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YEAR 13 - NO. 18

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

FEBRUARY 19, 2015

Montague Special Town Meeting Inches Over Quorum, Approves All Articles

By JEFF SINGLETON

The February 18 Montague special town meeting officially lasted for only an hour, but members had to wait for an extra half hour at the outset to achieve a quorum. The meeting was scheduled to begin at 6:30 p.m., but at 6:55 moderator Ray Godin announced that the body was still two votes short of a legal meeting.

Fortunately two members, bundled in cold weather gear, entered the auditorium several minutes later and the meeting began.

The meeting approved all seven items on its agenda, but several engendered a good deal of discussion and even some amendments, all of

which were voted down.

Article 1, which appropriated \$10,078 to cover a recent contract negotiated with town employees, passed without much debate.

But a request by the police department for \$15,000 to cover "unanticipated costs," including a new transmission for a police cruiser, was challenged by town meeting member and building inspector David Jensen.

Jensen questioned why the department needed approximately \$3,400 to repair the vehicle's transmission when there was still money in its repair budget. He proposed an amendment to reduce the appropriation by that amount.

Police chief Chip Dodge, reviewing the recent history of the repair budget, argued that he would run out of money by the end of the year without a supplemental appropriation. Town meeting voted down Jensen's amendment - by a close voice vote - and then approved the original request.

Article 3, which proposed to supplement the legal budget by \$22,500, also generated a good deal of discussion. After a lengthy presentation of legal expenditures by town administrator Frank Abbondanzio, town meeting member Jeanne Golrick of Millers Falls asked town officials a series of six questions.

see MEETING page A5

Turners Celebrates Black History Month

By TIA FATTARUSO

Richie Richardson said he didn't know the first thing about Turners Falls - he didn't know what "Turners" meant. "It was just a word to me," he said. Richardson moved to town last summer, and Rodney Madison was one of the first people he met here. "[Rodney] was my introduction to Turners Falls. He's the reason I'm here. It's an incredible place to be."

The two became fast friends. Last November they began a conversation about bringing a performer up from New York City, Richardson's home after moving from Trinidad in 1990. Richardson pointed out that February, Black History Month, would be a good time to feature the event.

"I'm interested in planting the seed of creative intent," Richardson said. That seed has blossomed into two nights of gathering with live performances, a "living museum" at Madison's shop, Madison on the



FATTARUSO PHOTO

Richie Richardson (left) and Rodney Madison (right) are each organizing a public event this coming week in Turners Falls.

Avenue, from February 22 to 28, and black history-related window displays on Avenue A.

The first event will start at 4 p.m. on Sunday, February 22 at Madison on the Avenue. It will feature an ethnic pot luck dinner, Tabla music from local musician and

painter Max Armen, performances by Sister Gloria Matlock, Madison, and local youth, and a multimedia presentation.

Madison said of his performance, "I wanted to tell the story of African American history from

see HISTORY page A4

Leverett to Discuss Proposed Expansion of Amherst-Pelham School Region

By JEFF SINGLETON

A proposal to expand Amherst-Pelham Regional School District to include elementary schools will be presented to a public forum at Leverett Elementary School on Thursday, February 26 at 7 p.m.

Currently the Amherst-Pelham regional district serves only middle and high school students from Amherst, Pelham Leverett, and Shutesbury. The

elementary schools in the four towns are in three separate districts.

The proposal to expand the middle/high school district to include elementary schools was developed by a subcommittee of the regional high school school committee.

The subcommittee, known as Regional Agreement Working Group (RAWG), presented a series of amendments to the current district agreement to the school committee

on January 13.

According to Leverett School Committee member Kip Fonsh, "This meeting is intended to provide residents of Leverett an opportunity to acquaint themselves with the proposals RAWG sent to the Regional SC."

"It is an opportunity for residents to raise questions, make comments, and offer suggestions. This information is to be provided to the RSC."

The proposal would allow elementary schools to enter the current Amherst-Pelham region, but would not require all four towns to join at the elementary level for the new consolidated district to be viable. One or two towns could, in theory, retain their own elementary schools.

This potential for a "hybrid" district leads to a complex series of amendments to the current district agreement. These focus on the process by which individual towns would join; the composition and method of electing a new regional school committee; and the method for assessing member towns for

see LEVERETT page A7

The Will to Win:TFHS Boys Basketball Heads to the Playoffs

By MATT ROBINSON

What's the difference between an 18-and-2 team and a 12-and-8 team? I think the Boys' Basketball Coach, Gary Mullins can answer that question. After all, in the past 30 years, Mullins has coached hundreds of basketball games. This season however, has seen barn-burners, blowouts, come-from-behind wins and overtime games.

Do you remember the overtime victory against Smith Academy in January? Or the game against Pioneer which was tied in the third quarter and Turners scored an amazing 30 fourth-quarter points? What about the 5-point victory against Mahar? Or when Turners held on to beat Mohawk? Or when they were trailing Smith 21 to 7 in the first quarter?

Any of these games could have gone either way. But the Boys in Blue found a way to win them all: fighting for the ball, going for the steal or the block, trying the miracle shot and playing through exhaustion and foul trouble to prove they had the will to win.

The last three games, Frontier, Pioneer, and Mahar, were no exceptions. With the Hampshire Title on the line, the Boys in Blue managed to pull out wins. And with those hard-fought, exhausting victories comes the Hampshire Conference Title. Their record improved to 15 and 1 in the Conference, and for years to come, future school kids will see this season emblazoned on the banner in the gym.

Turners Falls 65, Frontier 64 (OT)

On Tuesday, February 10, the Indians defeated the Frontier Red Hawks in overtime. For both teams, the game was very important. For the Tribe, the game meant staying



DAVID HOITT PHOTO

Tionne Brown steals the ball and fires off a shot that breaks a 69-69 tie with only 35 seconds remaining in the game.

atop the Hampshire Conference and postseason ranking. For the Hawks, it was do-or-die. "Frontier had their back up against the wall because a loss would eliminate them from tournament play," Coach Mullins explained after the game. "They were 6-10 going into the game and needed to win 4 straight."

Both teams fought, struggled and never gave up, playing each other hard all the way to the final buzzer and into overtime.

Frontier had a slight lead after the first quarter, 15-14, but Turners came back in the second. At halftime, the score was 33-26 Blue. Both teams scored 11 in the third period, but Frontier managed to tie it up at the end of regulation, 56 all.

Then came overtime. That's when ten exhausted kids took the court and did everything they could do to try to win it for their team.

Overtime was as close as the rest of the game had been, and the teams were tied with only 12 seconds left on the clock.

see BASKETBALL page A8



REPORTER FILE PHOTO

The proposal would permit one or two of the towns to retain their elementary schools.

The Montague Reporter

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Careful What You Ask For

On Monday afternoon, a CSX train carrying 3 million gallons of crude oil derailed in rural Boomer, West Virginia, caught fire and spilled two dozen cars' worth of its contents into the Kanawha River.

The oil had been drilled in North Dakota and was being transported to Yorktown, Virginia for export. Last April another CSX train on the same route exploded in Lynchburg, Virginia. It's an increasingly common catastrophe, as a domestic shale drilling boom outpaces pipeline construction: more oil was spilled on American railroads in 2013 alone than in the previous 37 years put together.

The worst accident so far happened a mere five-hour drive from Montague, when 47 sleeping villagers in Lac-Mégantic, Quebec were killed when a runaway trainful of – you guessed it – North Dakota crude exploded in their midst.

Big industry's proposed solution is to accelerate the buildout of pipeline infrastructure. Oil pipelines are certainly safer than oil trains, and BTU for BTU, gas pipelines are a safer way to transport energy than oil ones, despite their own tendency to occasionally produce horrifying 300-foot fireballs.

Energy independence was a buzzword from the oil shocks of the 1970s until 2007, the US's peak year for fossil fuel imports. But merely refocusing the extractive apparatus onto our own continent's crust isn't any better.

A "resource curse" dynamic – the political sickness that sets in when a material becomes more valuable to the world's owners than the humans in its proximity – has always existed in pockets in our country, from Appalachian coalfields through Texas oil country to the scattered uranium mines in the West. In the midst of the so-called domestic energy revolution made possible by advances in fracking for shale gas and oil, these industrial corridors are expanding.

Some are historically chronically polluted zones. The poor Kanawha River valley region is targeted for mountaintop removal coal mining, and four major chemical spills have occurred into the river and its tributary the Elk recently – including last year's major release of a coal processing agent into the Elk by the aptly named Freedom Industries, poisoning the city of Charleston's water supply.

But not all rural areas are the same, and just as with urban and suburban neighborhoods, the health and safety risks populations face

here tend to be linked to patterns of poverty and affluence.

The continuing string of devastating accidents indicates that the industry does not properly bear the cost of the risks they take. Proper regulation could overcome this negligence – in fact, it could separate safety questions out entirely from the more serious threats burning fossil fuels poses in our lifetimes.

We are thinking about all these things as we watch the biggest energy controversy in our region unfold: the proposed Kinder-Morgan pipeline that would ship Marcellus shale gas into New England.

We wouldn't want to live near enough to the pipeline – or one of its compressor stations – to feel even a one in one hundred thousand chance that we would one day burn to death because of it.

But appeals to local safety fears do not necessarily help build a movement that can challenge fossil fuel use. Just as relocating extraction did not solve the underlying problem, rerouting delivery around better politically resourced rural areas will also do little long-term good.

We must find ways to slow production and consumption of fossil fuels, not just stymie its delivery.

One good piece of news we've heard from opponents is that they are building an alliance with New York and New Hampshire-based activists, to coordinate challenges to the project on a larger scale.

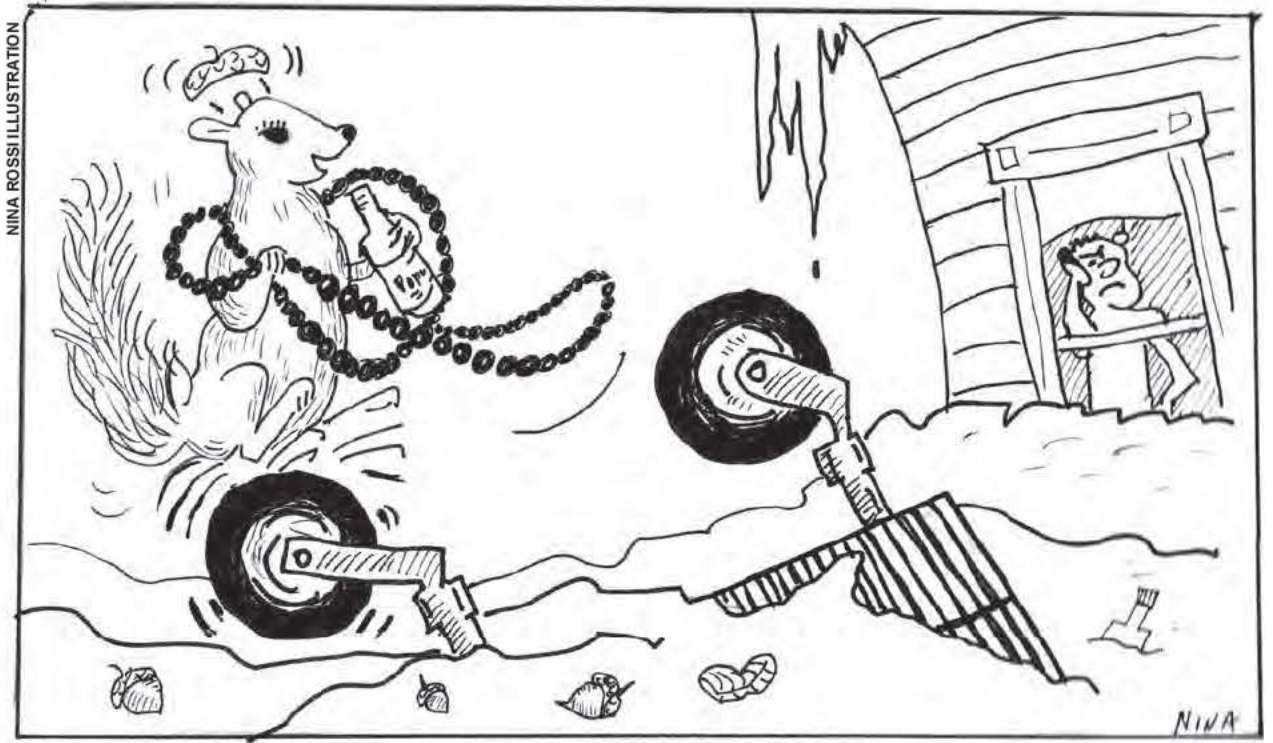
We hope this trend continues, and that the coalition grows to include Pennsylvania residents of fracking country, and urban and suburban end-users of gas and electricity.

Another good sign is that they have shifted from simply insisting that the incoming gas is *intended* for export, an unprovable talking point even if true, to opposing a project by second company that would export it. That should be where the stronger case is made, for who could justify exporting gas from a supposedly gas-starved region?

To succeed in its goals, this movement must continue to connect the dots, and develop from simply insisting the project is unnecessary to actually rendering it unnecessary.

When the true cost of burning fossil fuels is borne by the companies seeking to profit from it, accidents like Monday's will become a curious historical footnote.

Until then, opponents of single aspects of the system should be careful what they ask for, and how.



"So wait, if the Mardi Gras squirrel sees its shadow, we get how many more weeks of this?"

GUEST EDITORIAL

Switching Electricity Suppliers?

By SALLY PICK

MONTAGUE – As a home energy consultant, I have recently received a number of questions from homeowners understandably shocked and outraged by the huge jump in their electricity bill this year. They're asking for my opinion about switching their electricity supplier to one that offers cheaper prices.

I offer the following: buyer beware! While suppliers may offer a discount from *current* high prices, they may lock you in to a price for several years that might be higher than coming electricity rates. They probably won't mention that "wholesale prices for electricity and natural gas are running well below last year, and power plants are getting the fuel they need to run, even in very cold weather," according to the Conservation Law Foundation (CLF), a trusted environmental nonprofit.

CLF predicts that extreme winter price spikes will be much less likely in the future because of the addition of more Liquefied Natural Gas to supplement *existing* natural gas pipelines during our coldest, most energy-demanding weather, the continued expansion of energy efficiency and renewables, and pricing and market reforms, all helping to lower electricity prices.

And this is happening without any additional natural gas pipelines, despite the recent reports that more natural gas pipelines are necessary to prevent high energy prices.

If electricity prices are lower, why is my bill so high, you ask? Consumer prices are high because utilities locked into high price contracts until the spring. However, prices are expected to drop significantly when utilities set their next round of pricing. (Eversource, formerly WMECo, will set its new prices for its next 6-month contract on July 1.)

