town of its intention to renew their 10-year contract a year before its expiration, town officials say they were advised by counsel to put out a request for

proposals (RFP). When it was issued, the organization opted not to submit a proposal.

"Beyond a reasonable doubt, our intent to remain was obvious," said Daniel Kasnitz, an at-large member of Shea Community Theater, Inc., despite what he says were potential safety issues caused by a leaking roof the town was not fixing.

Kasnitz said the RFP itself was "not necessary," and that the group found its conditions "wildly unrealistic," saying it mandated "a level of expenditure that... is fiscally irresponsible, if one wants to create a sustainable corporation."

The organization, he said, planned to continue its operations whether or not its relationship with the actual Shea Theater would continue. "We're expanding our approach to work with a number of different venues," he said, saying it would become an "umbrella organization" similar to that of the Windham Arts Council in Vermont.

"We don't need a lease of any particular facility to pursue our mission," Kasnitz continued. "Any entity that organizes themselves around that RFP – we wish them the best."

He added that the group would be happy to collaborate in the venue under a new operator: "If they can get the theater into shape, and if their terms of use are as reasonable as ours, absolutely."

A Cultural District

The proposal submitted Wednesday by the STAC explains that, "when a local theater or dance company wants to stage a production, or an avant-garde musical group want to hold a performance, or poets want to book a slam at the Shea, the STAC will strive to say 'yes' to their request and ask the question 'and?' with respect to what they might share creatively, organizationally, and even financially, to the community."

Calling Turners Falls a diverse community, the proposal also seeks "to reach out to underrepresented people who live within the shadow of the Shea. Imagine a weekly Latin Dance night or a Black or Moldovan history series hosted by the Shea."

Should the STAC proposal be accepted, additional commitment to programming would come from Northampton-based Signature Sounds Records / Green River Festival Productions, "presenters of many successful events at the Shea," with whom Belmonte and NCFCA already have strong professional relationships, according to the proposal.

see SHEA next page

April 28: Public Meeting on Historic Districts in Gill

The Gill Historical Commission (GHC) is pleased to announce a public meeting for local residents and others interested in recent efforts to nominate the proposed "Gill Center" and "Riverside" historic districts to the National Register of Historic Places.

The meeting will take place Tuesday, April 28 at 7 p.m. at the Gill Fire Station, 196 Main Road.

"We are thrilled to have these proposals submitted to MHC," said Ivan Ussach, GHC chair. "Our little town has a lot of history, and we are eager to share it with locals and visitors alike."

Representatives of the Massachusetts Historical Commission

(MHC) and Bonnie Parsons, the GHC's historic preservation researcher and consultant, will present information and answer questions about both proposed historic districts.

The federal "National Register District" designation places no restrictions on property owners within the historic district. Neither proposal has been formally reviewed by MHC, and this public meeting is a preliminary session to help residents become better informed.

Copies of the researched forms and maps for the proposed districts are available for viewing at the Town Hall.

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SHEA from previous page

Beyond expanding events at the Shea, the proposal speaks to the need to partner with local businesses and arts organizations and maintain a strong relationship with Turners Falls RiverCulture.

"The Shea should be the centerpiece of what everyone is talking about in regards to the arts and Turners," the proposal's visioning statement says, adding that the venue "could serve as the physical headquarters for a Franklin County cultural revival."

The proposal also describes a need to increase financial support through revenue and fundraising, concerns about upkeep of and capital improvements to the building at 71 Avenue A, and a desire to work with the town toward acquiring a "Cultural District" designation under the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

"If they do accept our proposal, I hope people are as willing to pick up a broom or a pen as to criticize," Belmonte said.

"It's our theater," he affirmed, for all of Montague.



PRINCIPALS from pg A1

Leonard, who had begun a doctorate in educational leadership at UMass-Amherst, says she will be pursuing her own studies "very part time" and is excited to get back in a school environment.

"The district has tremendous assets, as do both of the schools," Leonard told the Reporter. "The dedication of the faculty really came through on my site visit. The facilities, and the district leadership, are also assets."

Leonard said that the newly recombined middle and high school position provides administrators with a "real opportunity" to get to know students and families over longer periods of time.

According to Sullivan, the

fact Leonard is "likely to be around for quite a while" was also a factor in his hiring decision.

The choice of Earl McGraw as assistant principal, Sullivan said, was easy. "He's known to be an expert at connecting with kids, and also with families in our community," he said. "People are really excited to have him come back."

McGraw has served as assistant principal and dean of students at the tech school since serving from 2003 to 2007 as assistant principal at TFHS.

A search committee of about ten people, Sullivan said, vetted applicants and came up with three finalists for the principal position. The finalists came last week for site visits and interviews with the superintendent.

"As a school leader, I'm very interested in preparing students academically," Leonard said. "But there are other skills – like empathy, and resilience – that go hand in hand with traditional academic skills in preparing for success in the adult world."

Leonard said that the "single thing" that she found most attractive about Gill-Montague on her site visit was "the feeling I got of the way students expressed real care for each other. One student told me, 'no one in this school has lunch alone.'"

Helping foster these "student-student" relationships, she said, was as important as relationships between students and teachers for providing a good environment for education.



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HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GILL SELECTBOARD

Heavy Fire Season Leads to Labor OVERRUNS at FD

By MIKE JACKSON

Gill fire chief Gene Beaubien came before the selectboard Tuesday to warn the town that the fire department is already over budget for the fiscal year. Overall call volume is not up significantly from previous years, said Beaubien, but the "longevity" of several area fires to which the department has lent mutual aid, along with a strong rate of response among the department's firefighters, has left the labor budget running a \$252 deficit as of the previous week.

"This has happened earlier in the year than it ever has in the past," said Beaubien.

In addition to recent fires in other towns, including a long-smouldering blaze in the yard at Erving Paper Mill and a Montague Center house fire, Gill has enjoyed mutual aid support from other towns for fires at home, such as a brush fire last week.

"As someone who has utilized that budget twice in the past year," said selectboard chair Randy Crochier, "I do appreciate people showing up."

The board and town administrative assistant Ray Purington discussed three options for patching a department's budget, including looking to "non-town" sources, deferring other department spending into a subsequent fiscal year, or seeking year-end transfers from the budgets of other departments which may have run a surplus.

The fire department's routine equipment upgrades and training were not seen as an item that could be deferred without jeopardizing safety. (Later in the meeting, the board approved purchase orders totaling \$5,200 to replace two pairs of pants, two jackets and a busted valve.)

"I guess this is just an FYI," said Beaubien. Board members noted that transfers from other departments may be large enough to require town meeting approval.

Nature Programming

Gill Elementary principal Kathleen Bailer introduced the board to Sena Rasun-Mahendra, a graduate student at Antioch University New England in Keene, NH, who has been commuting to Gill three days a week to serve as a nature intern.

Rasun-Mahendra has been helping teachers in the classroom at all grade levels, and during recess, taking small groups of students exploring on the school's new nature trail, which opened in the fall.

"We should thank the parents, and the Gill PTO," for the trail, said Bailer. She said that loss of Gill students to choice was noticeably declining, and that she estimates next year's kindergarten class will be 75 to 80% sourced from Gill, up from closer to 50% when she began the job.

Nature-based programming, she said, and place-based education in general, takes advantage of Gill's assets to connect with what she called a "movement of young families, moving into Gill and coming to Gill Elementary."

Bailer brought all this up as part of a request for a \$3,616.50 disbursement from the Quintus Allen Fund, an independent trust the school can turn to for educational expenses. The money would go toward a travel stipend for Rasun-Mahendra, and buy supplies for the programming that would last into future years.

Board members were enthused. "This whole thing screams Quintus Allen," said Crochier.

"We've got a jewel here," said John Ward of the school, describing such programming as a way to compete with charter, magnet, and choice options.

And Gregory Snedeker, also a parent at the school, spoke highly of the developments.

The vote was unanimous in favor of the request. Bailer also mentioned it might recur annually, and the selectboard reminded her that they cannot speak for future board members.

But Not Too Much Nature

According to Ray Purington, last week, another total coliform "hit" last week on the elementary school's well water tests is likely to trigger corrective steps under the town's consent order with the state Department of Environmental Protection.

The likely prescription, Purington said, will be continual low-level chlorination of the well – enough to kill the bacteria and still leave a residual chlorine count on testing, but not enough to taste or smell.

A USDA grant the town will seek in order to build out treatment apparatus at the well is held up over questions the town has about its proposed contract with project engineers.

Town counsel has flagged language about indemnification and liability in that contract as troublesome, and the town's insurance carrier also has related concerns.

The Warrant!

The selectboard reviewed the draft warrant for town meeting, which will begin the evening of Monday, May 4 for non-budget articles, with budgetary matters continued to a later date in June.

Two articles pertain to replacing windows and a boiler at the Sheffield Elementary School in Montague. The dollar amounts on those items are high, but under the district arrangement, Gill would not be paying for them in any case.

The board mulled its options: it could remove the articles, and miss an opportunity for educating Gill residents about district spending; or it could leave them on but include a good explanation, and lead with a motion to skip over them.

The latter option risks a movement from town meeting floor to block the spending. "I'd never want to be on the receiving end of that," said Crochier, of a scenario in which Montague residents block Gill from making capital improvements on its elementary school.

But that possibility seemed unlikely, and members seemed inclined to leave the articles on. "I see this as more semantic than anything else," said Snedeker.

The selectboard wanted more time to review the draft warrant, and set up a special meeting for Friday to sign it.

Other Business

Board members set the afternoon of Wednesday, June 17 for the project of finding and mapping the town's boundary markers.

Though it was previously reported the board had been abrogating this duty since 1850, more recent forensic archaeology at town hall has found indications that it was probably still being done as recently as the 1970s.

John Ward, who co-owns a solar energy business, indicated that after consulting with the state ethics commission, he has decided to recuse himself from any discussion involving a potential solar project on the Mariamante project.

Bids for lawn mowing and street sweeping were awarded to their respective low bidders: Howe's Lawn Care of Winchester, NH, and a company called "A Lot of Lines" based in Hadley.

The highway department expects a \$150,995 in Chapter 90 allotment from the state, up \$67 from the previous year.

Janice Giverson has resigned from the town's cable committee due to family concerns. That committee still has a quorum of 5 members, and is going into contract negotiations with Comcast.

Birds are singing and ticks are crawling, and Gill residents have until June to send in ticks to UMass' Laboratory of Medical Zoology for free testing under an offer with the county's Cooperative Public Health Services.

