



The Montague Reporter

YEAR 13 – NO. 19

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

FEBRUARY 26, 2015

Arts Bridge Project Moves Forward as Fundraiser Falls Short of Goal



JACKSON PHOTO

The group hopes to host Chinese artists on residency in the church building.

By MIKE JACKSON

MILLERS FALLS — After its initial online fundraising campaign fell short of its goal in the time provided, the Millers Falls Arts Bridge organization, which seeks to restore Saint John's Church and provide residencies for artists from China, is moving forward with renovations and planning another attempt using a rival crowdfunding website.

"It was my first time out of the gate," said Rick Widmer, the project's founder and director. "I think I'm going to swap horses and start an Indiegogo."

Reached by video phone from Beijing, Widmer said that he had learned several lessons from the 40-day campaign on Kickstarter.com, which raised \$70,873 in pledges but fell short of its \$100,000 goal, meaning the group received none of the money.

The group has put out a call in Beijing for artists to design temporary installations for five local sites. This spring they will assemble and photograph the works.

"I've been kicking myself," Widmer said. "You get to \$70 thousand, it means \$100 thousand is reachable." Indiegogo, he said, is better geared toward nonprofits, as well as toward international fundraising -- and if a campaign falls short of its goal, the beneficiary will still collect the donations.

While the Kickstarter campaign was running, according to Widmer, the organization incorporated as a nonprofit, joined the Alliance of Artist Communities, brought on a facilities manager, and hired Millers Falls resident Kate Martineau as director of programming.

"It's my first experience being involved in a project at the very beginning," said Martineau. "It's exciting, and also a little scary."

Martineau grew up in Montague and went to Northfield Mount Hermon before leaving the area for college. After lecturing in art history at Keene State, she moved to Millers

Falls last year with her husband, Jim, who grew up in Turners Falls. She said she noticed an ad for the project in the *Reporter* and knew she wanted to get involved.

"I think the economic change will be significant," she said. "But economic impact is not the point for me -- I wouldn't have gotten an Art History degree if that was all I cared about!"

"I already feel the pride growing in town. When I walk across the bridge and look down at the river, I see our town through the ideas of these artists, as an incredible place."

Martineau said that the group has put out a call in Beijing for artists to design temporary installations for five local sites: at Ruggles Pond, the French King Bridge, the oxbow below Millers Falls, the Great Falls, and the bike bridge at the confluence of the Deerfield and Connecticut rivers.

This spring they will assemble and photograph the works, and then display the photographs in storefronts in Turners Falls on May 16. That exhibit would be in conjunction with the River's Song project, an existing collaboration between UMass' Asian Arts and Culture program, the Discovery Center, Turners Falls RiverCulture and the Connecticut River Watershed Council.

"I think it's going to start small and grow," said Martineau. "I'm very hopeful and positive, based on the Kickstarter results, that it's going forward.... I think it'll be an evolving project."

Chuck Masters, the project's facilities manager, grew up in eastern Massachusetts and is a recent graduate of Hartwick College in New York. He first met Widmer, an alumnus of that college, as a visiting artist. The two shared an influential sculpture professor.

While he has some experience working with buildings, Masters emphasized that he is not a carpenter -- he is looking to hire contractors to help with the significant work the building needs.

This includes electrical, heating, plumbing, and some foundation work, along with a ramp and first-floor bathroom to bring the building up to code for accessibility.

see **PROJECT** page A8

Gearing Up for Battle, Pipeline Foes Rewatch "Lovejoy's War"

By LEE WICKS

GREENFIELD —

On February 22, 1974, Montague's own Sam Lovejoy toppled an observation tower on the Montague Plains, setting what would become the movement against nuclear power in motion.

On February 22, 2015, more than 150 people gathered at the Arts Block in Greenfield to view a new digital remastering of *Lovejoy's Nuclear War*, a documentary about the action and its aftermath.

The event was a fundraiser for local efforts to stop the proposed Kinder Morgan gas pipeline slated to pass through much of Western Massachusetts and New Hampshire on its way to Dracut. The event raised \$1,300 to help the No Fracked Gas In Mass group with legal fees, events and materials.

The parallels between Lovejoy's fight to protect the Montague Plains and local opposition to the Kinder Morgan pipeline proposal



Down memory lane: Lovejoy (l) and Hiltown Community Rights' Jim Cutler (r) check out a 1979 poster for the Concerts for Safe Energy.

seemed eerily apparent. The forty-one-year-old arguments in favor of the nuclear power plant on the plains sounded familiar as well.

Spokespeople for what was then called "The peaceful atom" said, "We need the power," "this technology is safe," and "this project will create jobs."

This was before accidents at Three Mile Island, Chernobyl and Fukushima and others less well known. The Atomic Energy regulatory Commission lists thirty-three

see **BENEFIT** page A5

ERVING SPECIAL TOWN MEETING

Voters Opt to Keep Elected Treasurer; Approve Most Expenses on Warrant

By TIA FATTARUSO

At Monday's special town meeting, Erving residents decided to keep the position of town treasurer an elected one rather than hand over appointment of the job to the Board of Selectmen in a 24-to-12 vote.

Selectboard chair William Bembury began discussion of the topic, saying, "we are here not because any one of us feels we should take the right to have and vote on elected positions," but rather to ensure the treasurer have the appropriate qualifications and education.

Bembury and finance committee member Jacob Smith dismissed residents' concerns that there may have been bad treasurers in the past. The job is just getting harder, they implied. Among other tasks, the treasurer is responsible for managing growing investment accounts and retirement funds and staying abreast of an increasing amount of regulations.

Daniel Hammock of the finance committee said, "From a personal point of view... I think we should keep electing. It's the American way." Margaret Sullivan, the current trea-

surer and a recent selectman, was absent from Monday's meeting.

Voters unanimously passed over an article that sought to pay partial tuition for a student at Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School. School committee chair Scott Bastarache explained that if Franklin Technical High School does not offer the program a student wants to take then the town is obligated to send the student to the nearest school that does under School Choice.

Bastarache requested that the item

see **ERVING** page A6



Coach Gary Mullins presents Liam Ellis with the 1000 Point Club trophy after the team's February 17 win against Mahar.

Turners Falls Prepares for Granby; Two Players Make All-Star Game

By MATT ROBINSON

The Turners Falls Boys basketball team will host the Granby Rams on Thursday, February 26 at 7 p.m.

The Indians, who finished with a record of 18 and 2, were ranked third in the Western Mass MIAA D4 basketball brackets and earned a bye in the first round. The Granby Rams, who were ranked sixth, finished the regular season with a record of 11-9.

On Monday, 2/23, Granby defeated McCann Tech, 60 to 41, and earned a shot at the Tribe.

Turners Coach Gary Mullins, who went to the game with a contingent of Indians, is familiar with Granby

and their style of play.

"Granby has been in the tournament several years in a row," he explained. "They had a big time scorer in Baker last year as well as Molin and they gave Smith a great game at the cage before bowing out."

Jesse Molin is Granby's top scorer and has averaged over 25 points per game this season. But Coach Mullins has ways to stop him and has developed several contingencies to battle the game plan of the Rams.

"(Coach Tim Sheehan) does a lot of different things and is not a One-defense kind of guy. I think we will see different things from them on the

see **BASKETBALL** page A8

The Montague Reporter

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Bridge Work... in Progress

We sighed as we watched the final days and hours of the Millers Falls Arts Bridge's Kickstarter campaign count down to zero.

Setting out to raise \$2,500 a day for 40 days straight is ambitious, especially for a newcomer in a town with a hard-earned skepticism of newcomers, building rehab schemes and the power of art – a hat trick the Arts Bridge plan scored neatly.

But this time around there's a new factor: this newcomer could serve as a conduit for true outsiders, Chinese resident artists seeking an immersive experience in a foreign place.

The idea that New England's run-down mill towns can provide some precious aura of abstract otherness is unsettling to many. This is our home, and while we have begrudgingly marketed our home to tourists for as long as anyone can remember, we at least have a rough idea of the meaning American visitors attach to rural New England.

But making that connection across a gaping cultural – some think even civilizational – chasm is another question. How would it work? Do these folks really want to come here? Are there really enough of them, with enough money to keep the project going?

Local public opinion has been mixed, with curiosity focused on the depth of its principal's connections, both in the US and in China.

We can assume it's a viable idea on the demand end. A massive country experiencing dizzying, if uneven, development, China does indeed have a thriving contemporary arts scene, centered in Beijing.

Its artists account for the second-largest share of the world's art market, fueled at first by Western curiosity but over time by a growing

class of Chinese art patrons with expendable income.

And China is by far the largest origin country of international students in the US, with 284,173 here on F-1 visas between 2008 and 2012. Sixty percent were here to study outside the STEM (science, technology, engineering, or math) disciplines. The New York and Boston metropolitan areas were their most and third-most popular destinations. It's not unimaginable that artists seeking to build careers would follow a similar path.

The Arts Bridge project has been more shaky on this end. The choice of Kickstarter, it turns out, was a misstep – as was asking for donations before building any ties to the region's institutions.

Eager to get a badly treated building into working condition in time for the summer season, they may have jumped the gun. And in a town where most of us will "believe it when we see it" at this point, having to re-raise their first \$70,000 is a visible public setback.

But it's heartening to see that they are starting work on the building, and seeding relationships with local artists and programs. And we have to say, brushing themselves off and starting an Indiegogo campaign shows confidence and adaptability.

Is it a good idea? We really don't know. It's an interesting one.

The second time around, we look forward to hearing more – in down-to-earth terms that don't involve resurrection and redemption – about how our communities can be strengthened by hosting skilled, creative visitors.

If this project comes to be, we may end up learning more about our own home than we ever expected.

We Have a Winner!

Congratulations to our official Snowflake Contest Winner, Juna Gradick!

Due to the number of handmade paper snowflake entries received, we let the suspense build for an extra week before drawing a winner to take home the Blizzard Survival Package of one can of soup, a roll of toilet paper, and a snow shovel donated by Steve's Aubuchon Hardware of Turners Falls.

The contest announcement was buried at the end of an angry editorial about snow, but some enterprising families noticed free merchandise was theirs for the scissoring.

The contest winner was chosen at random among entries.

An older member of Ms. Gradick's household inquired, with her submission, whether it would be possible to substitute a second roll of toilet paper for the can of soup.

After much deliberation the committee has decided to grant this wish. We hope that Juna will share her two rolls. We are sure we can get rid of this soup somehow.

A certain *Montague Reporter* team member, who should have known better but, under the self-admitted influence of "two beers" and the lure of premium TP, and in flagrant disregard of the contest rules posted on our website, sent a snowflake to the office, and didn't win anything.



The Food City "Turbo 3000TF"

RETRACTION & APOLOGY!

In our *Notes from the Montague Selectboard* column last week (February 19, "Town Issues Pouring Permit..."), we stated that it "it was noted" that a liquor license previously approved by town meeting "would probably not be issued" because its applicant "has decided not to purchase the former Montague Inn."

To the best of our knowledge this is incorrect. On reviewing the MCTV footage of the meeting and consulting with our reporter, it appears that he himself may have been responsible for a misunderstanding, thinking that he had, in the exchange, sought and received a confirmation of the rumor from town officials when in fact they may have just been kind of nodding at him.

The *Reporter* has heard both from the property's owner and from a representative of the applicant. Based on our understanding of the situation we want to very clearly retract the statement. The applicant has **not** decided not to purchase the former Montague Inn. The over-quota liquor license application is still pending with the state and may yet be issued.

We apologize to our readers for the inaccuracy, and to all involved parties for any headaches, hassles, harm, consternation, inconvenience, setback, vexation, difficulty, trouble, or concern our error caused.

CLARIFICATION

And here's another one (we're really on a roll).

Last week's coverage of the proposed agreement to consolidate elementary schools into the Amherst-Pelham regional school district (February 19, "Leverett to Discuss Proposed Expansion..."), in particular our photo caption, may have inadvertently created the impression that towns joining the expanded district would by default lose their elementary school.

This is not the case. Town elementary schools would continue to exist, but under the administration of the expanded district, rather than their local elementary school committee.

In fact, the proposal for an expanded district creates a lengthy process for closing an elementary school. A school closing would require a feasibility study including a financial analysis of savings, several public hearings and the votes of eight school committee members.

In addition, under the proposal, a town could maintain its elementary school even after a closing decision – if it were willing to "vote additional capital and/or operational funds (over and above the assessment) required to keep the school open."

Our apologies to any readers we may have misled.

Ever Since the Answering Machine

Ever-increasing technology – and with it, the belief that knowledge is everything, that being alone is not good, and that we must be entertained continuously – has contributed to a climate of pervasive anxiety in civilized societies.

It all started with the invention of the answering machine. The answering machine created a mythical sense of importance to people by allotting invisible personal secretaries to each one.

Along with the feeling of importance came a sense of always being "on call," a mental state that can undermine a person's well-being and create a sense of distraction not unlike the relentless noise of a refrigerator.

Increased technology has led to a world where no one talks to each other. So many people are dependent on communicating through texting, emailing, and messaging on social media that no one is talking anymore.

There is a shyness around the telephone that didn't used to be. Everyone takes a cell phone with them when they leave home, thereby diminishing their general capacity for spending time alone.

With the advent of home entertainment, movies have become something to be consumed rather than something to appreciate. Movie marathons at home have replaced walking to the theater with a friend.