For guaranteed lower electricity bills over the long term, I recommend "negawatts," a term coined to draw attention to money that you save by *not* using electricity.

That's to say, by dropping your electricity use long term through efficiency measures, you will lower your electricity bills and spend a little for years of savings.

Residential electricity use has been going up since the 1990s, driven a great deal by the addition of more home computers, TVs, and other electronics, so many homes have op-

portunities to lower their use.

While I'm not suggesting you get rid of your electronic devices, you may want to try ways to decrease wasted electricity drawn from devices that are left on standby.

For example, you could set your computer to sleep or hibernate automatically after a few minutes of idling, and purchase advanced power strips for computer-related items and/or for your TV/DVD/DVR/cable box (turning off your cable box does *not* interfere with your service).

Advanced power strips automatically turn off all items plugged into the strip when you turn off the one device (e.g. TV or computer) plugged into the master plug.

If you have a free Mass Save energy assessment, they will give you *free* advanced power strips, and they will install free high efficiency light bulbs, including long-lasting LEDs.

Mass Save is currently offering the following rebates for replacing the big electricity users with qualifying efficient ones: a \$50 rebate on qualifying high-efficiency fridges; a \$200 rebate for high-efficiency electric clothes dryers; and a \$750 rebate to replace an electric hot water heater with an extremely efficient heat-pump water heater, which will be the new standard for electric hot waters this spring. See more information at MassSave.com or (866) 527-7283.

If you do want to explore switching electricity suppliers, ask the supplier the following questions before making a decision:

- What power sources generate their electricity supply (some lower cost suppliers generate a large percentage of their power from coal and/or nuclear powered facilities)?
- If they claim to be green energy suppliers, ask how they define "green".
- As is the case with one company I researched, is the company among the Toxic 100 Air Polluters, an index from UMass that "identifies the top U.S. air polluters among the world's largest corporations?" (see www.peri.umass.edu/toxic100/)
- Do they have fees for starting or terminating a contract?
- If they have a trial period, how long is it, and what is the fee for terminating a contract after the trial period ends?
- How long has the supplier been in business?
- What rate options (e.g. senior discounts) does the supplier provide?

• Is the contract for a fixed rate, or does it change to a variable rate?

• How long will the quoted price be guaranteed?

• If you choose to change suppliers, how do you go about it, and when can you make that change?

There is one truly green power supplier that I'm aware of, Mass Energy, a nonprofit which offers two green power sources: their New England Wind fund, which sources 100% of its power from wind turbines, and New England GreenStart, regionally sourced from low-impact hydro, wind, solar, and digester gas from cow manure.

They are the only green power supplier that Eversource allows, and are also offered through National Grid. While their prices are a few cents more per kWh, the added amount is tax-deductible and supports the development of renewables in New England. You might think about using savings from your efficiency measures to purchase this green power supply. More information is available at www.massenergy.org/renewable-energy.

By the way, Eversource lists the following power sources from their suppliers, from April 2013 through March 2014, as reported in their December 2014 bill insert:

Natural gas 31.41%; nuclear 28.31%; "imported power" (not defined) 16.9%; oil 6.67%; wind 5.7%; coal 4.21%; municipal trash 3.6%; other renewable ("includes fuel cells utilizing renewable fuel sources, landfill gas, & ocean thermal") 1.67%; small hydro (under 30 MW) 0.58%; large hydro (over 30 MW) 0.43%; solar 0.3%; and biomass (wood & plant matter) 0.12%.

They have not yet provided more current power source information, which I requested several weeks ago, but, with Vermont Yankee having closed at the end of 2014, it's fairly safe to assume that their percentage of nuclear has dropped.

Lastly, you may want to explore solar power for your home when new solar loans of 3% or lower are made available at participating local banks this spring. Keep an eye out for updates about these loans on this website: www.masscec.com/programs/mass-solar-loan.

Sally Pick works as a home energy consultant, and serves on the Montague Energy Committee. She offers this opinion in a personal capacity.

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LOCAL BRIEFS

JESSICA LARKIN ILLUSTRATION

Compiled by DON CLEGG

This Friday, February 20, at 7 p.m., the **Wendell Climate Change Group** is hosting a discussion on the proposed Kinder Morgan pipeline at the Wendell Free Library.

Julia Blyth of Northfield will bring video footage showing the devastating effects of pipeline compressor stations such as the one Kinder Morgan wants to build in that town.

Athol's Hattie Nestel will show first-person interviews with opponents of the pipeline.

The discussion will be moderated by Wendell farmer and environmental activist Laurel Facey. Light refreshments will be served.

Enjoy a **Mardi Gras Celebration** with Moonlight and Morning Star Saturday, February 21, from 10 a.m. to noon at Greenfield Savings Bank in Turners Falls.

Thanks to the sponsorship of the

Montague Cultural Council, Moonlight and Morning Star are able to present the music of many New Orleans cultures. Their unique and crowd-pleasing vocal and instrumental skills are sure to delight families and folks of all ages. Come early to get a good seat and feel free to dress in a Mardi Gras costume.

Come to the **Full Snow Moon Gathering** on Saturday, February 21, from 1 to 3 p.m. at the Great Falls Discovery Center in Turners Falls. There will be an interactive presentation, "The Language Belongs to the Land Itself."

David Tall Pine White will talk about the Nipmuc Indian Presence and Persistence in Southern New England, and how the Nipmuc language "teaches appreciation and purpose of each living thing."

The Full Snow Moon is the name given by the Northeast tribes to the full moon of February, a month when

heavy snows are common. This free gathering is part of a series of events that will take place in Turners Falls in 2015 to celebrate Native American history and culture. It's co-sponsored by the Nolumbeka Project and the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation. Light refreshments will be provided. For more info visit: www.nolumbekaproject.org.

In conjunction with the Coop Concerts, the Greenfield Public Library will be hosting a Cooped Up at the **Library Concert Series** in the meeting room from 2 to 4 p.m. on February 22 and March 22. Folk-pop duo Orlen and Gabriel will perform in February, and Pat and Tex are the featured musicians in March.

Each program will begin with an open mic from 2 to 2:30, for which sign-up will be required; the main performance will begin at 3 p.m. Refreshments will be on sale for \$1, provided by the Friends of the Greenfield Public Library. Admission will be by donation, and space is limited, so early arrival is recommended. Doors open at 1:45.

Baystate Franklin Medical Center's Oncology Department offers a series of free eight-week yoga classes, **Gentle Yoga for Cancer Survivors**, at the YMCA in Greenfield.

The sessions, taking place from noon to 1:30 p.m., will run March 4 to April 22, and April 29 to June 17.

The weekly Gentle Yoga classes, for individuals who have been living with a cancer diagnosis, consist of stretching, strengthening, and breathing and deep relaxation exercises.

Course facilitator is Pam Roberts, a 21-year breast cancer survivor certified to teach Kripalu Yoga and Yoga of the Heart for Cardiac and Cancer Patients. For more information or to register for Gentle Yoga, call (413) 625-2402 or email pamro@aol.com

Attention Knitters, Quilters, Artisans and Craftspeople: The Our Lady of Peace Women's Group is looking for people interested in cleaning out their excess yarn, fabric, and other supplies. They are hosting a "Stash Bash" on April 11 at Our Lady of Peace in Turners Falls.

Anyone interested in renting a table to sell their craft materials or donating them to the Women's Group to sell should contact Chris at (413) 367-3052 or Bev at (413) 863-7783 for information or an application.

Anyone looking for bargains on craft materials, tools, and equipment should mark their calendars and plan on coming to shop on April 11.

Send your local briefs to editor@montaguereporter.org.

Leverett SB: Open Letter To Governor Baker

Dear Governor Baker,

It is not unusual for residents of Leverett to complain to the town's Tax Collector when they come to pay their ever-increasing property tax bill; this winter however, the complaints are taking the form of notes on receipts ("absolutely ridiculous" "outrageous tax bill - very unfair to poor people," for examples) and letters.

As a municipality, we struggle to maintain services and comply with the multitude of state and federal under- and un-funded mandates.

It seems popular among politicians to tout lower state income tax rates. What is not acknowledged is that, in reality, taxes don't go down, but are shifted to municipalities as lower state income tax rates (which preclude increased municipal aid at best) are not accompanied by a decrease in under- and un-funded mandates.

We would appreciate an honest public discussion of this problem so that citizens understand the full impact of decreased state income tax rates: property taxes increase and/or local services and educational programs get cut. We feel that you should initiate a discussion of this problem.

The lion's share of local property taxes go to funding education, and this is where the under- and un-funded mandates hit the hardest.

SPED costs are increasing, and state circuit breakers do not cover a large percentage of the overall costs, especially as many schools find it more economical to handle SPED cases in-house. State funding for schools is not based on the true costs of providing education and services for special needs students.

On top of that, municipalities are forced to fund charter schools, which do not have to comply with many of the mandates and requirements for a public school.

So, a municipality is forced to spend large sums on educational services for the under-achieving SPED students and privileged charter students, who, through the toss of a coin, get a supposedly

'superior' education.

Regular students are getting short-changed as the programs that schools have to cut to pay for those costs tend to be ones that enhance the education of the main body of public school students - language programs, art programs, science programs, etc.

We do not advocate the elimination of SPED programs. We all remember a time when students who were not able to keep up fell through the cracks and it is heartening to see their needs now being met.

Charter schools also are not necessarily a bad idea, but they should not be funded on the backs of public schools.

We ask that you initiate consideration of a state tax dedicated to charter schools or, in the alternative, at ways to incorporate experimental education within the existing school system, instead of funding additional buildings, administration, etc.

The decreased enrollment in a school due to students going to charter schools does not translate into decreased costs for that public school system - we still need to hire a teacher for sixth grade, say, whether 9 or 19 students are in that class. The facility still needs to be operated and maintained, whether there are 500 or 550 students in the school. Administration requirements also don't decrease with lower enrollment and SPED costs may increase the need for funding.

There is now a Massachusetts Foundation Budget Review Commission. We anticipate that some of these issues will be addressed and solutions recommended.

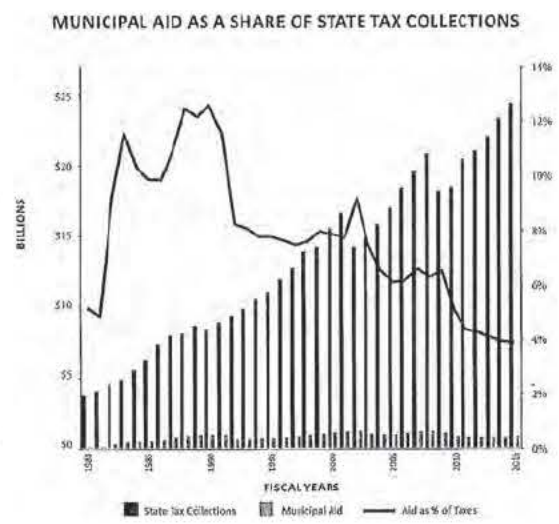
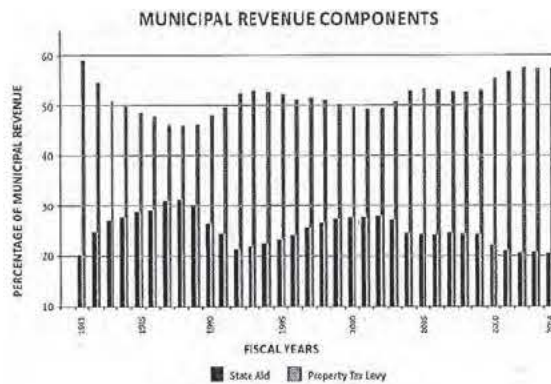
Attached is page 3 from the Massachusetts Municipal Association publication *Our Communities and the Commonwealth: Partners for Prosperity* (Sept. 2014).

The graphs show the sharply decreasing trend of state aid to municipalities and the increasing role for local property taxes in funding municipal services. The full text accompanying the graphs is available at mma.org.

We ask you to initiate an increase in the state income tax to support public schools and relieve the property tax burden. The Commonwealth must stop shifting tax burdens to municipalities.

Municipal leaders do not gain political cachet from "lower Massachusetts taxes," especially when our communities have to cover the ever-increasing costs of local services.

Sincerely,
Richard P. Brazeau
Peter d'Errico
Julia Shively
Leverett Selectboard



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HISTORY from page A1

one black man's perspective," his own.

In his 20 years teaching in the public school system, Madison said he saw many Black History Month events in which Rosa Parks, Louis Armstrong, Martin Luther King, Jr. were rightfully celebrated. "[Their] side... deserves to be told, and has been told," he said.

But these successful mid-twentieth-century figures represent "a relatively short part of African American history," he said, adding that he believes it is also important to "show some of the harsh realities of a painful history."

Madison grew up in Chicago in the 1960s, and talked about the uneasy history of his hometown. He was greatly affected by the deaths of Emmett Till and Fred Hampton.

When he was ten, Madison's father insisted that he look at a photograph of Till, a Chicago teenager who had been brutally murdered in 1955 in Mississippi, for reportedly flirting with a white woman while visiting relatives there.

Till's body was discarded in the Tallahatchie River, but was found and returned to his mother, who held an open-casket, public funeral service for her son. The image of Till's mutilated body motivated people across the country as what would become the Civil Rights movement built steam, and would have a lasting impact on Madison.

Growing up, Madison and many of his Chicago peers looked up to leaders in the Black Panther Party, including Hampton, the young chairman of its Illinois chapter, murdered in 1969 during a raid by the FBI and Chicago police.

"There is still tension and con-

flict between black men and police," Madison said. "It's a part of history that needs to remain fresh because the events of today dictate it... Issues of the past are confronting us now - there are more black men in jail than had been enslaved. I've had my own experiences of feeling unjustly treated by law enforcement," he added.

Madison will be joined by local youth in a performance at the event. "Some of the skits will be provocative," he said, "in the sense that they'll provoke thought of how you'd want your own son or daughter treated by the people in power."

Madison is also one of the curators of the window displays sharing the block with his store, and his contributions are focused on history's hardships: the relationship between slavery and colonization of Native American land, and comparisons between Jim Crow-era chain gangs and today's prison labor.

As to how provocative the images and narratives he's chosen may be, he said, "I definitely don't want to alienate anybody," and that he hoped to inform rather than estrange people.

The windows are also housing African fabrics and artifacts, mostly from Ghana in West Africa, which Anne Harding borrowed from Sheila Damkoehler of Bernardston.

