



# The Montague Reporter

also serving Irving, Gill, Leverett and Wendell

\$1

YEAR 12 – NO. 15

EDITOR@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

JANUARY 30, 2014

## MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

### Underwhelmed By “Bump-Out,” Board Endorses CDBG Plan

By JEFF SINGLETON

Montague Selectboard member Michael Nelson, usually an enthusiastic booster of all things local, was in an uncharacteristically critical mood on Monday evening.

“I’m not overly comfortable spending \$200,000 when I feel there’s a lot more things we could be doing with that money... I feel like the taxpayers are going to throw their arms up in the air when they hear that we spent two hundred grand to make a big sidewalk... I think it’s very sexy, it looks great, but for a town in the economic state we’re in, I don’t think it’s appropriate.”

The issue at hand was a key element of Montague’s application for federal community development block grant (CDBG) funds: a small plaza, or “bump-out,” on the corner of Avenue A and Third Street in

Turners Falls.

The plaza would be created by eliminating three parking spaces and expanding the sidewalk. The planters would be moved toward the street and raised to seating level. New lighting, bike racks, trees and benches would be installed.

A very attractive architect’s conception of the project – from two angles – was shown by Peter Wells of the firm Berkshire Design. The proposal was the product of a very long public process, including the Turners Falls “Livability Study” and a previous CDBG hearing before the selectboard.

According to town planner Walter Ramsey, the project is supported by members of the downtown business community and by the streetscape committee, which has been developing guidelines for the planters.

see MONTAGUE page A6

### Leverett Elementary Students Present on Endangered Species

By CHRISTOPHER SAWYER-LAÇANNO

An impressive group of endangered species experts – the fifth-graders in Bill Stewart’s Leverett Elementary class – presented a series of TED-style talks to their fellow classmates and parents on Monday afternoon, January 27.

The students, deftly using sophisticated touch-screen technology to present images with their talks, displayed a fine understanding of why so many animals have become endangered.

In addition to the presentations, the students also wrote and published detailed, illustrated reports on the animals that they chose as their topics. Their “books” were exceedingly well done: rich in detailed information, attractively formatted, replete with carefully-chosen graphics. The works were also beautifully printed and spiral-bound. They are now on display in the school library.

This event was the first of its kind in the history of the school. The fifth-grade students chose the format after watching several TED (Technology, Entertainment, Design) Talks.

The subjects of the reports included a great many animals that seemed, at least to this reporter, as fairly common. It was therefore



Ruby Heller-Goodman discusses giant pandas.

something of a shock to discover how many animals are seriously endangered. Indeed, with the exception of Przewalski horses, most of the animals were far from exotic: pandas, gorillas, great white sharks, orangutans, manatees, sea otters, cougars, black rhinos, cheetahs, polar bears, tigers, and wolves.

According to the presenters, the most common cause endangering these animals, was none other than humans. Encroachment on habitat, poaching and pollution were listed by many of the students as being primarily responsible for placing these species in precarious circumstances. In the case of the polar bear, global warming – another man-made problem – was playing an increasingly large role in their demise.

The students’ presentations were all lively and entertaining. Although the focus of each talk was on calling attention to the plight of

see TALKS page A5

### GMRSD Eyes Significantly Higher Budget For FY’15

By PATRICIA PRUITT and JEFF SINGLETON

The Gill-Montague Regional School Committee was rescued on the night of Tuesday, January 28 by a bit of on-the-spot research by Executive Assistant Robin Hamlett.

With the committee’s meeting at a standstill over its inability to garner the required six votes to approve its initial FY’15 budget, Hamlett checked the fine print of the district’s regional agreement.

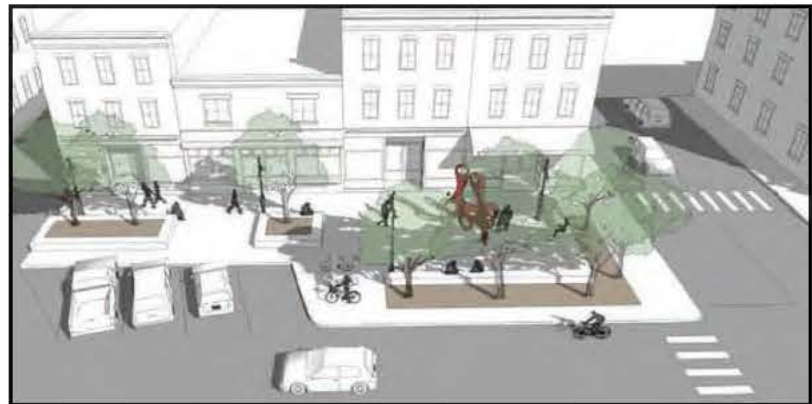
It had always been assumed that a budget for the upcoming fiscal year needed to be voted by February 1. But Hamlett noticed that the agreement actually used the word “prepare,” rather than “vote”.

According to the agreement, the district “shall annually prepare a tentative operating and maintenance budget for the ensuing fiscal year” by February 1.

Hamlett argued that preparing a budget did not require voting on a budget and the committee, reluctant to call a special meeting before the first of next month (that is, Saturday), agreed.

The committee will attempt to approve a budget prior to its next meeting on February 11. This meeting will begin with a public hearing

see GMRSD page A4



The curb “bump-out” at Avenue A and Third Street, as envisioned in last spring’s Livability Study recommendations. Image by Dodson & Flinker.

### Emergency Support for Martinez Family “Tremendous”

By CHRISTOPHER SAWYER-LAÇANNO

TURNERSFALLS—“The outpouring of sympathy and support for the Martinez family following Alberto’s tragic death was tremendous,” said Fr. Stanley Aksamit of Our Lady of Peace in Turners Falls.

Fr. Stan has been working closely with the family of Alberto Martinez since he fell to his death down the basement stairs in the early hours of the new year.

According to Fr. Stan, a substantial amount of money was raised to help transport Martinez’s body to his native Chiapas where he was buried on January 17. He also added that the Mexican Consulate contributed to the fund and helped pay for the funeral home in Holyoke.

Money has continued to come in to a fund set up by Our Lady of Peace, some of it through an online fundraising appeal. Fr. Stan also said that Our Lady of Czestochowa in Turners Falls and All Souls’ Church in Greenfield have also raised contributions to aid the family.

The Martinez family and his friends are still struggling with the aftermath of Martinez’s death, and trying to rebuild their lives.