To me these developments represent setbacks rather than progress. Following are some of the ways I keep the amount of technology in my life to a minimum:

1. Eliminating voice mail from my phone
2. Watching movies only in the theater
3. Converting my laptop into a glorified typewriter
4. Owning no more than two other electronic devices (a clock radio and CD player)

Living like this has made it possible for me to feel less machine-like, and to gain perspective for the general mood of angst I find outside my door.

Following are three ways you can decrease technology in your life:

1. The next time you visit a library, bypass the public computers and browse through the stacks instead.
2. Walk to your local post office, purchase a postage stamp, and write a letter to a friend.
3. Practice cheerier ways of answering your cell phone, reminiscent of a kinder and gentler time when every phone remained affixed to a wall.

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Published weekly on Thursdays.
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LOCAL BRIEFS

Compiled by DON CLEGG

The **Winter & Spring Saturday Preschool Series** continues this Saturday, February 28, from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. at the Great Falls Discovery Center, with a topic about Baby Animals.

Baby animals are more than cute. They are adapted to grow into the best grown up animals they can be! Come learn about the lives of young animals. Led by Janel Nockleby, each program will feature stories, activities, and crafts for ages 3 to 6 with a parent or guardian. Siblings and friends welcome.

The Carnegie Public Library hosts the Last Saturday **Lego Club** on the last Saturday of each month. The next meeting is February 28, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Children of all ages and their caregivers are invited to come build and play. Completed creations will be displayed for one month in the Children's Room. For more info, please call the Carnegie Library, 863-3214.

Unwanted Legos are always accepted at the library during open

hours. Maybe not a good idea to put them in the book return box.

In honor of Black History Month, local artist Louise Minks has graciously allowed four illustrations of her **Underground Railroad Series** to be on display in the lobby of GSB in Turners Falls.

To celebrate the **111th birthday of Dr. Seuss**, the Erving Elementary School Library and the Erving PTO are hosting two events on Sunday, March 1 at the Erving Community/Senior Center, located just north of the school on Route 63.

From 10:30 to 11:30 a.m., there will be a "Green Eggs & Ham" brunch to benefit the Sixth Grade's upcoming trip to New York City. On the menu will be "Green" eggs, sausage, donuts from Adams Donuts, juice, coffee & tea. All ages are welcome, and there will be activities to occupy younger children while older family members eat. While there is no set charge for this, a donation will be requested for each attendee.

From 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., there will be a Dr. Seuss Birthday Party, with Ed the Wizard performing his

Reading is Magic show at 11:45. Cake will follow and all children will go home with a free book! There will also be Dr. Seuss-related activities for younger children before and after the magic show.

This event is free and open to the public. Ed the Wizard's performance is supported in part by a grant from the Erving Cultural Council. His performance is appropriate for all ages, especially students in Kindergarten through Grade 4 and all the adults in their lives who care about them.

On Monday, March 2, the Turners Falls Fire Department and Montague Police will host a "Guns N Hoses," "battle of the badges" style blood drive for the American Red Cross.

Between noon and 5 p.m. you can bring your blood, preferably still in your body, to the Turners Falls Fire Station at 180 Turnpike Road.

Designate a department - whoever collects the most blood wins. Appointments are preferred. Call (800) 733-2767 or visit redcrossblood.org.

Greenfield Savings Bank is turning Five Years Old in its beautiful location in downtown Turners. Join them on Monday, March 2, from 1 to 3 p.m. for cake and ice cream. The staff in Turners Falls will be glad to offer one and all a sample of their GSB cake while supplies last.

Free technology help is available at the Carnegie Library on Friday mornings from 10 a.m. to noon, and on Thursday evening, March 6, from 6 to 8 p.m. Advance sign-ups

for 30 minute one-on-one slots are recommended. Topics can include basic computer skills, more advanced questions, managing e-mail, and downloading e-books.

Bring your own laptop, or other electronic device, or use a library laptop. Tech consultant Shirley Keech is the instructor. This service is part of the Bridging the Digital Divide in Montague project, funded by the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts. Call 863-3214 to sign up or for more information.

The **Greenfield Community College Chorus** will open its spring semester concert series on Friday, March 6, with a free preview concert, "Bach and Handel." The performance will take place from 12:15 to 12:45 p.m. at the Greenfield Community College main building, in Sloan Theater.

The **RECOVER Project**, a community-driven, peer-to-peer center that aims to enhance the lives of people in recovery, will host an Open Mic Night, on Saturday, March 7, from 8 to 10:30 p.m. in the RPX, at 1 Osgood Street, Greenfield.

Come out and wow with your talent: singing, dancing, poetry, comedy, skits and more. Admission by donation. This is a family-friendly, drug- and alcohol-free event. Coffee will be available, and light refreshments will be sold.

Send your local briefs to editor@montaguereporter.org.

GUEST EDITORIAL

By JEFF SINGLETON

"Is School Choice the Problem?" So reads the headline on the *Reporter* article about the recent hearing on the Fiscal Year 2016 Gill-Montague Regional School District budget. Below the headline one reads: "...the net loss for FY [Fiscal Year] '15 through choice and charter [school payments] is \$1,393,838."

Next we are told that the projected loss for FY'16 is \$1,530,000.

Much of the article deals with the proposed budget cuts designed to deal with an upcoming (FY'16) budget gap. The impression one gets is that the big school choice numbers are causing the budget gap.

I'm not blaming *Reporter* columnist Ellen Blanchette for this. It is a logical conclusion probably suggested by the budget presentation.

But it does not seem to be supportable. According to data that has been distributed by school superintendent Michael Sullivan, the projected budget "gap" for 2016 that is producing the cuts is \$1,096,759. According to the *Reporter* article, choice and charter school costs are projected to increase by approximately \$136,000. This increase is significant, but only a relatively small portion of the projected gap.

School Choice and GMRSD Budget Cuts

The problem is that the big numbers for total school choice/charter costs are confused with the annual increase in these costs. It is this increase that produces the gap.

The numbers distributed by the district show that cost increases and revenue losses in other programs are far more significant.

According to a list of "budget drivers" distributed by the superintendent, there is an increase of over \$335,701 in "insurance/benefit" costs and \$326,000 in wage increases. That is a total increase of over \$660,000, a significant proportion of it negotiated wage and benefit increases.

Some of us on the school district negotiating committee voted against the contract that produced these increases because we believed they were unaffordable. It appears we were correct.

My goal here is not to point fingers or say "I told you so." My point is that we need to recognize mistakes and correct them if we are to avoid more big budget cuts in the future.

Another concern is the rather dramatic changes in the use of so-called "revolving funds," primarily the special education "circuit breaker" revolving fund. This fund contains state money that is used to finance high cost students in the

special education program.

According to "budget drivers," this revenue source has been cut by nearly \$400,000 because there is a "reduction in revenues over the past several years." This is a huge revenue loss in one year, and would seem to reflect poor planning by the district and oversight committees.

The irony is that the circuit breaker revolving fund has recently been included in the budget process through something called the "all funds budget." The goal has been to show how these funds, which also include the school choice revolving fund and grants, enter the budget.

Finally, I would agree with Mike Naughton that the formula for the Chapter 70 state aid is a persistent problem. Chapter 70 school aid is the biggest form of local aid from the state, totalling over \$6 million to the GMRSD. It has been essentially flat for nearly fifteen years.

Chapter 70 is a particularly important issue this year because the state is reviewing the formula through a "Foundation Budget Review Commission." There have been hearings all over the state, including one in Northampton where I and others from the town and district testified.

Last year, the school committee, Montague finance committee and selectboard approved a statement

sent to state officials which pointed to some key problems with the formula that affect all districts in the state. This critique applies not only to small districts in western Massachusetts, but also to large districts such as Boston and Somerville, whose aid has been flat as well.

Unfortunately the superintendent and business manager of the GMRSD, in testifying before the state review commission, for some reason completely ignored the statements approved by the town committees. Instead they proposed to tweak the formula in order to benefit only small Western Massachusetts districts.

In my opinion, this proposal will not get the GMRSD more money, and divides us from more influential districts in the eastern part of the state. The testimony ignores policy proposals adopted by our own oversight boards, proposals that were the result of a good deal of hard work and creative thinking!

It is all very frustrating to me, but maybe none of it matters. My son (and his family) had a great experience at Turners Falls High School in spite of all the conflicts over school district budgets.

But I fear that if we do not do a better job of understanding the causes of these budget gaps, we will see more of them in the future.

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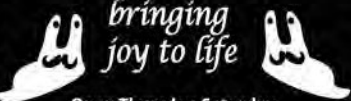
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Town of Gill seeks clerk to assist Zoning Board of Appeals, Planning Board, Conservation Commission, & Board of Health. Workload fluctuates, \$13.21/hr, 100-300 hrs/year including evening meetings. Requires basic secretarial & computer skills and ability 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, & résumé due Mar. 5.

Gill is an EO/AAE.

NOTES FROM THE GILL SELECTBOARD

Fate of Town Hall Piano
Hangs in the Balance

By BEVERLY KETCH

The Gill selectboard met Monday evening, and the videotaped meeting began with a few project updates.

A grant has been awarded for disinfecting the Gill Elementary School’s well, and Ray Purington would be meeting with representatives of the USDA on Tuesday the 23rd to sign the paperwork.

Reached on Thursday, Purington said that meeting went “very well.” “There’s still paperwork to be pushed,” he said, “but for all intents and purposes, I think we can say we’re getting the grant.”

The hoped-for \$25,350 would go toward preliminary engineering for a small in-house system capable of filtering out manganese and killing coliform bacteria.

Purington said construction might then be funded by a second-phase USDA grant. “We’re hoping to have the system installed before school starts in September,” he said.

In the long process of arranging for new locks to be installed throughout the elementary school, the locksmith’s estimate for the project became slightly outdated. The board voted to add the necessary \$680 to complete the project, since the \$6,800 estimate had been provided when the process started in 2012.

Although board members John Ward and Randy Crochier had questioned the importance of these locks at first consideration, all agreed that the project should be completed and would be an appropriate precaution in today’s world.

The upright piano in the town hall seems to be old, and in the way. Amy Gordon, who directs the A.C.T. children’s program in the Gill town hall, has asked that it be moved from the stage to make room for the children’s activities there.

Board member Gregory Snedeker, when asked for his opinion, said that he thought it wouldn’t be worth the town’s money to tune, as it would likely go right out of tune again.

Crochier delayed a final decision about the piano to the next meeting to give people who may be sentimental about it time to speak up, and if someone offers to tune it, it could perhaps remain in the back of the hall and still be of some use.

Otherwise, the instrument, dated to around 1909, may be declared

surplus.

Ernie Hastings and Brian Piela bid for the use of the Boyle Lots, with Piela winning the right to use the lots for \$125 dollars this year and an option to pay the same for the following two years.

Volunteer members of the Energy Commission will be holding some upcoming workshops and it was agreed that they could be designated Special Municipal Employees so that they could be paid a \$300 fee for doing this extra work beyond their duties as volunteers.

Tax collector Veronica LaChance informed the board that of the 3 properties that had been behind on their taxes, two had paid the back taxes and returned to good standing, and one had become the town’s property, as the owner was deceased and no relatives wanted it.

When all abutting property owners have been notified there will be an auction, probably in April. The property is on River Road.

Fire chief Gene Beaubien came to the meeting to tell the board about Code Red Emergency Communications Network. After May of 2016, Vermont Yankee will no longer pay for the system that is now in place for notifying citizens for disaster preparedness.

For \$1,500 dollars a year, the town can have an advanced notification system of its own, capable of sending warning texts and cell phone calls to residents, as well as to people with a phone app coordinated to the system who were traveling in the area.

It was brought up for consideration to possibly get the new system in place before May 2016 so that there would be no time when the town had to rely on a system that had not been tested and worked out. Also, it would allow the town to lock in the price that is now being offered and it would allow the phone numbers in the present system to be transferred to the new system.

The meeting concluded with the announcement that there would be dog and cat rabies vaccination clinics on Sunday, March 22 from 9 a.m. to noon at the Bernardston police department, and on Saturday, April 4 from 12 to 2 p.m. at the Franklin County Regional Dog Shelter.

A community survey from the cultural council will be available on the Town of Gill’s website.

Mike Jackson contributed additional reporting.

MONTAGUE from page A1

ing the compact was a response to a statement attributed to school committee chair Joyce Phillips that “the Compact has expired.” It was not clear whether this statement represented Phillips’ opinion or the position of the school committee as a whole.

The Montague letter notes that “while the timeline in the original Table B extended only through FY 2015, the Compact itself has no expiration date, and our understanding is that it will remain in effect unless and until its member parties agree to terminate it.”

An effort is being made by the informal group known as the “technical panel,” which produced the original 2010 plan, to update Table B. The update will not only extend the projections in the plan but may also include several new revenue sources the school district currently accounts for in its “all funds budget.”

The Montague letter does not propose a specific process for modifying or extending Table B. However, the compact states that proposed changes “will be evaluated by all parties with the goal of reaching a consensus on a revision of the long term plan...”

Library Trustees

In other news, Linda Hickman, the director of the Montague libraries, announced the temporary appointments of Nancy Crowell and David Harmon to the library Board of Trustees. These members will serve until upcoming elections on May 18. Hickman stated that four residents had applied for the two empty slots on the board, which totals nine citizens.