"Cloth has been an important trade element in Ghana for several centuries," Harding said in an email detailing the types of colorfully dyed and patterned textiles.

Greenfield Savings Bank will also be exhibiting four of Louise Minks' Underground Railroad paintings in the lobby of its Turners Falls branch.

The second event of the week,

organized by Richardson, will take place at Great Falls Harvest on Wednesday, February 25 at 6 p.m.

The evening will begin with spoken word from New York artist and writer Bob McNeil, accompanied by percussionist Fred Simpson. His poetry will be followed by local jazz music from The Forfia and David Duo. Pianist Ken Forfia and cellist Vernon C. David play jazz standards ranging from Duke Ellington and Thelonius Monk to Wayne Shorter.

Tickets are \$10 to \$20, sliding scale, and attendees will be provided "a wonderful mystery" of appetizers including vegan and gluten-free options.

Montague Community Television will also be on site documenting the event, said Richardson, "[so] people can talk about their experiences, race, observations, prejudice."

"There are many varieties of black American experience. In spite of everything, going on to celebrate what came out of it - jazz and poetry." These traditions come out of storytelling, he explained.

Richardson said he has been hosting black history events in NYC for the past 5 or 6 years, but enjoyed a new challenge with the support of volunteers Suzanne LoManto and Anne Harding, whom he praised for their "wonderful abilities to organize and orchestrate" the event together.

"When people identify with something they can relate to, there is tremendous energy - [they] harmonize, work together, love, celebrate," Richardson said, referring to the use of art to bring people together around the theme of diversity, and make events such as this possible. He said he is looking forward to having time to collaboratively build something "grander" for next year.

Coming from the Caribbean, Richardson said he witnesses, but does not "experience," racism: "Racism in America is uniquely American... I learn it, but not to the extent I incorporate it into my life." That would be limiting, he said.

"Why must I foster a legacy? When you make racism a legacy, it becomes part of your DNA," he explained. "When you have that experience, and you expect to have that experience, it becomes like an epidemic."


He elaborated that he feels the experience of slavery in the Caribbean was different, and, if anything, classism is the predominant form of prejudice in Trinidad, though he did not feel affected by that, either: "I grew up in an atmosphere of openness," he said. "I never experienced prejudice - period."

Richardson attributes this openness to art and creation, specifically to that of Carnival, where all masquerade. "It brings everyone together in one great celebration. For us it's like religion."

Richardson said Wednesday's event should be an opportunity to unify, "a cool, entertaining, funky evening for everyone."

"If you want people to learn about black history, they have to feel invited," he emphasized. "When you invite people to be part of the process, they bring their own stories."

These stories may not be of racism but of another form of prejudice experienced in one's own life or family life, which "makes it easier to relate to the black experience," to foster empathy and "a greater sense of compassion."

"I'm part of a human family," Richardson said. "I use that." 

NOTES FROM THE MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD**Town Issues Pouring Permit to Millers "Farmer Brewery"**

By JEFF SINGLETON

The Montague selectboard confronted several applications from local businesses to expand liquor service that proved more complex than the normal liquor licensing process. Dan Kramer of Element Brewing Company, requested that the board approve a "pouring permit" so the business could serve beer to potential customers. The request was made due to the fact that Element is a "farmer brewery."

The board seemed amenable but the request raised several questions: What is a "pouring permit," and how did Element, located in downtown Millers Falls, become a "farmer brewery?"

According to an advisory from the state Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission, a pouring permit allows "the licensee to sell and allow samplings of the alcoholic beverages it manufactures on its premises." This is a new type of state license that became effective on July 11, 2013. It replaces something called a "restaurant pouring permit."

The new license applies to Farmer Breweries, Farmer Wineries, and Farmer Distilleries. The "farmer" designation applies to establishments that make their own alcoholic beverages using either ingredients they grow themselves, or a set percentage of farm-grown ingredients purchased from local farms.

Kramer requested such a permit to serve "malt beverages" at the El-

ement storefront in Millers Falls. He also stated that he "cleaned up" the application, which had previously been rejected due to a prior ownership dispute.

Selectboard member Mark Fairbrother asked if the brewery was equipped to handle customers drinking beer at the storefront. Kramer stated that the company has a small bar, and appropriate restroom facilities.

The board approved the permit, which will now be sent on to the state.

Another license request, by the Five Eyed Fox, was put on hold for at least a week. Ashley Arthur, the owner of the new café-bar located on Third Street in Turners Falls, applied for an "all liquor license," which would allow her business to sell hard liquor in addition to beer and wine. This would require the town to apply to the state for an expansion of its quota of such licenses.

This request immediately ran into potential opposition from Fairbrother, who noted that the town had recently applied to increase its quota by three licenses, and stated that "I've gone along with these requests, but am getting ready to say that enough is enough." He noted that a number of residents had expressed concern about the number of licenses that have been issued recently.

Arthur replied that she understood Fairbrother's concerns, but

noted that the business was already serving alcoholic beverages. It was also noted that one of the three licenses approved by the board and town meeting, currently under consideration by the state, would probably not be issued. The applicant has decided not to purchase the former Montague Inn on Route 63.

The selectboard decided to delay a decision for a future meeting when member Michael Nelson, who was not in attendance, could weigh in on the issue.

Baseball Variance Declined

Next, Eric Meals of the Newt Guilbault little league came before the board to request a waiver for a \$100 fee required when applying for a zoning variance. It seems that the league, as it has in the past, would like to place signs at its fields in Turners Falls with the names of businesses that have donated to the organization.

However, zoning regulations prohibit such "advertising," so the league must request a variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals. The application requires a \$100 fee.

Meals was accompanied by police chief Chip Dodge who, speaking as a private citizen, testified to the virtues of the little league. Both Dodge and Meals noted the league was a private non-profit entity and that league officials were attempting to preempt potential problems with the zoning law.

The board expressed strong sup-

port for the league but was not inclined to set a precedent by waiving the application fee.

Board member Chris Boutwell then stated that he would personally donate the money for the fee, declaring that he would "bring it in to [town treasurer] Patty [Dion]."

"No, it goes to them [the little league]," declared an amused, but somewhat agitated Fairbrother.

Other Business

The board then moved on to the town administrator's report. Frank Abbondanzio announced that the warrant for the May annual town meeting (ATM) would be officially "closed" on March 17. He emphasized that no articles, including petitioned articles, would be accepted after that date.

In response to a question from the audience, Abbondanzio and board members stressed that the early closing was required by the need to get the warrant, which is accompanied by detailed information on the annual town budget, to the printer.

The board approved a "Common Victualler" License for Hubie's Tavern and Restaurant. However, they put an entertainment license request on hold until a representative from Hubie's applies in person, and the board has a full quota of members.

Hubie's is the former Jake's Tavern on Avenue A in Turners Falls.

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MEETING from page A1

For example, she asked select-board chair Chris Boutwell who authorizes specific legal expenditures. His response was that the full board signs the weekly warrant on which they appear. She also asked town lawyer Gregg Corbo if his firm, Koppelman & Paige, PC, has a "formal contract" with the town. The answer was no.

Then Lisa Adams, a resident of Hatchery Road and not currently a town meeting member, reviewed the history of her litigation with the town over a variety of issues, including the town's refusal to allow her to rebuild a burned barn within a disputed right of way. "Our story is out there," she stated. "The issues could have been avoided."

Town meeting voted to endorse the supplementary legal request.

A request by the highway department to appropriate \$40,000 for a plow, sander and "incidental setup costs" was also approved by the meeting, but not without several complaints about the quality of snow removal. Highway chief Tom Beregeron responded that his department was half the size of Greenfield's, and has nearly as much total road mileage.

Two motions to give the town rights to acquire property easements for sewer pump station replacements passed the meeting without discussion.

The final article, which allowed the town to acquire the building housing the current senior center for

\$1, was the source of a good deal of discussion. Jeanne Golrick proposed an amendment which, while supporting the purchase, directed the selectboard to sell the building if it could no longer be used as a senior center.

Moderator Ray Godin ruled the amendment out of order, on the grounds that it was "not within the scope of the motion." However he allowed Golrick to propose a "straw vote" on her amendment, so the selectboard would have a "sense of the meeting" about the issue.

The straw vote failed to pass Golrick's proposal, and the original motion to purchase the building was approved.

On this note the meeting adjourned.



Montague Announces Parking Emergency

Because of the amount of snow that has accumulated along the roadsides, the Town of Montague has declared a state of emergency. A parking ban is being put into effect immediately.

Parking is now prohibited on the side of each road with odd house numbers. Parking is still allowed on the even number side of the road.

The only current exceptions, with parking allowed on both sides of the street, are the parts of Third Street, Avenue A, Fifth Street and Park Street where the snow has been removed from both sides of the road.

The normal on-street overnight

parking ban still remains in effect between the hours of 1 and 5 a.m.

The reason for this declaration is the amount of snow that has accumulated along the roadsides. The snowbanks and parked vehicles are making it very dangerous and on most streets impossible for emergency vehicles and regular traffic to travel on.

This ban remains in effect until both sides of the roadway have been cleared of snow or you hear otherwise from the police department.

MEMA has been notified and they will be sending assistance as soon as they have the equipment available.

NOTES FROM THE GILL SELECTBOARD

Blue Lights, Green Workshops, Ultraviolet Disinfection

By TIA FATTARUSO

Gill is getting ever closer to making the switch to LED streetlights. Town administrator Ray Purington said the town has received the middle 50 percent of Green Community Grant funding, which amounts to \$69,950, which will finish paying for the insulation of Town Hall and the Riverside building and begin to pay for the lights.

An inventory of streetlights has blossomed into a general discussion about whether all the lights are needed where they are. One, at North Cross and Main roads, will be moved to where there's a curve in the road, which means the town won't have to buy the old pole from WMECO.

Selectboard chair Randy Crochier noted that he uses that road often, and advised that moving the pole may mean installing reflective material there as well, as it is headed into an intersection.

A conversation about LED light color spectrum and human bio-rhythm followed. Board member John Ward explained it has become understood that red light puts the brain to sleep and blue light causes it to stay awake. The consensus was the brain ought to stay awake while driving, and so blue-ish lights would be superior.

"If it shines in your bedroom window, put up a drape," said Janet Maccucci, filming for MCTV, addressing the potential for concern from homeowners about the difference in color.

Green Workshops

\$5,100 of Green Community Grant money was approved for the year's energy workshops; Ward recused himself from the decision.

"We're getting a good deal for all the workshops they're putting on," said Crochier.

A finalized consent and release for workshops held off town property, with guidelines set by town counsel, has been sent to the energy commis-

sion but not yet reviewed.

Well Light

There is still no word from the USDA about the status of a grant that would help pay for design and installation of ultra-violet disinfection equipment for the school well. The USDA is currently reviewing town finances to see if there are other sources for payment for the equipment, which will take a few more weeks.

"We have a very good case, but it's not the slam dunk I'd hoped it would be," said Purington. He added that the timeline is now a bigger challenge than if a decision had been reached in January, and asked that, assuming they receive the award, the board give him permission to sign papers to keep the process moving.

Locking It In

Purington is still in the process of trying to gather enough information to make a case on a fixed price contract for electricity. Estimates have yet to materialize from Hampshire COG. Once they have, there will still be some uncertainty, as the streetlight usage will change, though at least predictably, and the potential change in electric usage at Riverside if an air-source heat pump is installed is very unpredictable.

3,800 gallons of oil have been locked in for next year at a price of a little over \$2.26, while this year's oil was at \$3.19.

Purington said he would also like to do some research on diesel, which the town traditionally receives through Franklin Regional COG, but could alternatively contract for with the Lower Pioneer Valley Educational Collaborative, the other potential source for a fixed electricity contract.

"We haven't been poorly served by FRCOG, it's a matter of how might we be better served," said Purington.

Annual Reports

Anne Banash has virtually completed drafts of the 2011, 2012 and 2013 annual reports, and asked for advice on doing abridged reports for some local entities. Crochier expressed concern about who would do the editing.

"You don't want to take someone's work, edit it down, and call it theirs without approval," he said.

Purington understood that an organization would submit its report to Banash which she would then compress and return to the organization for approval. This seemed satisfactory to all.

"Thank you, Anne - it's an important project, and good to know it's getting done," said Crochier.

Other Business

The board once again approved use of the town hall for the After-school Community Theater (ACT) play, from May 6 through May 30, 3:30 to 5:30 p.m., with performances May 27, 28 and 29. "It definitely livens up the place," Purington said of the ACT program and its participants, led by Amy Gordon.

The board accepted with regret the resignation of Deborah Gleason, clerical assistant to the zoning board of appeal, planning board, board of health and conservation commission. Purington recommended advertising and hiring the position, while Crochier suggested anyone interested could pick up the extra work in the meantime.

The "Winter Gardening Under Cover" workshop this Saturday, February 21, is full. Check the Gill website for a waiting list.

A dog and cat Rabies vaccination clinic will be held at the Bernardston Police Department Sunday, March 22, from 9 a.m. to noon, at \$18 per pet. Town clerks will process licenses as well.

Friends of Gill will host a pancake breakfast Saturday, March 28, 8 to 10:30 a.m. at the Gill Church.

Our Contest Extended

The snowflake contest announced in our February 12 editorial will be extended by one week, due to too few entries received.

The prize is a snow shovel, a can

of soup and a roll of toilet paper. Submit your paper snowflake, with your name and phone number, to the Montague Reporter at 177 Avenue A to enter.

Montague: 2015 Annual Census

Did you get your annual census/street list form? Montague's 2015 Annual Town Census/Street List forms were mailed out Friday, January 30.

The Board of Registrars is required by State Statute to verify and update the name, address, age and occupation of all residents.

Census responses are used as proof of residency to protect voter rights, veterans' bonus, to assist the Council on Aging with service projections and to assist the School with enrollment information and projections. Population figures are also used by the state in calculating state and federal aid monies to the town.

Census data is also used to compile the annual street list. The street list is made available to the Police, Fire and Emergency Medical Technicians to aid in the daily performance of their duties as well as other municipal departments.

Census information about children under the age of 17 is not made available to the public. Birthdates of residents will not be published due to the threat of identity theft.

If you are a registered voter and do not respond to the census, the Board of Registrars is required by law to move you to the "Inactive Voter" list and risk being removed from the voter registration rolls.

Please help us make the Annual Town Census as complete and accurate as possible. If you did not receive a form you can download a form from the town website www.montague.net or call the Town Clerk's Office at 863-3200, ext. 203 and we will send out a blank form.

Please fill in the information for all members of the household and mail the completed form to the Town Clerk's Office at One Avenue A, Turners Falls, MA 01376.