Martinez, originally from Chiapas, Mexico, moved to the United States about four years ago. He left behind his wife Damaris Morales Martinez, and their two children, a two-year-old daughter, also named Damaris and a two-month-old baby, Andrew.

**“Damaris and the babies can go on. It’s still very difficult... but bit by bit, things are getting better.”**

In Turners, Martinez also had other family, including a sister.

Martinez, described by friends and family as a wonderful man, devoted to his wife and children, outgoing, hardworking and respectful of others. Martinez was employed on various farms, mainly in Hadley, as a laborer.

His family was totally dependent on his income. According to his sister, Estrella, his work in the fields allowed him to save money to support his family during the winter months.

She also said he picked up odd jobs in the winter. A

family friend described him as easy-going but very hard working and dedicated to his family.

The funds, according to Fr. Stan, have exceeded the immediate transport and burial needs. The remaining money, and contributions that are still coming in, are very much needed by his small family.

Martinez’s wife said they are planning to stay in Turners – “at least for a while.” She said she had wonderful support here from his family and friends, and no other family of her own to speak of.

A close family friend, who asked to remain anonymous, said that he and family members were “quite moved by the kindness and caring shown to them during this terrible period.”

“We didn’t expect this,” he said. “Damaris and the babies can go on. It’s still very difficult, and will be difficult, but bit by bit things are getting better.”

Fr. Stan echoed these remarks. “The community response was phenomenal,” he said. He also expressed his high regard for the social services that cooperated so well after the tragedy.

“The network of agency support that kicked in

see SUPPORT page A6

## GILL SELECTBOARD

### Let the State Shovel the Sidewalk

By DAVID DETMOLD

The state of Massachusetts owns the Gill-Montague Bridge; the state of Massachusetts should shovel the sidewalk.

That was the consensus of opinion following yet another in a long, long series of discussions the town of Gill has been holding about what government entity is responsible for clearing snow and ice from the long, long sidewalk on the bridge.

As town administrative assistant Ray Purington pointed out earlier this month, Gill has been debating the best means of getting the bridge sidewalk cleared since at least 1950, when town meeting voted to send a delegation of town citizens to the (now defunct) county commissioners to seek action on shoveling the bridge sidewalk.

Now, when the \$40 million plus project to renovate and expand the Gill-Montague bridge deck is nearing completion, with both lanes open to vehicular traffic and a well-lit new sidewalk, town officials on both sides of the gleaming, repaved bridge are wondering why the sidewalk remains unplowed in the winter, forcing pedestrians to risk their footing on snow and ice high above the Connecticut River, or to risk their necks

walking in the roadway of the third of a mile long bridge.

Purington said he had spoken last week with his counterpart in Montague, Frank Abbondanzio, and the two town administrators agreed to hold a meeting soon with the superintendents of their highway departments – Mick LaClaire in Gill and Tom Bergeron in Montague – to find out “what we know, what we don’t know, and what we need to know about ice and snow removal” on the bridge.

On speaker phone from her vacation home in Florida, where the temperature peaked in the low 70s on Monday, selectboard member Ann Banash asked when it would be best to involve local (Massachusetts) legislators in the discussion.

Purington answered her question elliptically, saying, “When we see what it will cost the towns in man hours,” to clear the sidewalk, and, “when Mass DOT states in writing, ‘We’ll plow the bridge but we don’t do sidewalks,’ when we know we have a safety problem on a state-owned bridge.”

Selectboard member Randy Crochier said, “There are 54 lights on the bridge to make it more pedestrian friendly – but they’re not shoveling the snow.” He added, “At what point do we become liable?”

Banash responded, “It’s not our bridge. I don’t see how we can take responsibility for it. They have repaired the bridge. They need to take care of the bridge. They

see GILL page A3



In this 2011 Reporter file photo, residents Mitchell Waldron, Claire Chang and John Ward shovel the bridge themselves.



# The Montague Reporter

*"The Voice of the Villages"*

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## Global, Regional, Local: Pipelines and Politics

Last week we reported that a planned expansion to Kinder Morgan's natural gas pipeline system would see a new Tennessee Gas Pipeline main line laid through our county.

Our hunch about the route the company is eyeballing – from Deerfield to Montague, Erving and Northfield – strengthened on Saturday, when homeowners on Route 5 and 10 in Deerfield told us the company had called them that morning for permission to survey their land.

The other big gas news that morning was that a TransCanada pipeline exploded in Manitoba. No one was hurt, but thousands there have been left without heat, and the massive plume of flame made for an eye-catching, and scary, news story.

Half of Massachusetts' residents heat their homes with natural gas, and it is used to generate over 70% of the state's electricity – a proportion that stands to increase as oil, coal and nuclear power are reduced faster than the gains made in renewables and efficiency.

And like it or not, our region's existing natural gas pipeline infrastructure can't keep up with our demand for the stuff, which is why two LNG import (regasification) terminals were built off Cape Ann in 2008 and 2009, joining the existing one at Everett.

But those terminals are barely in use, due to the domestic shale gas boom made possible by hydro-fracking. This supply has drawn us unexpectedly into a new age, and depending on who you ask, will either provide a "bridge" to a lower-carbon future or bind us permanently to a dark, hot world of fossil fuels.

The country only has one export (liquefaction) terminal, in Alaska, though five more have been approved and another nineteen proposals are under consideration. Most of these are along the Gulf Coast, and the closest is in Maryland.

This situation makes for a domestic glut of cheap natural gas, though prices are bound to rise when the Gulf's export capacity catches up. And it has seriously undermined the push for the development of renewable energy sources, and made the urgency for reduction in consumption less apparent, allowing policymakers to postpone the inevitable.

There are plenty of valid reasons to oppose a particular pipeline's

plans, or aspects of them.

Safety is a concern, especially where lines pass close to homes and workplaces, and especially for a company accused by some Wall Street analysts of skimping on maintenance to boost earnings figures, a charge Kinder Morgan hotly disputes.

Residents of Searsmont, Maine had a scare on New Year's Eve when an ice plug apparently blocked a valve at a Maritimes & Northeast Pipeline compressor station, sending it into a emergency vent mode. According to its neighbors, the station roared like a jet engine and shook the earth while it released 24 miles' worth of blocked-up gas into the air. Better than what happened in Manitoba.

And we place great intrinsic value on our land and our river. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, who will ultimately be tasked with approving the project, does not, and so it will be up to local communities to make sure the costs along the way do not outweigh the benefits.