In response to a question from audience member John Reynolds, Hickman stated that an effort is made to include residents from all five villages on the board. She noted that several current board members live in Montague Center and that Crowell, who was not at the meeting, is from Millers Falls.

Other Business

Jason Hunter of the Berkshire Brewing Company requested and

received a one-day license to serve beer at a Shea Theater event on March 1.

Town administrator Frank Abbondanzio noted a letter from the FirstLight power company announcing that its annual “service outage” at the power canal will be scheduled for October 5 to October 11.

The outage will involve emptying the canal to allow the power company, which owns it, to make repairs. The Water Pollution Control Facility may use the opportunity to repair a “siphon” under the canal.

Warrant to Close March 17

At the end of the meeting selectboard member Mark Fairbrother noted that, while the warrant for the May annual town meeting will close on March 17, the town will follow all state laws on the issue.

This was a response to an inquiry at the last meeting concerning whether the early closing date legally applied to articles placed on the warrant by citizen petition. Town administrator Frank Abbondanzio stated he believed that the closing date, including for petitioned articles, was legal.

State law, Chapter 39 Section 10, regulates local town meetings, including warrants and petitioned articles. It requires ten signatures, with the addresses, of registered voters for petitioned articles to annual town meetings. 100 resident signatures are required to place an article on a special town meeting.

While the law requires the warrant for the annual meeting to be published at least seven days in advance, it does not establish a date when the petition must be submitted. Nor does it mention a date when local officials may “close” the warrant.

The current closing date in Montague, over six weeks before the meeting, is a product of the need to approve and publish extensive budget figures of town departments that appear on the warrant.

The mailing to town meeting members also includes a report by the town finance committee.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GILL POLICE LOG

Deer, Pet, Wires, Sect, Blood,
& Geese Lead To Incidents

Friday, 2/13

11:55 a.m. Assisted with possible elder abuse case.

1:15 p.m. Investigated unattended death at Main Road residence.

6:45 p.m. Car versus deer accident on Main Road.

Saturday, 2/14

12:55 p.m. Followed up with resident over mental illness issues.

7:20 p.m. Suspicious footprints in snow at Barney Hale Road residence. Under investigation.

8:25 p.m. Three-vehicle accident on the French King Highway. Two operators transported with injuries; one arrest for numerous driving offenses, including driving while intoxicated.

Sunday, 2/15

6:45 p.m. Assisted Bernardston PD with child

custody issue.

Monday, 2/16

12:45 p.m. Medical assistance for subject who fell at Factory Hollow Bridge.

Tuesday, 2/17

5:30 p.m. Alarm sounding at Center Road residence. Pet set off motion alarm.

7:30 p.m. Court process served on Munns Ferry Road resident.

7:45 p.m. Munns Ferry Road resident reports larceny of money and prescription medication.

Wednesday, 2/18

7:55 a.m. Assisted DCF with child abuse investigation.

12:30 p.m. Assisted with employee firing at Main Road business.

2:20 p.m. Wires down across Franklin Road.

Assisted homeowner with contacts.

Thursday, 2/19

5:55 p.m. Arrest for aggravated assault & battery, domestic.

Friday, 2/20

10:40 a.m. Complaint of religious group going door to door in Riverside area.

1:45 p.m. Oak Street resident reports “strange” phone call of a friend that is dying.

5 p.m. Search warrant issued and completed for blood at Franklin Medical Center.

Saturday, 2/21

12:25 p.m. Complaint that geese are creating an issue on River Road.

2:25 p.m. Firearms issue with French King Highway resident.

Sunday, 2/22

2:40 p.m. Suspicious trucks at elementary school. Discovered parking for snowmobilers.

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BENEFIT from page A1

nuclear power plant accidents world-wide since 1952.

Seeing Sam Lovejoy as a young man led entirely by his ideals was inspiring to those who have fought to close down the Vermont Yankee nuclear plant and are now fighting to stop the pipeline here and also raise awareness about the dangers of hydro-fracking and turn attention to sustainable energy sources.

Ashfield’s Jim Cutler, who has taken a leadership role in the pipeline opposition since it emerged about a year ago, said, “Reliance on fossil fuels has to stop. Now. Solar power is making enormous strides. That’s where our future lies.

“Fracked gas is no different than the nuclear threat. We are fighting for the lives and livelihoods of people who are losing everything.”

Rose Wessel from Cummington has also been engaged in this movement from the beginning. She built the website *www.nofrackedgasin-mass.org* and people wanting to read media reports on this subject, view videos about the communities that would be impacted, and learn how they might get involved should visit the site regularly.

Wessel said that when ISO issues reports on energy use and energy production it does not include energy created through renewable resources. She said groups from our

area went to a forum in Albany this winter that included participants from Pennsylvania, New Hampshire and New York.

Energized by the film, a sunny thirty-degree day and the promise of spring, Cutler and Wessel exuded confidence.

Leigh Youngblood from the Mount Grace Land Trust took the microphone during a comment session after the film and said, “More than 900 landowners will have their land taken if this project wins approval. Nobody likes the idea of taking private property. It is not in the public good whether it’s your personal property or conservation land that you have helped pay to preserve.” She won a round of applause for that.

Nina Keller of Wendell volunteered to help prepare the snacks. While cutting vegetables with quiet efficiency, she spoke with passionate conviction.

“That pipeline will not be built,” she said, “because hundreds of approaches will whittle away and create delays, and this will have an impact on the economic viability of the project.

“What the town of Deerfield is doing, what Steve Kulik is doing, along with the [Franklyn Regional Council of Governments], the Mohawk Area Public Health Coalition and more, will have a cumulative effect.”

Wessel called this strategy “death by papercut.” When compared with Lovejoy’s “war,” a lonely battle fought by just one person who believed he had to act on behalf of others, the Stop the Pipeline movement has an impressive scorecard to date.

There are 13,381 signatures on its statewide petition to ban new gas pipelines, and to date, 44 municipalities have passed resolutions either to ban pipelines and gas storage facilities, or support community-rights initiatives that could prevent their construction. All that have been voted on have passed, most by wide margins, several unanimously.

This time last year, few people knew anything about this proposed pipeline. Once word began to spread concern grew, people began meeting in individual towns, eventually joining in a statewide march along the project’s then-proposed route, ending at the State House in Boston.

Many were outraged to learn that this pipeline would bring no gas to local homes, that there were plans for the utility company to put a surcharge on our electric bills to pay for the pipeline, as well as plans to export the gas.

We learned a lot about “natural gas,” which is presented as a clean alternative to coal and oil. We learned that methane leaks along pipelines do as much environmental damage as coal emissions and that fracking

has had devastating effects on communities where water has been poisoned and land values destroyed.

Over time we learned that in addition to the pipeline, Kinder Morgan planned to build at least two compressor stations in this area. At an open house they showed a picture of one, painted red to blend into a farm community.

But that station turned out to be only a third the size of the two they would build here, and the picture they projected did not show the bright lights that burn all night long, or the barbed wire.

Wessel said, “By constantly repeating that we need this gas now that nuclear power plants and coal-fired plants are closing, they are distracting people from the facts and the terrible environmental impact of the pipeline.

“We do not need a new pipeline. Efficiencies in the current pipelines, in combination with conservation and new sustainable technologies, will serve our needs.”

With all the lawn signs buried under snow, the memory of activism seems distant. But opposition has not been hibernating. People have been busy and many more will begin to act as spring approaches.

“Last year we were in an awareness phase,” said Cutler. “This second phase will involve action.”

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One Way to Wean From Fossil Fuels

Representatives from Mothers Out Front came to the Arts Block with information on how people can switch to clean energy. Their goal is to make Massachusetts the first state to meet its energy needs through 100% renewable sources.

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NOTES FROM THE LEVERETT SELECTBOARD

Leverett Elementary Springs a Leak

By DAVID DETMOLD

Somewhere between 6,000 and 8,000 gallons of water burst from a cracked elbow in the Leverett Elementary School’s sprinkler system at about 4 p.m. on Wednesday, February 18, during school vacation. Selectboard chair Rich Brazeau said he and about a half dozen school employees and volunteers were pushing water down the hallway with snow shovels out the back door into a catch basin during the worst of the flooding, with water inches deep on the hallway ramp near the auditorium.

Four rooms were heavily damaged, and repair work has been ongoing since, under the supervision of Randall Roberts and his crew.

This week, with school back in session despite the fact that the art room, music room, and two special education classrooms had been rendered unusable, a second, smaller break occurred in the sprinkler system on Tuesday at about 5 a.m., causing further damage, this time to the 2nd and 3rd grade classrooms.

According to Union 28 superintendent Bob Mahler, the 2nd grade is now conducting class in a remedial education room, and the 3rd grade is in session in the school library. “We’re looking at weeks” of repairs, he said.

Brazeau said the breaks in the sprinkler system occurred above the

recently insulated ceiling, at the unheated attic level, during a spell of exceptionally cold winter weather.

Brazeau said the sprinkler system is pressure-tested annually. He speculated that some water had remained in an elbow section of black pipe, where the first break occurred. He did not fault school staff for any oversight in annual maintenance.

“I don’t know what else they could have done,” said a tired-looking Brazeau, following a budget hearing for the elementary school on Tuesday. The selectboard chair was called to the school again early in the morning on Tuesday to respond to the sprinkler line emergency, as he had been during Wednesday’s more serious event.

Both Brazeau and Mahler noted that some time delay occurred in shutting down the sprinkler system on Wednesday, because state law requires the fire department to respond when the sprinkler alarm in the school is activated. Although school maintenance staff were on hand when the alarm went off on Wednesday, they were not able to deactivate the system themselves.

Mahler could not provide an estimate of how much time elapsed before the fire department arrived to shut the water off, although he said they were on hand, and the water shut off, before he arrived about an hour after the break occurred.

Leverett has been engaged in a years-long discussion about the advisability of hiring a full-time firefighter to staff the main fire station during the day, to respond to emergency calls, but has yet to take action on that proposal.

Mahler said on Tuesday he arrived at the school about 6:30 a.m., inspected the damage to the 2nd and 3rd grade classrooms, and made the decision not to cancel school, opting instead to relocate those classes.

“I’m glad we didn’t,” said Mahler, “We were able to move the classes. People rallied. The kids were great. If there’s a silver lining it’s that the community and the school community has really risen to help.”

Teachers are able to access materials from the damaged classrooms, and though regular library programs are being impacted, teachers and staff have risen to the occasion and made the continuation of the regular school calendar a top priority.

Brazeau said insurance will pay for most of the damages, although the town will have to pay up to a \$5,000 deductible for the two incidents.

LES Budget Hearing

Despite the flooding, Mahler and members of the school committee arrived on schedule at the selectboard meeting on Tuesday to present their \$1.8 million budget for FY’16, which showed a 3.5% reduction, as requested by the selectboard and fi-

nance committee.

The finance boards have asked all town departments to also prepare an 8% budget reduction scenario, to prepare for several fiscal wildcards that may occur during this budget cycle, but Mahler said he was unwilling to present such a seriously reduced budget in public unless the need for deep cuts becomes real. “It would be too demoralizing to staff,” he said.

“If we have to go to 8% cuts,” Mahler told the joint hearing of the finance and selectboards, “that’s \$75,000. If you need it, you can have it on your desk within 48 hours. But to do it as an exercise, it will affect morale.”

Finance committee chair Tom Powers supported Mahler’s approach, but finance member Steve Nagy questioned why Mahler had cushioned the 3.5% budget reduction with a \$22,000 increase in spending from the school choice account, which in the past has functioned as a sort of supplementary budget for the school’s unanticipated annual expenses.

Nagy said once the extra school choice funds were applied to reduce the budget impact to the town, the school is actually showing only about a 1% reduction in overall spending.

“Is that what you are going to go to town meeting with?” demanded Nagy. “A 1% cut in spending?”

Powers came to the school committee’s defense, saying, “Our request to departments was not for a reduction in spending. It was for a reduction in budget. If they were

able to balance their budget with other revenues, I think that’s entirely appropriate.”

Even at that, Mahler said a 3.5% budget reduction will cause a reduction in hours for a maintenance worker and a special education teacher, along with line item cuts in all departments. “We believe we can still operate an excellent program,” despite the cuts, Mahler said.

Regionalization Forum

On Thursday, February 26, at 7, at the elementary school, Leverett will host a public forum on the proposed changes to the Amherst Pelham Regional School District agreement, in a years long effort to pave the way for the possible consolidation of Leverett and Shutesbury’s elementary schools within a unified K-12 Amherst Pelham District.

But on Tuesday, Leverett school committee chair Kip Fonsh said the exact wording for the proposed amendments to the district agreement had not been finalized in time to place a warrant item for elementary regionalization on Leverett’s spring annual town meeting.

“My personal opinion is we’re not going to have a vote at town meeting,” Fonsh told the selectboard. “It will have to wait until fall.”

When Powers stated his view that such an “important and complex issue” should not be brought to a special town meeting in the fall, both Fonsh and selectboard member Julie Shively responded that the regionalization vote may have to be put off until the annual town meeting in 2016.

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LOOKING BACK: 10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Here's the way it was on February 24, 2005: News from the Montague Reporter's archive.

Montague Pay and Classification Study

Town administrator Frank Abbondanzio reported that he had been hard at work updating a pay and classification study, comparing the job descriptions and compensation of Montague employees with those of area towns.