TOWN OF GILL SEEKS CLERK

Town of Gill seeks clerk to assist Zoning Board of Appeals, Planning Board, Conservation Commission, & Board of Health. Workload fluctuates, \$13.21/hr, 100-300 hrs/year including evening meetings. Requires basic secretarial & computer skills and ability to work independently. Municipal experience & zoning knowledge a plus!

Job description & application at Town Hall, 325 Main Road, Gill, MA 01354 or www.gillmass.org/jobs.php Call 413-863-9347 for further info. Letter of interest, application, & resumé due Mar. 5.

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HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ERVING POLICE LOG

Ice Froze Door Shut

Monday, 2/9

12:45 p.m. Resident requesting assistance. Cannot get out of residence. Ice froze door shut. Assisted same.

Wednesday, 2/11

1:05 p.m. Landlord/tenant dispute on Forest Street. Mediated same, advised was civil matter.

Thursday, 2/12

7:45 p.m. Criminal application issued to [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] for operating with

a revoked license.

Friday, 2/13

8:45 a.m. Animal complaint on Briggs Street. Animal control officer advised. 3 p.m. State Road resident reported IRS scam phone call.

3:45 p.m. Took report of fraud on French King Highway.

Saturday, 2/14

4:12 a.m. Alarm at Box Car. All secure.

4:55 a.m. Report of a paper machine fire at Erving Paper Mill. Assisted Erving FD

on scene.

6:05 a.m. Assisted motor vehicle with flat tire on Route 2 eastbound.

8:20 p.m. Report of a one-car crash on Route 2 and Old State Road. State Police handled.

8:25 p.m. Mutual aid to Gill PD for three-car crash, Route 2 at Chapel Hill Road.

Sunday, 2/15

4:20 p.m. Took report of tenant harassing snow plow worker at Forest Street.

Turners Falls Fire District Nomination Papers Available

Nomination papers for the annual Turners Falls Fire District election are now available to all district residents from the District Office located at 226 Millers Falls Road until Monday, March 9.

Papers must be returned no later than Wednesday, March 11. The District Office is open Monday through Friday, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

All potential candidates need to obtain 32 signatures from registered voters of the Turners Falls Fire District.

Offices are as follows:

- Prudential Committee, for a

three-year term;

- Water Commissioner, for a three-year term;
- Water Commissioner, to fill an unexpired two-year term;
- Moderator, to fill an unexpired two-year term.

The annual election will be held on Tuesday, April 28. The polls will open noon to 7 p.m. District residents wishing to register to vote may do so at the Town Clerk's office located in Town Hall, 1 Avenue A, Turners Falls.

For more information, call the District Office at 863-4542.

Food Justice: What Is It?

On Saturday morning, March 7, Mass Slavery Apology's free monthly program series will feature a workshop on food justice, exploring the questions:

What is it? Is it attainable? What does it mean in our individual lives? What are the ingredients of a more just food system? What do just systems look like? Who needs to be in the conversation? Who is missing from the conversation? Why?

Presenters Liz O'Gilvie and Catherine Sands are both on the

Steering Committee, Racial Equity Committee, and Food System of Pioneer Valley Growers, based in South Deerfield.

The program, at the First Congregational Church, 43 Silver Street in Greenfield, will be from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Doors open at 9:30. Admission is free; donations are welcomed. To reserve childcare, RSVP with number and ages of children to (413) 625-2951 or email@massslaveryapology.org.

For more information, see www.massslaveryapology.org.

Franklin County Tech Recruiting Teams for Dodgeball Tournament

If you think you have what it takes to withstand the punishment and outlast the competition, then organize a team to test your stamina in the 7th Annual Franklin County Technical School Dodgeball Tournament.

The public is invited to organize teams of five players to face off in double-elimination matches to be held at the school on Friday, March 6.

Competition will begin at 6 p.m. at FCTS, located at 82 Industrial Blvd., Turners Falls. The event will end when one victorious team is left standing. Cash prizes of \$200 for first

place and \$100 for second place will be awarded to the top two teams.

Teams must register by March 4 to be eligible to play. There is a \$25 registration fee per team, which is due at the time of registration. To register a team, contact Amber Coburn at (413) 863-9561, ext. 255, or sign up at FCTS.

The public is invited to attend the tournament, and general admission is \$1. All proceeds from the tournament will go to the FCTS Varsity Girls Soccer and Varsity Field Hockey programs.

NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD

Recreation, Highway Need to Talk

By KATIE NOLAN

"In the winter, we need all the people we have to keep the roads clear," highway foreman Glenn McCrory told the selectboard, explaining why he feels the highway department should not be responsible to the recreation commission for clearing skating rink ice. McCrory noted the list of seasonal tasks the recreation commission is asking the highway department to do, and said, "It's out of control."

Selectboard member Margaret Sullivan read out some of the recreation commission's task list, including "lining fields, tilling, raking leaves, measuring and anchoring [baseball field] bases, moving portable bleachers."

Sullivan said the tasks have increased over time and said she "would like the rec commission, highway, and board of selectmen to come to agreement" on what is reasonable for the highway department to do. She suggested that another employee was needed to "do the basic stuff that the rec commission wants done."

Sullivan noted that one article on the February 23 special town meeting warrant requests \$5,000 to pay

for recreation maintenance work. She said this amount should pay for a part-time variable employee to complete the commission's tasks until June 30, the end of this fiscal year. After July 1, she said, the maintenance "should be included in someone's budget."

Selectboard member Arthur Johnson said that an employee "completely dedicated to the recreation commission" would make sense.

Selectboard chair William Bem-bury said, "I am totally opposed to this. The highway department is going in the wrong direction. Ultimately, the highway department is there to help people in the town out." However, he agreed with Sullivan: "I want to see all departments sit down and communicate."

Recreation commission member Michele Turner, who said she was at the selectboard meeting to listen, because she hasn't been on the commission long, said, "We need to start from square one. We need to talk about this. We're new, Glenn's new, let's talk about it."

The selectboard agreed to set up a meeting with the recreation commission and highway department on a date after the special town meeting.

On police chief Chris Blair's recommendation, the Erving selectboard appointed reserve officer James Loynd as a full-time officer, and approved paying Loynd's tuition at the state police academy.

The approval is conditional on Loynd signing a contract to remain on the Erving department for 3 years.

Selectboard member Margaret Sullivan read aloud a letter from Captain Mark Carignan of the Brattleboro police department, who was a passenger in a car involved in an accident on Route 2. He praised Blair's "superior" accident investigation and professional manner while dealing with the accident.

Fire chief Philip Wonkka presented his fiscal year 2016 budget to the selectboard. Wonkka noted increases based on increased costs for fuel oil and electricity, an estimated 2% increase in the costs of ambulance service, and purchase of three new suits of firefighting gear.

Correction: In our last edition we reported that the Erving selectboard voted 2-1 in favor of accepting a donation of conservation land. That vote was actually unanimous. Our apologies to our readers.

NOTES FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD

Board Opts to Let its Freak Flag Fly

By JOSH HEINEMANN

With a short agenda and the one scheduled visitor postponing because she was sick, the Wendell selectboard had a short meeting on February 11.

The postponing visitor, Judy Hall of the kitchen committee, caused little problem with her decision to stay home because the issue she was to discuss with the selectboard was use and governing of the town hall kitchen after the reconstruction is finished. The reconstruction is still in progress.

The Flag, Plain or Colorful

Selectboard member Jeffrey Pooser brought in two full-size copies of the proposed Wendell flag, one with the starburst pattern around the center circle, and one with a plain background. He preferred the starburst version, and said that is the design that people voted for.

Selectboard member Dan Keller said that some people voted more than once at Old Home Day, and the plainer design might be improved if it included a colored border.

Still, he said he felt that the colorful design better represented Wendell's diversity and the spirit of Shay's rebellion. The other board members agreed.

Department Website Updates

Town coordinator Nancy Aldrich said that some town departments have not maintained their pages of the town website and that she was unable to get accurate tax information from the site.

Pooser said that website designer Christine Texiera has offered to teach members of town boards and departments how to maintain their pages, and there is money budgeted

for that. Pages should be updated at least once a year, and he said he will send a letter out to town departments.

Committee Appointments

John Craddock is willing to come back as a member of the ZBA to keep his friend Don Bartlett from being alone on the board. Selectboard members wasted no time in signing his appointment slip.

Accepting the recommendation of the agricultural commission, the selectboard signed an appointment slip that made Luke Doody a member of the agricultural commission.

MMA Breakfast

Aldrich said the Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA) will hold a breakfast meeting in Shelburne, at 8 a.m. on March 6.

Selectboard chair Christine Heard said she was interested.

Septic System Alarm

Aldrich said that one time that she entered the building septic system alarm was sounding, indicating that the sump was full. The reset button silenced the alarm, and town engineer Jim Slavas found the system was working but the hours shown on one pump seemed to indicate that the pump has not been working. The pumps alternate and the other pump can keep the system working.

The conclusion was that repairs can wait until the snow is gone and the ground is soft.

Fire Chief Benefits

The proposed meeting with the New Salem selectboard to discuss benefits for shared fire chief, Joe Cuneo, was called off because of weather, and is rescheduled to February 17.

If there is weather then, the meeting can be held at the following New Salem selectboard meeting, March 2.

Senior Tech Assistance

The FRCOG asked for needs of Wendell's senior center and council on aging, especially technical assistance. Those needs were low on the selectboard's priority list when the FRCOG asked for a list of priorities.

Heard said senior housing is a concern, and that is under ongoing discussion.

Annual Town Report

Aldrich said she is putting the annual town report together and will save the town some money by using Athol Press. She can send them the files in PDF form and save herself time.

"Something is coming."

At the meeting's end Keller reported on the evening he went to represent Wendell at the FRCOG. There the personnel department asked for a significant bump in some pay rates saying they are out of sync with similar work elsewhere. He asked rhetorically if those pay rates compared to pay rates in Boston if they include step raises and merit raises.

Keller said that Wendell does not give merit raises, and Aldrich said that New Salem has merit raises, but the system has not worked well. Keller said, "something is coming."

Left Click Owed Money

Wendell owes Left Click computer service money for its work backing up town computer files, but Pooser said that he would like to see specifically what they have done.

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Leverett Town Hall

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 Dates to be announced.

For more information, call Alli at Franklin County Regional Housing & Redevelopment Authority at (413) 863-9781 x 156, or email alangley@fcrhra.org.

TOWN OF LEVERETT TRANSFER STATION COORDINATOR/SUPERVISOR

The Selectboard is hiring a part-time Transfer Station Coordinator/ Supervisor. Duties to include, but are not limited to, working at the Station as a Supervisor for one shift a weekend, managing and hiring staff, paying bills, preparing budgets and annual report, resident education and consulting with Selectboard and regional solid waste organization on special projects. Approximately 8.5 hours per week. Hours flexible, but will include weekends and evenings. Pay based on experience. An application is available in the Town Hall or by calling the Administrator's office at (413) 548-9699. Applications due by March 5, 2014.

Leverett is an AA/EOE.

LEVERETT from page A1

school district costs. The proposed amendments also create a process for closing an elementary school, perhaps the most controversial question to be addressed in the new agreement.

The current regional school committee will be discussing the proposed amendments on February 24, two days before the Leverett forum. The committee is currently slated to vote on the amendments at its meeting on March 10.

This rather early ratification date is required if the amendments are to be voted on by member towns at their spring annual town meetings. Town meeting approvals would potentially lead to a new region beginning in the fall of 2016.



NOTES FROM THE GMRSD SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Is School Choice the Problem?

By ELLEN BLANCHETTE

In his presentation to the school committee and interested members of the community at a budget hearing held on February 10, Gill-Montague Superintendent Michael Sullivan pointed to declining enrollment as the cause of lost revenue to the school district.

With all the district has achieved in terms of improved status, student achievement, quality advanced placement and honors classes, and continued support for arts programming and technology, there is a net loss to the district in student population, costing the district a substantial amount of income.

The number of students living within the district who choose out continues to rise. This is offset to some degree by increases in students who choose into the district, and in students from Erving, but there is still a net loss in revenue.

With charts projected on a screen, Sullivan explained the numbers to those gathered.

The number of potential students residing within the school district for the 2014-15 school year is 1,267. This number naturally fluctuates slightly from year to year.

The number of resident students currently enrolled in the district is 826.

The difference is explained by several factors. These are the numbers for the current school year: students attending private schools or home-schooling (81); students attending Franklin County Tech High School (66); students who choose out and attend other school districts (223); and students who attend charter schools (66).

Balancing the choice-out numbers are student increases over last year: eleven more students choiced in from other districts, and ten more are attending from Erving. The total number of students enrolled in the Gill-Montague Regional School District (GMRSD) for this school year is 1,001.

In spite of the overall improvement in performance in the school district and the view by many attending the meeting that the district has made great strides and is doing very well, the district has not improved enrollment sufficiently to overcome the loss of revenue.

The net loss for Fiscal Year 2015 through choice and charter is \$1,393,838, with a change over the previous year of \$333,777.

The projected revenue loss through choice and charter for FY'16 is estimated at \$1,530,000.

Those losses are being incurred within a district budget for FY'15 of \$17,488,832, and a projected FY16 budget of \$18,347,688.

Michael Naughton, member of the Montague finance committee, spoke to this subject in his comments to the school committee. He said he was glad to see an effort to address the issue of enrollment, but that he felt the underlying problem was the state's formula for Chapter 70 reimbursement. Naughton said this puts the budget at continuing risk in the years ahead.

The net loss for FY'15 through choice and charter is \$1,393,838. The district has not improved enrollment sufficiently to overcome the loss of revenue.

Looking at the compact between the school district and the towns agreed to several years ago, the part that has never been met was the commitment on the part of the state to provide a set amount of increased revenues under Chapter 70.

Naughton said he felt the legislators who agreed, verbally, to the compact language did not fully understand what the towns and school district expected, and that although they were sincere in their efforts, they did not have the power to bring about the change Gill-Montague and other small rural districts need.

Karl Dziura, president of the Gill-Montague Education Association, said that with Turners Falls High School now rated Level 2 and Great Falls Middle School Level 1, having to make extensive cuts could undermine these achievements and the stability of the district.

Dziura and several others expressed a concern over a downward spiral that could be set off if students and parents think cuts to staff will undermine the quality of the school experience, and choose to go elsewhere.

Dziura suggested the superintendent consider spreading out the cuts over two years, and try to find places to make cuts like expenditures on classroom supplies before cutting staff.

He argued for keeping parapro-

professionals, saying they make valuable contributions in roles that may be more costly to replace in the long run.