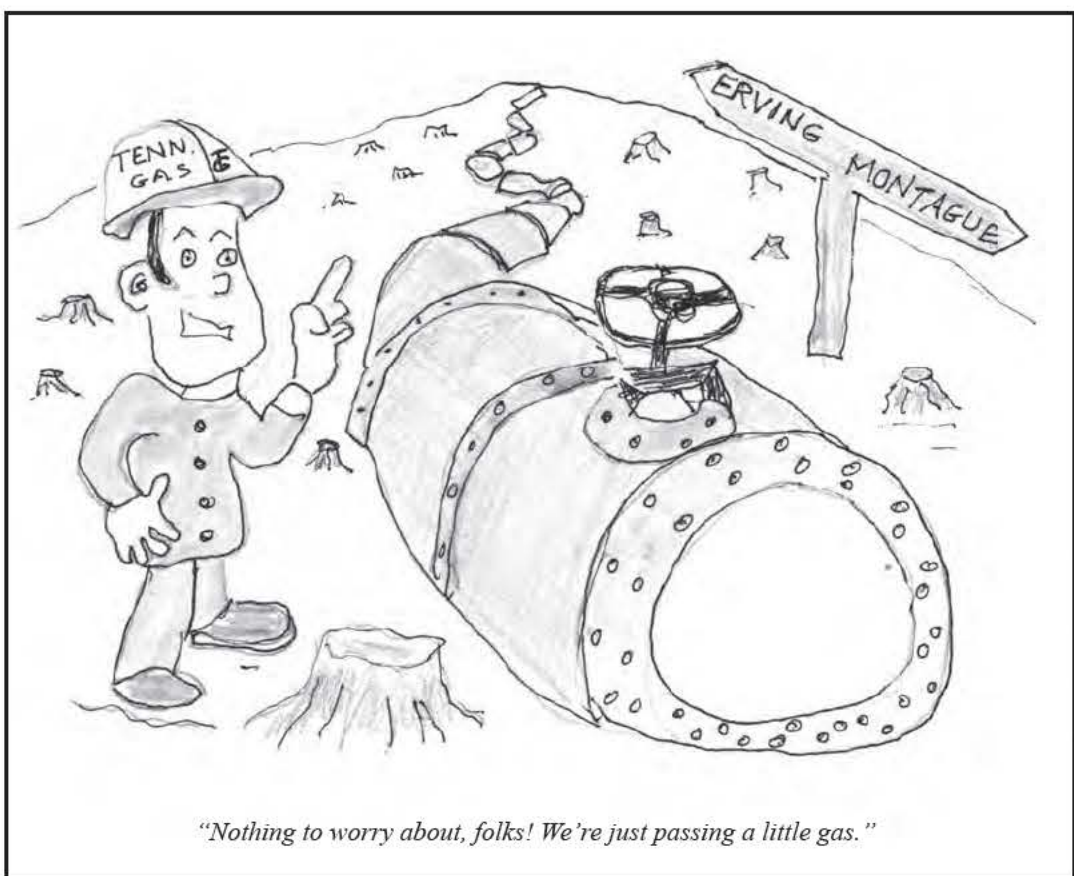
But climate activists who think they might have a Keystone XL to fight in their own backyard, in order to have an effect on overall energy policy, are mistaken: Tennessee's Northeast Expansion is not a pipeline that it makes national, or global, strategic sense to fight.

Preventing it, or making it detour around our county, will not challenge any grand strategy of the energy industry. It will not slow, or reform, fracking. And it will not prevent any CO<sub>2</sub> from being released into the atmosphere.

It will, on the other hand, prolong a situation in which New England – with less than 5% of the country's population – is subject to an uncertain supply of a commodity it has come to depend dearly on, and for which it already pays higher prices than the rest of the country.

Our grid is sorely tested by the cold. As we write this on Tuesday, the futures price for natural gas is \$4.85 for a million BTU's worth. The spot price on the Northwest market is \$5.20. In New England it's \$73.

Most consumers are cushioned from these spikes because the utilities try to take out longer contracts, and set our rates twice a year. But their effect is felt, and higher energy bills are felt the most by the poorest among us, many of whom are already champions of thrifty consumption.



## Letters to the Editors

### Snow Job!

In light of the recent—and apparently continuing—flap concerning the snow removal on the sidewalk of the Turners Falls-Gill Bridge. (Montague Reporter, Dec. 16, 2014, pg. A4 ) The subject has turned into a small-town political football.

It never ceases to amaze me as to how those supposedly in charge of town interests continually come up with a myriad of reasons as to how and why relatively simple goals can't be accomplished.

The MR article quotes Mr. John Ward, Gill Selectboard Chair: "I find it disingenuous that the reason given for adding all that lighting to the bridge is to make it safe for pedestrian access, when five months of the year, those sidewalks are not

cleared."

He goes on to say "some of those pedestrians do not own vehicles."

In that "five month" period (he refers to the winter months), in reality, the sidewalk may have to be cleared maybe 5 or 6 times for *reasonably substantial* snow accumulations.

Randy Crochier – Gill Selectboard member – said "he has regularly seen a number of people attempting to cross the bridge on foot, despite the aftermath of recent snowstorms."

With those comments in mind, I find it disingenuous that the Gill Selectboard would jeopardize the safety of Gill and other citizens who cross the bridge on foot, by not finding a way to clear the snow from the

sidewalks.

Crochier said "the matter should be discussed further with the Mass. Department of Transportation, with local state representatives, and between the selectboards of the two towns."

The Mass. Department of Transportation, and local state representatives? This seems a bit much for a situation that should be resolved via local forum... the respective Selectboards.

Gill and Montague have a viable resource to mitigate this dilemma... speak with Mitch Waldron of Gill. I believe the young man may perhaps be your remedy.

Ed Gregory  
Greenfield

## Airing of Differences Crucial to Reconciliation

I have been moved to write this letter in response to the recent articles and editorial regarding the Battlefield Grant.

Mr. Fairbrother's actions and attitudes regarding the projects with Native groups are the very reason why this grant project is of such great significance to the success of Turners Falls.

While the proposed grant project will most likely help the town succeed financially with the increase in tourism, the much more significant benefit will come from the reconciliation that will take place when groups work together to air their differences, reflect on and amend their negative beliefs and join together to work on a common goal for the common good.

No matter what actually occurred on May 19, 1676, there is absolutely no doubt that there was significant loss suffered – loss of life, loss of respect, loss of hope and loss of humanity.

The memory of these tremendous losses endures and continues to have a harmful impact on the area.

Until the losses are recognized, acknowledged, grieved and reconciled, there can be no real healing. And until there is real healing, there can be no real, long-lasting success.