The study was prepared for the town by a consultant in 2001. The selectboard and town meeting endorsed its findings, but the town was not able to afford the approximately \$70,000 annual increase in personnel costs to bring Montague employees up to par with the pay of employees in neighboring communities, due to state aid cutbacks during the recent recession.

Abbondanzio said this has left employees of certain departments,

like Montague's civilian police dispatchers, working at nearly 25% less than their counterparts in nearby towns, putting Montague in the position of providing training for dispatchers who routinely leave for better paying jobs elsewhere.

Town Gets Grant for Fieldhouse

The Montague Parks and Recreation Commission is pleased to announce the receipt of an \$18,000 grant from the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund for improvements to the Fieldhouse at Unity Park in Turners Falls.

The grant will pay for repairs to the roof and interior renovations to improve energy efficiency and space utilization.

Town meeting previously appropriated \$18,165 for the roof repairs. The grant will match these funds and allow the town to make the additional improvements.

"This is a good deal for the taxpayers," said parks and recreation director Jon Dobosz. "It will improve the operation of our facility, or reducing costs for utilities and maintenance."

Sales of Used Heavy Machinery

Robert Semanski is planning to expand his business in Montague City to include sales of used heavy machinery in the lot behind his contracting business and warehouse.

Semanski said the Rod Shop Road property has a fenced lot, on which he would hope to have up to 24 pieces of used heavy equipment, such as dump trucks and excavators, for resale.

He said he had spoken with the residential abutter to the north of his lot, and agreed to put up a stockade fence on his property line to shield the view from her house.

ERVING from page A1

be tabled until the annual town meeting as more time was needed to better understand the details of residency and School Choice in this instance, and since it should not affect the student's current enrollment.

Expenditures

All other articles passed unanimously.

The highway department received the support it sought as residents approved several appropriations of funds from free cash for improvements.

The department will get \$30,000 to purchase a tow behind wood chipper, much needed as municipalities can no longer burn brush under Massachusetts general law. The chipper will eventually "pay for itself" due to the approximately \$4200 per year cost of hauling the brush.

The highway department will also get \$15,000 to replace two "under-built," according to department head Glenn McCrory, wooden storage sheds with three dry storage containers.

\$5,000 will go toward funding a part-time position for maintenance of recreation fields and programs through FY'15, with an amendment that put the job under the highway department's supervision.

The position will continue into the following year at 19.5 hours per week and \$13.04 per hour, and is intended to ease what Bembury said was becoming an increasingly difficult load for the highway department to pick up.

An audience member from the recreation department said that Rec was pleased with the agreement as it has been proposed.

The Police Department was given \$5,000 to send officer James Loynd to the police academy. "Jim has proven to be a loyal and good officer," said Chief Christopher Blair of the newly full-time officer, who had been part-time for nine years.

The Pleasant Street Graded School will receive a \$25,000 upgrade in the form of a new wheelchair lift in the same location of the old lift, which was removed three years ago after sitting in mechanical disrepair, apparently unable to be fixed.

Audience questions about a ramp alternative were put to rest by board members, who explained that a ramp would be excessively long in order not to be too steep, and that building of a ramp rather than improving a preexisting fixture could open the door to the need for further upgrades that the board had yet to discuss.

Also approved was payment of \$3,976 to Duseau Trucking for payment of services already rendered.

Selectboard Meeting

The board of selectmen appointed George Moonlight Davis to the planning board Monday evening. Planning board chair William Morris and clerk Jacquelyn Boyden said the board had voted unanimously to recommend Davis after interviewing him.

Morris said Davis, a musician, seemed intelligent and characterized himself as a leader interested in public service. Davis will join the planning board for now and a

special permit hearing will be held March 19.

Friends of the Erving Public Library president Rebecca Hubbard asked the board if the Friends might be permitted to include an information sheet on their organization in the upcoming tax mailing. Hubbard said they have had difficulty "spreading the word" about the group, and that this idea was suggested to her.

Board member Arthur Johnson expressed concerns that people might see the sheet and dismiss their tax bills, and that if the Friends are allowed to market their organization this way, what other groups would then approach with the same request.

"What happens when other groups ask? If we say yes to one then we have to say yes to all, and all could become quite a bit," he said.

The board decided to wait on seeing the finished product to make a decision.

Before bringing it as an article to special town meeting, the board decided to amend the request for funding for field maintenance to be managed by the highway, rather than recreation, department. A part-time position will be created and dedicated to recreation uses first, but with wages coming from the highway department.

Frank Moschetti of F.A. Moschetti & Sons, Inc. said his firm is making progress securing the IP Mill, and that the count of 215 windows boarded up was already several days old by Monday. The doors will be boarded up last. Bembury said he planned to join a walk through the building Tuesday morning.

A small, recurring leak in the library roof has been addressed by raking the snow off the roof and removing ice dams. Snow blowers were used to remove snow from the school roof.

Budget reviews of the police, highway and water/POTW departments proved rising costs of electricity to be the most consistent increase across the board. All budgets accounted for wage raises and cost of living allowance, as well as for specific educational benefits and incentives for qualifying employees.

A resignation in the police department caused that budget to go down, though officer James Loynd was promoted to fill that position, and five more station hours per week were budgeted for officer Beth Kaczinski.

Highway department foreman Glenn McCrory said he hopes to repave three roads this year with increased FY'16 chapter 90 funding of \$126,000. Mountain Road, High Street and Lillians Way "are so beat up they tear up trucks, and your physical body," McCrory said.

"It's a lot for one year, but it would save on equipment immensely," he said.

McCrory included in the budget the replacement of a 2005 zero turn John Deere mower that was due to be replaced in FY'15.

The water department's budget stayed the same, but for the aforementioned increases in electricity and wages, and the annual change in principal on an FRS loan.



NOTES FROM THE GMRSD SCHOOL COMMITTEE

District Budget to be Voted on March 10

By ELLEN BLANCHETTE

The Gill-Montague technology department is moving forward with infrastructure improvements that will allow it to maintain and build its high tech capacity in all the district schools.

Network Manager William St. Cyr shared an informative presentation with the school committee at its meeting this week at Turners Falls High School. He explained that Virtualization allows one or two servers to do the work of many.

Within the district's network there are two machines doing the work of 33 servers, plus 98 towers for individual student computers. These machines have the capacity to be expanded to increase the virtual network.

St. Cyr turned next to the subject of the Local Network (LAN) and how a move to fiber connectors, replacing the coax connectors currently used will improve the network.

According to St. Cyr, using fiber connections will double speed and allow many systems to be connected to the "cloud." Asked about cost, he said it would cost a little more initially but will provide technical abilities that will give them many advantages in the long run.

He said that with the state moving away from MCAS to PARCC testing (which is taken online) this will give the district a great advantage over others. St. Cyr said a lot of other districts can't administer PARCC because they don't have the infrastructure to support it.

The Gill-Montague district already has much of the infrastructure required so this will simply improve that and allow the systems to be more efficient.

He said with a fiber connection they will be able to manage PARCC in the cloud. They've been working to upgrade the connections for the two machines and individual student computers and expect to be

able to run a simulation to test the entire system in the near future.

These upgrades will also improve many of the district's services at all levels, including phone systems, email and other interactive systems.

It may be possible in the future to create a system where students could access their personal homework folders stored on the school computers at home by connecting to the cloud. Access is currently limited by the network systems, security necessities and privacy requirements.

Asked by a school committee member if they needed to take a vote to approve it, Michael Sullivan, district superintendent, said there was no need for a vote because this was already part of the budget. All agreed the generous federal contribution to this program makes it a very worthwhile investment.

Resignations

Superintendent Sullivan announced two resignations from the school district.

Food Service Manager Jim Loynd will be resigning as of March 27. He has held this position for thirteen years.

Sullivan said, "Jim has done an excellent job at the very challenging task of providing tasty and nutritious meals every day, under tight budgets and lots of rules and regulations."

He also announced that maintenance staff member Bob Flaherty will be leaving effective February 27. Flaherty has worked for the district for nine years.

Sullivan said, "He has a reputation for expert workmanship and a willingness to go out of his way to do extra projects for teachers and staff."

He said both men will be missed and wished them well.

Challenges

The school committee also discussed a citizen letter concern-

ing lack of district bus service to young children in the Patch as a hardship with the very cold mornings this winter.

Members asked a lot of questions of Sullivan and business manager Joanne Blier, clearly indicating an interest in finding a solution to the problem, but requirements related to state transportation reimbursement funding made it difficult to find an answer.

There was also mention of a letter sent to the administration signed by teachers at the middle school challenging the decision (in the budget proposal) to combine middle school and high school offices.

Sullivan said he hopes to meet with them next week to hear their concerns, but also shared his reasoning with the school committee. The plan is to have the middle school and high school combined into one grade 6-12 school, administered by one principal.

Looking toward the future, Sullivan said he felt they should aspire to see a grade 6 to 12 teaching staff that would work closely together and a student body where older students support younger ones. And he feels having one administrative office would be best for this model.

The governor's budget is expected on March 4, at which point the budget numbers will be reviewed by the superintendent and the business office. A vote on the budget will be held at the next meeting and that number will be used to establish town assessments.

Assessments cannot be estimated until the governor's budget is released but administration and school committee members have expressed their hope that the cooperative spirit between the towns and the school district will inform the process and produce a result that is acceptable to all the parties.

The next regular school committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 10 at Turners Falls High School at 6:30 p.m.

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It is difficult
to get the news from poems
yet men die miserably every day
for lack
of what is found there.

– William Carlos Williams

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

The editors would like to thank the following for
their generous financial underwriting of this page:
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and Montague Dental Arts

CARMODY PHOTO

Bird

Dear one, little bird, strong
And fragile
Like me, also like me
It is still the same
Tender
ness
When you look at me
Angel eyes
Wisdom fluttering in their beauty
& Some knowing
ness I share
& unknowing
ly possess
Their twin
To it, you, me
Could there be Us?
To trace your skin from
Face to neck
To breast
To go home again
Home home to you, in you
Looking at you
Divine
Each breast: grace
Below: amen
yes

– Nina Rossi

SANIBONANI

I come from the land of
Tata Nelson Mandela,
where the greeting is a warm-hearted and complex handshake
and the word
‘Sanibonani’
as we look in each other’s eyes and recognize the heart beat of
‘I see you’

I come to your land
as a visitor and friend,
where the greeting is not dissimilar. Though the handshake is simple it is strong
and the heart space is open friendly and welcoming.
And I feel ‘seen’.

I bring ‘hearts and hugz’

– Thandi Skye

love

it is in the shape of the void
and [love] in the dependence of the shape of
the void
and [we] are the void
not the [shapes] of bodies
but that imposed by/with them
in the memory of the shapes
and the 0³ of their motion
and the opening of them and their holding
[love] predicting its unknown form only
in retrospect and becoming
it is not seeing/feeling or the life of language
it is the [matter] of freedom mattering itself
not as stars form constellations but in the
[emptying] between them
it is: (3 2=1derful)
not a construction but a motion
process/delight
it is the shape of {potential(circumstance)}

These Days

Put aside cathectic quandaries
in search of new ways
to decipher the road
advancing before us.

Freedom to cast aside
collapsing suppositions
allows us to embrace
the advent of adventure.

Can you see it?
It’s just in front of your eyes
in that circular landscape
where dream and waking
and all that we were
and are
and will be
coexist on the plane of love.

– Christopher
Sawyer-Laucanno

time’s track

the shore’s sand laps
along its foamy lace
warming my skin
its rhythmic wave surges
over my feet by the white lighthouse
at water’s autumn edge
whispering its ancestral tree
buries its nautical graveyard below
and I- unaware- observe

sympathetic breezes comfort
each adolescent gull preening
its tilting plucks of brown
this reclusive business continues
whether I am present or absent
night-day
all this planet’s families
maintain their dynasties
as I breathe on

– Alice Thomas

god in life

life in love

it is the shape of the legs of the table
not the legs not the table
but what was made of the void
by its being, that shape
as in a jar but wildness also
it is after our thought came there
before the tongue and the words
before the symbols [:]
the shape of their approachment]:[
it is unaware and the unaware answering:
inside-out : trumpets & :poets :
it is coming
coming
be

– Nina Rossi

part to whole

I paused by the open marsh
its rich humus
while waters slowly greened
my dense grove of thought
that sleeved my quiet space
in mists of ancestral worth

its solitude hid
behind tangles of posthumous branches
hard and brown that withstood the
ragged winds’ allusion
fluff of cattails hawks and chariots
of migrant geese

they unveiled an uncensored terrain
in all this intimate clutch of preserve
I was embraced and then with open eyes
two tiny spheres of all this was laid before me
as I slowly elevated my binoculars to
witness the whole of our glorious world

– Alice Thomas

Bios:

Alice Thomas is a regional poet, painter and maker of photographic-multimedia assemblage in western Massachusetts. This year, she was published in the New England Farmers Union Facebook page, in an anthology and was recently a winner in the Poet Seat Poetry Contest. Accepted in the Juniper Summer Writers Institute,

at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, she currently writes on the topics of ecology and sustainability for which her work is well-received at readings, writing groups, and a salon. Thandi Skye lives in South Africa where she creates and sells cards to raise money for kids with special needs.

Nina Rossi, artist, poet, and gallery owner of Nina’s Nook , answered the MR’s call for a few words about Love. Thank you, Nina!
Chris Sawyer-Laucanno writes his poems in and around the many other forms of work he engages. He too answered the call for a poem. Thank you, dear Chris!