"They are a bargain, given their cost," Dziura said. "Careful consideration should be given before eliminating any of them."

Dziura also argued for keeping some of the administrative assistants being considered for cuts, saying they have knowledge that may turn out to be hard to replace. He suggested the district consider reducing cuts to teaching staff by half, warned against cuts in technology, as did Naughton and several others.

Tara Martineau spoke about the students' needs and opinions in a way no one else had addressed. She is a volunteer from Community Action, working with students through the Gay-Straight Alliance.

Martineau asked the school committee and superintendent if they had considered the results of the student survey done by their organization. She felt the district should be looking at how students feel about the school environment instead of focusing on maintaining academics.

Martineau said the student census data shows that when there are staff reductions, students often lose someone they consider a friend. She suggested that for future budgets they look beyond the academic needs of students alone, and also consider the impact of such changes on student climate.

Mentioned repeatedly by many speakers at this meeting were cuts to the arts. The superintendent and school committee chair say there have not been cuts in these programs but perhaps changes in staff and therefore to programs have given students and others the impression that cuts in programs have been made.

The suggestions made at this meeting seem to be that finding a way to maintain a high standard of quality education is of foremost importance with many expressing hope that a way can be found to solve the financial dilemma that will allow Gill-Montague to continue to grow and thrive.

There will be further opportunity for discussion of the budget at the next school committee meeting, with a final vote on the FY'16 budget at the school committee held on March 10.

The next regular school committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 24, at Turners Falls High School at 6:30 p.m.

GREAT FALLS MIDDLE SCHOOL 2nd QUARTER HONOR ROLL

Grade 6:

First Honors: Timothy Agapov, Catherine Bezio, Emily Denison, Emmalee Dobosz, Jacob Dodge, Isabelle Farrick, Haleigh Greene, Abigail Hoynoski, Isabella Johnson, Natalie Kells, Mackenzie Martel, Mercedes Morales, Taylor Murphy, Audrey O'Keefe, Catherine Reynolds, Emily Sevrens, Lana Spera, Julie Sprankle, Amber Taylor, Taryn Thayer, Jade Tyler, Olivia Whittier

Second Honors: Nicholas Billings, Vincent Carme, Alexis Lynds, Nicholas Lyons, James Robison, Jacob Sak

Third Honors: Vincent-Price Fournier, G-anni Garcia, Dylan McLaughlin, Dalver Perez, Mercedes Rivera-Drew, Kelli Schneider, Nicholas White

Grade 7:

First Honors: Hailey Bogusz, Cameron Bradley, Karissa Fleming, Josy Hunter, Eliza Johnson, Joseph Kochan, Chantelle Monaghan, Alyson Murphy, Karlie Porter, Kayani Rodriguez, Dabney Rollins, Brody Trott, Lucas Upham, Abigail Waite, Connor Waitkus, Allison Wheeler, Lindsay Whiteman

Second Honors: Jakob Burnett, Carson Carlisle, Alden Courtemanche, Madison McCassie, Kaitlyn Miner, Journey Smalls, Lucy Spera, Lydia Wright

Third Honors: Jonathon Fritz, Joshua Gaulin, Gram Hancock-Pezzati, Shelby Jordan, Mason Kucenski, Edward Reipold, Marcus Sanders, Emily Sisson, Glen Sumner, Mackenna Whiteman

Grade 8:

First Honors: Samantha Bocon, Ryan Campbell, Dominic Carme, Andy Craver, Kyle Dodge, Reagan Fiske, Cailyn Gobeil, Jenna Jacobsen, Anna Kochan, Jacob LaBelle, Tyler Noyes, John Putala, Keltyn Socquet, Ayden Stacy, Sarah Studlien, Holly Tetreault, Will Turn, Sarah Waldron, Hannah Welles, Cassidhe Wozniak

Second Honors: Jared Bergmann, Lindsey Bourbeau, Reilan Castine, Kayleigh Curtiss, Timothy Fritz, Rebecca Harrell, Dizarre Lopez,

Garrett Martel, Tyler Murray-Lavin, Kallie Ryan, Hunter Sanders, Ethan Shilo-Draper, Victoria Veaudry

Third Honors: Madison Adams, Rodney Duteau, Katherine Garcia, Deven Goshea, Danielle Lively, Bianca Martin

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BASKETBALL from page A1

That's when Liam Ellis sunk the game winner from the foul line and the Boys in Blue entered the locker room with a win. But they had little time to rest. 20 hours later, they had to start their warm up drills for their next contest.

"We have little time to lick our wounds," Coach Mullins said after the game. "Because Pioneer can score big time, and in fact they put up 90 tonight on Athol."

Tyler Charbonneau led Powertown with 20 points, including three 3-pointers. Liam Ellis ended with 18 points, including two buckets from 3-point land. He also had some key blocks. Jalen Sanders added 10 points, Nick York had 9 and Tionne Brown hit 8.

Turners Falls 75, Pioneer 69

You can't blame the boys for playing tired. After all, the night before, they pulled out all the stops and squeaked past a very determined, very good Frontier team.

And Pioneer is an excellent team. They beat Hopkins which gave Powertown sole possession of first place in the Hampshire Conference. But in order for Turners to keep that toe-hold on the top rung, they needed to pull it together and beat the Panthers on Wednesday the 11th.

But Pioneer came out shooting. And rebounding and stealing. And before the Tribe could score a single point, the Panthers were ahead 7 to zilch. Though Blue was able to keep pace through the rest of the quarter, when the buzzer sounded, the Panthers were ahead 22-14.

The Panthers piled on the points into the second quarter, increasing the lead to 34-18 with 4:05 left to play in the half. But the True Blue Faithful were still hopeful. After all, Turners Falls has come back by bigger margins.

The cheerleaders led the cheers and the crowd clapped along. But would the boys have anything left?

It was almost halftime and they were down by 16. But they were trying hard to find a way to win: diving for balls, going for steals and trying impossible shots. When the midgame buzzer sounded, they had pulled within 9 points, 39-30.

Two 3-pointers at the start of the third period and Pioneer was back up by 15 points, 45-30. But the boys weren't dissuaded. Turners chipped away again at the lead and the quarter ended with them behind by only 8 points, 55-47.

In the fourth, the Panthers shot-out to an 11-point lead, 62 to 51. But the Indians have a will to win. Even though they were down by 11 in the final period, with every player in foul trouble, they never gave up.

They worked together as a team and went for the steal and the block and fought for the rebounds, even if it meant fouling out. With 3 minutes 25 seconds left in the game, it looked like it was possible for the Indians to win – or at least make a game of it.

And when they pulled to within 6 points, 67-61, the whole Tribe came alive. Parents, students, faculty, and the alumni were on their feet, screaming, cheering and stamping their feet and the cheerleaders led them on.

Turners' aggressive play led to Panthers' fouls, and Blue scored three foul shots in succession, narrowing the lead to 3. But Pioneer also got 2 free throw points right back and upped the lead to 5, 69-64.

Turners responded with a 3-pointer to make it a 2-point game, and then with 48 seconds left, Nick York hit a basket and tied the game for the first time since it was 0-0.

Then, Tionne stole the ball! In a Johnny Most/Havlicek moment, Tionne Brown intercepted a Panther pass and then took the ball to the hoop. And just like that, Turners took their first lead of the night, 71 to 69. Turners capped off the win with 4 free throws.

Liam Ellis scored 19 points, and had 7 rebounds and 7 assists. Nick York and Jalen Sanders each had 17 points. Nick had 8 rebounds and 2 assists. Jalen also got 8 rebounds and gave 3 assists. Tyler Charbonneau had 13 points and grabbed 4 rebounds. Tionne Brown scored 7 points, snagged 4 rebounds and gave 2 assists. Emmett Turn added 2 points.



Jalen Sanders gets some air, and 2 of his 17 points, as Turners battles to a 75-69 win against Pioneer.

Turners Falls 67 Mahar 60

On Tuesday, February 17 the Indians defeated the Mahar Senators, 67 to 60. It was a pivotal game for both teams and for one player in particular. Powertown needed to win, to capture the Hampshire Crown. Mahar needed to win, to make the playoffs.

And Liam Ellis needed 15 points, to reach 1000 career points.

It was senior night and Coach Gary Mullins decided to start all seniors. Jalen Sanders and Tionne Brown sat out while Emmett Turn, Tyler Charbonneau, Nick York, Liam Ellis, and Spencer Hubert took the court. And after 2 minutes 41 seconds, Eulalio Veras came into

the game. But at 3:33 of the first quarter, all five starters were in.

Turners instituted the full-court press with a minute and a half left and soon the Tribe was up, 12 to 6. Mahar scored as time ran out, and after a quarter the score was 12-8.

The second period had some fantastic plays. The full-court press allowed Tionne Brown to pick off a pass and take the ball to the hoop himself. And when Turners snagged a rebound or intercepted a pass, they would throw the ball all the way down the court to an open man.

With 5:47 left in the half, Liam scored his 9th point. But on the next play, he received his second foul.

Then Nick York sunk a 3 and the Tribe was pulling away, 22-13. When Liam scored his 11th point, Turners was leading 29-17. Tionne stole another ball, and the lead increased to 31-17. Mahar scored 2 as time ran out and the teams entered the locker room with Turners leading 31-19 – and Liam Ellis only 4 points shy of the millennium mark.

Turners started the second half off with a 13-to-2 run, capped when an Ellis 3-pointer brought them to a 44-21 lead, giving him 14 points in the game. But on the next series, he was called for his third foul.

With the score 44-27, while players were fighting over a loose ball in the Mahar end, Liam Ellis sprinted down the court, waving his arms. Turners came up with the loose ball and alertly threw it to Liam who forced his way to the hoop. When the ball swished in, the crowd erupted. But the basket was waved off and Liam was called for a charge.

With 4 fouls, he had to take a seat, still 1 point short of the 1000 mark. Powertown maintained the 20-plus lead for the rest of the period, and after three, the score was 51-30.

Then with the score 57-40, with

just under four minutes left in the game, Liam shot from two feet behind the 3-point line, scoring his 1000th, 1001st and 1002nd points.

After the announcement was made and the crowd finally quieted, the game restarted. And at 1:57, with the score 66 to 48 and the Hampshire Title firmly in hand, Coach Mullins took his starters off the court.

No player wins by himself. This was demonstrated aptly on Tuesday by the Indians. At times, all five players touched the ball before one took a shot. Other times, hand signals or calls from the bench resulted in calculated passes to open men.

Ellis led the Tribe with 19 points, 8 rebounds and 7 assists. Nick York scored 17 points, grabbed 10 rebounds and gave 4 assists. Tionne Brown had 15 points and 4 assists. Jalen Sanders, 9 points, 6 rebounds and 2 assists. Tyler Charbonneau added 7 points, 8 rebounds and 2 assists.

This style of smart, selfless play has led to a record of 18 and 2, a Hampshire Conference Title, a thousand-point scorer and a high seed in the upcoming postseason tournament.

Upward and Onward

The Hampshire Conference Champions will probably play their first playoff game on Thursday, February 26 at home. But the official rankings will come out on Saturday the 21st.

If you ask Gary Mullins about the Hampshire Conference, he humbly answers, "Hopkins is the best team in the league, and Pioneer is the second most talented, with a long bench and tremendous size for this league."

So what's the difference between an 18-and-2 team and a 12-and-8 team? Mullins finished his thought:

"However, if it comes to measuring hearts, I'm going with the Turners kids!"



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MoRe

Friday at the Brick House

By REPORTER STAFF

TURNERS FALLS – Worried about spending yet another snowbound Friday night covered in blankets and old cats on the futon, humming along forlornly as Sandy Denny's *North Star Grassman and the Ravens* spins in endless circles?

Head down to the Brick House and let others do the forlorn humming, if maybe not the spinning in endless circles, for you. There two touring acts, *Itasca* and *Tropical Rock*, will be paired with two local openers, *Willie Lane* and *Ruth Garbus*, for a night of wooly and warped, dark and beautiful, quiet and focused music.

Itasca is the stage name of Los Angeles-based singer-songwriter-guitarist Kayla Cohen. *Pitchfork*, a larger publication than the *Reporter* and one with a web publishing presence, has described her newest release, *Unmoored by the Wind*, with adjectives including folk-derived, natural, subtle, mystic, homespun, delicate, textural, narrative, baroque, angelic, conversational, mysterious, dreamy, radiant, and deft.

What we've heard they pay their writers for reviews is about \$80 more than we're getting for this one so we'll just reprint those, but having heard some of her music we would also like to point out that it is pretty, and wicked good, and soft.

(Oh, and *Vogue* is calling *Itasca* "ancient and new at once," which is like, not what anyone asked *Vogue* about ever.)

Tropical Rock is the ambient, synth-based collaboration of Kathleen Baird (*Spires That in the Sunset Rise*) and Camilla Padgett-Coles (*Future Shuttle*). They have a short tape out that their label claims was "birthed under the auspices of frog possession."

When this *Reporter* staff member saw *Spires That...* at Terrastock in '06 it was one of the only sets we saw during peak New Weird America or whatever that actually seemed like the players might be earnestly attempting to open a dark portal into which the audience would disappear forever, so we are looking forward to seeing what Ms. Baird has gotten into now, frog possession or no frog possession.

On the tape at least, Padgett-Coles plays an interactive music sequencer called a Tenori-on, which generally makes a lot of peaceful beeping.

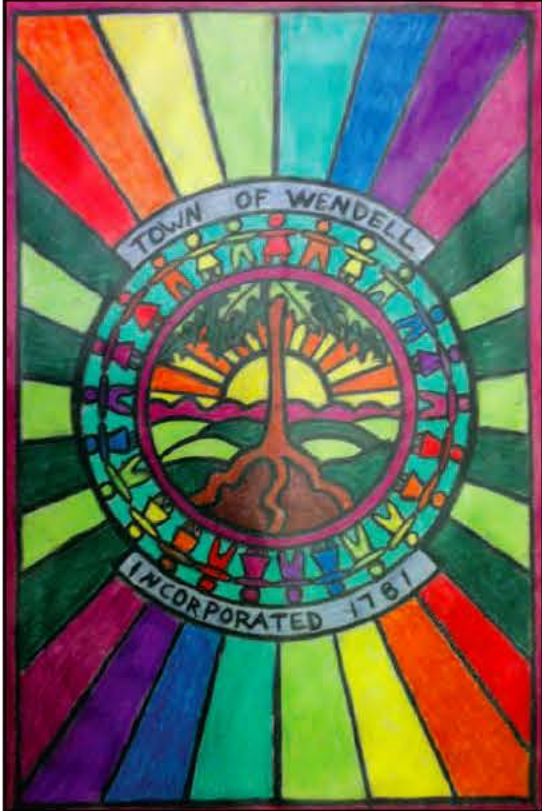
Willie Lane, back from living away, will contribute his blazing/ed solo guitar rants, and *Ruth Garbus* of Brattleboro (ex-Feathers; Happy Birthday) will chip in a few of her self-contained subliminal pop masterpieces. Both local legends have been coaxed out of hiding by the hot tuna of a bill well-stacked.