So I thank Mr. Fairbrother for having the courage to voice his opinions – opinions I believe are shared by many area citizens.

While I find those opinions to be very different from my own, his voicing them publicly will hopefully serve as a catalyst for authentic restoration.

The site we now call Turners Falls is a place of great beauty and significance. My hope is that it can be restored to its true magnificence of a place of welcoming, cooperation and respect for everyone.

Jann Rosemerita  
Leverett

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## LOCAL BRIEFS

JESSICA LARKIN ILLUSTRATION

Compiled by DON CLEGG

Subscribers to the *Montague Reporter* who receive their paper in the mail will be noticing a lot of stamps on the mailing wrapper. This is due to a postal increase on January 26: from 46 to 49 cents, effective January 26 was for first-class letters. The cost of mailing the *Reporter* has increased from 66 to 70 cents.

So for some time you will find 3 stamps on your wrapper: a forever stamp, at a cost of 49 cents, plus a 20-cent and 1-cent stamp.

During the month of February, the Gill/Montague Senior Center, 5th Street, in Turners Falls will be collecting **non-perishable food items** for the Franklin Area Survival Center Food Pantry.

Winter is long and hard, and there are individuals and families of all ages in our community who depend on local pantries. The Center is open from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Monday through Friday.

**GILL** from page A1

need to plow the sidewalks. We're going to need the legislators. We have new lights. We have new sidewalks. And people have to walk in the road to get to work. That's the state's liability."

The town of Montague has by-laws requiring the town and its residents to clear sidewalks in the winter, within 24 hours of a storm, and to sand stubborn ice to make sidewalks passable.

Gill has bylaws governing where residents may shovel snow (not onto town roads) and park their cars in winter to allow snowplows unimpeded access.

The state of Massachusetts empowers cities and towns to enforce local ordinances to keep roads and walkways clear and safe for pedestrians in winter.

But nowhere in Massachusetts general laws, or even on the state Department of Transportation website, is a clear mandate, or a clear policy articulated for how the state should clear (or not clear) sidewalks on the bridges it owns.

An inquiry directed to the DOT's ice and snow contact asking why the state has not cleared the Gill Montague Bridge sidewalk remained unanswered as of press time.

But Joe Parzych, a former snowplow contractor for the state of Massachusetts, said a precedent of the state attempting to clear snow off the Gill-Montague bridge sidewalk had been set years ago, and should be respected.

As Parzych told the selectboard on Monday, "I used to clear the snow off that bridge, and the Factory Hollow bridge. We pushed the snow [off the roadway] through the railings. Then they would have a crew from Northampton," come up to shovel the sidewalk, or at least begin to shovel the sidewalk, Parzych recalled.

"They established a precedent," said Parzych. "The state was clearing the sidewalk, even if they only got halfway. I see no reason why we should change that."

The Erving Council on Aging (COA) has **grant money to help Erving Seniors with small repair projects around their home**. Our Handyman will come and estimate the size of the project and see if it fits our guidelines. Projects in the past have included installing grab bars, fixing leaky faucets, small painting jobs and much more. The Erving C.O.A. will pay the cost of the labor and the homeowner is responsible for materials.

For more information, please call Polly at 423-3649.

The Montague Public Libraries have established an **online archive for old Turners Falls newspapers**. The old *Turners Falls Reporter*, this newspaper's namesake, and the *Turners Falls Herald* newspapers from 1872-1942 were recently digitized, and are now available online at [montague.advantage-preservation.com](http://montague.advantage-preservation.com). The hyphen is in the web address.

They can be viewed from home or

### Other Business

In other news, land-owners Colleen Sculley and Chris Polatin told the selectboard of their plans to seek a permanent conservation restriction from the state of Massachusetts on 87 acres of land they own at the northeast corner of the intersection of Mountain Road and Main Road, and also on a smaller, 7 acre backlot of forested land further up Mountain Road.

With the assistance of the Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust, which would hold the conservation restriction on both parcels, and the Clesson Blake and Ruth Cook Trust, Sculley and Polatin would reserve the right to farm the land or manage the woodlot, but further development of the acreage would be precluded. A 1.8 acre houselot, where the couple currently resides on the lower parcel, would be excluded from the permanently conserved land.

As the FY '15 budget cycle begins to turn, Purington reported that the town's cash reserves are in generally good shape, although new growth and state aid are both expected to be nearly flat.

Purington said the town's free cash account had recently been certified at \$145,766 (about \$25,000 higher than he had expected). The town has \$207,538 socked away in a general stabilization fund, with \$68,939 in an education stabilization fund, and \$48,150 in a capital improvements stabilization fund.

Together, these three reserve accounts total nearly \$325,000, which is above the recommended range of 5% - 10% of a town's annual budget recommended for reserve funds by the state Department of Revenue. Gill has about a \$3 million annual budget, Purington said.

But this generally positive

on the Montague Public Libraries' public-access computers. The site works best if used with Internet Explorer for a browser.

Previously these old newspapers were viewable on cumbersome microfilm at the Carnegie Library. The digitization process was funded by State Aid to Libraries. For more information, call 863-3214.

**Atty. Isaac J. Mass** holds court on Saturday, February 1, from 10 to 11 a.m. at Greenfield Savings Bank in Turners Falls. Light refreshments provided by GSB. For information call (413) 863-4316.

**Will the groundhog see his shadow this year?** How long until Spring? Join Janel Nockleby for a Winter and Spring Pre-school Series at the Great Falls Discovery Center on Saturday, February 1, from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. for stories, crafts, and activities to find out more about this hibernating mammal and its mysterious forecasts.

Recommended for ages 3 to 6 with a parent or guardian. Siblings and friends welcome.

**Greenfield Harmony**, a multi-generational community choir led by Mary Cay Brass, begins its winter/spring session Monday, February 10 at 6:45 at St. James Episcopal Church Parish Hall. This season will focus on songs of South Africa

— including an homage to Nelson Mandela. For information contact Mary Cay Brass at [mcb Brass@vermontel.net](mailto:mcb Brass@vermontel.net).

There will be an **Opening Reception** on Saturday, February 8, from 1 to 3 p.m. for the "Children of the Swift River Valley" Exhibit in the Great Hall of Great Falls Discovery Center.

This is a family-friendly exhibit of **historic photos** focusing on the children of the Swift River Valley before it was flooded. The exhibit is presented by the Swift River Valley Historical Society, and will be open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays through the end of March.