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PROJECT from page A1

“I’ve been in there,” said town building inspector David Jensen. “It’s a church. It’s hard to make those things into other things. But, [Widmer] seems like he has a compatible idea of how to use it.... He has a rational plan.”

“If he’s got the backing, anything can happen,” Jensen added. “But it’s hard to be in an undercapitalized region of the Earth.”

“At some point the heat stopped, and the water was still running,” said Masters, pointing to a bulge in the wooden basement floor where a pipe had frozen. The accordioning, olive-colored Sunday school classroom dividers downstairs will probably be removed, he said, though much of the sanctuary is likely to remain familiar, and even the organ in the choir loft may stay – “I mean, how would you get it out?” he joked.

“There are some definite quirks, but this building has great bones,” he said. “This space has a lot of meaning to a lot of people, and we don’t want to disrespect that.... What needs to stay, because of what this building was? And how do we preserve that, while still turning its function toward other things?”

“We’re early in the project,” he said, echoing Martineau. “The plan for this space is evolving.”

One room may end up a studio for woodworking, he said, though it was not clear whether its incongruous free-standing shower would remain. Another large room behind the nave might become “a small theater.”

“I look at home renovation, and the renovation of this church, as creating a piece of communal art,” Masters continued. “A church is a common building used for a lot of things, and this space is going to be made available for different things, not just serving as a bridge between China and Millers Falls.”

Still, he said, building the project around visitors is what sets it

apart from other arts-based adaptive reuse proposals. “How do you make [these buildings] bring great creativity, in a production sense, back to the area? One of the interesting things Rick’s doing with this project is he’s not just relying on what’s here.”

He pointed to North Adams and Amherst as area towns that have benefited, in part, from openness to an “outside influence.”

“But there’s more to making a strong community than just the economic impact.”

**Kate Martineau,
MEAB Director of
Programming**

Funding for ten artist residencies, Martineau said, has already been worked out with the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing. She hopes these first visitors will return to Beijing and spread the word about the program.

She says the group hopes to give Chinese artists “a sense of the local community... This is an amazing place full of amazing people, and a real contrast to the craziness of Beijing. The art world is huge there; it’s just kind of exploded.

“So many art students are looking to make a mark,” she said, and spending time in an American village like Millers could help them do that.

In a practical sense, Martineau said, the project Obear Construction is undertaking a block away under the town’s commercial homesteading program is well-timed. The proposed restaurant there, as well as a recently approved pouring license across the street at Element Brewing Company, could enhance the village’s draw for visitors.

“I don’t think there’s a question that [the Arts Bridge] will have a

positive impact, even if it’s not huge right away. I think it’s going to make a difference....

“But there’s more to making a strong community than just the economic impact,” she added, acknowledging that many of the gains might be “a lot harder to measure.”

“Building bridges, connecting and understanding each other, I think is really crucial in this day and age. I hope that we’ll be well-received once the artists are here, and we’re doing enough local programming that it feels like they’re not taking anything away from local artists.”

According to Widmer, one of those local artists, filmmaker Steve Alves, told him that “to be a good fundraiser, you’ve got to be eternally optimistic and tenacious.”

Setting up an Indiegogo site from Beijing, still his home for another few months, Widmer seems determined to take Alves’ advice to heart.

“Now we’ll have another forty days at it,” he said, “with five or six lessons learned.”



FACES & PLACES

JOHN FURBISH PHOTO

Moonlight Davis and Morning Star Chenven brought the sights and sounds of Mardi Gras to Turners Falls last Saturday with a concert at the town's Greenfield Savings Bank branch.

After “marching in with the saints” to Ben Kohn’s keyboards, Moonlight and Morning Star removed their masks and belted out English, French and Spanish songs associated with the New Orleans Mardi Gras, or “Fat Tuesday” celebration at the end of Carnival, before the fasting of Lent.

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BASKETBALL from page A1

offense as well but they do shoot a lot of threes,” said Mullins.

If Powertown does defeat the underdog Rams on Thursday, they will probably play on Monday at the cage in UMass against the winner of the Hopkins vs. Hampden Charter School of Science game.

The other big news for Turners Falls Basketball was that the Basketball Hall of Fame announced that Liam Ellis and Nick York were selected to play in the 2015 Western Mass Senior All-Star game.

Liam and Nick will play on Friday, March 20 at the Jerry Colangelo Court of Dreams at the Hall of Fame. The all-star team they will play on represents the best players from Divisions II, III and IV.



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WEST ALONG THE RIVER: Snow-Bound, Snowshoes, and Nipmucs

By DAVID BRULE

MILLERS RIVER – 11 February. Three feet of snow blanket the landscape. The river rushes by beyond the trees, free of ice, sparkling in the starlight, moonlight or sunlight. Vapor rises from the river's surface in the daily below zero temperatures.

The days have their routine, which is one way of getting through a winter, and it's the way I like it.

At seven a.m. the jays wing in. The cock pheasant who showed up just before Christmas fluffs feathers in the frosty morning from his wild perch in the old apple tree. That tree, now broken and twisted, still sends up a half a dozen small yet strong trunks. That apple tree has figured in dozens of family photographs for close to one hundred years, all black and white, but it's still here, like us.

The pheasant got his name of Balthazar, one of the three kings of the Magi, by showing up in December and settling in and taking over our back yard. He's a startlingly beautiful combination of emerald, red, turquoise, orange sunburst, and

long tail, an exotic creature in the old apple tree.

One cold morning a bald eagle spent an hour perched in a dead tree, surveying the river. We watched him from the kitchen window, making sure he didn't catch a glimpse of our Balthazar. The eagle was more interested in the black ducks that wing their way up from downriver, coming for the pile of cracked corn we put out for their morning breakfast.

15 February. The deep winter routine repeats itself, day after day, night after night. In a way the regularity of it all is reassuring, at this stage of our lives, but for the deep cold, the danger of freezing pipes, warnings about falling ice and collapsing roofs. So far we have survived it all. Staying nice and warm on days like this, wood from our own great grandfather's land crackles and snaps in the Glenwood C cook stove. He still provides both wood, and stories.

Orion's Belt at night coldly glimmers in the clear sky, visible
see WEST ALONG page B6



David Tall Pine White spoke at the Discovery Center last Saturday.

A History of the Bridge of Names: Part 1

By DAVID JAMES

LAKE PLEASANT – Few, and very far between as well, are communities slightly shy of 200 human souls likely to be so audacious as to proclaim to have a claim to fame.

But for Montague's Village of Lake Pleasant, boldness knows no such bonds or bounds. In fact, village history lays out a case for not only one reason for being known well beyond its borders, but for a pair of uniquenesses unshared by any other known municipality on the face of Planet Earth, large or small or somewhere in between.

The first fame-claim is that Lake Pleasant, from birth in the 1870s as a Spiritualist summer campground through half-a-century thereafter, was the largest Spiritualist community and gathering place in the United States. And as the result of the ongoing presence of The National Spiritual Alliance, the village is also the oldest continuously existing Spiritualist center in the nation.

Spiritualism's twin core beliefs are that the consciousness and soul of human beings survive so-called death and that souls in the world of flesh communicate with souls in the afterworld of spirit.

The second claim to fame is Lake Pleasant's Bridge of Names, which this year is celebrating its Ruby Anniversary, the traditional moniker for marking 40 years of existence.

Built in 1975, the structure is a wooden footbridge which spans a ravine cleaving the village atwain, the halves dubbed in the community's glory days as the "Bluffs" to the southeast and the "Highlands" to the northwest.

The bridge, not surprisingly, earned its name from a double wall



The first bridge at Lake Pleasant, taken circa 1890.

of pickets flanking its entirety and inscribed with nothing but names. Through the years, routed pickets, like coat hangers in a dark closet, have bred to a guesstimated baker's hundred dozen.

Enshrined names include: village residents from days of old and days of now; old-time and new-time Spiritualists from all corners of the country and the British Isles where Spiritualism flourished in its early days and retains a strong presence still; Montague businesses yet with doors open and welcome mats laid out, as well those which have departed from commercial life; lovers then, although, alas, for some no longer so; beloved pets present and in absentia, furred, fish, and fowl, and first-time village visitors along time's way who sensed peace and power in the presence of Lake Pleasant and wished their gratitude, as well as themselves, immortalized upon the Bridge of Names.

In addition, the bridge contains a not inconsequential number of "tribute" pickets to the rich and the famous ... actors, artists, authors, and musicians, such as John Wayne,

Tarzan, Marilyn Monroe (although it appears as Monrow), John, Paul, George, and Ringo of The Beatles, Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, Bob Dylan, jazz giant Thelonius Monk (although it appears as The Lonius Monk), Picasso, Vincent Van Gogh (although it appears as Van Gosh), Carlos Castaneda, Greenfield's Penn Jillette, the talking half of the comedy team Penn & Teller, and many, many more in the essence of those ilk.

According to newspaper accounts at the time it was constructed, the bridge is approximately 220 feet long, 7 feet wide, and 45 feet at its greatest height above the deepest part of the ravine below. The bridge is located at the southwestern end of Lake Pleasant, once known as Great Pond, Otter Lake, and Pleasant Lake before the Vermont and Massachusetts railroad and the Fitchburg railroad company collaborated in 1872 with what came two years later to be known as the New England Spiritualists Campmeeting Association to create a religious resort on 50 uninhabited acres of glacier-gouged

see BRIDGE page B4

Gill Gourmet: A Recipe for Disaster

By JOE PARZYCH

GILL – I apologize to the *Montague Reporter* editors, and the reading public, for having neglected my "Gill Gourmet" column.

I also need to give credit where credit is due. I learned much of my cooking by observing and helping my mother cook, whether she wanted my help or not.

I especially liked her lemon pies with meringue on top. When she declined to give me a second slice of her delicious treat, I whined, saying, "Golly gee, I wish that just once you'd bake a whole lemon pie just for me."

She didn't reply, but the next time she baked lemon pies, she baked an extra one just for me. I polished off the entire pie in a twinkling. She was a good mother, and I never forgot that.

She often baked a sweet bread using half a dozen eggs, so that the bread was yellow. The bread dough made a wonderful thick crust for her cheese cake using cottage cheese, which I'm going to try to duplicate, one day.

"All good things come to an end," my older brother Walter always said. My father had a heart attack and the Keith Paper Company doctor wouldn't let him return to his job at the mill. My mother got a job there, and my father took over the cooking.

That was not a good day, despite my father fancying himself an excellent cook. He may have been innovative, but his cooking was far from excellent. His unique chicken noodle soup was made with macaroni. He compounded the wretchedness of his soup by boiling eggs in the brew.

I suppose there was nothing wrong with his efficiency, but I was acutely aware of whence

the eggs had emerged, at the north end of a south-facing chicken.

My father's idea of a cookout was to bake potatoes in the coals of a bonfire. He raked the potatoes out of the coals when he decided they were done. The potatoes looked like big lumps of charcoal. He put them in a big bran sack bag, which we shook back and forth to dislodge some of the charcoal.

Broken in two and slathered with butter and sour cream, they were surprisingly good. The charcoal gave the potatoes a slightly salty taste, but left a black ring around our mouths. We washed the potatoes down with my father's idea of the perfect lemonade, made with chopped onions, salt and pepper in a gallon jug of water.

Of necessity, we were largely vegetarians, until the fall when he butchered a hog and made kielbasa and bacon. A graphic preview of the "natural casings" during butchering somehow reduced my desire to actually eat any of the finished kielbasa.

The bacon had its own path to inedibility. Since we had no electricity or refrigeration, he smoked the sausage and bacon before hanging it from the rafters of the woodshed.

However, the smoking process was not without peril. The apparatus consisted of 55-gallon steel drums, with the ends cut out, stacked three high, attaining a height of 12 feet. These teetering tower sections were held together with nothing more than, perhaps, spit and prayer, stacked perilously close to the roof of our house.

My father hung the slabs of bacon and kielbasa rings impaled on S-hooks that were secured to iron rods placed across the top of the uppermost steel drum. He needed to place his smoking apparatus so he could lean a ladder on the house to reach the top where he placed the sausage and bacon.

Inevitably, an S-hook would pull through
see RECIPE page B4

Portraits in Black History

In honor of Black History Month we have been featuring Louise Minks' series of paintings of locally connected black men and women.



This portrait of **Mary Pittman Wyatt** was painted by Leverett artist Louise Minks as part of her series of life-sized portraits of notable Black Americans. Wyatt and Minks belonged to the Wesley Methodist Church of North Amherst. They both hail from Indiana; Wyatt's grandfather escaped to freedom in Indiana via the Underground Railroad and raised his family in Greencastle, Indiana.

Wyatt was a social justice activist who participated in the civil rights march on Washington DC in 1963, where she was inspired by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech.

Wyatt moved with her husband to Northampton in 1954, and lived in the area until her death in 2011 at the age of 93. She was a tireless and

inspirational member of the same church community as Minks.

Wyatt was a founder of the Martin Luther King Jr. Breakfast in Amherst in the 1970s, which confers an award to a citizen who has worked to foster increased understanding among people of all religions and races. Minks was the recipient of the award in 2004.

Frederick Douglass, born Frederick Johnston in Maryland in 1818, was taught to read at a young age by his "owner" Sophia Auld. His lessons ended abruptly when her husband Hugh warned her that "learning would spoil the best slave in the world."