The Brick House is an all-ages, substance-free space, within a block of several bars and eateries. Patrons are urged to bring \$5 to \$9 to donate to the bands so they make it to their next appointments. The show should start around 8 p.m.

A Flag for Every Town?

By PETE WACKERNAGEL

MONTAGUE – The completion of Wendell's town flag will make Montague the only town in our circulation range to not have a flag. 321 out



Wendell's current flag proposal, including the favored "starburst" background.

of 351, or 91%, of Massachusetts' towns and cities have flags.

While some of the Commonwealth's cities have had official flags for a long time, many of the smaller towns did not. A boom in municipal flag creation occurred following a request from the State House in the early 1990s to remedy a sonic blunder.

In 1990 Governor Dukakis completed the State House's Great Hall, the largest public event space in the building, by adding a glass ceiling and marble floor to what had previously been an open-air courtyard in the 1895 addition.

But the acoustics in the skinny, three-story room turned out to be intolerably bad. It was decided that fabric was needed to soften the hard edges of the space, and that the flags of the towns and cities of the state would be hung. They would also generate civic pride and enthusiasm.

"It worked a little bit," said Susan Greendyke Lachevre, curator of the Massachusetts Art Commission, referring to the acoustical improvements made by the flags.

While we mainly think of flags today as symbols representative of states or nations, their origins in fact predate the existence of the modern nation-state. Flag making grew out of heraldry, which was born out of the medieval need to distinguish friends from foes in combat when their faces and bodies were hidden behind metallic armor.

As the practicality and use of coats-of-arms

for direct warfare diminished, they made the jump to banners, and their importance as a hereditary status symbol increased (coats-of-arms are specific to a single family).

While heraldry is essentially a complex language of symbolism involving a high amount of detail, modern flags are simple and iconic. The reporter conjectures that one reason for this could be because of the vast numerical simplification in political units over time (i.e. there are far fewer nations of the world today than there were kingdoms within medieval Europe).

It also seems that a modern flag is able to serve, symbolize, and bring together a large percentage of the populace. A coat-of-arms, perhaps, would not encourage national unity, as it would serve as a reminder of distinctions between the ruling family and the ruled.

see **FLAGS** page B4



Leverett's flag incorporates its town seal.

AN INSPIRED COCKTAIL SAUCE

By ERIC DAMKOEHLER

TURNERS FALLS – Inspiration comes from many different avenues. The most important is from simple ingredients. Anyone can make a steak. Any cook, whether a master chef, an aspiring culinary student or a homemaker, can put a piece of red meat in a pan or on a grill and wait for the magic to happen. That, my friends, is nothing special. What makes a dish something special? It is the one thing that separates a cook from a chef. It is the inspiration.

I walk the aisles of the grocery store with a slow and methodical pace, searching for nothing in particular. This slow walk is a part of the process of creating food and menus that I have long been a part of.

It always starts with one simple ingredient. Blood orange vinegar, or gooseberries, or a can of cashews. That is where it starts, never with the steak. The steak is a given, a necessary catalyst for the rest of the meal. It is the canvas, the cashews or the vinegar are the paint.

There is the cliché, "cooking is an art." Yes, figuratively speaking, cooking is an art. Barry Sanders was an artist on the football field. A well-landscaped property is aesthetically pleasing. An antique rocking chair is a nice compliment to the



A solution is found for a tricky sauce.

best interior design. But, what good is it if it isn't comfortable or sturdy?

If the plants don't have fertilizer or water they will die, and the artistic landscape will be a shabby grove. Without the fundamentals and training, who is Barry Sanders?

So there you have it: the art of cooking is the

end result of a scientific process.

We have three basic rules when grading a dish: Does it taste good? Is it hot? Does it look good? By that formula, cooking is only one-third art.

Add a fourth, equally important rule: is it safe to eat? Now, your artistic value drops again.

see **SAUCE** page B6

THE GARDENER'S COMPANION

Our Northern Florida Adventure, Part 3



By LESLIE BROWN

DELEON SPRINGS, FL – Much has changed since our arrival three weeks ago. Since the full moon and some mild nights, the bullfrogs and peepers have been chorusing in the nearby swamp. All of the deciduous trees now sport new leaves. Yesterday we saw Camellias in bloom although the overnight temperatures are in the high thirties.

Overnight the verge of the highways has been decorated with wildflowers in white and lavender.

Yesterday a bright, windless day brought temperatures in the low seventies.

Our last state forest visit for this trip took us to DeLeon Springs, named for Juan Ponce de Leon although there is absolutely no evidence that it is the famed Fountain of Youth. The local community was home to Native Americans 6,000 years ago, and was later settled by families who built sugar and cotton plantations and named it Spring Garden.

In the 1880s the area was named DeLeon Springs in order to capitalize on the potential for bringing the tourist trade to this resort area. Although originally privately owned, the park area became a state park in 1982.

The park continues to be an odd amalgam of its origins and a tourist attraction in particular for its natural sulphur springs and for the Old Sugar Mill pancake house.

A large swimming area has been built around the "boil" from the underground river, which keeps a

steady temperature of 72 degrees year round. It is open for swimming and snorkeling.

The original sugar mill was used to grind cane sugar using the water power of the spring which produces a force of 18 million gallons a day. In 1961 the building was set for demolition, but was leased by a grist miller named Peter Schwarze who restored the mill and built an electric-powered grist for his own flours. This evolved into the pancake business using his own grains.

We can attest to the flavor of the five-grain pancakes cooked by the customer on griddles set into

wooden picnic tables, but we came unprepared to enjoy the delights of the warm water spring.

A hike into the swampy forest lands took us through a hydric hammock of trees which flourish in wet conditions: red maples, sweet gums, magnolias, cabbage palms and water hickories.

There was also a huge Bald Cypress which is over 500 years old. The cypress has a special talent for swamp living producing woody projections above water level from its roots. These are known as cypress "knees," but their function is

see **GARDENER** page B4



The Old Spanish Sugar Mill at DeLeon Springs State Park.

Pet of the Week

Well hello there! My name is Tinkie and I was brought to Dakin because my family was going through a divorce. I know, right?

I am a friendly, independent cat who would love to watch movies with you on your couch.

I may be a little shy at first but please just give me some time to warm right up to you and then we can be best friends!

In my previous home I have lived with dogs but it wasn't the best experience for me so please no dogs. I am a cute cat who is looking for love during this winter season.

Please ask a Staff member for more information about me today!

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



“TINKIE”

Senior Center Activities

February 23 to 27

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 2/23

Tax Aid by Appointment
No Scheduled Activities

Tuesday 2/24

9:30 a.m. Chair Yoga
Noon Lunch

1 p.m. Knitting Circle

Wednesday 2/25

10:10 a.m. Aerobics
10:30 Monthly Health Screenings

10:50 a.m. Chair Exercise
Noon Lunch

12:45 p.m. Bingo

Thursday 2/26

9 a.m. Tai Chi
10 a.m. Tech Tutor

Noon Lunch
1 p.m. Pitch

Friday 2/27

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

1 p.m. Writing Group

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, 1 Care Drive, 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 Mealsite Manager Rebecca Meuse at 423-3308 for meal information and reservations.

For information, call Polly Kiely, 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 2/23

9 a.m. Tai Chi
10 a.m. Osteo Exercise

12:30 p.m. Quilting
Tuesday 2/24

8:45 a.m. Chair Aerobics
10 a.m. Zumba Fitness

12:30 p.m. Painting
Wednesday 2/25

8:45 a.m. Line Dancing
10 a.m. Chair Yoga

Noon Bingo
Thursday 2/26

8:45 a.m. Aerobics
10 a.m. Healthy Bones, Muscles

12:30 p.m. Cards
Friday 2/27

9 a.m. Bowling
12:30 p.m. Beginner Quilting

LEVERETT

For information, contact the Leverett COA at (413) 548-1022, ext. 5, or coa@leverett.ma.us.

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

O’Keeffe-Style Pastel Workshop in Wendell

The Wendell Free Library will host award-winning pastel artist Gregory John Maichack’s workshop, *Scarlet Poppies: Pastel Painting Like Georgia O’Keeffe*, on Wednesday, February 25, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. This hands on pastel painting workshop is designed for adults, from beginners to experienced artists. All materials are provided.

Under Maichack’s tutorage, participants will work with professional grade pastels, pastel pencils, and pastel paper to recreate O’Keeffe poppies while learning the techniques involved. O’Keeffe (1887-1986) was a US painter who pioneered a modernist style, producing mostly abstract work. She became famous for her paintings of enlarged flowers, which were believed to have sexual symbolism.

Maichack, nominated twice for a Massachusetts Gold Star Program Award, will demonstrate the essentials of painting with pastels. Scumbling, feathering, blending, slurring, edges, and layering techniques will be taught. Participants will focus on O’Keeffe’s famous poppy paintings as well as Maichack’s versions and will work in tandem with Maichack, utilizing O’Keeffe techniques to achieve their own paintings of poppies. Participants take home their

original pastel paintings.

Maichack’s workshops have been so well-liked, many libraries and senior centers have booked and rebooked him. His teaching style is known to be encouraging, positive and constructive.

Maichack lives in Holyoke. He is a portraitist and painter working primarily in pastels, and is a faculty member at the Museum Studio School in the Fine Arts Museum Quadrangle in Springfield, and also teaches at Greenfield and Holyoke Community Colleges in their adult continuing education departments.

Winner of the Award of Merit from the Bennington Center for the Arts: Impressions of New England Show 2003, he also was awarded the Savoir-faire Pastel Award from the

Great Lakes Pastel Society. He has been in many national juried shows and was awarded numerous Massachusetts Cultural Council grants. In addition to portraiture, his still lifes and landscapes are represented by galleries from Kennebunkport, Maine to San Francisco, California. Maichack is accepting requests to do portraits, and various commissions to do pastel paintings. His web site is GregoryMaichack.com.

The workshop at the Wendell Free Library is supported in part by a grant from the Wendell Cultural Council and is also supported by the Friends of the Wendell Free Library.

Seats may fill quickly, so please call the library at (978) 544-3559 to pre-register. A \$5 donation is requested but not required.



THE HEALTHY GEEZER

Low Blood Pressure

hypotension” that affects some people when they stand up. Also called “orthostatic hypotension,” this is especially common in older adults who are more likely to use high blood pressure drugs. When you experience postural hypotension, blood pools in your legs.

Low blood pressure is commonly caused by drugs for high blood pressure, surgical medications, anti-anxiety agents, diuretics, heart medicines, antidepressants, narcotic painkillers and alcohol.

Other causes of low blood pressure include dehydration, heart failure, heart arrhythmias, shock from infection, stroke, severe allergic reaction, major trauma, heart attack and advanced diabetes.

The effects of hypotension can lead to falls, which can be serious for seniors. Here are some pointers for avoiding the dangers of low blood pressure:

When arising, let your feet hang over the side of your bed. Then flex your toes up and down about a dozen times. Stand up slowly. Count to 10 before you start walking. This is a good idea whenever you get up from lying or sitting for more than 20 minutes. Crossing your legs while sitting upright may also help increase blood pressure.

Some experts define low blood pressure as readings lower than 90 systolic (the first number) or 60 diastolic (the second number).

However, low blood pressure is relative, so doctors often define blood pressure as too low only if there are symptoms.

In many instances, low blood pressure isn’t serious. However, it is important to see your doctor if you have hypotension symptoms, because they sometimes can point to serious problems. Chronic low blood pressure may increase the risk of Alzheimer’s-type dementia in some older adults.

Low blood pressure without symptoms rarely requires treatment. In symptomatic cases, doctors address the primary problems such as heart failure. When hypotension is drug-induced, treatment usually involves altering the drug regimen.

It is possible to raise blood pressure when that is required. Here are some ways:

Eating more salt. However, too much sodium can cause heart failure, especially among seniors.

Don’t increase your salt without consulting with your doctor.

Drink more water. Fluids increase blood volume and help prevent dehydration.

Compression stockings used to treat varicose veins may help reduce the pooling of blood in your legs.

There are also medications your doctor may prescribe.

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



JESSICA LARKIN ILLUSTRATION

Q. I usually get a bit light-headed when I stand, but this feeling is much worse when I get up from the dinner table. I don’t drink. Any ideas?

There’s a possibility you have “postprandial hypotension,” or, in layman’s language, low blood pressure after a meal. This is a senior malady; few younger people experience this. Other possible symptoms include dizziness, blurred vision, nausea and fainting. I recommend going to a doctor to have your symptoms checked.

When you eat, blood pours into your digestive system. To maintain your blood pressure, your heart pumps more often and your blood vessels constrict. But these compensatory mechanisms don’t work for some people.

To help prevent postprandial hypotension, eat small portions several times a day and limit high-carbohydrate foods such as potatoes, rice, pasta and bread.

There’s another form of low blood pressure called “postural

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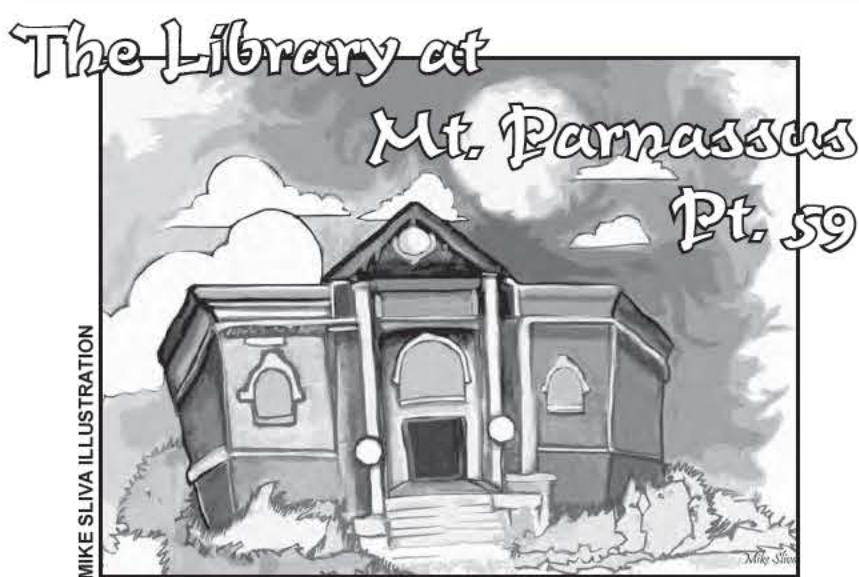
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By DAVID DETMOLD

Herr Klee grabbed the tripod vand upended it, examining the hammered brass legs and their beautifully turned scrollwork.