See tickreport.com for details.

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NEWS ANALYSIS

Citizens "Warned" of Thirty Articles on Montague Town Meeting Agenda

By JEFF SINGLETON

Hear ye, hear ye. On May 2 the Montague Annual Town Meeting will deliberate on a total of thirty articles. These include not only the usual recommendations for the Town operating budget, school assessments, and special articles, generally for specific capital projects, but will also include a proposed ordinance to regulate the sale of spray paint, an appropriation to hire a consultant to review the status of town records, a bylaw revision to change posting requirements for town meeting, and, possibly, an appropriation to create new broadband service in town.

There are also three "petitioned articles," articles placed on the warrant by citizens collecting ten or more signatures. These include an article calling for greater town meeting oversight of legal expenses, opposing a proposed natural gas pipeline through the town and voting on a new contract for the town's local access station, Montague Community Cable Incorporated.

More detail on these articles is available on the town website, which includes both "Background Information" from town hall staff and a report by the finance committee. One can also see a dramatic reading of the warrant by the current selectboard at its April 13 meeting courtesy of Montague Community Television (see MCTV on vimeo.com).

The town meeting warrant, an archaic term that refers to the tradition of "warning" citizens of topics to be discussed, begins with the usual "housekeeping" measures.

The first three articles are combined in a "consent agenda," voted as a unit without a full reading by the moderator. These include articles authorizing the receipt of various annual reports, giving town officials the power to apply for and receive grants, and authorizing the hazardous materials revolving fund.

The next two articles would fix the salaries of local elected and appointed officials. Town meeting actually votes on salary ranges for these officials, which tend to conform to collective bargaining agreements.

Article 6 is the "Department Appropriations Article" which essentially refers to the town operating budget. This is the total of all department appropriations: police, public works, libraries, parks and recreation, etc.

It does not include the water pollution control facility, the Colle office building, or the airport. Nor does it include the two fire departments (independent districts separate from the town), two water districts (ditto) or the two regional school districts, which have their own warrant articles.

Although it sounds like this article leaves out a lot, this is still the second largest appropriation town meeting

must consider. This year the request is for \$8,373,806 financed mainly by property taxation and \$125,000 from free cash.

A note on funding sources: "Free cash" is a balance left from previous years that, when certified by the state, can be used to fund future expenses. The use of free cash appears in a number of warrant articles. The regional school district has its own form of free cash which it calls "excess and deficiency."

Not to be outdone, the water pollution facility has a similar reserve with its own name, "retained earnings." To further simplify matters, there are a variety of other reserve funds called "stabilization" funds. These on-going reserve funds, often for specific purposes, receive appropriations from town meeting.

Stabilization funds also appear as funding sources on town meeting warrant articles, but they require a two-thirds vote by town meeting.

The main source of funding for local government is property taxation, which is limited to an increase of 2.5% per year, plus "new growth." This, in the absence of a property tax override or debt exclusion, is a limit on the total town levy, not on tax increases for individual homeowners.

Town warrant articles can also be funded by enterprise funds (the sewer fund mainly financed by user fees but with a small injection of property tax money), revolving funds, grants and borrowing.

Next on the town meeting agenda is Article 7, the appropriation for the water pollution control facility (WPCF), also known as the sewer system and treatment plant. This request totals \$2,244,913, which is an increase of just over 3%.

The percentage increase is one of the larger mark-ups on the town budget, perhaps reflecting the good feelings created by the numerous innovations at the sewer treatment plant in recent years. These innovations, in particular the capacity to process "solids" from other towns, have generated significant revenue.

Article 8 appropriates \$80,350 for the maintenance of the Colle Building on Avenue A in Turners Falls. Not much is generally said about this article, but for those who enjoy odd town programs and their funding sources, this may be of interest.

The Colle is essentially a historic office building owned by the town which is funded almost entirely by something called "receipts reserved for appropriation," that is rent. Some might consider this arrangement a bit socialistic but it seems to work, and does not cost the taxpayers much at all.

Speaking of socialism, Article 9 funds the town Airport to the tune of \$46,278. Yes, Montague has its own airport, which raises the perennial question at town meeting: why does the town of Montague run an

airport?

The answer used to be because Bill Cosby occasionally landed there, but this only seemed to intensify the criticism. The newer answer seems to be that most of the pilots are regular guys, and small airports are cool.

Also, town funding hardly busts the budget. The total tax appropriation this year is \$15,431, probably less than your basic feasibility study.

Article 10 funds the assessment for the Franklin Regional Technical School. That's real money at \$760,815, and it's a \$78,104 (11%) increase.

If any other department or school district came in with that sort of increase, town meeting would be in an uproar. However, everyone seems to like the tech school, deeming it well managed and serving a valuable function. Also, tech school assessments are highly correlated with the number of students Montague sends to the school, which this year increased by three.

More real money is appropriated in Article 11: \$8,498,343 for the Gill-Montague Regional School District. Although the largest appropriation on the warrant, this is only a 2.5% increase. It thus meets the criteria of the "affordable assessment," a key part of the long-term plan approved by the town and district a few years ago.

The finance committee seemed very happy with the bottom line, but the school district achieved this result by significant staff cuts, a one-time spike in tuition money from Erving, and an increase in Excess and Deficiency above what the long-term plan calls for.

There are also a lot of grants and revolving fund numbers flying around inside the budget, so some may question its long-term viability.

Article 12 is for lining and "documenting" various sewer lines to the tune of \$385,000. This would be funded from sewer debt.

This is an on-going project to deal with a crumbling sewer system. Last year the town inspected approximately 1,000 feet of sewer, which involves a high-tech video camera, and lined the sewer with something that looks like an inflatable sock.

Some of that work is done by the town DPW. We also receive fine technical consulting from the firm CDM Smith, who know a lot about the inflatable sock, and also how to get large amounts of state grant money.

The next two articles, 13 and 14, fund window and boiler repairs at the Sheffield school buildings, which are town-owned buildings leased to the schools. The window appropriation of \$1,116,764 is projected to be partly reimbursed by the state school building assistance fund.

The \$145,000 boiler proposal has been the source of much confusion. Sheffield has two boilers; one was

replaced last year for \$90,000 plus. However, the new boiler needs a new burner to work properly. Then there is a needed back-up boiler that is not functioning. So... the \$145,000 seems to be for a new back-up boiler and two new burners.

The Sheffield building, a town building, has been put under the baseline for the state Green Communities program, so energy efficiency is a key issue. The Montague energy committee was said to have approved this article, but no one on the committee could recall doing so, and the meeting minutes do not reveal a vote.

As of this writing the MEC has voted to propose an appropriation of \$55,000 for a new burner for the new boiler, a repair of the back-up boiler, and a feasibility study to determine the most energy-efficient and affordable heating system for the building.

Article 15 would appropriate \$75,000 for the DPW Discretionary Account. This would allow the DPW chief some flexibility in the case of a need for unforeseen repairs or equipment purchases.

The next article, 16, would fund lease payments on a dump truck of \$43,325. This is the fourth year of a five-year lease so you can do the math to determine what it costs to lease a dump truck.

Article 17 appropriates \$20,000 to replace the front portion of the Shea Theater roof, move the air handling units, and clean up accumulated bird poop. This work is said to be coordinated with a plan to purchase and install a more energy-efficient heating system for the building, a project funded by a state grant.

The next article would appropriate \$15,000 to fund police equipment, including firearms, tasers, vests, furniture or "any similar items."

Article 19 would spend \$46,000 to hire a consultant to inventory town records, recommend which must be saved and which discarded, and to create systems for retention and storage. Town records of various quality are scattered throughout the building, and are rapidly deteriorating.

Article 20 would expand the Capital Stabilization fund with an injection of \$32,632 from taxation.

The next article appropriates \$15,000 to maintain the Montague Center School building. Town officials believe, or hope, that the building will be purchased by the chosen developer, Mark Zaccheo, in May, so perhaps this appropriation will not be needed.

Article 22 would amend the town bylaw to eliminate the need to post the town meeting warrant at each post office and at each public library. It would replace this with the more limited requirement that the town post the warrant on its website and at town hall.

Town officials also note that the warrant is mailed to each town meet-

ing member. The argument seems to be that two of the libraries are open infrequently, making timely posting onerous.

One suspects this article is a response to town meeting member Jeanne Golrick's recent complaint that the town had failed to post a recent warrant at the Millers Falls library. The complaint required special legislation from the state to certify the meeting.

Article 23 appropriates \$8,200 to fund new information technology equipment for the town.

The next article is a request by the town broadband committee for costs associated with the "design, construction, and installation... of a broadband fiber-to-the-home network..."

The original request was for roughly \$175,000 for a pole survey for a project to serve the Chestnut Hill, Taylor Hill, and Meadow Road neighborhoods. This project would also have linked the Montague Center Fire Station to the Turners Falls fire station.

The present proposal appears to be broader, and carry a price tag of approximately \$400,000.

Since the warrant article was approved by the selectboard, town officials seem to have been told that borrowing for the project may not be legal without a municipal light plant or special legislation. So, broadband may be on hold for now.

Article 25 is designed to create a new "graffiti bylaw" that would not only make it illegal to spray graffiti on buildings but penalize property owners who fail to remove graffiti and store owners who sell spray paint to minors. This proposal will no doubt lead to a good deal of debate at town meeting. (See page A1, *Police-Proposed Graffiti Legislation Goes Before May 2 Town Meeting.*)

Article 26 authorizes a five-year contract extension with a recycling facility in Springfield. Article 27 would allow the selectmen to petition for an additional liquor license for the Five-Eyed Fox restaurant in Turners Falls.

Articles 28 to 30 were placed on the warrant by citizen petition. The first would direct the selectboard to "solicit written proposals" for legal services in the upcoming fiscal year. Such proposals would be presented to town meeting for approval.

Article 29 would essentially oppose the construction of a natural gas pipeline through Montague.

The final article, #30, places the contract currently being negotiated with the local access station, Montague Community Cable Incorporated, before town meeting.

The article calls for a contract of not more than three years, accompanied by a plan to expand local content and community involvement in the station.

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SPRAY PAINT from page A1

mean things we don't understand." The second part of the bylaw puts the responsibility for cleaning graffiti on the owner of the property, and sets fines for both creators of the graffiti, if caught, and property owners. After a 10-day grace period, building owners would face fines of \$20 per day until they remediate the graffiti.

For the purposes of the bylaw, "graffiti" is defined as "any word, figure or painted design that is marked, etched, scratched, drawn, painted, pasted or otherwise affixed to or on any surface, regardless of the nature of the material of that structural component, unless the same was authorized in advance by the owner thereof."