This fueled a desire to learn, and Frederick became a self-taught scholar. He escaped to freedom in New Bedford, Massachusetts in 1838 and became one of the most famous black men of his time. He changed his last name to Douglass to protect himself from mercenary slave catchers who might return him to the South.

Douglass was a noted abolitionist, author and orator, and became one of

the most popular speakers of the 19th century antislavery movement, traveling throughout this country and beyond.

While in western Massachusetts, Douglass knew John Brown, Sojourner Truth and other activists in the area. A trip to England made him a popular orator there, and some credit his influence as one reason England did not enter into the Civil War on the side of the South, whose cotton was vital to English factories.

Douglass was appointed a US Marshall and Recorder of Deeds for Washington DC. His home there, Cedar Hill, is now a National Historic Site. He died in 1895.



Pet of the Week



“JEREMIAH”

I have lots of energy and love to spend time with you playing on the floor. I will help you find things

you’ve lost!

I can be a bit shy at first, so give me a few minutes to come and say hi.

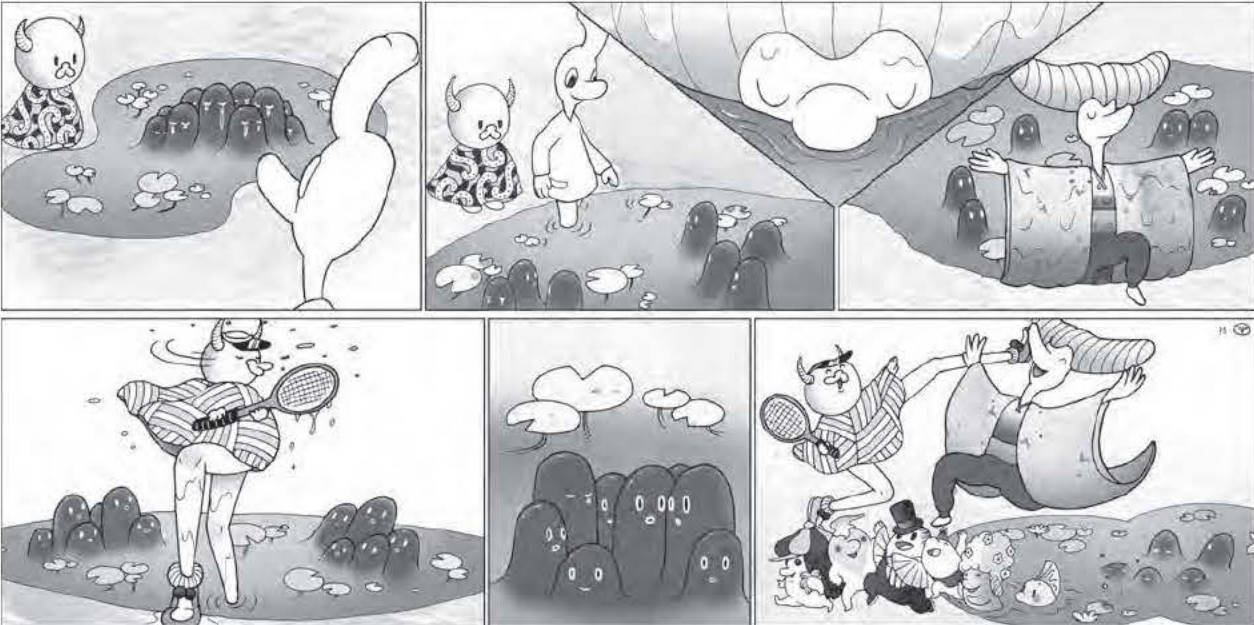
Like most bunnies, however, I can get a bit nervous when picked up! Just be slow and kind.

I can be part of a bonded pair if the proper amount of time is given!

Ask an adoption counselor about any other personality traits and magical powers that I may have!

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Young Shakespeare Players To Read Dickens at the Fox & Voo

TURNERS FALLS – You are invited this weekend to be part of the close community of mostly teens and a few adults sharing a dramatic retelling of one of the greatest stories in all of literature.

Two three-person casts of the Young Shakespeare Players East will present selections from this Charles Dickens’s “A Tale of Two Cities on Saturday, February 28 at 1 p.m. at Five Eyed Fox on Third Street, and Sunday, March 1, at 1 p.m. at the Rendezvous, also on Third Street in Turners.

Each performance will cover major selections from

the book over the space of three hours at each location. Visitors are welcome to “come and go” throughout the afternoon readings, which will present the book sequentially over two days.

Both venues offer delicious food and drink, so come for lunch and enjoy free entertainment (a wonderful opportunity to support two locally owned businesses and a thriving non-profit youth arts organization).

In this age of texting, tweeting, and too much time wasted in online surfing, come join this great retelling of a wonderful, beautifully written tale.

THE HEALTHY GEEZER

When the Dog Bites



JESSICA LARKIN ILLUSTRATION

Q. Who are the people most liable to be bitten by a dog?

More than 60 percent of the people who are bitten by dogs are children. The elderly are second. And people like mail carriers and meter readers are third.

Children often don’t know how to act around dogs and frighten them into aggressive behavior. Older people are more prone to being bitten by an aggressive dog because they tend to be slower and weaker than younger adults. Mail carriers walk onto property the dogs consider their domain to defend.

Dogs bite more than 4.7 million Americans a year. About 800,000 of these victims seek medical attention. Of those injured, 386,000 require treatment in an emergency department and about a dozen die.

Here are some tips from the experts on how to avoid being attacked by a dog:

- Don’t look a dog straight in the

eye. This is provocative.

- Do not run away from or past a dog. This can make them aggressive and want to chase you.

- Never go up to a dog you don’t know and try to get friendly, especially if the dog is behind a fence, tethered or in a parked car.

- If an unfamiliar dog comes up to you, stand still. Most of the time, the dog will sniff you and then walk away.

- Never bother a dog that is eating or sleeping. And stay away from a mother tending to her litter.

- If you’re threatened by a dog, don’t yell. Respond calmly. In a commanding voice, tell the dog to go away. Try to stay still until the dog leaves, or back away slowly.

- If you are attacked, give the dog an object, such as a jacket or a backpack to bite. If you are knocked down, roll yourself into a ball and lie still. Cover your head and face with your hands.

Call your doctor if : the bite is on your hand, foot or head; the bite is deep or gaping; you have any condition that could weaken your ability to fight infection; there are signs of infection; there is bleeding after 15 minutes of pressure; there are signs of a broken bone, nerve damage or another serious injury, and if your last tetanus shot was more than five years ago.

For bites that don’t require a doctor’s care, you should clean the wound with soap and water, apply pressure with a clean towel to stop bleeding, apply a sterile bandage to the wound, keep the injury elevated above the level of the heart to slow swelling and prevent infection, apply antibiotic ointment to the wound twice daily until it heals.

An immediate concern that comes to mind after a dog bite is rabies.

Rabies is uncommon in dogs in the United States. If a dog appears to be healthy, it probably does not have rabies. However, if you’re bitten by a dog, you should take some precautions.

If you are familiar with the dog that bit you, check its vaccination record. Even if it has been vaccinated, it should still be quarantined for 10 days to ensure it doesn’t exhibit rabies symptoms. If the dog has rabies, you will need to get a series of rabies shots.

If the animal is a stray, call the animal control agency or health department in your area. They will try to find the animal so it can be tested for rabies. If the authorities can’t find the animal that bit you, your doctor will probably want you to get the shots.

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

Senior Center Activities

March 2 to 6

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 3/2

10:10 a.m. Aerobics
10:50 Chair Exercise
1:00 p.m. Knitting Circle

Tuesday 3/3

9:30 a.m. Chair Yoga
Noon Lunch
12:45 p.m. COA Meeting
1 p.m. Painting with David Sund

Wednesday 3/4

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

Thursday 3/5

9 a.m. No Tai Chi
10 a.m. Tech Tutor
Noon Lunch
1 p.m. Pitch

Friday 3/6

10:10 a.m. Aerobics
10:50 a.m. Chair Exercise
1 p.m. Writing Group

LEVERETT

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

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, Ervingside, is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. for activities and congregational meals.

Lunch is at 11:30 a.m., with reservations required 24 hours in advance. Call 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 3/2

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

Tuesday 3/3

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

Wednesday 3/4

8:45 a.m. Line Dancing
9 a.m. Blood Pressure
10 a.m. Chair Yoga
Noon Bingo

Thursday 3/5

8:15 a.m. Foot Clinic
8:45 a.m. Aerobics
10 a.m. Healthy Bones, Muscles
10-2 p.m. Tax Prep for Seniors

Friday 3/6

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

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At the Athens Market.

The Library at Mt. Parnassus Pt. 60



MIKE SLIVA ILLUSTRATION

By DAVID DETMOLD

Now the tension seemed to have passed us by, vanishing like the clouds at sunset, as if the storm had never lingered. But more snow was in the forecast.

I saw someone who looked like Neon on the far side of the Avenue pushing his shopping cart with its rattling cans and bottles. He bumped over the snow and the frozen curb in the dusk, keeping his hectic yet unhurried pace.

“Don’t break those bottles,” I called after him cheerily as he passed, heading toward the market.

“I won’t,” he called back, still balancing an unlit cigarette on his lip.

It took me a moment to realize it couldn’t possibly be Neon. Neon was dead and gone. Maybe they issue passes from the halls of the dead for recycling, but if so I’ve never heard.

I walked across the Avenue and followed the bundled figure toward the market. The wind blew cold to meet me. I thought of Cadmus, traveling north in this. I thought of Tony, and his sweet summer saxophone. When would I ever hear music like that again?

By the entrance to the marketplace, a small crowd had gathered in the cold to listen to a red-cheeked orator, standing on an upended plastic bucket. He was shouting and gesticulating.

“They take away our jobs!” he cried in a voice thick with the rheum of demagoguery. “Then they raise our taxes!”

A small black goat with shaven horns was kneeling beside the speaker in the broken glass and gravel, muzzled and chained to a pillar. The bucket once held pickles. Even in this weather, I caught the smell the vinegar.

Slouched against a wall nearby, two men in hooded coats were hunkered down and casting lots. I passed near them – and saw their dice were nothing but bits of bone tossed out from a clay jar. One gathered up the lots with a bony hand while his companion scribbled the results down in a little notebook.

In the breezeway, a woman of huge girth was standing by the automatic doors guarding two heavily laden shopping carts. She was waiting for her children; I could see them through the glass, muffled and mittened, six in line, each carrying a smaller and smaller parcel.

I pushed past them. Inside, the store was jammed with late holiday shoppers. People jostled in long lines at the cash registers with an air of animated and unrestrained cupidity, grabbing up chocolates and heart-shaped boxes of candy. Women were flipping through the pages of glossy magazines. Over at the florist a mob had formed.

A man on an orange crate was shouting, “I love my wife! I love my wife! She’s the most beautiful woman in the world and I want her back!”

I paused nearby to listen. “He stole her away from me! I have to win her back. She’s beautiful, I tell you!”

A woman next to me nodded and sneered, “Same old story.”

“Uh-huh,” I chimed in. “Ain’t that the truth?”

Standing amid banks of forced roses, the distraught lover gesticulated with muscular hands as he exhorted the crowd. “Won’t you help me? Won’t you join me? My honor is at stake. We could mount an expedition!”

People began throwing grapes at him.

A clerk in a dark blue jacket sa-shayed through the crowd bearing aloft a bouquet of mylar balloons, tethered by their curlicue ribbons. The ballons were splashed with curative slogans that looked as if they had been written in pink lipstick: “I Love You!” “Be Mine!” “You’re So Special!”

“Please!” the man on the orange crate pleaded. “It won’t take long. She’s the most beautiful woman in the world, I tell you.”

I wandered by the meat department, past the mounded piles of ground round wrapped in flexing cellophane, pink and glistening against a background of green matting. In the next aisle, I found a brand of cereal I liked, date muesli. I patted my pockets absently and remembered I’d forgotten to bring the coupon once again.

Sadly, I left the cereal and snack food aisle and walked by through the beer and wine. The theme from *Black Orpheus* was wafting from somewhere in the stained ceiling. I saw a woman drop a jug of tokay on the floor; it smashed into a hundred pieces, and a glittering pool of red wine spread out on the linoleum.

“Oh, well!” she said, cheerfully, looking my way.

She fetched down another bottle as a short balding man in a red jacket came running up behind her.

“Put it back, honey. Put the bottle back.” His voice was nasty.

“What!?”

“I said put that bottle back. You’ve had enough.”

“Don’t talk to me like that! Get outta my way an’ lemme go! I’ll buy what I please. Let me GO!”

They struggled, slipping in the sticky pool of broken glass, until the woman dropped the second bottle and it too exploded with a dull pop. Wine splashed everywhere.

The manager had the woman underneath the arms, dragging her away. Her boots left purple trails on the white linoleum.

“What will become of her?” a tall man who had suddenly materialized beside me asked.

“Oh,” I said vaguely. “They’ll take care of her, I guess. Just another casualty of the war on poverty.”

“The war on poverty?”

Continued next week.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Opossum Frozen to Side of Building Having Worse Winter Than You

Monday, 2/16

7:26 a.m. Request for lift assist on Sunrise Terrace; no injuries. Services rendered.

7:28 a.m. Report of disabled motor vehicle on the General Pierce Bridge. Caller advises that the steering wheel came off in the operator’s hands while she was driving. Services rendered.