"Hmm. Nice work. By the hand that forged it, I'd hate to mar it." He put the stool to one side and tossed his cigar into the snow. "Why not get this out of the way instead?"

He bent down and took hold of the huge marble slab that formed the library landing. "Move over," he growled.

Melantha and I stepped back. "Move!" barked Klee, straining at the slab.

We stepped back into the vestibule. Old Clare went a little way down the stairs. He stood leaning on his cane and smoked his pipe. Sweet clouds of *Revelation* came wafting up to us.

With one great heave, Klee tore the massive slab from its footing and rested it on end. He took the top edge with one hand, put his shoulder to the slab, grunted, and levered the stone skyward. For a moment, it seemed he might topple backwards, such was the weight of the thing. But Klee steadied and set his stance and raised the marble slab higher, until his arms were fully extended.

We stood amazed in the doorway. Klee was huge. Clouds of dust and steam were rising from the jagged fissure at his feet. With the light from the staircase lamps crossing in the mist behind him, he looked godlike and heroic. He pressed the great stone upward toward the heavens and filled his lungs. Then, with a roar, he heaved the marble forward.

It came crashing down, smashing the doorstep into a heap of crushed rock and mortar and carving a gash into the terracotta trim beneath our feet. But the marble slab itself remained intact.

It came to rest on a slight incline, a little forward from its original position, with the canted plane of its worn surface now forming a smooth joint with the interior threshold.

Old Clare stepped up to inspect the work. He tapped the tilted landing with his cane. "Ten degrees," he remarked. "Not bad."

"Nothing to be sneered at," said Klee, dusting off his palms. "In spring, we can build a ramp right down to the sidewalk. One step at a time."

Melantha glided forward. I tried the double doors. They still closed and opened neatly.

When I turned back I saw Melantha kneeling on the top step, in the ice, by the narrow crack, removing bits of rubble and cement from where the front edge of the landing used to lie.

She was brushing off a round black stone that had formed part of the footing. In the middle of the stone was a smooth declivity, an obsidian pock.

Klee picked up the brass tripod

again and set it down across the gap, with two feet on the top step, and one, straddling the fissure, in the hollow of the smooth black stone.

"We can use this," he remarked. "Gently," Melantha warned him. "Anyone who damages the omphalos will regret it to the end of days."

There was silence. I glanced at Clare, who shrugged and puffed his pipe.

"Well, I have some shopping to do," I said.

"Best get to it then," said Clare.

Eddie shuffled out the door, edging sideways to avoid Melantha, who glared at him. She rose and drew her shawl around her shoulders. Melantha seemed to tower over Eddie, who blanched and cowered against the wall. She stalked back into the library. The doors swung closed behind her.

Eddie had his hands behind his back as he made his way past us, stepping carefully over the unfamiliar marble plane.

"G'night Clare," he said. He nodded at me. "Otis."

As he turned to go I noticed he was holding a hank of wool behind his back. Instead of heading down the stairs toward town, he sidled past Klee, turned, and headed off around the back of the building.

"Where's he think he's going?"

"Round the mountain," said Clare.

"He's back to his wool-gathering."

"I suspect he's goin' courtin'."

"Eddie? Courting? Not likely. Who lives up that way?"

"No one but Penelope."

"Uh-oh," I said.

We watched Eddie limp up the snow crusted hill in the moonlight.

"Fuck 'em," said Klee. "Who's ready for a beer?"

"I've got work in the morning."

"Then it's me and you old man." Klee clapped his paw on Clare's shoulder.

I bent to take another look at the smooth black stone. One foot of the tripod rested snugly in the little hollow at its center. It looked like it had been fashioned long ago by the thumb of some vulcanian smith for just such a purpose.

"Clare?"

"Hmm?"

"What's it mean, omphalos? That word she used..."

"Omphalos? Hmmm." He puffed his pipe. "Means: 'Navel of the Universe'. Near enough."

"That's deep."

"Mmm."

"You'll tell me about it someday, won't you?"

"Sure thing, man."

Clare looped his cane around his wrist and knocked his pipe out on the flat of his hand and cast a glowing trail of sparks across the entrance to the library.

Continued next week.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Basketball, Keys, Lug Nuts Go Missing; Snow Makes It Difficult for Cars, Trucks, Pedestrians, Neighbors; Even Trains Having A Hard Time

Monday, 2/9

9:12 a.m. Motorist reports that a tractor trailer unit is stuck and blocking both lanes in the vicinity of Paper Logic on Canal Street. DPW en route with sand.

4:03 p.m. Caller from Fifteenth Street complains that a neighbor who plows for several people in the neighborhood has been pushing snow into the road and making it difficult for cars to pass. Responding officer checked area; street had not been plowed yet by DPW, but officer did not find issues with cars being able to traverse road.

Tuesday, 2/10

12:15 a.m. Request to assist Greenfield PD in locating a suspect wanted on multiple charges, including threat to commit murder and arson. MPD checked possible location on Fourth Street; negative contact.

7:31 a.m. Assisted DPW with towing for snow removal in Third Street lot.

8:49 a.m. Caller from Chestnut Street reports an ongoing issue with a neighbor who regularly idles his truck loudly (caller likened it to "20 diesels") for as much as 30 minutes at a time around 7 a.m. and late at night.

Truck was gone when officer arrived on scene.

9:05 a.m. Assisted DPW with towing for snow removal in Fourth Street lot.

9:32 a.m. Report of motorist stuck in snow bank at Main Street and School Street. Vehicle freed itself prior to officer's arrival.

12:40 p.m. Officer flagged down near the canal bridge by motorist reporting that there is a traffic cone in the road and that vehicles are swerving around the cone and nearly colliding with oncoming traffic. Greenfield PD advised.

12:49 p.m. Complaint regarding unshoveled sidewalk on I Street; walk has reportedly not been cleared for the past 3 storms, and the snow is approximately 2 feet high. Officer advises that there is a for sale sign at the residence. Message left with realtor.

2:22 p.m. Caller from K Street reports that vehicles are parked on the street such that she cannot get in or out of her driveway. Caller later reported that some of the vehicles had moved; cancelled en route.

3:25 p.m. Caller from Our Lady of Peace Church ad-

vises that there is a little orange gun at this location; caller believes it to be a toy, but is not sure. Officer advised.

4:52 p.m. Burglar alarm triggered by something to do with the snow on Swamp Road.

Wednesday, 2/11

9:19 a.m. Caller from Rod Shop Road who works nights reports seeing tracks in the snow on his driveway the past few nights. Advised of options; officers will conduct extra patrols.

11:37 a.m. Report of unshoveled sidewalk covered by about 4 feet of snow on Millers Falls Road. Caller advises that house is for sale; she has contacted the realty company several times and been assured that they would take care of the problem, but they have yet to do so. Caller's children are being forced to walk in the road to get to the school bus. Officer left message for keyholder and advised them of the complaint.

5:17 p.m. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] was arrested on two default warrants and also charged with operating a motor vehicle with a suspended license.

6:22 p.m. Caller from Walnut Street reports telephone threats/harassment, including references to her young daughter. Referred to an officer.

7:50 p.m. Officer approached at TFHS by a parent reporting that her son's basketball was stolen. Officer advises that the basketball was not stolen, but was bounced into a restroom, and the party did not want to go in and get it. When the restroom was eventually checked, the ball was gone. Report taken.

8:05 p.m. Report of threatening/harassment via text message on Central Street. Advised of options.

Thursday, 2/12

9:06 a.m. Party into station to report that some lug nuts were removed from his vehicle on Third Street while others were loosened. Advised of options.

12:27 p.m. Caller requesting assistance for 88 year old man stuck on a roof on Davis Street. While units were en route, man was able to safely get down from the roof; however, the couple then began arguing. Units clear.

2:25 p.m. On behalf of client, caller reports larceny (medication and money) at Powertown Apartments on Avenue A

last night. Report taken.

3:03 p.m. Report of dangerous/unsanitary conditions in a Third Street apartment where a young child lives. Officer spoke with mother, who refused him entry, and with landlord, who reports that the tenants are good tenants. Previous safety calls involving the minor in this household identified. Officer will be filing an abuse/neglect report with DCF.

6:48 p.m. Report regarding ongoing parking dispute at Eighth and L Streets. Uncertain whether land in question belongs to the town or to the church. Call will be referred to an officer and to the DPW, who might be able to bring in Father Stan and figure out the parking space issue once and for all.

Friday, 2/13

9:32 a.m. Officer came upon a crew from Asplundh who had shut down an area of Taylor Hill Road. Advised crew that they were not allowed to arbitrarily shut the road down and would have to move to another location.

1:56 p.m. Call from tractor trailer unit operator at Lake Pleasant Railroad crossing; caller states that the crossing arms are in the down position though no train is in sight. Driver unable to back up but does not want to go through crossing. Officer checked area; no problems noted.

2:52 p.m. Party into station requesting assistance getting back to Food City, where he thinks he lost his keys. Courtesy transport provided.

6:23 p.m. Complaint regarding unwanted person on Millers Falls Road. Advised to call back if party returns.

Saturday, 2/14

10:48 a.m. Owner of Federal Street business advises that when she arrived this morning, a blue van was parked outside the door running. When the caller opened the door to her business, she confronted a female party that had her hands full of merchandise. Upon questioning, female "rambled on" not making much sense, but eventually gave the caller her name and left the property. Officer spoke to party and advised her that she is no longer allowed to go to this business.

12:20 p.m. Railroad dispatch called to advise that the signal arms are down at the Lake Pleasant railroad crossing but

should not be; a train came through, and now the crossing won't shut down. Tech is on the way.

12:56 p.m. Caller observed two old individuals running in the roadway toward the police department; he believes that their vehicle is stuck in a snow bank near the cemetery. Officer assisted parties in getting the vehicle unstuck.

5:03 p.m. Multiple reports of physical altercation between neighbors on Fifth Street. One party injured and transported to the hospital. Parties separated; peace restored.

7:52 p.m. Caller advises that a vehicle almost hit her in front of the Cutlery Block on Third Street. She "followed them home to tell them to be careful," at which point the other vehicle reportedly hit her car and its passengers started screaming, yelling, and threatening her. Officers report that no accident occurred and that incident occurred in Greenfield. Parties advised of options.

Sunday, 2/15

1:50 a.m. Caller from East Main Street reports smell of smoke from first floor; fire alarms sounding in building. Advised to evacuate. TFFD on scene; forced entry to Apt. 1, where burnt food on the stove was causing the smoke. Three males inside apartment would not answer the door. Alcohol was involved. Building turned over to landlord; system reset.

7:48 a.m. Caller from Park Street asking what to do with all the snow; she is trying to avoid a conflict with her neighbor next door. Referred to an officer.

1:54 p.m. Additional report regarding parking dispute at Eighth and L Streets. Advised of options.

9:11 p.m. Intoxicated female party taken into protective custody on Seventh Street.

9:21 p.m. Caller advises that a train is sitting still and blocking traffic at the Lake Pleasant railroad crossing. Caller waited ten minutes, then turned around and used an alternate route. Spoke with Joe from Pan Am, who advised that the train had stalled and would be pushed out of the way shortly.

9:50 p.m. Report of assault on Seventh Street. Courtesy transport provided to one party. Investigated.

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GARDENER from page B1

unknown. For some time these outgrowths were thought to serve as oxygenators for the trees, but this is unproven. The knee wood is prized by wood carvers, but trees whose knees have been harvested continue to thrive without them. Most recent scientific thought is that the knees help to stabilize these enormous trees in their muddy habitat. Whatever their purpose, these knees of the cypress give them a fantastic and surreal look.

We are enjoying the southern cuisine: fresh fish, barbequed ribs and gumbo while avoiding the amazing facility for everything fried. Fried foods include the usual as well as almost everything: green beans, okra, pickles, grits, any kind of meat or fish.

Also unpalatable is Florida water. We have been unable to identify the flavors, but whatever the additive, we avoid it like the plague, as well as any beverages made with it. Good spring water is always available and is not expensive. It's hard to start the day without that fresh, beany cup of coffee.

Our neighbors to the left are two brothers we have affectionately dubbed the Louds. They are ruddy-faced men who have been fishing here since they were in their teens. We deduce that all of those years of motor boating have reduced their hearing considerably. Everything they do is loud: conversation, heavy tread, and most disarming, the television.

Several years ago when we settled in for our first night in Merida we soon learned that a bar in the area of the hotel played loud Mexican music until the wee hours every night. We despaired of good rest, but soon the music became part of the fabric of our time in the Yucatan: so too, with the Loud brothers' TV.

One recent evening the genial Louds shared some of their catch of the day, small-mouthed Bass. We breaded the filets in a light coating of flour and cornmeal, sautéed them in oil, and topped them with lemon juice. That fish was the freshest we'd ever had, sweet and meaty.

We developed a slow leak in one of the tires a few days ago. Adam, the able multi-tasking manager of the marina, sent us to Bucky's in Crescent City. Bucky, a busy fel-

low of many tires and few words had that tire off in a jiffy, removed a small screw, plugged the leak, and had us back on the road in no time. The charge: nine hundred pennies.

We are finding Florida driving much like driving in Maine, where great distances seem to require a "pedal to the metal" approach. A road the size of Routes 5 and 10 back home has speed limits of 55 to 60 here, and the county roads are not much slower. The speed limit signs are few and far between, lending an aura of the notion that you can simply choose your own.

A Few Last Things

On Thursday, February 12 we drove about forty-five miles to Flagler Beach for the day. The air was bright but cool with what sailors might call a freshening breeze but which we called downright chilly. Once layered up with sweatshirts and hats it was heartwarming to watch the high tide surf and the Floridian sea birds wheeling.

We enjoyed making our barefoot way along the sand, collecting shells and dipping into the edge of the approaching tide. There is such a primal pull towards the ocean presence, both exciting and familiar.

Today, Friday, we drove the short distance to Seville, where we had seen a weathered sign reading Fruit for Sale. We pulled into the driveway and rang the bell.

An elderly woman toggled out in a winter hat and red patent leather shoes greeted us. She and her daughter walked us out to the grove and helped us pick the sweetest fruit ever tasted. The older lady told us she was ninety-two, and that she had lived in Florida since the 1950s. She was very gracious and helped us fill a five-gallon bucket in no time. I told her we'd see her again next year.