"It's my hope we don't have to ticket anybody," said Dodge. "If somebody puts up a painting and it's vulgar, offensive, or discriminatory, we'd have to take action."

According to the language of the proposed bylaw, the process would begin when "[t]he building inspector, the Board of Health or its designee or a member of the Police Department determines graffiti in any surface is visible... the owner shall abate within 10 days."

But despite the concern voiced in the

bylaw about graffiti "affecting the public health, safety, and welfare" of the town, Gina McNeely, Montague's director of public health, said, "I don't think the board of health will be involved, it's really a police matter.... It's unpleasant, but it's not a public health issue."

David Jensen, building inspector, also questioned the proposal, which he said he had not been consulted about. "I was not aware I was a regulating authority on this bylaw," he said. "It makes property owners victims twice. It doesn't sound very well thought out."

Chief Dodge added that while graffiti cannot be isolated as a reason for other crime, "it does lead to more graffiti - we've seen that - and vandalism is a crime."

Reaction on the street was mixed. "There's different times and places for it," said Gino Gomez, of Greenfield. "People who do it in public on the front of a building, that's wrong. Some are doing it to vandalize, some are doing it for art... I like it. They should come down hard on the vandals."

"That's pretty stupid," Isaac Gravelle, 14, of Turners Falls, said of the proposed age restriction. "It shouldn't matter what your age is. Older people graffiti too."

The Montague Reporter is seeking to expand our sports coverage. If you are interested in writing, photography, or underwriting this effort, please contact (413) 863-8666 or editor@montaguereporter.org

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ERVING POLICE LOG

Send Your Texts From the Shoulder

Monday, 4/13

7:10 a.m. Report of disabled motor vehicle near Route 2A, the vehicle hit an object in the road.

11:25 a.m. Assisted with medical emergency on High Street

Wednesday, 4/15

10:15 p.m. Suspicious vehicle at Dorsey Road

found to be subject pulled over to text

10:25 p.m. Reported disabled motor vehicle at Weatherheads Convenience Store had permission to leave car.

Thursday, 4/16

11 a.m. [redacted] arrested for two counts of assault and battery

Friday, 4/17

9:45 a.m. [redacted] arrested for operating a motor vehicle with a suspended license and refusing to submit license and registration.

3:30 p.m. Report of phone scam at Mountain Road residence.

Saturday, 4/18

11:20 a.m. [redacted] arrested for unlicensed operation of a motor vehicle and not having an inspection sticker.

Sunday, 4/19

10:05 a.m. Disabled motor vehicle in Farley Flats, towing company on scene.

ERVING from page A1
the job is filled.

In Erving, the selectboard, treasurer, town administrator, department heads and others hold human resources responsibilities.

The selectboard reviewed a list of human resources responsibilities and who is responsible, for instance with selectboard having responsibility for setting policy and department heads keeping track of job-related licensing.

The board agreed that the town does not need

to participate in the Franklin Regional Council of Governments shared human resources service at this time.

Personnel Policy

The board wrote a definition of "interim employee" for the Personnel Policy Manual, and set the compensation for town hall employees when town hall is closed for hazardous weather or emergency.

Compassionate Choices

By LEE WICKS

NORTHAMPTON - Nancy Paglia, who lives in Leverett, has had a career devoted to enhancing quality of life. She has a Master's degree in health education, and for the last twenty-six years she's been a massage therapist, a yoga instructor, and a stress management coach.

Since her father's death this winter, she also has a new mission to ensure quality, choice and control at the end of life. Before her father died, she promised him that she would work to get a Death with Dignity law passed in Massachusetts. She is honoring that promise by speaking of her dad's experience and educating people about what such legislation would mean.

Last week Paglia and Lisa Ahbel, a nurse currently working with patients who have Alzheimer's disease, spoke about end of life issues at the Rockridge Retirement Community in Northampton.

About thirty people from the Rockridge Community and beyond attended, and though they were all senior citizens, an important message from both Paglia and Ahbel is that, hard as it may be, everyone over the age of eighteen should be thinking about end of life choices.

Ahbel said, "The average person spends more time planning vacations than planning for end of life issues."

Young people get into car accidents. They ski into trees, or like Brittany Maynard, the woman with terminal brain cancer who moved from California to Oregon in order to utilize Oregon's Death with Dignity law, they become terminally ill.

Legal Documents

Having a health care proxy, a person who will speak for you and make medical decisions when you cannot, is vital. Having an Advance Directive, a set of legal documents that allow you to spell out your decisions about end of life care ahead of time, is also something all adults ought to have.

But, said Paglia, neither of these is the same as Death with Dignity legislation. Neither a Health Care

Proxy nor an Advance Directive, called a MOLST form in Massachusetts, standing for Massachusetts Medical Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment, functions in the same way Death with Dignity legislation would.

You might have a "do not resuscitate" order; you might deny a feeding tube, intubation, dialysis or more, but in Massachusetts you may not ask for medication that will end your life. In Oregon, Washington, Montana, Vermont and New Mexico, you can - with very clear conditions.

Paglia explained that the proposed Death with Dignity legislation requires that a patient have six months or less to live and be capable of making the decision. No one else can make that decision, she said. The law would not allow it.

Though her father died quickly - he was diagnosed in March with stage 4 cancer, and died in April - Paglia said his suffering was increased by fear. "He was imagining horrible outcomes," she said, "He wanted control."

Her dad moved in with her for his final weeks, and it was during that time that she promised him she'd do what she could to get the legislation passed.

Paglia referenced the recent case of Lee Hawkins, an elderly Northampton resident who simply stopped eating and drinking when she felt her quality of life was too compromised.

Paglia said, "Lee's story ran in our local papers, and some people now feel that refusing food and water could function as well as Death with Dignity legislation. That may work for some people, but for others it would simply be cruel."

Her father, for instance, loved to eat, and he was living and dying in a home where people were cooking. Eating was one of his last pleasures. He could not have made the decision Lee Hawkins made.

In 2012, the last time Massachusetts advocates tried to pass Death with Dignity legislation, the referendum called Question 2 failed by about 68,000 votes, a 51 to 49 percent defeat.

At present, Paglia said, there are 39 legislators in favor of the bill. They include Steve Kulik (D-Worthington) and Ellen Story (D-Amherst). She encouraged those who support Death with Dignity to contact their legislators and visit the website www.compassionandchoices.org for information both locally and nationally about this movement.

The Best Life Possible

Because they have Alzheimer's disease and dementia, Lisa Ahbel's patients would not be affected by the legislation Paglia is supporting. Ahbel's portion of the program focused on how healthcare decisions are made when a person who is ill or suffering from dementia cannot express his or her own wishes.

Though Ahbel did not speak against Death with Dignity legislation, she did say that palliative care has improved vastly, and the transition from life to death can be managed in a calm and loving way, especially when a person has appointed a health care proxy and made their wishes known.

But, she said a number of times, "People's needs and desires change over time, and Advance Directives (MOLST Form) need to be revisited and revised often and a health care proxy must be informed."

"A fifty-five-year-old woman might want an emergency medical team to do everything in their power to save her life if she finds herself in the ER. Her MOLST form should say so. Her health care proxy needs to know how she feels, and that person must be able to communicate with the doctors."

"On the other hand, an eighty-three-year-old man might feel differently, considering that past the age of eighty, CPR has only a 0 to 5 percent success rate," she said.

How to decide what you want requires information and soul searching. Conversations with your doctors, reading and research will help individuals understand the ramifications of all the decisions that must be made, Ahbel said.

She added, "Once you have made your choices and filled out the

Websites

www.compassionandchoices.org
www.agingwithdignity.org
www.caringconnections.org
www.sustainable-aging.com
MOLST form information: www.molst-ma.org
Health Care Proxy information: www.molst.org/forms/the-massachusetts-health-care-proxy-form

Books

Ira Byock M.D., *The Best Care Possible: a Physician's Quest to Transform Care Through the End of Life* (Avery, 2013)
Jeanne Fitzpatrick M.D. and Eileen Fitzpatrick J.D., *A Better Way of Dying: How to Make the Best Choices at the End of Life* (Penguin, 2010)
Jerome Groopman M.D. and Pamela Hartzband M.D., *Your Medical Mind: How to Decide What's Right for You* (Penguin, 2012)
Atul Gawande M.D., "What should medicine do when it can't save your life?" *The New Yorker*, August 2, 2010

MOLST form, make a ton of copies. Print them on bright pink paper because this is easy to identify. Put one in your car and another on your refrigerator door. Another option is to wear a medical alert bracelet."

For Ahbel the goal is to have the best life possible until your very last breath and that requires choosing the right health care proxy and keeping your MOLST form up to date.

She spoke at length about making the right choice for the all-important health care proxy. Most people assume it should be the closest family member, she said, but that is not always the case. The people who love you the most might feel burdened by the job, especially if you do not want any extreme measures taken to pro-

long your life. Ahbel recommended The Conversation Project website, www.theconversationproject.org, as a resource, along with a number of books.

Both Paglia and Ahbel want people to live full and happy lives and know that they have choices when and if their quality of life is diminished by pain and suffering.

If you support the Death with Dignity legislation, Paglia urges you to talk to legislators, friends and neighbors and ask them to voice their support.

If you want to learn more about health care proxies and advance directives, Ahbel provided a number of resources and said an online search will provide additional information.



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NOTES FROM THE GMRSD SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Standardized Testing,
Borrowing for Boilers

By ELLEN BLANCHETTE

TURNERS FALLS – The Gill-Montague school committee held its April 14 meeting at Sheffield Elementary. Principal Sharon Moberg and several teachers from Sheffield attended, giving the committee and superintendent an opportunity to discuss the recent administration of the PARCC tests.

Sullivan said those administering the test reported no serious problems with the technology. Asked how the students felt about the difference between PARCC, which is taken on computers, and the MCAS, teachers reported some confusion with the “two-part” questions. These questions are presented in two parts, one where the answer is more clearly right or wrong, the second that requires some thought and reflection.

Some students, accustomed to questions with “right or wrong” answers like on the MCAS, were stressed out by the uncertainty of the opinion format, but their teachers generally felt that, as students become more familiar with it, they will be less stressed.

One teacher said a problem for students is that if their answer to the first part is wrong, that affects their answer to the second part.