12:23 p.m. Officer advises that there is a swan lying in the road; it does not appear to be injured, but its wings may be frozen. Contacted animal control officer, who will warm the animal in his vehicle and then set it free.

1:10 p.m. [redacted] was arrested on a default warrant.

1:43 p.m. Report from a motorist that the signal arms are stuck in the down position at the Lake Pleasant railroad crossing and vehicles are starting to go around them. No trains in sight. Second caller reports that trucks are trying to turn around at the crossing and creating a traffic issue. Officers and Pan Am Railways dispatch advised.

2:20 p.m. Complaint regarding loose dogs on G Street; ongoing problem. Officer unable to locate dogs; will follow up with owner.

3:45 p.m. Complaint regarding loose dog on Turnpike Road; ongoing problem. While on phone, owners retrieved dog. Copy of call left for animal control officer.

6:23 p.m. Officer noticed a car with extensive front end damage in a snow bank near Millers Falls Road and Turnpike Road. Party had already called for help. Vehicle out of snow and driveable.

7:26 p.m. Report of car into snowbank at Turners Falls Road and Millers Falls Road. Caller did not see anyone around; vehicle did have hazards on. Services rendered.

Tuesday, 2/17

12:53 p.m. Caller from Central Street reports that her upstairs neighbor is stomping on the floor. Believes it is to make her “quiet down,” but she is only baking cookies at this time. Ongoing problem. Officer spoke with both parties; they are going to attempt to work it out.

4:03 p.m. Report of minor accident; vehicle vs. automatic car wash. No injuries or fluids. Services rendered.

5:14 p.m. Hit and run accident with property damage on Fifth Street. Report taken.

Wednesday, 2/18

9:06 a.m. Caller advises of railroad crossing trouble in Millers Falls; arms and

lights are activating as if train is coming, then stop as if clear. When caller attempted to cross, arms came down on her car (no damage). Caller stated that she was on way to Route 2 “by the little store” and believed the crossing was in Millers, not Erving. Contacted N.E. Central Railroad, who stated that a crew was working in that area and could be causing the problems; would look into it. Spoke with railroad employee who stated that the Millers railroad crossing has flashing lights only; Erving crossing has gates. Referred to other agency.

9:25 a.m. Complaint regarding parking situation on K Street; reporting party unable to pass through to get home last night. Referred to DPW.

11:27 a.m. Complaint regarding vehicles parked on sidewalk at United Arc. Responding officer reported that cars are there due to snow removal; DPW was able to free up space so cars were able to move.

3:55 p.m. Caller would like to speak to animal control officer regarding a (homeless) cat she would like some help with. Copy of call left for ACO.

5:37 p.m. Complaint regarding snowmobilers that have been crossing caller’s property on Sunderland Road. Environmental Police advised; officers will keep an eye out.

5:56 p.m. Caller reports that one of the dump trucks parked at the town yard has had its lights left on. Officer located truck; same truck as two previous occasions. DPW foreman advised.

Thursday, 2/19

8:49 a.m. Caller from Gill requesting assistance with an opossum the she says is frozen to the side of their building. State police advise that they don’t believe that Gill has an animal control officer. Montague ACO will respond and assist.

10:25 a.m. Report of hit and run accident with property damage at Hillside Plastics. Investigated.

10:27 a.m. Postal carrier reports that roof on a Second Street building appears to be ready to collapse.

lapse. TFFD and building inspector en route.

11:27 a.m. Caller reports that she was traveling on South Prospect Street behind a DPW plow truck. At some point, the truck stopped in the roadway and began backing up. Caller was able to back up and avoid being struck, but felt that the driver was not paying attention, creating a dangerous situation. DPW advised.

Friday, 2/20

1:34 a.m.

[redacted] was arrested and charged with disorderly conduct and resisting arrest.

8:49 a.m. Two-vehicle accident with injuries at Seventh Street and Avenue A. Two parties transported to hospital. One citation issued for failure to use care in stopping.

9:47 a.m. Avenue A property owner inquiring where he can dump snow that he is clearing from his roof. DPW identified a field where snow could be dumped “as long as they don’t make a mess.”

9:54 a.m. Caller from Lake Pleasant Road reports that neighbor’s horses have gotten loose. Horses were running near her house; have now crossed tracks headed toward Lake Pleasant center. Officer spoke to owner, who was attempting to corral horses.

1:53 p.m.

[redacted] was arrested on a default warrant.

1:56 p.m. Two-car accident at Avenue A and Third Street. One party cited for failure to use care in backing.

3:04 p.m. Caller reports that his tractor trailer unit snapped power lines and broke a pole on Eleventh Street; no injuries. Eversource (formerly WMECO) and TFFD advised. Water Department contacted to mark lines ASAP; Eversource is going to have to dig. Berkshire Gas already on scene.

5:15 p.m. Hit and run accident in Third Street parking lot. Report taken.

6:28 p.m. Caller reports snowmobilers on neighbor’s land on Sunderland Road. Unable to locate.

10:15 p.m. Report of public drinking and disorderly conduct on Avenue A. Unable to locate.

Saturday, 2/21

2:04 p.m. Caller inquiring whether it is safe and legal to use space heaters as the sole heating source in an apartment. Caller’s friend’s apartment does not have heat, so she started using space heaters to heat her apartment. Referred to TFFD.

4:08 p.m. Caller advises that a Sunderland town dump truck rolled over on Fosters Road. No injuries. Vehicle rolled back over and will be on its way.

Sunday, 2/22

6:11 a.m. Officer out with male walking in road at Montague City Road and Walnut Street. Party advised to stay on sidewalk.

8:24 a.m. Report of party snowblowing the sidewalk on Montague City Road and blowing snow into the southbound lane. Officer spoke with owner of building, who will speak with employee who was clearing the sidewalk.

11:18 a.m. Caller reports that when she stepped outside her house, she heard a high-pitched sound coming from the area at the intersection of Turners Falls Road and Swamp Road. Per officer, the sound is coming from equipment that the Water Department is using to thaw out frozen pipes. No police service necessary.

4:31 p.m. Caller reports a very large puddle at the intersection of Eleventh Street and I Street. Referred to an officer.

5:47 p.m. Neighbor disturbance among children on Eleventh Street. Officer spoke with all parties involved. Peace restored.

6:59 p.m. Caller from Fifth Street complains that upstairs neighbor is stomping on floor; unsure if parties upstairs are fighting or trying to get his attention. Officer spoke with parties; upstairs neighbor does have a two year old and was not attempting to make noise.

10:48 p.m. Train idling along South Prospect Street. Pan Am contacted; a train from Deerfield is coming to assist, but it will be a couple of hours.

MONTAGUE CRYPTOJAM!

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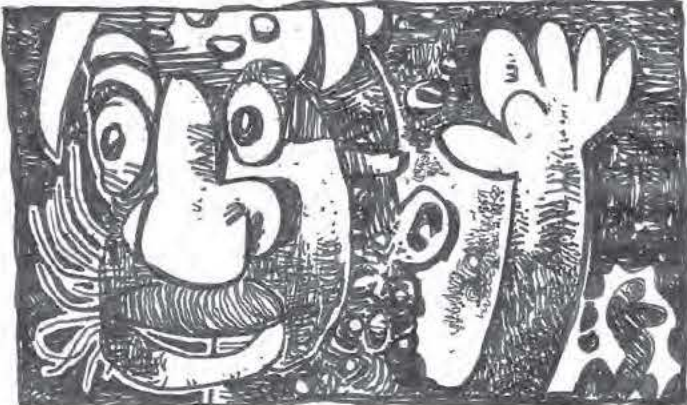
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BRIDGE from page B1

lakeside pine and scrub oak woods in the wilds of Western Massachusetts.

In season, a stream flows out of the lake and under the bridge, wends its way through a wooded dell that longtime village residents call the “dingle,” and continues south to join the Sawmill River, a tributary of the Connecticut River which forms part of Montague’s northern and western boundary.

The Bridge of Names is not, however, Lake Pleasant’s first footbridge. Two complete incarnations and multiple major makeovers preceded it.

The original footbridge was constructed in 1888 by Frank Bickford. According to his obituary published in 1921, Bickford was born in Gardner in 1848 and moved to Greenfield in 1876, where he became a building contractor and also one of the earliest warm-weather residents of the burgeoning Spiritualist campmeeting grounds in Lake Pleasant.

The obit stated, “Mr. Bickford was a noted athlete in his early manhood, being champion wrestler and strong man of Franklin County and a member of the fire department and of the famous Eagle hose team which won a world’s championship.”

He also operated a stable for many years near the corner of Broadway and what is now Lake Pleasant Road and built a 600-seat temple and village social center for NESCA which burned to the ground in 1955, courtesy, allegedly, of a teenage home-grown arsonist.

Bickford’s bridge, too, had a near-death-by-fire experience. On April 25, 1907, the bridge was almost destroyed by a conflagration which raged through the Bluffs, consuming 100-plus cottages, a dance pavilion, and the Lake Pleasant Hotel, and charring acres of surrounding woodlands, before being contained at the edge of the ravine which his footbridge spanned. But by the late-1920’s over-weather-woodedness had almost taken its ultimate toll and the best days of Bickford’s bridge had become far, far too long behind it.

In 1929 Minnie Rutter, a wealthy Spiritualist from Utica, New York who also owned a cottage in Lake Pleasant, donated funds to reconstruct the footbridge as a memorial to her son Frederick who had died in an automobile accident.

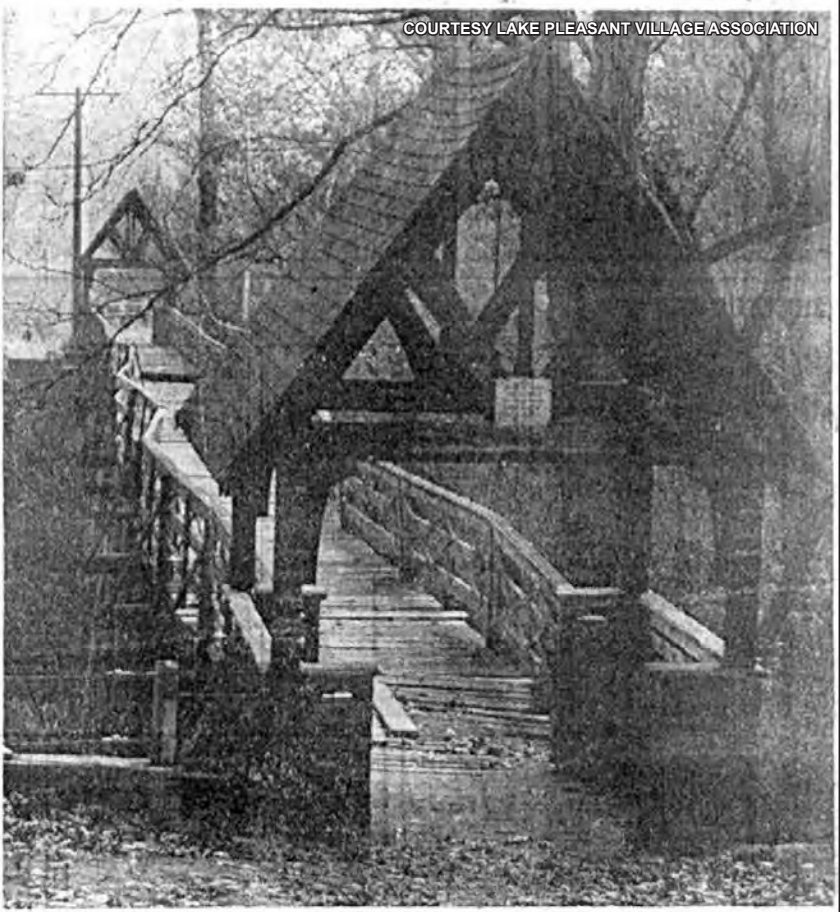
According to a transcription of recorded interviews done in 1973 and 1974 by Kathleen Vetter, an undergraduate at Hampshire College in Amherst, Dorothy Begg, the first child born in Lake Pleasant in 1898 and longtime resident of Denton Street until her death in 1977, fleshed out the tale of the origins of Lake Pleasant’s second footbridge based on personal experience with the female friend who had made it possible.

The complete transcript of Vetter’s interview is part of Lake Pleasant memorabilia donated to the Special Collections and University Archives Department at the W.E.B. Du Bois Library on the University of Massachusetts flagship campus in Amherst.

“Frederick was her adored bachelor son,” Mrs. Begg said. “He worshipped her, too. On his thirty-second birthday she gave him what, at that time, was the most expensive racing car you could get. He went out in it with Gladys Atwood ... and he went right into a telephone pole and it killed him. Broke his neck ... So she did a lot for the lake and she gave the bridge in Freddie’s memory. A memorial to Freddie. And she kept both ends of it full of flowers and it was very lovely at one time.”

But as had occurred with Bickford’s bridge, in a cruel and hopeless tussle with time the Fred Rutter Memorial Bridge inexorably traveled its path to inevitable terminality. A late-October, 1957, article published in the then *Greenfield Recorder-Gazette* was accompanied by a photograph which demonstrated far, far beyond any reasonable doubt the truth of the adage that one picture does equal 1,000 words.