**Attention all chocolate lovers!** The Chocolate Fest returns to the First Congregational Church, 43 Silver Street, in Greenfield on Saturday, February 8, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Come and enjoy the Chocolate Fountain or the Chocolate Fondue and dip your favorite fruit, pretzels, marshmallows and more. Sponsored by and to benefit The First Congregational Church of Greenfield.

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

## 2014 ANNUAL TOWN CENSUS

Did you get your annual census/street list form? Montague's 2014 annual town census/street list forms were mailed out Thursday, January 23.

The Board of Registrars is required by State Statute to verify and update the name, address, age and occupation of all residents. Census responses are used as proof of residency to protect voter rights, veterans' bonus, to assist the Council on Aging with service projections and to assist the School with enrollment information and projections. Population figures are also used by the state in calculating state and federal aid monies to the town.

Census data is also used to compile the annual street list. The street list is made available to the Police, Fire and Emergency Medical Technicians to aid in the daily performance of their duties as well as other municipal departments. Census information about children under the age of 17 is not made available to the public. Birthdates of residents will not be published due to the threat of identity theft.

If you are a registered voter and do not respond to the census, the Board of Registrars is required by law to move you to the "Inactive Voter" list and risk being removed from the voter registration rolls. Please help us make the Annual Town Census as complete and accurate as possible. If you did not receive a form you can download a form from the town website [www.montague.net](http://www.montague.net) or call the Town Clerk's Office at (413) 863-3200, ext. 203 and we will send out a blank form. Please fill in the information for all members of the household and mail the completed form to the Town Clerk's Office at One Avenue A, Turners Falls, MA 01376.

Please Note: The State Primary date has been changed to September 9 since the printing of this notice — please mark your calendars.

snapshot of town finances must be weighed against upcoming capital needs that surely will include replacing the roof at the safety complex, which just had to have nine new leaks patched at a cost of about \$400, with estimated damage to the interior walls and ceiling of at least \$3500, Purington said.

The roofs at the elementary school and the Riverside municipal building are also at or near the end of their expected life span. Meanwhile, town taxpayers are adjusting to the reality of higher property taxes, which this year show the impact of debt exclusion articles to purchase a new police cruiser and a new roof for town hall.

An aggregate electricity supply contract with Hampshire Council of Government's Hampshire Power will finally go into effect, after winning approval from the Department of Public Utilities.

The contract, which will affect homeowners and businesses in 38 towns, including Northampton,

will allow individual customers to opt out without penalty, if they have already entered into power purchase contracts with other suppliers. Otherwise, residents and business owners in Gill should soon be realizing some savings on their electric bills from aggregate power supplied through Hampshire Power. WMECo will continue to provide service transmission for electricity customers, as before.

Mark your calendars for three upcoming workshops at town hall provided by the Gill energy commission: Solar Hot Water Systems, on March 15, Composting, on April 5, and Electrifying your Bicycle, on May 10. All workshops are free, and take place from 9 to noon; contact [jmasucci@msn.com](mailto:jmasucci@msn.com) to reserve a space.

Dog owners, take note: a rabies clinic will be held at the Riverside municipal building on Sunday, March 23, from 9 to noon.



[www.MontagueMA.net](http://www.MontagueMA.net)  
local gossip, news & business listings



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## GILL-MONTAGUE REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE OPENINGS

Nomination papers for the annual town election to be held on Monday, May 19, 2014 for School Committee seats are available at the Gill-Montague Regional School Superintendent's Office, 35 Crocker Avenue, Turners Falls, MA. Completed nomination papers are due in the Superintendent's Office no later than 4 p.m. on Monday, March 31, 2014.

Please note that all papers must be picked up and returned to the Superintendent's Office and not the Town Clerk's Office.

There is one 3-year Gill School Committee seat open, and two 3-year Montague School Committee seats open.

For more information or questions, please contact Robin Hamlett at 413.863.9324.

## GMRS from page A1

on the preliminary budget, a meeting also mandated by the district agreement.

The failure of the committee to garner the required six votes was, in part, a product of the fact that only six members of the nine-member board were present when the vote was taken late in the evening.

The budget needed unanimous approval, which was not forthcoming. Committee member Sandy Brown objected to the size of the budget increases (3.5 percent), and particularly the projected assessment increase to the member towns as unsustainable.

The total assessment increased by 8.6 percent, while the assessment for Montague rose by over nine percent. The Gill assessment increase was 5.3%.

"If it were just a little less, maybe seven percent or six percent, I could support it," said Brown, but "this is a huge spread."

Brown argued that the budget would immediately be rejected by the member towns, potentially setting in motion the budget conflicts that had plagued the district several

years ago.

Between 2009 and 2011 the state had assumed fiscal control of the district due to the rejection of budgets and assessments by member towns.

Committee Chair Joyce Phillips, on the other hand, argued that the proposed budget was a "starting point," simply a basis for discussion and negotiation: "I'm not saying 'this is it people, figure out how to pay for it'."

The budget and assessments were presented by new Superintendent Michael Sullivan with the assistance of Andy Paquette of the firm The Management Solution (TMS). The 3.5% budget increase was primarily driven by wage increases, including a 2% cost of living increase for teaching staff, and by a projected 4% increase in health care costs.

The district also proposes to add three new staff positions, including an Elementary Literacy Coach, a Middle School Health Teacher and an Elementary Behaviorist.

However, the new positions will be balanced by the elimination of three teaching positions. Sullivan

## Turners Falls Dropout Rate Lowest In Years

According to figures recently released by the Massachusetts Department of Secondary and Elementary Education, Turners Falls High School had only a 2.1 percent dropout rate in 2012-13, equaling a loss of 6 students.

This is a slight improvement over the 2011-12 school year where eight students, or 2.8 percent, left school before graduation.

But compared to earlier years, this is a major step forward. In 2002-03, for instance, the dropout rate was 12.6 percent.; in 2005-06,

it stood at 10.4 percent.

The trend at Turners nearly matches the statewide rate which was down to 2.2 percent, the lowest rate in decades, the highest graduation rates since these rates were first calculated.

With the exception of Frontier, where the dropout rate in 2012-13 was just two percent, Turners was ahead of all other public high schools in the region.

Greenfield had a dropout rate of 3.3 percent; Mohawk 2.7 percent and PVRs 2.8 percent.

did not elaborate on the positions to be eliminated.

The school committee also voted to hire a new instructor for English Language Learners, which is officially part of the FY'14 budget.

Superintendent Sullivan argued that "we really have no choice," given the fact that the number of ELL has students increased by 25 (to a total of 63) this year.