The amount of time spent on tak-

ing the tests, which were administered over a period of a week, was described as difficult and stressful for both teachers and students. One teacher mentioned that preparation for PARCC ties up all of the technology in the school for several weeks, which has a big impact on the teachers’ time, and requires planning classroom adjustments when the computers are not available for regular student work.

School committee chair Joyce Phillips said she felt the state was moving too quickly. The state wants teachers to move toward teaching critical thinking, she said, but is not giving enough time for the children to make the transition.

Capital Expenses

Two capital projects have been in the works for some time at Sheffield Elementary: replacing the windows, and replacing the boiler.

The school committee approved moving forward with both projects earlier this year with an understanding that the town of Montague would pay for both, because it owns the building.

District business manager Joanne Blier told the committee that the school district and the town have been working on this project together, but the town’s bond manager

now says the school district needs to be the one to borrow the money up front. The town will still pay for the portion of the cost that is not reimbursable.

The district would borrow \$1 million dollars for the window project, 76% of which has been approved for reimbursement by the Massachusetts School Building Authority. The balance, approximately \$300,000, will be paid off over time in the form of an assessment to the town.

The school committee voted unanimously to approve this, plus another loan for \$125,000 to replace

the boiler.

With elections coming up in May, three school committee members are up for re-election. Leslie Cogswell of Montague is seeking another term. Jennifer Waldron of Gill is running for another term as a write-in candidate, having missed the deadline to file. Misty Lyons is not seeking another term, and Christina Postera of Turners Falls is seeking to fill the seat from Montague.

The next regular school committee meeting will be held on April 28 at the Turners Falls High School at 6:30 p.m.

NEW TO TOWN



LYNN PELLAND PHOTO

One of Turners Falls’ visiting Peregrine Falcons enjoys the view from the rail on the abandoned Indeck coal silo. Great job to our reader Lynn Pelland, who stalked the birds for a week before getting us this shot.

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is seeking writers to cover local board meetings. Modest compensation and editorial guidance provided.

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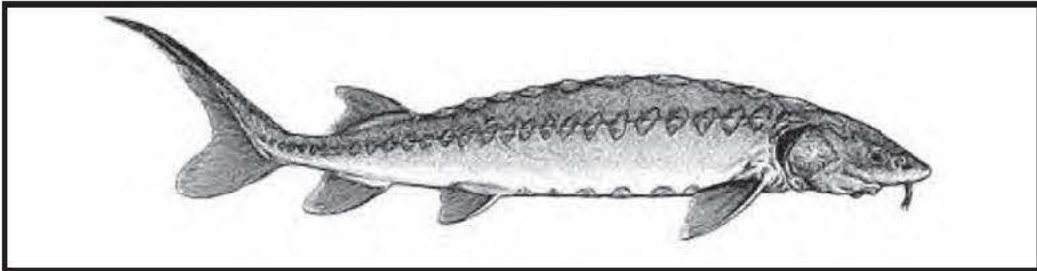
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OF THE MONTAGUE REPORTER

APRIL 23, 2015



The Shortnose Sturgeon: Life on the Edge

By EMILY ALLING

TURNERS FALLS – On April 15, a small but rapt audience gathered at the Great Falls Discovery Center to learn about the Connecticut River shortnose sturgeon, a federally recognized endangered species whose spawning habits may have implications for the regulation and relicensing of hydroelectric facilities along the river. The event was sponsored by the Connecticut River Watershed Council, a group that works to protect the watershed along the length of the river.

Also in attendance was a juvenile white sturgeon from Idaho, representing genus *Acipenser*.

Dr. Boyd Kynard, a retired federal fish researcher and current owner-manager of Erving-based BK-Riverfish, presented the results of over 30 years of research into this sturgeon. The shortnose sturgeon is an ancient species – fossils from the age of dinosaurs closely resemble today's fish – found in rivers along the North American Atlantic seaboard from the Canadian maritimes to the southeastern United States.

Shortnose sturgeon can grow to 3 to 4 feet in length and have a lifespan measured in decades. While the fish is abundant in most of its rivers with populations in the tens of thousands, its numbers are severely restricted in the Connecticut (population ~1,500) and the Merrimack (population ~60). In the course of researching why this is, Kynard and his group uncovered important information about this ancient fish and the effects of the hydroelectric projects along the Connecticut upon its

migration and breeding habits.

Kynard's team set out to determine whether there are two separate populations of shortnose sturgeon in the Connecticut River – one above the Holyoke Dam, where numbers have hovered around 325 for the past 30 years, and another below the dam, where the population approaches 1,000 – or whether the upstream and downstream groups comprise a single population.

If the populations were truly separate, with the upstream group effectively landlocked, then the relicensing of the Holyoke Hydroelectric Project should be unaffected by efforts to preserve the species. If, however, there was a single population whose migration was disrupted by the dam, then regulatory actions could come into play.

After years of tagging and monitoring fish between Turners Falls (the natural northern boundary of their habitat) and the river's estuary, Kynard's team found that Connecticut River shortnose sturgeon spawn *only* near the natural rock dam in Turners Falls, where a rocky river bottom and an appropriate flow rate combine to create optimal conditions for sturgeon eggs to hatch and embryos to develop.

In Kynard's words, "Females are programmed to spawn in Montague."

Fish who make their way downstream of the Holyoke dam are blocked from returning upstream and simply do not spawn – except for "the odd lady who spawns in Holyoke," one of whom is encountered perhaps every three years.

see STURGEON page B4

Visit to the Homeland



By JOE PARZYCH

GILL – During their childhood years, I often told my children of my hope of someday visiting the birthplace of my mother and father who were born and brought up in opposite ends of Poland. My mother lived in the Tatra Mountains, the home of fiercely independent mountaineers, poets, writers, musicians, and artists as well as dissidents, remnants of wandering tribes like the Celts, and other outcasts. My father grew up near a national forest in the Russian occupied sector, which was once a shallow sea.

Since Poland was divided into sectors during their childhood, my parents each spoke a slightly different dialect. My mother grew up in the Austro-Hungarian partition. For instance, her term for potatoes was *kartofle*, a term borrowed from the Germans who had occupied sections of Poland at times. My father's term for potatoes was *ziemniaki* or "fruit of the earth." For some reason, we grew up using the term *kartofle*.

My first-born daughter, Deborah, grew up to become a consulting civil engineer

and decided to take me to Poland to visit my parents' birthplaces. We flew into Warsaw airport with her husband, Mike, rented a car and toured the city.

When the Germans saw the end of WWII coming, they'd bombed, shelled, and dynamited all of Warsaw. Luckily, some museums and historic structures were spared. German engineers had large holes drilled for the placement of dynamite to assure many buildings' complete destruction, but they ran short of dynamite, or time. The city was rebuilt as it had been before the war.

Polish contractors often used pictures and original plans found stored in city archives. Some of the buildings that survived the destruction were left standing with the ef-

fects of shelling still evident in what is now known as "The Old Town." Much of the Jewish ghetto ruins were also left in place.

After touring Warsaw, we set out for the Tatra Mountains, my mother's home place, where the soil is poor, the growing season is short, and the winters long and cold. The buildings have steep alpine roofs to weather the heavy snowfall.

Each house is a work of art, starting from the foundations which are laid up with stones taken from a river bed. Each mason vies to build a more decorative foundation than the other.

Woodwork is carved throughout. Ridge beam are decoratively carved before being raised into place. Wooden

see POLAND page B6



The author and his daughter Deborah leave Zalesie.

1676, Part Two: When The River Banks Shook

By JAMES GILDEA

BERNARDSTON – The native population of Massachusetts had literally been "under siege" from other tribes for many years before this war began. Tribes along the East Coast, from Maine to the Mid-Atlantic colonies, were being repeatedly attacked by the Iroquois Nation. The Iroquois routinely carried out raids as far south as Pennsylvania, and as far west as Michigan and the Ohio Valley.

For example, in 1664 the Iroquois began a war against the Susquehanna tribe in Pennsylvania, and by 1676, had absorbed them into their inner circle. During still other

ventures in the Ohio Valley, they routinely slaughtered members of any tribe that opposed them.

Local history offers a glaring example of their slaughter. In the same year (1664) the Iroquois also attacked the Pocumtucks, a native people living nearby in the Connecticut River Valley of western Massachusetts. During that siege, the Pocumtucks were almost completely annihilated; so few Pocumtucks were left that they could no longer call themselves a tribe.

A year later, John Pynchon of Springfield contacted the few Pocumtucks that remained and offered to purchase their tribal lands. The Pocumtucks had scattered

into the hills, and Pynchon had to search far and wide to find enough tribal members to sign a sales agreement. That agreement between Pynchon and the few remaining Pocumtucks led to the creation of the town of Deerfield.

The Iroquois Nation comprised a number of affiliated tribes, including the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca. They were known as the "people of the long houses," and they lived in the region around the Great Lakes and in southern Canada near the St. Lawrence River. Raiding tribes often took adolescent girls as future brides for their young braves.

Why were these northern tribes so aggressive?

Note the date when the carnage began...1664.

The year before, in 1663, the land along the St. Lawrence River in Quebec sustained one of the most devastating earthquakes in that region's history.

But to describe it as "devastating" doesn't begin to explain either the magnitude or the full significance of this event. In fact, the many lingering aftereffects

see 1676 page B4



WEST ALONG THE RIVER

Joyful Noise in the Spring Morning

By DAVID BRULE

MILLERS RIVER – April 3. Good Friday dawns as some of the older folks would expect: overcast, ominous, gray with a troubled sky. At least it's mild, and no rain yet.

In contrast to weather and religion, the yard overflows with joyful song.

More than likely at least forty-five birds are singing pell-mell: white-throated, song, and tree sparrows put forth varied melodies, juncos twitter, jays yodel, redwings huff up scarlet epaulets and let loose a triumphant *oak-a-lee!*

Grackles croak and chuck, nuthatches pipe up with their tin horn call, cardinal chants *cheer-up*; robins bob, silent and serious for the time being, over snow patch and dry grass, mallards and black ducks wing low over the yard, quacking of course, in their heedless headlong teasing and courting, oblivious to the human below, sitting and taking this all in.

This is such a flooding chorus of song and exuberance after an endless winter. Titmouse flutes, chickadee whistles a limpid, clear *fee-bee*.

Suddenly a shock and shiver of emotion courses down my spine: a cloud of tree swallows burst through the yard in the forty-degree grayness.

"Hey you swallows, are you SURE you want to be here already?" I shout silently to

myself. "What happens to you when it snows again? And it will!"

One tree swallow, or a dozen, does not the spring make.