"The good Lord willing," she said.

"Oh, you'll be here," I replied.

She asked me if she could have a hug and I was glad to give one. It was yet another sweet Florida adventure.

Tomorrow we head north, hoping only for decent driving. It will be a sea change to get back to the cold and the snow, but we are ready to be home. A few more weeks and it will be time to start the tomatoes!



LOOKING BACK: 10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Here's the way it was on February 17, 2005: News from the Montague Reporter's archive.

Women's Club Helps Sally Wilder

The Wendell Women's Club held a wonderfully successful pancake breakfast on February 12 at the Wendell Town Hall, to raise money for resident Sally Wilder, who recently lost her Davis Turn Road home to a fire on January 19.

Sally, her granddaughter and her two children escaped without injury on a frigid cold night with literally the clothes on their back. Unfortunately her home and possessions were a complete loss.

Local and surrounding townspeople have rallied in support of Sally's situation and raised \$1,000 to help her get back on her feet.

Central-Prospect Neighborhood Meeting

Seventeen neighborhood people met at the Central Street School in Turners Falls on February 11 to discuss the Prospect Street bridge, and traffic and pedestrian patterns in the

neighborhood.

The neighbors agreed to send as many people as possible to attend the design review meeting on February 15 to see MassHighway's proposal for the bridge replacement, to make sure community concerns are addressed.

The neighbors agreed to ask officials to install signs restricting the more dangerous turns at the Central-Unity Street intersection. While the barriers are open and the bridge is still closed, the neighborhood group will monitor how the changed traffic patterns affect the neighborhood before recommending long-term solutions.

"Greening" Committee Proposed

Since 1999 the Kostanski Funeral Home has made a donation towards the planting of trees in the town of Montague, in memory of each person who passes on and whose family utilizes their services. The donations, which now total over \$5,000, were made through the Massachusetts Releaf program, part of the State Department of Conservation and Recreation.

But, during the last four years

that the funds were donated, not a tree has been planted, said Karen Larrabee, who owns Kostanski Funeral Home parlors in Turners Falls and Greenfield with her brothers Mike and Bill Kostanski.

Larrabee voiced her concerns in a February 1 letter to the Montague selectboard, stating that she has contacted families notifying them that contributions have been made in their loved ones' names toward the tree program, and she wants to see the funds utilized in the manner in which they were intended.

Larrabee suggested in her letter that a committee be formed similar to that of neighboring Greenfield called the "Greening of Greenfield Committee," which works with the town to plant trees.

Selectboard member Pat Allen said "I know people have talked about this in the past, and I know that our money for planting trees is very minimal. I think it would be great people came forward to get involved on the committee."

Local residents may wish to help organize the committee, figure out what the best areas are for planting trees, or suggest places that should be considered.

FLAGS from page B1

The North American Vexillological Association has five recommendations for flag design. They are:

1. Keep it simple.
2. Use meaningful symbolism.
3. Use two or three basic colors.
4. Avoid letters or seals.
5. Be distinctive or be related.

This last suggestion means that one should avoid duplication, but use similarities to show connections between different groups (for example, the Union Jack's placement in the Point of Honor of the Australian flag).

After a survey of many of the municipal flags in our area, I found only one that didn't break these rules: Northampton's, which includes a birds-eye representation of the blue Connecticut River (with distinctive oxbow) and a fluttering golden feather on a deep green background.

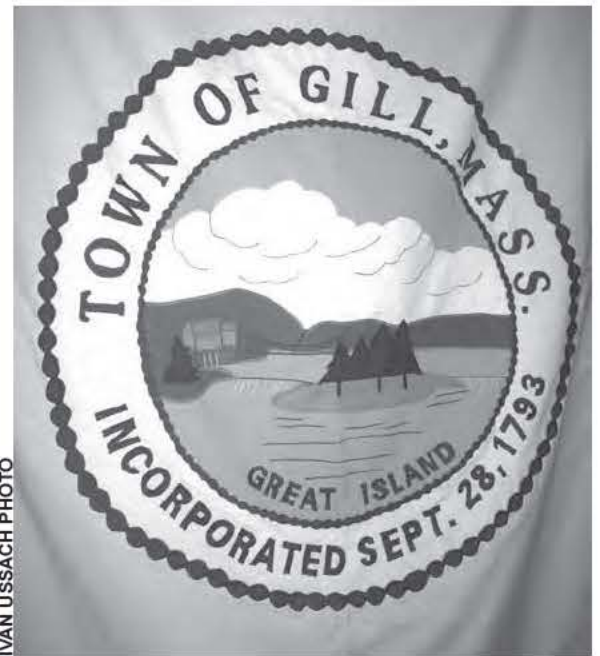
All of the others broke one or more of the rules, many by including the town seal as the central symbol on the flag. A town seal, while inspiringly official on paper, becomes lost on a flag as the detail and wording is often too minute to be understood.

Erving's flag is Cub Scout blue and gold but contains only small words, no graphic symbolism at all.

Gill's, while also being wordy, is a pleasing tan with a merit badge-like representation of the Connecticut River and Great Island.

Leverett's incorporates a similar tan and green color scheme, and includes a log cabin. It does, however, say "Leverett" twice.

Chesterfield manages to break rules of flag design in new, felonious ways. The background seems to be



IVAN USSACH PHOTO

Ten words and a great, tiny island: Gill's flag.

the town seal, which looks like it includes "Equality" as a motto. However, hopes for "equality" are dashed into unreadable obscurity by the words "Town of Chesterfield" that are superimposed in 2001-era Word Art boldness right over everything. A pine tree covers the date of incorporation of the town so that it appears to read "1 [pine tree] 2."

Should Montague have a town flag? While Susan Greendyke Lachevre asserts that "new flag[s] have added greatly to community spirit," I do not believe that community spirit is itself an end-goal. Community spirit is really a reflection of activities and interdependencies of significance going on within the community.

That being said, I think that flags are neat, and that the people of Montague could produce a flag of superior design. While I couldn't care less about a representation of Montague on Beacon Hill, there are many locations in our town that a flag would lend drama to.

The Turners Falls-Gill Bridge would be a great spot, or that unusual and unused radio tower between Third and Fourth Streets. Any dock on a lake.

For those still looking for a winter sewing project, look to one's inner Betsy Ross for inspiration for a flag for Montague. Submissions accepted at the Reporter's office.



Gold on blue: Erving's flag.

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

EVERY MONDAY

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

EVERY TUESDAY

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

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

Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: *Free Texas Hold 'em Poker tournament*, with cash prizes.

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

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

EVERY FRIDAY

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

EXHIBITS:

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *An exhibit of historic photographs of villages,*



Bob McNeil, spoken word artist performs as part of *Music & Diversity Celebration* at Great Falls Harvest, Turners Falls on Wednesday, 2/25.

hamlets and hollows, reproduced from the collection of the Swift River Valley Historical Society on display in the Great Hall. On display through March 28.

Nina's Nook, Turners Falls: *The Fourth Annual Erotic Art Show*. Art of more than two dozen local and regional artists working in a wide array of materials along the erotic spectrum from *mild* to WILD. Through March 14.

Smith College Museum of Art, Northampton: *Mary Bauermeister: The New York Decade* This exhibition is the first to concentrate on the work of German artist Mary Bauermeister (b. 1934) during the decade she lived and worked in the United States from 1962 to 1972. Featuring her signature optical lens boxes, assemblages, stone reliefs, drawings, and other works. Free admission 2nd Friday of each month, 4 to 8 p.m. On view through May 24.

Smith College, Northampton: Book Arts Gallery, Neilson Library: *Paper or Plastic?* A collection of 176 paper and plastic bags from bookstores and museum gift shops from the U.S. and around the world. An eclectic selection of these bags, saved by Elizabeth A. Swaim and presented to the MRBR in 2000, are on view through 2/28.

Arts Block, Greenfield: *Anniversary film showing of "Lovejoy's Nuclear War"* to benefit No Pipeline mvt. Forty-one years after Samuel Lovejoy toppled the symbol of a twin nuclear plant planned for the Montague Plains, the award-winning 1975 film on the action, trial and issues will be shown to benefit the current pipeline fight. Discussion will

Lane. All ages, substance free, 8 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Josh Levangie & The Pistoleros*, outlaw country, 9 p.m.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 21
Montague Common Hall, Montague Center: *Gender Role Free Contra Dance* all level dance, \$, 7 p.m.

Pothole Pictures, Shelburne Falls: *Matilda*. \$, 7:30 p.m. with music before the movie at 7 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Rockit Queer* with DJ Just Joan, \$, 9:30 p.m.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 22
Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Twin Peaks Season One*, 1 to 4 p.m. then the Oscars on the big screen.

Leverett Crafts and Arts, Leverett: *Danse Café, French & Breton Dance*, dancing, instruction, live music, French Café ambience. \$, 3 p.m.

Arts Block, Greenfield: *Anniversary film showing of "Lovejoy's Nuclear War"* to benefit No Pipeline mvt. Forty-one years after Samuel Lovejoy toppled the symbol of a twin nuclear plant planned for the Montague Plains, the award-winning 1975 film on the action, trial and issues will be shown to benefit the current pipeline fight. Discussion will

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follow. \$, all proceeds go to No Fracked Gas in Mass. (www.nofrackedgasinmass.org), 3 p.m.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 23
Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Nora's Stellar Open Mic Cabaret*, 8 p.m. with 7:30 p.m. sign ups.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 25
Deja Brew, Wendell: *Knitting & Crafts night*. All welcome, any craft, skill level.

Great Falls Harvest, Turners Falls: *Music and Diversity Celebration of Black History Month*. Bob McNeil, a spoken word artist from New York City, accompanied by a percussionist, Mr. McNeil will share poems and songs that celebrate prominent African-Americans. *The Forfia and David Duo* at 7 :30 p.m. Pianist Ken Forfia and cellist Vernon C. David will play jazz standards ranging from Duke Ellington and Thelonious Monk to Wayne Shorter. Many lesser known tunes will be included. \$, 6 p.m. to 10 p.m.

Greenfield Community College, Downtown Campus: *By Hand, Hammer and Machine: Metalworking through the Ages*. The Senior Symposia Program presented by Ashfield Silversmith Stephen Smithers. Smithers will discuss this important regional history and the origins and characteristics of various metals used. He will also show tools and demonstrate techniques employed by metalworkers across centuries, illustrating the range of metal objects that have become a major part of our lives. This presentation will include video segments and photographic images, as well as samples of Smithers' own work. \$, 2 to 4 p.m. To register: (413) 775-1661

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Blue Pearl Jazz/Blues*, 8 p.m.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27
Deja Brew, Wendell: *Damon Reeves Band, Roots/Rock/Blues*, 9 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *BackItUp presents Feelin' It*, 9:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28
Green Fields Market, Greenfield: *Seed Swap!* Bring your saved seeds or surplus seeds, trade or just try some new ones. Upstairs meeting room. This annual free event is part of the Week of Winter Fare. 1 to 4 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Free Range Cats, Jazz & Groove Music*, 9 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Street Change, Lexi Weege*, indie/folk/pop, 9:30 p.m.

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The Montague Reporter seeks love poems for its February poetry page, in next week's edition. Send your best original poem on the theme to poetry@montaguereporter.org.

SAUCE from page B1

Yet another, in the professional world: is it profitable? Twenty percent art, twenty percent accounting, sixty percent science.

With this formula in mind, one can see the restrictions on the creative, the inventive aspect of culinary arts.

Without limitation, without rules and restrictions, any bucket of pureed ingredients would be praiseworthy. The more restrictions and scientific laws governing any artistic endeavor leads to all the more brilliant discoveries.

Part of the artistic process – which you now see is a very small part of the meal – is the inspiration. As I walk the aisles of the grocery store, I remember a TV show filmed in a horseradish factory, at the end of which was a two-second screen shot of cranberry horseradish sauce. I want to try it.

I buy a can of cranberry sauce and a jar of horseradish. Now I have two ingredients to build a four course menu from.

I spend a long time in the produce aisle. There are plums, pears, fingerling potatoes and small but ripe hot house tomatoes. I love brussels sprouts, and will use them whenever I have the chance.

It all goes in the cart, but I still have no idea what I'm going to make. Then, as I stroll along I see some brown rice. I taste it with my eyes, and I look back in my cart

and have a stuffed tomato adorned with a clam and chiffonade of basil and drizzled balsamic glaze, and it tastes good.

The brussels sprouts have already prepared themselves, with red onions sauteed in butter, bacon and red wine vinegar. The fingerlings suddenly became braised with chicken stock and scallions, and the pears and plums turned into a short-cake topping.

The only thing not to move and turn itself into something was the cranberry and horseradish. Soon enough. I buy some red meat, and head home.

As I begin to prepare this meal for my wife, my guinea pig wife, she laments that I never cook for her, unless it is for some trial, never romantic. I insist that she get a large group of friends together to come to this special event which I am researching. (Here you see that ratio of twenty percent accounting is always on the mind of a chef.)

Finally, as the bulk of the cooking is coming to a conclusion, I concoct my cranberry and horseradish sauce – and it's disgusting. It is downright putrid, sings my nose hairs and offends my tongue.

Luckily, there is one remaining clementine on the counter. I zest it, then squeeze it in, add some sugar, honey, and it now tastes edible. Sweet, bitter, and unlike anything I've had before, except it has a distinct similarity to cocktail sauce.

I think, sweet cocktail sauce, sweet shrimp. That's when it hit me – coconut shrimp with cranberry cocktail sauce. A few minutes later, I figured it would taste better and be more marketable with some blood orange.

I am not the creator, or inventor of this thing. To invent something in the food world is near impossible. People have been eating forever. What food exists today, in some form or another, was there when dinosaurs were there.

When all of the scientific and artistic parts combine, and it tastes good, and it was inspired, and someone is willing to buy it, then you have something special.

Then you serve it, and you tuck it away, perhaps in a recipe index or cookbook or perhaps, in the case of most chefs, somewhere in your mind.

You draw on this reservoir from time to time and you change it, or as you are exposed to new ingredients you expand upon it, but it will never be as good, at least on your palate, as the first time inspiration struck you.

Eric Damkoehler is the Sous Chef of the Delaney House in Holyoke. He lives in Turners Falls with his wife and three sons. He has been working in commercial kitchens since 1999, and attended the New England Culinary Institute in Montpelier, VT.



SPORTS CORNER



Turners' Haleigh Bassett fills the hoop for 2 points against the Pioneer Panthers in Northfield Monday night. The team went 6 and 14 for the season.

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