On the revenue side, the school district's Chapter 70 state aid is projected to increase by less than 0.5% under the current state formula.

The district projects a big decline (\$220,000) in revenues from school choice students coming in to the district. Medicaid reimbursements are projected to decline from \$360,000 to \$249,000, and "circuit breaker" reimbursements for special education students will decline by over \$125,000.

On the other side of the coin, the district intends to use over \$50,000 in additional grant funds and a \$130,000 increase in one-time reserves (Excess and Deficiency funds) to balance the budget.

The school committee will hold a hearing on the budget at 6:30 p.m. on February 11, and the Montague Finance Committee will meet with the district on its budget on March 5.

Gill is slated to review the school budget on a date yet to be set, according to Gill Administrator, Ray Purington.

## Other Business

Montague Elementary School Principal Mark Andrews gave his report highlighting the work going on among his pre-schoolers through 4th graders.

Using the Lucy Calkins Writing Program and utilizing support from a STARS grant, which allowed the school to bring in a storyteller-musician named John Porcino to work both one-on-one and in small groups with children to develop their oral skills and to provide for oral rehearsal of their stories as a way into the next step - writing their stories.

Students learned about 'seed stories' or small moments that start a story on its way. In addition they learned what writers do to make a story interesting.

In math they are learning the

vocabulary of mathematics, and recently held a Math Night at the school. He said he has seen that his students can rise to a challenge, and indeed are engaged in their learning in challenging work. Pre-schoolers are working on "Lively Letters." There will be an ice cream social in April, and a monthly newsletter is forthcoming.

An incentive to reward good attendance has been set up with a weekly raffle and end-of-year prizes.

In answer to Ms. Levenson's query about the percentage of poor attendance, Andrews explained that students living within walking distance presented the problem in different ways; for example, a parent with small children might not be able to walk her young school child to school, and not wish to send that child to school alone.

Kathleen Adams, principal of the Gill Elementary School, presented an effective video prepared by Gill kindergarten teacher Kelly Gobel expressing the school's Mission Statement, which was newly developed by the School Community Council.

The Gill Student Council, comprised of fourth, fifth, and sixth graders voted to have a school mascot. Many suggestions were made, but a school vote came down to the Gray Wolf.

The Gill Gray Wolves are compassionate, cooperative, independent, and persevering.

Adams outlined the school goals as follows: to increase higher order thinking; to utilize best instructional practices; to focus on "fast finishers" and social emotional well-being.

Technology manager, Darin Paulus, and Martin Espinola, Director of Teaching & Learning, offered an in-progress update of the regulations governing student use of mobile equipment in the schools.

They cited a need for new policies to bring the devices listed in school regulations up-to-date, swapping Walkmen for iPhones, etc.

They described significant challenges posed by the question of cell phone use on school premises being inconsistent with learning during school hours. In short, the policy seems to be "in development."



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## NOTES FROM THE LEVERETT SELECTBOARD

## New Furnaces for Town Hall

By DAVID DETMOLD

After three winters of sub-par performance – including a near disaster on the last night of 2013 when a malfunctioning furnace nearly caused a fire in the town hall basement and carbon monoxide released through the heating vents sickened treasurer Dee Ann Civello, working late on New Year's Eve – Leverett is now on track to replace the two recently-installed, factory-direct Adams high-efficiency furnaces at town hall with new models from a different manufacturer.

The cost of replacing the three year old furnaces will be borne by Siemens Building Technologies, which oversaw renovations to the town hall heating system as part of a larger energy performance contract in 2011.

The recommendation from the Siemens representative is to replace the faulty units with Regal furnaces, manufactured in Pennsylvania, according to town administrator Margie McGinnis, who is researching performance data on various makes and models of boilers and furnaces.

Whatever manufacturer is eventually chosen, the selectboard advised McGinnis to seek one with enough capacity to correct the current imbalance in performance that

too often has the back offices of town hall warm and toasty during the heating season, with the front of the building, where the town clerk and treasurer have their offices, remaining chilly, and the downstairs bathroom more like igloos.

## Highway Over Budget

Harsh winter weather was on the selectboard's mind on Tuesday as highway superintendent Will Stratford notified the board that his department has run into red ink in the effort to keep the roads clear, and this despite the fact the groundhog has yet to emerge with a prediction for how many more weeks of winter we are likely to endure.

Stratford said even though the snowstorms this season have been modest in terms of accumulation, each has required a similar amount of preparation and plow work as would a larger storm.

The main battle so far has been to keep the roads clear of ice, amid bitterly cold temperatures.

Stratford said the highway department is currently \$4,200 over budget for snow and ice removal. Since this is still January, Stratford was merely stating the obvious when he called the budget position for snow and ice, "not good."

The selectboard authorized the highway boss to "deficit spend" for

snow and ice removal for the remainder of the season, and will take the matter up with the finance committee, to seek reserve funds for the department.

The selectboard also granted Stratford's request to increase the salary of highway foreman Silas Ball by \$1 an hour, to \$20.01 per hour.

Stratford said Ball has demonstrated an ability to work well with the rest of the highway crew and contractors as foreman, and his mechanical abilities and troubleshooting finesse has served the town well.

The selectboard, while granting the request, urged Stratford to convey that sentiment that highway workers, like all town employees, are the servants of the taxpayers who pay their salaries, and should therefore treat all residents with respect and give proper deference to their observations regarding service.

## Transfer Station

Neil Brazeau, superintendent of the transfer station, presented his budget request for the coming fiscal year.

With a request for a nearly level funded \$70,000 budget, Brazeau said sales of stickers and bags, the refunds from recycling, and other fees should allow the transfer station to almost break even in the coming year, especially if his plan to introduce what he termed "industrial composting" at the transfer

station takes hold with town residents.

Brazeau said Leverett is one of the few towns in the Franklin County Solid Waste Management District that does not have a program for large scale composting of biodegradable products that are not suitable for backyard composting, and he aims to correct that deficiency beginning this summer.

The introduction of a new roll off container at the station will allow residents to separate such items as "meat, bones, egg cartons, pizza boxes, wet newspaper and cardboard," and, pet owners take note, cat litter.

The last item, Brazeau said, is one of the heaviest by volume that town residents currently pay to put into the trash compactor to be hauled away to Springfield, instead of separated from the waste stream and composted.

Brazeau intends to publish a full list in the town newsletter of materials that will be able to be composted at the transfer station before introducing the new program in July.

## Library

Librarian Ashley Blake introduced a \$73,466 library budget request for FY'15, up about \$1,890 from last year.