Yet the inexorable, instinctive drive in these creatures to wing north, chasing the glacier of winter in its retreat, has been going on for more than 12,000 years.

I can't hold them back with my human logic and carefully measured travel plan for them.

These frail, kite-winged migrants know what they're doing, and we're glad to hail them a welcome back.

An alarm call suddenly silences all song.

Hawks have been knifing through the yard all winter, and their kill-spots are now uncovered: circles of feathers are exposed where jays or doves were captured and plumed by these swift-winged predators.

Everyone listens for the chickadee who gave the alarm. He whistles the all clear, and song, courting and flirting resume.

April 4. Today there's one little voice singing stronger than all the others. He seems not to stop for a breath, he keeps going on and on, about what? Is he singing the Good News of spring's resurrection? Is he singing for the sheer joy of still being alive after this endless winter?

It would be hard to believe that his is just see WEST ALONG page B3



In 1663, the land along the St. Lawrence River suffered one of the most devastating earthquakes in the region's history.

Pet of the Week

Meet Grace. At the height of cat fashion, sporting the most amazing, long haired coat with diverse colors. As you can see, she is very photo-

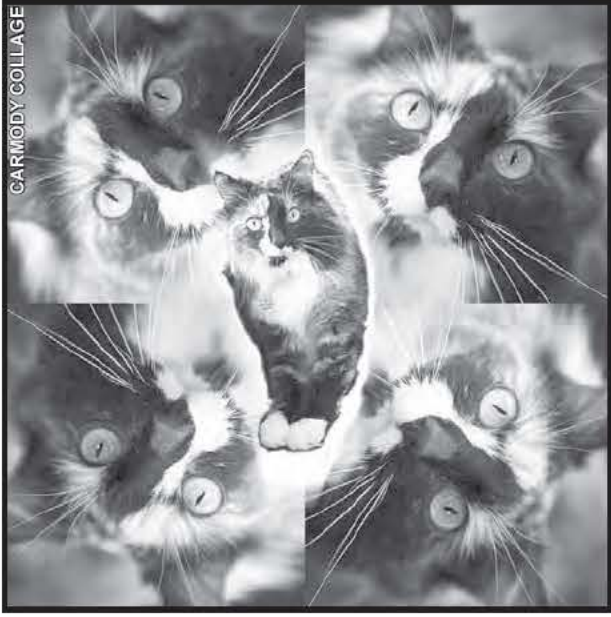
genic and knows a thing or two.

Grace is a delightful glamor girl who cherishes "people time," with her human friends.

She gets along with dogs. Having her belly rubbed is one of her favorite pastimes.

She's always ready for a good snuggle. Does Grace sound like the gal for you?

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



"GRACE"

FACES & PLACES



Alison and Kari wait on customers at the Shady Glen.

PHOTO BY G.E. LOMAX, HALLMARK STUDENT

Film and Workshop: Latinos in the U.S.

On Saturday, May 2, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., the public is invited to a free workshop on "Latinos in the U.S.: Colonization, Diaspora & Racialization," with presenter Annie Rodriguez, at the First Congregational Church in Greenfield.

The workshop will use Juan Gonzalez's film *Harvest of Empire: The Untold Story of Latinos in America*, along with discussion and questions, to help participants develop a deeper understanding of the realities of Latino life in the U.S.

Annie is a core trainer with the New Orleans-based People's Institute for Survival and Beyond and a founding member of the Undoing Racism Organizing Collective of Western MA (UROC).

This workshop is part of Mass Slavery Apology's monthly program series, and is free (donations welcome). Doors open at 9:30 a.m. To reserve childcare, RSVP with number and ages of children to (413) 625-2951 or email@massslaveryapology.org. First Congregational Church is located at 43 Silver Street in Greenfield.

THE HEALTHY GEEZER

Natural Cautiousness

if you are taking drugs that treat any of these health problems.

Alternatives can interfere with the way your body should process medicine. For example, you may not absorb enough of the medicine that you need.

These products can cause difficulties during surgery, including bleeding and problems with anesthesia. You should stop using herbal products at least two weeks before surgery.

In the United States, alternatives are regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration as foods. Therefore, they are not held to the same standards as medicines whose manufacturers must prove they are safe and effective.

These products can also contain ingredients that aren't on the label. That bottle of natural elixir on the shelf could contain plant pollen, steroids, arsenic, lead and pesticides.

The active ingredients in many of these products are unknown. In fact, because alternatives are not held to tough standards, you may even consume more or less of the supplement than what the label tells you're taking.

Well, you ask, these products must be standardized in some way, right? The fact is that, in the United States, there is no legal definition of

"standardized" for supplements.

There are hundreds of alternatives on the shelves that claim they will help you feel better in a variety of ways. However, the advertising claims usually aren't backed by reliable information.

Some of the most popular alternatives include chondroitin, echinacea, ephedra, garlic, ginkgo biloba, ginseng, glucosamine, kava, melatonin, black cohosh, saw palmetto and St. John's wort.

These alternatives may have additional effects that the manufacturers don't always tell you about. Here are some side effects you should know about:

- If you are sensitive to aspirin, don't take black cohosh because it contains salicylates. Black cohosh is used for menopausal symptoms. Aspirin or acetylsalicylic acid is a drug in the family of salicylates.

- If you have a shellfish allergy, you may also be allergic to glucosamine. Glucosamine is taken for arthritis.

- Don't drink alcohol if you take kava products. Kava can increase the effects of alcohol. Kava is used to calm your nerves.

If you would like to ask a question, write to fred@healthygeezzer.com.

JESSICA LARKIN ILLUSTRATION



By FRED CICETTI

Q. I'm a geezer and I believe in herbal products because they're natural and I think you should tell your readers how wonderful they are.

I get a kick out of people who are big on "natural" and "organic." Poison ivy is natural and organic. So is cobra venom.

You have to be very careful when you use herbal health products and dietary supplements, especially if you are a senior. Always consult a doctor before taking any of these products, which I like to label "alternatives."

These products may not be safe if you have cancer, an enlarged prostate gland, high blood pressure, diabetes, glaucoma, heart disease, epilepsy, Parkinson disease, psychiatric issues, or problems with clotting blood, your immune system, liver or thyroid. You should be especially cautious about these products

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 congregate meals.

Lunch is at 11:30 a.m., with reservations required 24 hours in advance. Call the Meals 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 4/27

9 a.m. Tai Chi
10 a.m. Osteo Exercise
12:30 p.m. Movie & Popcorn

Tuesday 4/28

8:45 a.m. Chair Aerobics
10 a.m. Cardio Toning
12:30 p.m. Painting

Wednesday 4/29

8:45 a.m. Line Dancing
10 a.m. Chair Yoga
Noon Bingo & Snacks

Thursday 4/30

8:45 a.m. Aerobics
10 a.m. Healthy Bones, Muscles
Noon Pitch Card Game

Friday 5/1

9 a.m. Bowling

Senior Center Activities

April 27 to May 1

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 4/27

10:10 a.m. Aerobics
10:50 a.m. Chair Exercise

Tuesday 4/28

9:30 a.m. Chair Yoga
Noon Lunch
12:30 p.m. Tech Support appts.

Wednesday 4/29

10:10 a.m. Aerobics
10:50 a.m. Chair Exercise
Noon Lunch
12:45 p.m. Bingo

Thursday 4/30

9 a.m. Tai Chi
10:10 a.m. Tech Tutor
Noon Lunch
1 p.m. Pitch & Five Crowns

Friday 5/1

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.

Flexibility and Balance Chair Yoga – Wednesdays at 10 a.m. at the Town Hall. Drop-in \$6 (first

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WEST ALONG from page B1

some instinctive, hormonal song to impress a mate in a simplistic drive to preserve the species, to replace himself before dying. No, this little guy is *happy!* This song sparrow is singing out of joy. He's reminding us we have come through it all, and he wants the world to know.

April 10. The yard is *still* full of song. Other people out and about in the morning have noticed the joyful singing also. We all agree there's something different about this year. It rains at 7 am and the birds sing, it snows a wet white blanket and they sing even louder!

Our good fortune has been that more than a dozen song sparrows have lingered in the yard for more than two weeks. Perhaps some cold front is holding them up, but regardless, they're still here. So what's the rush?

It snowed the day before yesterday, so they stick around, scratch in the dormant garden and sing their fool heads off. The tree sparrows and juncos can only twitter compared to the little Caruso or Pavarotti announcing love, and the joy to be alive for at least one more springtime!

April 17. In the early evening, the hillsides of the deep oxbow across the river are in a rosy hue as the sun begins to go down.

There's the faint suggestion of

stirring life in the reddish buds of the maples that spread across the bowl-shaped *cirque* that forms my horizon. Erratic birch trunks glow white in the pink blush of the setting sun. The glow soon will turn to yellow, then orange to blue in the oblique rays of the end of the day.

Redwings think about their marsh roost across the river. Their females have begun arriving, several weeks after the males.

These rakish gentlemen rise up and wing their way to their home territory in yonder oxbow.

The river rushes loud in the dusk, white water still flashing and streaming, but less today than yesterday.

The sparrow lothario pipes a few notes, but he has fewer competitors this evening. The cardinal clan will arrive, the last to visit the yard for a late evening meal. The bats are due in around 8:05, later and later as the day grows longer. Now there's a cool blue sky, it'll be a chill night, but no one cares.

Below in the pond the frogs are going a-courtin', splashing and jostling in their mating frenzy. The peepers call in their silver voices, in memory of all our elders who passed on this year.

Who knows who the wood frogs sing for with their cacophonous quacks and guttural chucks?

I shall have to inquire when I get around to it!



The Great Falls Discovery Center

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

TURNERS FALLS – The Great Falls Discovery Center, located at 2 Avenue A, has been open since 2004. The Center has public displays that show the natural, cultural and industrial history of the Connecticut River watershed.

There are butterfly gardens, native plants, and an open lawn where people can learn about things like nature.

Learning is done through special educational programs and activities for children and adults.

The recent Jurassic Road show helped participants get to know the fossils, rocks, and dinosaur in our area. The stated purpose is to "support and enhance the Great Falls Discovery Center and the Connecticut River Watershed."

A group called the Friends of the Great Falls Discovery Center consists of volunteers who aim to foster public use and enjoyment of the center, the park and the refuge, and who put on fundraisers for the support of free programs. These fundraisers include a monthly live music event, with coffee to warm up the room.

They also educate the public about unique features of the Silvio O. Conte National Fish & Wildlife Refuge and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Connecticut River Greenway State Park, the sponsors of the Discovery Center.