Under the headline “The Bridge Nobody Cares About,” excerpts from the story and cutline beneath the photo include: “Timbers of the structure ... are rotten and in some



DEATH TRAP IN LAKE PLEASANT is this wooden bridge owned by the Lake Pleasant Association. Timbers of the structure, 45 feet above a gully, are rotten and in some places floor planks have fallen through. Dark rectangle at upper left center is sizable hole in flooring. The structure is held up by rotting wood posts and formerly straight guard rails have taken on a zig-zag look. A sign on the bridge warns that persons using it do so at their own risk.—Recorder-Gazette Photo by Bill Steinecke

This 1957 Recorder-Gazette photograph by Bill Steinecke shows the full extent of the old bridge’s disrepair.

places floor planks have fallen through... and formerly straight guard rails have taken on a zig-zag look... the bridge is an invitation to death... There stands the Fred Rutter Memorial Bridge – but for how long? And will it be necessary for someone to be killed or injured before action is taken?”

And action was taken, either by nature and time, or by village residents and premeditated intent. Answers to exactly when, how, and what happened next have fallen victim to the mists of collective village memory.

A dated 1960 photograph of a bridge-less ravine discovered amongst memorabilia of a now-departed villager validates that Rutter’s bridge had given up its ghost by then.

Three variant versions exist concerning the Fall of the Bridge of

Rutter. One is that of its own accord the bridge collapsed in 1958 or 1959. The second is that teen-age boys, which Lake Pleasant had in abundance like weeds in its lawns in those days, organized a successful in the dark-of-the-night assault on the bridge and mercy-killed it. The final contender for the real-deal tale of the Rutter bridge demise is that the deed of destruction was executed by village fathers of village sons.

Walt Burnham of Taylor Hill, Montague Center, lived with his family in Lake Pleasant from birth to age 10 in 1963. As an adult, he owned a cottage in the village until 1983, and still makes a nostalgic drive-by visit now and again for the sake of his years of yesteryore.

“I remember living there as special,” he said, “even though we were all poor, I suppose. I didn’t know that as a fact until I was 8 or 9. I was

having too much fun.”

In the last year or two of the 1950s, Burnham said, “I remember being in the kitchen at our house on Montague Street (now Avenue) and one of my older brothers coming in and hearing him say that some of the older boys in the neighborhood were going to knock down the bridge because it was dangerous. I remember my parents saying that wasn’t for the kids to decide,” and he recollects that neighborhood parents warned their children not to get involved in any amateur bridge demolition plots.

“It’s my understanding that some of the fathers got together and did the job. I don’t know which ones, or whether my father was involved,” Burnham said.

His recollection, however, which has prevailed for more than half-a-century, is that there were fathers in Lake Pleasant then who might well have been so inclined and more than willing to act on those inclinations.

In essence, from whenever the exact date was of the timely death of the Rutter bridge, Lake Pleasant became footbridge-less for the first time in almost three-quarters of a century ... and remained in that footbridge-less state for the following decade and a half.

Throughout the bridged years, aside from ease of visitation for social purposes, people from the Bluffs had crossed to the Highlands to attend Spiritualist activities as well as secular events at the Adams Street temple of the New England Spiritualists Campmeeting Association.

And, because the U.S. Postal Service has never provided home delivery in the village, people from the Highlands had crossed to the Bluffs to send and receive mail at the Lake Pleasant Post Office, which has been based there in several locations since its establishment in 1887.

Continued Next Week: The birth of the Bridge of Names in 1975, and the rebirth and reunification, literal and symbolic, of the halves of the divided Village of Lake Pleasant.



WENDELL FREE LIBRARY NEWS

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RECIPE from page B1

a slab of bacon, sending it hurtling down to fuel the fire at the base of the teetering disaster waiting to happen. Fueled by the errant bacon slab, flames would soon be roaring up the makeshift chimney with a vengeance, shooting flames out of the top drum perilously close to the roof with a shower of sparks rivaling a Fourth of July display, most of which landed on the roof.

Grabbing a stout pole my father had the foresight to have ready, he shoved the center drum of his make-shift contraption away from the house. The tower buckled in the middle and the drums went flying. The obedient slabs of bacon that had remained in their rightful place atop the uppermost barrel were now lying in the dirt amidst the smoking drums rolling on their sides.

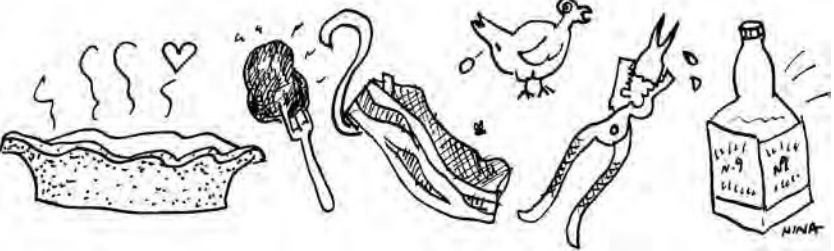
Undaunted by the calamity, my father rinsed most of the dirt off the slabs, reassembled his leaning “tower of Pizza,” and finished the smoking process.

Slices of the bacon sometimes produced a grinding of errant sand on our teeth, which was not very often, since the bacon slabs were shriveled into black leathery lumps resembling sections of a horse harness. The only way to slice the bacon was to place a butcher knife on a slab and whack the back of the blade with a hammer. We looked forward

to eating vegetarian again.

My father never discovered how bad his bacon was, since he could not gum it. He had little faith in doctors or dentists. When he got a tooth ache, he’d apply “Pain Expeller” to both cavity and gum, anesthetize himself courtesy of Dr. Jack Daniels, and yank out the offending tooth with a quick twisting motion of his mechanic’s pliers.

He soon ran out of teeth and need for a dentist, but he had a lasting soft spot for Dr. Daniels.



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ONGOING:

EVERY SUNDAY

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

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

EVERY MONDAY

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

EVERY TUESDAY

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:

Smith College, Northampton: Book Arts Gallery, Neilson Library: *Paper or Plastic?* A collection of 176 paper and plas-

tic 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.

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

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27



JD McPherson CD release tour presented by Signature Sounds Presents at the Shea Theater, Turners Falls on Sunday, March 1, 7 p.m. \$

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

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.

EVENTS:

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 26

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

Green River Yoga & Movement Arts, Greenfield: *Kirtan*, call-and-response singing led by Jeff Martell, accompanied by Libby Volckening on harmonium and Russ Nieman on percussion. www.heartcenteredkirtan.com, \$, 7:30 p.m.

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

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Animal Babies!* Aw...baby animals are more than cute. They are adapted to grow into the best grown up animals they can be! 10:30 a.m.

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.

Five Eyed Fox, Turners Falls: Dickens Dramatic Reading Society of YSP East present *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens, 1 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.

SUNDAY, MARCH 1

Erving Community Center, Erving: *A Dr. Seuss Birthday Party* Green Eggs & Ham Brunch from 10:30 to 11:30 and magic performance by *Ed the Wizard*, 11:45 a.m.

Greenfield Savings Bank, Turners Falls: *It's a Party!* Greenfield Savings Bank at 282 Avenue A is turning 5 Years Old in its beautiful location in downtown Turners. Join us for cake & ice cream, 1 to 3 p.m.

Turners Falls: Dickens Dramatic Reading Society of YSP East present *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens, 1 p.m.

WEDNESDAY,

MARCH 4

Leverett Library, *Machines and Mechanisms, Lego Duplo with Library Lego Lady*, 3:15 p.m.

Greenfield Community College, Downtown Center: *The Broad Reach of Prison*, Senior Symposia Program presentation. with George Daniel Olds Professor of Economic and Social Institutions at Amherst College, Kristin Bumiller. \$, 2 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Knitting & Crafts night*.

All welcome, any craft, skill level.

THURSDAY, MARCH 5

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

FRIDAY, MARCH 6

Greenfield Community College, Main Campus, Sloan Theater: GCC Chorus opens its spring semester concert series with a free preview concert: "Bach and Handel." The GCC Chorus is under the direction of Margery Heins, with soloists from the group, and with Marilyn Berthelette, accompanist. 12:15 to 12:45 p.m.

Frontier Regional High School, South Deerfield: *The Country Players Present: Agatha Christie's "And Then There Were None"*, \$, 7 p.m.

Brick House, Turners Falls: *Linear Downfall* (Nashville), *Flaming Dragons of Middle Earth*, *Wicked Rot*, *Ratatoing*. All ages/substance free. \$, 7:30 p.m.

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

SATURDAY, MARCH 7

Erving Public Library, *Machines and Mechanisms, Lego Duplo with Library Lego Lady*, 11 a.m.

Frontier Regional High School, South Deerfield: *The Country Players Present: Agatha Christie's "And Then There Were None"*, \$, 7 p.m.

SUNDAY, MARCH 8

Sawmill Arts Gallery, Montague: Photography of Collin Chmielowiec and Josh Allen, reception 2 to 4 p.m. Collin, originally from Arizona and Josh, a native of Ohio are both technically trained at the Hallmark Institute of Photography.

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

Guiding Star Grange, Greenfield: *Food For Change* film showing. This locally-made documentary about the history of food co-ops in the U.S. Filmmaker Steve Alves in attendance for discussion following the film. Fundraiser for the Grange, 7 p.m.

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WEST ALONG from page B1 through the bedroom window overlooking the snowbound yard and sparkling river.

16 February. The regular Monday blizzards finally coaxed down an ancient volume of John Greenleaf Whittier's *Complete Poetical Works*, published in 1884 in Cambridge.

Perhaps the regularity of the whiteouts, and an occasional chat with our 8th grade teacher, Mrs. Rita Kersavage, now in her mid-nineties, brought the epic poem of *Snow-Bound: A Winter Idyl (1866)* to mind.

The Greenleaf poem captured the essence of a real New England snow-storm, and was a ritual and a staple of Rita's English curriculum in the '50s. All of her students labored to read it, and to produce an illustrated semester project based upon it.

Opening the book to that poem on this late afternoon, I settled into an easy chair in front of the fireplace to read the lines once again, almost 60 years later, while the snow swirled and covered the familiar features of the back yard, just as Whittier described:

*We looked upon a world unknown,
On nothing we could call our own.
The old familiar sights of ours
Took marvelous shapes; strange
domes and towers
Rose up where sty or corn-crib
stood
Or garden wall, or stack of wood.
No cloud above, no earth below, –
A universe of sky and snow!*

21 February. We spent the early afternoon of this snowy Saturday in the Great Hall of the Discovery Center in Turners Falls. The Snow Moon Gathering brought one hundred people out of the weather to hear stories and histories of the survival and persistence of the nearby Nipmuc community, our neighbors from the Quabbin region.

The Nipmuc Tribe is participating actively in the American Battlefield Protection Program grant awarded to the town of Montague that provides funds for research into King Philip's War, and the massacre at Peskeompskut.

In the days of King Philip's War, the Nipmuc occupied a vast territory in the central part of Massachusetts, with Mount Wachusett at its center.

Close allies of Philip's Wampanoag – Massasoit himself retired to live among the Nipmuc at the end of his life – the Nipmuc fought fiercely and bravely to defend their way of life against the exploding populations of the English of Massachusetts Bay Colony and Plymouth.

Nipmuc sachems and warriors with names like Matoonas, Shoshonin (Sagamore Sam), Monoco, and Muttawmp fought from Deerfield to Northfield, from Wachusett to Peskeompskut to defend their homelands, and they paid the price. They were all killed in battle, or hung on Boston Common.

Nipmuc tribal historic preservation officer David Tall Pine White was the guest speaker this day, invited by the Nolumbeka Project to tell the story of continued presence and persistence of his people now living

in the Quabbin area towns of Brookfield, Brimfield, New Braintree and Ware, the lands of their ancestors for thousands of years.

They're still here. Tall Pine White told the history of discrimination and survival in the face of prejudice and relentless dubious legal challenges to the Nipmuc community's survival. He spoke of the efforts by state authorities to undermine families' unity, to break their spirit, to find ways to remove potential leaders from their midst.

But survive these tribal people did, and now White can speak of the persistence of Nipmuc culture and language, both experiencing new growth.

As endangered languages, like endangered species disappear yearly, the Nipmuc are refusing to let their language die. When a language dies, the uniqueness of a community dies with it.

White, himself a linguist and Nipmuc language teacher, stressed that his community's language evolved over thousands of years. The language is not only a means of communication; it is also a linguistic system that conveys a unique way of looking at nature and the world. It carries with it a valuable interpretation of human relationship with nature, a valuable contribution to the experience of human beings.

White and his community are employing effective pedagogical methods to help his language persevere, to become once again a vital part of tribal existence for future generations.



Embracing Confusion

Last month, we introduced local artist Max Armen and his Third Street Studio project in Turners Falls. He is sharing notes on his artistic process with us periodically.



From "Childhood Drawing Series" by Max Armen, March 2013. Acrylic and charcoal on paper.

In this piece I use acrylic gel medium and charcoal on heavy watercolor paper. In this particular series I was using the same image in a drafting process of charcoal lines to develop the composition before implementing the color and final layers.

Knowing when a painting is finished is a peculiar thing. It seems like a cop-out to say that "it just happens," because there is a lot of preparation work that leads to this

point. For me, each new piece must be approached from a completely new perspective, and initially this is a very confusing aspect of painting.

Ultimately I have learned to embrace this confusion so that the paintings I create can be unhindered by too much forethought or planning, which to me extinguishes the fascinating and mysterious surprises that my work with these images holds.

Max Armen

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