The budget features a \$400 hike for library materials, to comply with state library aid guidelines, and a roughly \$300 increase in annual dues for the regional lending network known as C/WMARS, which

allows residents of any town with a member library to access materials from any other member library in Central or Western Massachusetts.

The library has not been immune to heating system problems this year, and an increase in reliance on electric heat may show up on the town's side of the ledger before the winter is through.

## Solar Zone

The recent, well-attended special town meeting granted an exception to the zoning bylaw governing the installation of pole mounted photovoltaic systems in the rural village district, to allow the town to build a 15 kilowatt PV system on town land between the elementary school and the safety complex.

That system, to be built by the Solar Store of Greenfield and paid for with Green Community grant funds from the Department of Energy Resources, will provide electric power for one of the neighboring town buildings.

Peter d'Errico said the planning board assured the 120 or so residents at the meeting earlier this month that a bylaw change allowing all residents to have the ability to mount appropriately sized solar installations in residential zones would be forthcoming at annual town meeting.

## Other Business

A hearing on the elementary school budget will take place at town hall on March 4 at 7 p.m.

## NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD

## Power Substation Proposed; Usher Smokestack Debated

By KATIE NOLAN

Robert Carberry of Northeast Utilities presented WMECO's plans for a \$75 million substation and transmission line project in Northfield and Erving. Currently, two 345 kilovolt (kV) transmission lines run from Northfield Mountain station through Erving and other towns to Ludlow.

The proposed project will connect these high capacity power lines to the National Grid's 115 kV system in Erving in order to improve reliability during overloads. A transformer at Northfield Mountain will step down the power from the high capacity lines to 115 kV.

Carberry estimated approximately \$30 million of the infrastructure would be located in Erving. He said that the property tax bill for the completed project was estimated at \$400,000 for the first year, before depreciation.

WMECO is seeking approval from the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities and will be asking for exemption from Erving zoning bylaws. Carberry said that DPU gives serious consideration to an exemption only if the town supports the project going forward. Northfield has already written a letter of support.

Answering questions from citizens, Carberry said that the right of way and substation would require clearing about 3 acres of land. He said that the project would be subject to all provisions of the Wetlands Protection Act and state stormwater standards.

Planning Board Chair William Morris said that WMECO had consulted with the planning board early in the process and that the planning board had participated in a site walkover in December. He called the planned substation a "great location" that would not be easily visible. The selectboard board voted unanimously to write a letter of support for the project.

## Former Usher Plant Stack

NCM Contracting Group of Westford provided a stability report on the Boiler Building smokestack at the Former Usher Plant. Based on its inspection, NCM recommended removal of the stack to the roofline of the building. In November, bricks started falling from the upper part of the smokestack. NCM estimated \$66,000 as the cost for removing the stack to the roofline of the building.

Usher Plant Re-Use Committee member Jeff Dubay said he was disappointed with the stability report and was "a little taken aback" that

there was no estimate for repairing the stack. He said he "would hate to see the town knock it down if it was not absolutely necessary." Dubay asked if there was some way for NCM to reassess the stack as they worked on it, possibly saving some or all of the stack. Speaking for retaining the stack, Dubay called it an investment with an "iconic effect."

Reuse committee member Linda Downs-Bembury said, "I don't think the town should throw good money after bad," but she felt the stack should be saved if possible.

Selectboard chair Andrew Goodwin said if he were deciding at that meeting, he would vote to take the stack down entirely. "If you leave it to me, I'm going to make it a green park." However, he asked that Reuse committee to take on the task of finding out what the other options are. "I would be happy to have the committee take this and run with it," Goodwin said.

Selectboard member Eugene Klepadlo told the committee members, "Until we know what the end use is, we can't expect to commit millions and millions of dollars."

Complaining about the slow pace of the committee's work, Klepadlo said that if the stack is repaired this year, "three years from now we'll have to do it all over again because we haven't done anything with the site."

He noted that town meeting had voted to demolish the entire stack and that the property may not have a source of potable water to support redevelopment.

## TALKS from page A1

these creatures, the approaches the students used to convey information about their subjects were quite different. Key factors that all the presenters covered, however, were why and how these species were endangered, their locale and environment and their average reproduction rates. Every student seemed extremely comfortable with the technology. The quality of images used to illustrate the talks was professional.

Judging from the mastery of their topics and the passion each of these young experts exhibited, I feel far more comfortable about the future of the planet and the survivability of these animals. Indeed,

Planning board chair William Morris said that he was frustrated at "the committee going on for 2 or 3 years and not presenting a vision for future use of the site."

Reuse committee member Sarah Vega-Liros observed that all of the committee members were volunteers, learning about the redevelopment process as they went, "not even knowing where our authority is." She said that the committee had given presentations about the future of the site at selectboard meetings and at an annual town meeting.

Finance committee chair Daniel Hammock said that, from a financial view, there was not enough information to make a recommendation to the town, because the costs of alternate options were unknown.

The board asked the committee

the students offered not just facts about the endangerment each species is facing but also ways to help prevent a further decline in these animal populations.

Bill Stewart is to be commended for offering his students such a challenge and for assisting his young wildlife biologists with an amazing opportunity to learn, read, write and present.

The student presenters were: Adriana Gahagan, Ashirah Dev-Dalomba, Emily Cobb, Ethan Flint, Ruby Heller-Goodman, Will Konieczny, Tatiana O'Connell-Toplitz, Emily Owen, Madeline Poole, Grant Powicki, Maeve Roe, Noah Saxenian, Zachariah Sexton and Ocea Zullo.



to return on February 24 with specific plans for the stack and for the site. Selectboard member Margaret Sullivan admonished, "Then, we want some answers."

## Donation of Conservation Land

John Mackin of Greenfield offered the town a gift of 55 acres, a steep landlocked parcel abutting the town's 118 acre conservation land. Assistant assessor Jacqueline Boyden reported that the town receives a limited amount of taxes for the 55 acres.

Sharp said that the conservation commission was in favor of accepting the land. The board asked Sharp to pursue discussions with the Franklin Land Trust, which would facilitate the donation.

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# PLACES

Ray DiDonato, organizer of last Monday's Montague Reporter Benefit Reading at the Deja Brew in Wendell, and Patricia Pruitt, poetry page editor of the Reporter.

We want to thank Ray, and Patti Scutari of Deja Brew for making the event possible. We also want to extend our appreciation to the readers who donated their time and their poems for what was an outstanding event. And without the very generous contributions of the many who came to support the paper and poetry and poets, the benefit would not have been nearly so successful. Our hats are off to all of you!