Doug Clark, a recreation facility supervisor at the Connecticut River for ten years, says he guesses the Friends of Great Falls Discovery Center have been around for ten years.

When it comes to his thoughts on the job of conservation and ways to educate people about the topics, Clark says, "People who have never visited the center before are taken by surprise at how beautiful a center it is. I think the Great Falls Discovery Center excels at educating the public using displays and natural sounds of various habitats present through the

Connecticut River Valley, as well as through the many programs offered to the public and school groups that help show people just how important these habitats are and to let the public know what it takes to keep these habitats ready."

He states that the Discovery Center is "a partnership between the Department of Conservation and Recreation, and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service." He thinks of this partnership as the purpose of the center, which he calls an "eco-tourist destination."

Clark says he believes conservation is important because "without conservation of wildlife and plants, more and more species of animals and plants that were once plentiful will be endangered to the point of extinction."

As an example of that, Clark says, "In our own area here in Massachusetts, it was a rare sight after 1930 to see a turkey in the wild. This decline in numbers was due to habitat loss from land settlement and clearing during the 1800s. The state's restoration efforts through the last 50 years have restored the turkeys' numbers to a point that they are seen throughout the state."

Upcoming events that are put on by the center include a concert called "All Cooped Up" by a group called The Coopsters, part of a series for preschoolers led by Janel Nockleby where stories are told, activities are done, and crafts are created.

The Coopsters do special performances each spring at the center. One part is connected to early signs of spring. Another part of the series has to do with bird migration.

Doug Clark has strongly stated the importance of conservation, and how well the Great Falls Discovery Center does the job of it. The Center's quality is likely to continue for years to come.

See www.greatfallsdiscoverycenter.org for more information.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Publishers Clearing House Tries New Tack; Locked Gates on Plains a Hazard

Monday, 4/13

1:55 a.m. Caller reports that he was driving on Avenue A at 1:15 a.m. and observed a group of 10 or so people dressed in black robes; several parties had helmets or hats on, and one may have had a gun. Officer checked area; unable to locate.

8:06 a.m. Several reports of a pedestrian struck by a vehicle at Seventh Street and Avenue A. Victim later came to station to report the accident. He has a bruise on his hip but does not believe that he needs medical attention. Report taken.

12:34 p.m. Sunrise Terrace resident reports that for the past year someone has been ringing her doorbell 2-3 times a week around 2-3 a.m. When party opens the door, no one is there. Advised to call immediately when this happens.

12:38 p.m. Caller from Grove Street reports that she saw a deceased dog wrapped in a tarp near her home; she is concerned that this is not a proper burial for a dog. Referred to animal control officer.

2:50 p.m. Report of suspicious person walking around Unity Park. Male, unknown race, wearing jeans but no shirt, carrying a compound bow; may have climbed a tree at one point. Last seen leaving park in a black sedan driving toward F.L. Roberts. Unable to locate.

4:13 p.m. Suspected drug activity reported on Avenue A. Referred to an officer.

5:43 p.m. Report of ongoing problem with trespassing by neighbor on Union Street. Advised of options.

7:34 p.m. Report of brush fire on Turners Falls Road. Officer advises that MCFD had to break through a locked set of gates into the plains to gain access. Contact made with owners of gates, who will make sure that the police and fire chiefs get keys for them.

9:06 p.m. Report of assault on Wrightson Avenue: several parties reportedly showed up at a house and attacked a pregnant 21 year old female. Officers checking Park Street for involved parties. One female and the victim refused medical transport. Investigated.

Tuesday, 4/14

9:52 a.m. Caller from Ever-source reports that they received a call from one of their techs who is enroute to a Park Street apartment to shut off service; tenant reportedly threatened to "punch him in the face." Issue resolved without police intervention.

11:20 a.m. Report of flames visible from the rear of a building on Park Street. TFFD notified.

12:30 p.m. Request from

Greenfield PD to check a Fourth Street residence for a party suspected in the theft of products from a Greenfield salon yesterday. Officers spoke with party's father, who offered to make restitution to the salon for the items. GPD notified.

1:18 p.m. Caller from Turners Falls High School received a report of a student driving recklessly in the parking lot last week; vehicle was seen "playing chicken" with another vehicle, and legs and feet were observed hanging out of the windows. Call placed to owner of vehicle, who advised that his son was the driver. Father and son will take care of matter internally.

1:21 p.m. Permitted burn reported to be getting out of control at Greenfield Road and Randall Road. TFFD notified and responded. Burn extinguished.

1:25 p.m. Report of ongoing thefts from a store on Federal Street. Advised of options.

5:50 p.m. Caller reports that he observed a white female throw a trash bag out of a vehicle near Lake Pleasant Road then drive away. Referred to an officer.

6:45 p.m. Report of ongoing property boundary dispute on Greenfield Road. Advised of options.

10:18 p.m. Caller following up on previously reported situation. Party has "stuff" stored at caller's barn, including a trailer with a bathtub on it. Party was supposed to gather belongings this evening, but has not shown up. Caller requests extra patrols to watch for male party at this location. Party's vehicle described as a blue "hot rod" Ford truck. Referred to an officer.

Wednesday, 4/15

9:11 a.m. Oil spill reported at Montague City Road and Avenue A. DPW sanded area and placed "slow" signs for traffic.

1:50 p.m. Motorist reports that she was nearly hit by a vehicle that was trying to avoid three parties on skateboards coming down Unity Hill. Officer spoke to several youths in area, who denied involvement.

2:33 p.m. Report of larceny at Farren Care Center. Report taken.

4:12 p.m. Caller advises that she received a phone call from a male claiming to be with Publishers Clearing House. Caller hung up and then called back and told male, "I know you're not from Publishers Clearing House; what do you think I am? Stupid?" Male replied "Yes!" and threatened to bomb caller's house. Caller later came to station to speak with an officer.

Thursday, 4/16

9:00 a.m. Report of illegal dumping of mattresses on Millers Falls Road. Investigated.

7:32 p.m. Caller wishes to have on record that while riding his motorcycle near Unity and Prospect Streets, he was cut off by a China Gourmet delivery driver, who nearly caused an accident. Caller also complained to restaurant.

Friday, 4/17

7:09 a.m. Report of trespassing on East Main Street. Referred to an officer.

9:14 a.m. Caller from Central Street reports that parties were working on a motorcycle in a small shed on the property last night. Parties left engine running while they worked; caller is concerned that this could present a fire hazard. Referred to TFFD, who responded to residence to investigate.

11:04 a.m. Report of suspicious auto without plates parked in the Powertown lot behind Fourth Street for approximately one week. Referred to an officer.

4:28 p.m. Officer helped lost tractor-trailer unit make its way back to Hillside Plastics and assisted with traffic while vehicle turned around on Millers Falls Road.

4:54 p.m. Car vs. horse accident on Turners Falls Road. Vehicle damaged; horse walked away. Caller stated that two horses came running across the road "like in the movies." Responding officer found operator not to be at fault. Will follow up with horse owner.

7:45 p.m. Caller from Highland Street reports that her husband lent a planer to a male party in Florence, who is now refusing to return it. Officer attempted to contact male party; he already had Northampton PD on scene. Item will be

tagged and taken to PD for owner to pick up.

11:19 p.m. Neighbor disturbance on Eleventh Street. Officer requested Medicare for a female with possible injuries; checking area for involved party who left prior to officers' arrival.

Saturday, 4/18

1:09 a.m. Complaint of people playing basketball at Unity Park. Officer advised parties that 1 a.m. is not the best time to play basketball.

8:39 a.m. Caller spoke with party on Sixth Street regarding items that had spilled out of party's vehicle due to the excessive amount of trash in it. Party advised to clean up the items that spilled out.

12:42 p.m. Report of suspected drug activity on Fourth street; logged.

1:34 p.m. Caller following up regarding ongoing drug activity on T Street. Caller connected to detective's voicemail.

5:33 p.m.

[Redacted] was arrested and charged with assault and battery (domestic); strangulation or suffocation; and assault and battery.

Sunday, 4/19

12:11 a.m. Caller reports that there has been a large group of people in the alley behind St. Kazimierz yelling and screaming for the past 20 minutes.

[Redacted] was arrested on a default warrant; officers attempted to figure out transportation home for other parties.

3:11 p.m. Report of male party walking on the railing of the Turners Falls-Gill Bridge. Two parties located; believed to be same males that were dealt with previously for same issue. Parties reportedly just "dropped their pants" to officer.

[Redacted] was arrested and charged with disorderly conduct, subsequent offense.

10:02 p.m. Caller reports that from his backyard on Fifteenth Street, he can see flames near the high tension lines by the river bank. Officer and firefighters located group of high school kids with campfire. Fire extinguished and parties sent on way.

MONTAGUE CRYPTOJAM!

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STURGEON from page B1

When researchers helped fish from the downstream population over the dam, allowing them to return to Montague, the sturgeon did, indeed, spawn near the rock dam.

The researchers thus established that there is a single population of shortnose sturgeon in the Connecticut River: virtually all of the downstream fish were born upstream, and the presence of the Holyoke Dam inhibits the growth of the sturgeon population by preventing the downstream fish from returning to their spawning grounds.

The chances of the tiny upstream spawning population of 325 or so sturgeon sustaining itself over the next several decades are, according to Kynard, "practically zero." If shortnose sturgeon are to remain in the Connecticut River, it is essential that the downstream sturgeon are able to return upstream to Montague to spawn.

The fishway at the Holyoke Dam lifts primarily shad and other species that tend to migrate upstream en masse in the spring. While the occasional sturgeon does enter the fish lift and make its way upstream, by the time most of them get around to migrating to their spawning grounds (usually in the summer or fall), the lift has stopped operating for the year.

In addition to preventing fish from returning upstream to spawn, the Holyoke Dam presents a hazard to fish moving downstream, who can end up being diverted into the canals and eventually into the turbines that generate electricity, where some fish meet an untimely end. "The larger the fish, the higher the mortality. That is the way it is with turbine mortality," explained Kynard.

As a result of these findings, the operators of the Holyoke Dam have been charged with making changes at the Robert E. Barrett Fishway to facilitate both the upstream and downstream passage of this endangered species. The fishway at the Holyoke Dam will remain closed to the public this summer as this work is completed.

Even with improvements in Holyoke, however, serious threats to the sturgeon population remain in their upstream habitat. The natural spawning grounds of the sturgeon lie in the section of the Connecticut River that serves, in effect, as a bypass for the Turners Falls canal, through which most river water is

diverted. Low water levels and insufficient flow rates in the bypass area can deter sturgeon from spawning near the rock dam.

A secondary spawning area is located just outside of the overflow gates through which excess water spills over from the end of the canal into the river.

This area is subject to sudden large rushes of water due to releases from the Northfield Mountain reservoir that are diverted through the canal. These powerful surges can wash away the sturgeon eggs and embryos that lie on and under the rocks on the river floor on the other side of the overflow gates.

Kynard, who described himself as "a friend to the fish" but no foe of industry, opined that at least a partial solution to this problem could be as simple as diverting water coming from Northfield into the river bypass rather than into the canal during prime spawning times for sturgeon.

Near the end of the presentation, Kynard revealed that our Connecticut River shortnose sturgeon are demonstrably genetically distinct from those in other rivers of North America.

Shortnoses from the rivers of the southern U.S. can be grouped together genetically, as can those from Maine and the Maritimes, but our population stands out as unique.

The current licenses for both the Turners Falls Hydroelectric Project and the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage expire in 2018. FirstLight, the operator of both facilities, must apply to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission for relicensing by April 2016.

Because licenses are valid for 30-50 years, the period leading up to relicensing presents a rare opportunity to present evidence that could affect the operations of these facilities.

The Connecticut River Watershed Council (CRWC) is closely monitoring and providing feedback during the early stages of the relicensing process, during which the effects of the facilities upon the ecology of the river are studied. Interested readers can learn more about the CRWC at www.criver.org.

Beer drinkers who feel kindly towards the sturgeon may want to keep an eye out for the People's Pint's Shortnose Stout, available throughout western Massachusetts; a portion of the proceeds from sales of this brew are donated to the CRWC.

1676 from page B1

of the quake of 1663 along the St. Lawrence for much of America's subsequent Colonial history, including that of Franklin County.

Intense shaking along the St. Lawrence River in 1663 began on February 5, the coldest time of year, and a warming fire would have been burning inside the homes of these northern tribes. The "people of the long houses" built their homes in the shape of today's "Quonset huts," and many were large enough to house 50 or more occupants.

The roof was covered with elm or birch bark, and at the height of shaking many "long houses" either collapsed or were consumed by fire; many native people were rendered homeless and cast into the bitter cold of a Canadian winter.

Jesuit missionary scribes in Quebec at the time wrote about this quake in rather lurid terms. The shaking lasted for at least one half-hour. That's incredible! A quake in the Atlantic in 1755 that lasted for only 8 minutes still completely destroyed the city of Lisbon, Portugal, and even toppled buildings in Spain.

The San Francisco earthquake of 1906 was also short-lived; in barely 45 seconds of shaking it destroyed more than 28,000 buildings and left the city in flames.

In 1663, the aftershocks also seemed unending; the earth shook for seven months, from February till August, and a few aftershocks were almost as large as the first quake. For a detailed discussion of this quake, check out heritagetoronto.org. In that site's search window look for the "1663 earthquake."

Although it's difficult to accurately assess the magnitude of any quake that happened long ago, it was estimated to be 7.5 or higher – a "major" quake. But that figure might be low; magnitude estimates

alone do not begin to explain what happened in this event.

When the shaking finally ended, thousands of acres of forest along the St. Lawrence River had vanished. Where great forests had stood there were only empty fields that seemed freshly plowed. Many trees were buried so deeply that only their topmost branches were visible. Other trees were buried upside down, with just their roots protruding from the ground. Springs either stopped flowing or were so fouled with sulfurous odors that their water was undrinkable. Many small rivers ran with a yellow or red color.

Fissures created during the quake seemed like bottomless abysses whose depths couldn't be plumbed. Whole mountains had vanished; they ended up in the St. Lawrence River, which had become so defiled with mud and muck it seemed that one could walk across it.

Waterfalls near the river that previously had a great height were brought low. Two mountains, with all their forests, overturned into the river; one was quickly eroded while the other became a small island. In this muck and mire, white beluga whales that had been trapped by the mud gave voice to their distress, filling the air with a most pitiful bellowing.

The Heritage Toronto website notes that fields of "thousands of arpents" had become utterly bare, where a short time before there were only forests. (The area represented by an "arpent" depends on who – and when – you asked. In the modern era it is about an acre. Some older references describe it as either 4.5 or 2.5 acres. By any measure, "thousands of arpents" is still a large land area.)

At the "Pointe aux Allouettes," a place with lots of birds more than 50 miles from the quake's epicen-

ter, an entire forest had become detached from the land, and slid into the river, where it offered a view of great trees, tall and straight, which appear to have grown in the river overnight.

Some lakes completely disappeared, while others sprang into being.

These descriptions were those offered by the Jesuit missionaries of the time, and they're all part of the story to be found on the Heritage Toronto website.

During the shaking, a land area that might have been as large as the town of Bernardston was swept into the river. However unbelievable that might seem, the numbers tell the story. Bernardston has an area of about 23 square miles, roughly 4.6 by 5 miles. At 640 acres per square mile, this equals 14,720 acres.

That's the acreage of Bernardston, which is home to many thousands of animals, large and small.

In the wake of a snowy winter, for example, hundreds of deer come out of the woods in spring to dine on the weeds growing in an elevated 200+ acre pasture near the town's center.

The northern bank of the St. Lawrence is hundreds of meters above the river. During the past ice age, that area was scraped down to bedrock by glaciers that might have been a mile or two thick. The topsoil that supported the forests along the St. Lawrence has never been terribly deep since then.

The shaking loosened thousands of acres of loosely held topsoil and dumped it into the St. Lawrence, taking with it many animals on which the native people of the region had come to depend.

The carnage along the St. Lawrence in 1663 can only be imagined.



LOOKING BACK: 10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Here's the way it was April 23, 2005: News from the Montague Reporter's archive.

Raw Sewage in the Connecticut River

Sewer users will see their rates rise by two-thirds within five years if they are forced to foot the entire bill for planned improvements to the town's sewer lines and wastewater pollution control facility.

Improvements will cost the town \$5.7 million, raising an average sewer user's annual bill from \$350 to \$570 by the year 2010.

The town is under notice from the state and federal Environmental Protection Agency to correct ongoing violations of the Clean Water Act resulting from the discharge of raw sewage directly to the Connecticut River at two combined sewer overflow (CSO) locations in Turners Falls and one in Montague City.

Town planner Robin Sherman commented, "We can't be discharging sewage into the Connecticut River. But it is completely inappropriate to finance (the entire cost of the improvements) through the sewer rates."

Downtown Spring Cleanup

There will be a downtown Spring Cleanup this Saturday in Turners Falls. Interested residents and individuals will be meeting at the corner of Avenue A and Third Street at 10 a.m.

The group will begin on Third Street as the Highway department has recently cleaned up Avenue A. The cleanup will include trash pickup, weeding, sweeping, and raking.

If possible, participants should bring gloves, rakes, brooms and water. The cleanup will continue until at least Noon on Saturday.

The cleanup is in honor of Earth Day, April 22nd, and in preparation for the Great Falls Art Fest on Saturday, April 30 and the Arts & Blooms Studio Tours on April 30 and May 1.

We would like the downtown to look as good as possible for the Crabapple Blossom Festival which runs from April 30 to May 7.

Operation Slow Burn

Northwestern district attorney Elizabeth D. Scheibel announced on Wednesday, April 20th, the completion of Operation Slow Burn, a large-scale undercover narcotics

operation in the towns of Greenfield and Montague involving more than 60 defendants.

The operation was developed by Greenfield police chief David Guilbault and Montague police chief Ray Bukowski and staff sergeant Gary Billings, at the direction of Greenfield mayor Christine Forgey and Montague selectboard chair Pat Allen.

These officials believe street level drug dealing leads to increased assaults, robberies, burglaries, and larcenies, as well as a negative impact on the public's use of business and town facilities.

Undercover officers made multiple hand-to-hand purchases from 64 individuals in Greenfield and Montague, involving heroin, crack and powder cocaine, oxycontin, mushrooms, and marijuana.

The planning and execution of the operation involved more than 100 law enforcement personnel.

The operation was directed by Sgt. John Newton, Sgt. Joe Burge, and detective Kevin Rowell of the Greenfield police department, detective Lee Laster of the Montague police department, and Massachusetts state police officer Chris Wilcox.

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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

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

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

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

EXHIBITS:

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Trash to Treasure*. Artwork created with trash from the Connecticut River watershed by regional artists. Through 5/27. Details at www.turnersfallsriverculture.org

Avenue A Storefront Galleries, #106-#112 Avenue A: Installations of work by Paul Root and Julianne Jones, video by artists from Millers Falls Arts Bridge. Through 5/13.

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. Work on display 4/2 to 5/2/15.

Deerfield Arts Bank, Deerfield: *Black and White and Read All Over*, group exhibit 4/16-5/17.

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.

Sawmill River Arts, Montague: *Work by Marie Welch*, 4/1-4/30

Barnes Gallery, Leverett Crafts & Arts: *Will Sieruta, Mixed Media Paintings*, through 5/31. Opening Reception: Sunday May 10, 4-6 p.m.

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS:

Seeking Water Dancers for Riversong May 16, Turners Falls. You will need stamina for a full day: co-creating and rehearsing and then performing the ceremony after the sun sets that night. Dancers arrive by 2:30 pm so we can begin at 3:00 p.m. We will be using illuminated hula hoops for the dance so it would be helpful if you know how to use one. Call Phyllis (413.369.9985) to RSVP by May 1.

Drummers Desired for Riversong May 16, Turners Falls. Drummers arrive by 3:00 p.m. on the afternoon of the event. Please bring a drum. Contact Ricardo (ricardofrota3@gmail.com) to RSVP.

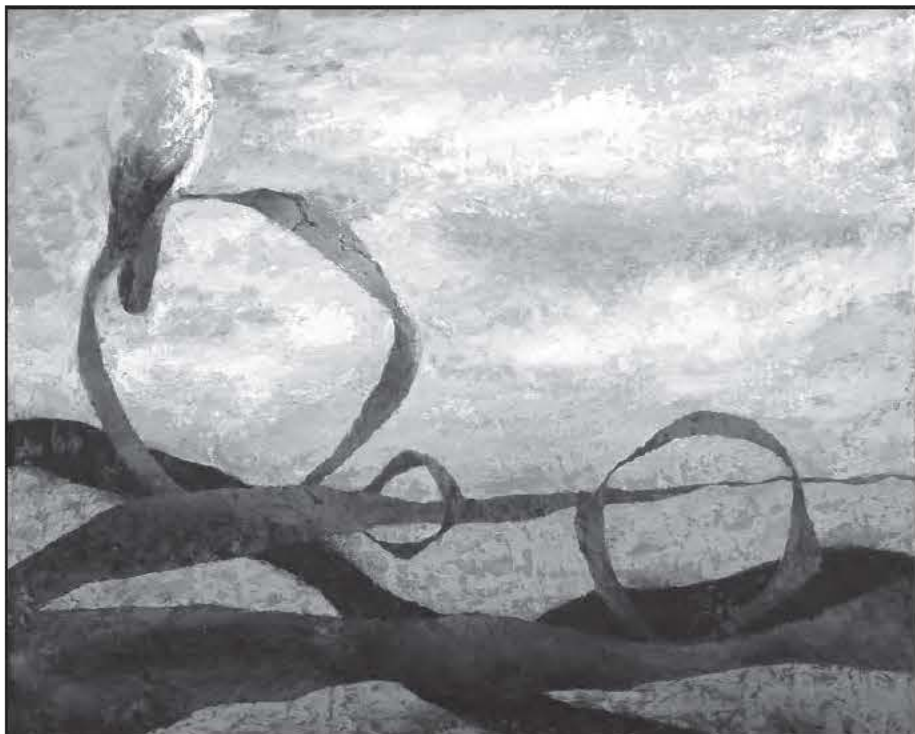
Seeking Cool Cats for a special feline feature at Nina's Nook in Turners Falls June-July 2015! Fantastical, floppy, funny, frumpy, foolish, just let the fur fly for this show of fine art and craft. Also seeking practical cat items such as treats, toys, collars, etc. Interested consignors please contact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

EVENTS:

THURSDAY, APRIL 23

Augusta Savage Gallery, UMass: *Max Armen, The Origin of Line*, Opening Reception 5 p.m. Through May 7.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Maris Otter, Folk/Rock* by Alyssa Kelly & Jen Spengla, 8 p.m.



Artwork by Martha Brouwer, part of the group exhibit "Black and White and Read All Over" at the Deerfield Arts Bank through May 17.

FRIDAY, APRIL 24

The Bing Arts Center, Springfield: *Indie Rock Show with Mark Schwaber, Wishbone Zoe and Crowdrider*. \$ 8 p.m.

Academy of Music, Northampton: *Heather Maloney CD Release with Suitcase Junket*, \$ 8 p.m.

Arts Block, Greenfield: *Irma La Douce* performed by Arena Civic Theatre, opening performance, \$ 8 p.m.

Montague Book Mill, Montague: *Ray Mason*, \$ 8 p.m.

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: *Holly May* and special guest *The Gypsy Lights*. Holly May is pop singer/songwriter from Charlemont who tried out on "The Voice." 8 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Automatic Slim*, Chicago-style blues, 9 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *BackitUp* presents *No Requests*, 9:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, APRIL 25

Asparagus Valley Pottery Trail. Franklin County. Visit local pottery studios on this annual tour. For details see www.apotterytrail.com. Saturday and Sunday.

Homegrown Coffeehouse, Temple Isreal, Greenfield: *The Funny Side of the Street* with Christine Lavin and Don White. A night of comedy unlike any other. \$ 7 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Sierra Leone Refugee All Stars*, Fundraising performance to benefit humanitarian aid in Sierra Leone. \$ 7 p.m.

Arts Block, Greenfield: *Irma La Douce* performed by Arena Civic Theatre, opening performance, \$ 8 p.m.

Mocha Mayas, Shelburne Falls: *Prester John*: Guitar, Mandolin, Vocals. Django meets Stravinsky

THURSDAY, APRIL 30

Deerfield Arts Bank, Deerfield: "Share a Read" Come read three pages from a favorite book or other work to share. 6 p.m.

Montague Bookmill, Montague: *City of Four*, jazz quartet. \$ 8 p.m.

FRIDAY, MAY 1

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

Bing Arts Center, Springfield: *Jim Kaminski*, legendary Valley blues and rock guitarist. \$ 8 p.m.

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POLAND from page B1

ceilings are also decorated with carvings of birds and flowers.

Fireplaces laid up with brook stones are arranged in an original floral pattern. Each house has a wrought iron fence around the property, no two alike in their decorative design.

A sheep, or two, are passed along from yard to yard to trim the lawn once the grass has grown, with not a lawn mower to be seen, anywhere. Cows staked out along the shoulders of the Autobahn keep the grass trimmed. We once spotted a herd of hundreds of sheep quickly munching their way across a grass light aircraft landing strip.

With the abundance of snow on the steep mountain slopes, the Tatra area has become a ski resort in recent years.

Polish children are becoming fluent in German, Russian and now, English, as Brits and Americans come to tour in summer and ski in winter. Older Poles are not as adept in adopting other languages.

Young Germans often come to tour the death camps where six million Jews, Gypsies and others were gassed and burned. To soften the knowledge young Germans have gained recently, since the holocausts were not reported in any German textbooks until recent years, there is a tour of Schindler's Factory, so that they would know that not all Germans were as cruel.

Since I'd continued my parents' custom of sending "care" packages to relatives, we received a heartfelt welcome. A day or two later, it snowed a half inch or so, there in the South. We moved on to the plains of Northern Poland to search for my father's birthplace of Zalesie, which means "By the Woods".

Towns of that name showing no shortage, none of which being my father's birthplace. Strangely enough, while it had snowed in the mountains of the South, in the North by the Russian border, it was warm

enough for us to go for a swim, though it was definitely not a tourist mecca. Some Russian soldiers at a checkpoint were downright hostile, and we did not tarry.

We drove on in our rental car to a good sized town with an upscale restaurant. Debbie brushed her hair and fixed her lipstick before going in. A waitress, dressed in a nice uniform with a little white apron sporting ruffled trim, seated us, and left.

Debbie and her husband Mike had studied Polish at a college in Seattle. They could read and write Polish and even speak it, though their accent made it sound as if they were speaking Swahili.

After hearing their Polish, I told them that it reminded me of a cartoon I'd recently seen in a New Yorker Magazine. A tourist, with the Eiffel tower in the background, is reading from a phrase book, asking a policeman the way to the depot. "Sir, may I fondle your buttocks," the caption reads.

When the very professional waitress of this upscale restaurant came to take our order, Debbie, proudly speaking her Swahili-accented Polish, pointed to the word *befsztyk* and attempted to determine what kind of beef steak the menu referred to.

The waitress stuck her pencil in her beautifully coiffured hair with a sweep of her hand, and put the order pad in the pocket of her ruffled apron.

With great dignity, our waitress leaned forward, holding clenched hands to her temples with forefingers pointed straight ahead.

She leaned forward until her body was parallel to the floor, then cried out, "Mo-o-o!", swung her butt to one side and slapped herself on the rump.

After our mime left with our rump steak order, we exploded in laughter.

After lunch, we continued our quest for Zalesie. As night fell we arrived at a large town. We circled the



PHOTO COURTESY JOE PARAYEN
The author's escort to the hotel.

town looking for a Polish Hotel.

Unlike the Hilton hotels in Poland, or even the Polish Tourist hotels, the ordinary Polish hotels have a very modest sign about a foot high and a foot and a half long, on the side of the building. They are often unlighted and hard to spot, especially since the street lights were off as we searched.

We circled the dark deserted streets in vain. In Poland, all honest people are home by nine o'clock in small towns. Many towns shut off their street lights at 10 p.m. This was one of them.

We started another tour of the town when a police car pulled up, lights flashing, blocking our way. Two policemen got out - two very unfriendly policemen.

Pointing to the number plate, one of them demanded to know what we were doing so far from Warsaw - and at such an ungodly hour. It was now about 10:30 p.m.

"Hotel. We look for hotel," Mike said in his Swahili Polish.

"Ha! A likely story. No hotels in this town. *Papiery!*" the policeman demanded of Mike, who's scared to death of policemen. Mike's hands shook as he handed the policeman the rental papers. Debbie, also scared, was biting her lip.

"Dad! For heaven's sake, talk to

them. Talk to them!" Debbie said in a panic.

"May I fondle your buttocks?" I politely asked the cop.

Debbie gave me such a jab with her elbow that I thought she'd fractured a rib.

"Dad! Cut it out! Talk to them in Polish!"

As soon as the hostile cops heard me say "*Amerykanski*," their whole demeanor changed.

"There's no hotel in this town, but we take to one. Follow us!" and off they sped.

Mike followed. We drove thirty miles, or more, to a brightly lit Polish Government tourist hotel. Brightly lit, and expensive. Not as expensive as a Hilton, but nowhere near as reasonable as an ordinary Polish hotel.

We bid the cops a cheery farewell and went to the hotel door. It was locked. A doorman dozed in a chair. I rattled the door. He got up and unlocked the door. I thanked him and began a conversation with him in Polish. I told him about my search for my father's birthplace and he seemed touched by it. I told him how the police had mistaken us for robbers when we were only looking for a reasonably priced Polish hotel.

The doorman jumped up. "Why,

there's a Polish hotel right across the road, just a short distance away." The doorman marched up to the desk and began to berate the clerk.

"What's the matter with you, taking these good countrymen's money? A month's pay you'll be charging. Robbery, I say. Half the night's gone and just across the road they can get a few hours' sleep without paying a ransom."

The desk clerk hung her head. "What's going on?" Debbie asked me, bewildered by the shouting doorman.

"We're going across the road to a Polish hotel."

Sure enough, there was a Polish hotel over the hill just far enough away to be out of sight. There were posters up, advertising some sort of sporting event. This door was also locked. I rattled the door to wake the doorman.

He let us in and woke the desk clerk. I asked for two rooms. The girl charged us \$10. She took us to a suite of two bedrooms and a living room with a balcony. The living room had a thick maroon rug and crystal chandelier.

When we asked if they had a soda machine, the girl said she'd make tea. Soon she was back with a tray of tea, cream and sugar. She didn't want to take any money, but Debbie insisted.

She then asked the room clerk if she would wake us at 7 a.m. The girl said their clock was broken and she had no watch. Debbie said, "Take mine."

Next morning at 7 o'clock, the clerk knocked on the door. She began to take off the watch, but Debbie put her hand on the girl's wrist. The girl looked puzzled. Debbie said "*Prezent*."

The girl was overwhelmed and began to cry. "Thank you, thank you; I never had a watch before", she said in Polish, hugging Debbie, and smiling through her tears.



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