## Montague Dems to Hold Delegate Caucus

Registered Democrats in Montague will hold a caucus at the second floor meeting room of Montague Town Hall, 1 Avenue A, Turners Falls, at 7 p.m., Thursday, February 27, to elect 5 delegates and 3 alternates to the Massachusetts Democratic Convention, to be held Friday-Saturday, June 13-14, in Worcester to nominate statewide candidates for the primary ballot.

This local caucus is a meeting that is open to all Democrats registered in Montague by 12/31/13. Registered attendees are eligible to vote and/or run for one of the five openings available to represent Montague Democrats at the statewide nominating convention.

Delegates must be divided equally among

men and women. Candidates must consent to nomination in writing. Candidates may make a one-minute statement to the meeting and may distribute materials. It is a very straight forward and transparent process any registered Democrat may participate in, or just come to watch.

There will also be a brief meeting of the Democratic Town Committee prior the caucus that any registered Democrat may attend. The meeting place is handicapped accessible.

For more information about the Convention or caucus procedures, contact Democratic Town Committee chair Jay DiPucchio at 863-8656, or visit the party's website at [www.massdems.org](http://www.massdems.org).

## Montague: Nomination Papers Available

Nomination papers for the May 19 town election are available at the town clerk's office until Thursday, March 27. They must be returned no later than Monday, March 31 by 5 p.m.

Candidates for town-wide offices need to obtain 30 signatures of registered voters from the "town at large" to be placed on the ballot. Potential town meeting members need to obtain 10 signatures from registered voters of their home precinct.

Offices are as follows:

- **Selectman, Assessor, Board of Health, and Parks & Recreation**, each for a 3 year term.
- **Library Trustees** have 3 positions open, each for a 3 year term.
- **Soldier's Memorial Trustees** have two positions open, (Veteran and Non-

Veteran), each for a 3 year term.

- **Montague Housing Authority** has one position open for a 5-year term.
- **Town Meeting Members** are needed for all precincts.

The annual town election will be held on Monday, May 19, 2014. The polls will be open from 7 am to 7 pm. The deadline to register to vote is Tuesday, April 29

See pg. 4 of this paper for information regarding school committee nominations.

The Town Clerk's office is open Monday, Tuesday & Thursday 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., and Wednesdays from 8:30 am to 6:30 pm. Town Hall is closed on Fridays.

For more information please call the office at 863-3200, ext 203.

SUPPORT from page A1

immediately following Martinez's death was "amazing. It was phenomenal how quickly they pulled it all together."

He singled out for special recognition Rebecca Wright, English Language Learners coordinator for the Gill-Montague school district, Erin Ibrahim at the Brick House, Susan Mareneck at Montague Catholic Social Ministries, and Laurie Millman at the Center for New Americans. "Their assistance was multi-layered."

Fr. Stan also wanted to thank his parishioners and others in the community and beyond who contributed so generously to the fund and to helping the family.

In this regard he mentioned that one of his parishioners, a student at Williston Northampton School, had organized a group of students there to work actively with the family.

A number of local agencies are still responding to the family's need. Our Lady of Peace Church is continuing to gather donations. They encourage our readers to send them checks, with "Family of Alberto Martinez" in the memo line, made out to Our Lady of Peace and sent to 90 Seventh Street, Turners Falls, MA 01376.

The online donation site is at [www.youcaring.com/albertomartinezfund](http://www.youcaring.com/albertomartinezfund). It is administered by the managing editor of the *Montague Reporter*, and all donations made there will be relayed to the family via Our Lady of Peace.



## MONTAGUE from page A1

Several stakeholders spoke enthusiastically about the project. Maureen Pollock, who participated in the livability planning process, stated: "I think this is a wonderful design. I am very excited. I can picture myself going [from the bump-out] to the ice cream shop."

The project was also enthusiastically endorsed by M.J. Adams of the Franklin Regional Housing Authority, which administers the CDBG grants, and Town Administrator Frank Abbondanzio.

But the three Montague Selectboard members were not convinced. Michael Nelson again suggested that given all the local needs and financial demands on the town, a bump-out was not a priority.

As at previous meetings, Nelson advocated for spending more money on street light improvements. The current CDBG proposal would replace lights on Avenue A down to Fifth Street. Nelson has advocated for extending the light improvements down to Seventh, including Peskeumpsut Park.

Noting that the proposal did not seem to include a significant increase

in trash cans, Nelson also stated that "I'm tired of picking up trash."

Chris Boutwell expressed concern about eliminating two parking spaces while Selectboard Chair Mark Fairbrother suggested that the money might be better spent on the planned town parking lot on Canal Street.

Adams and Ramsey responded by arguing that simply expanding the number of street lights would not conform to the CDBG guidelines for a "streetscape."

Town Administrator Frank Abbondanzio suggested that federal officials might not be enthusiastic about another grant proposal for a parking lot.

The bump-out is only one part of the application for federal funds. As noted, the "streetscape improvements" would also include new lighting on Avenue A from First to Fifth Streets. The total cost, including bump-out and lights, is estimated to be approximately \$454,400.

The "housing rehabilitation" component of the application, again targeted to Turners Falls, would upgrade five units at a total estimated cost of \$179,000.

There is a relatively small "social service" component, that would fund early childhood education for children of parents who are in an ELL (English Language Learners) program administered by the Montague Catholic Social Ministries. The total application was for an estimated \$887,400 in federal funds.

Despite their skepticism about the value of the bump-out, the selectboard voted to endorse the grant by a vote of 2-0, with Mark Fairbrother abstaining.

### Other Business

In other action, the Selectboard approved a wide range of changes to sewer regulations brought forward by Bob Trombley of the Water Pollution Control Facility. Many of these bring local regulations into compliance with federal standards, including a "model sewer use ordinance" promoted by the Environmental Protection Agency.

Walter Ramsey received approval for a change order totaling \$6,150 for the bike path crossing improvement project. The order is related to the crossing near Farren Care Center on Montague City Road.

Cindy Tarail, Outreach and Communication Coordinator for Montague Community Television, requested support for installing "remote video systems" in town hall. The systems would expand taping and broadcasting of various local board meetings and increase the amount of local "content" on MCTV. The Selectboard approved the idea.

Next came a liquor license hearing where the board approved, with no public opposition, the transfer of a liquor license from the Montague Mini Mart to Dennis Lynch of "Ling Ling Corporation." Lynch is a previous, and now current, owner of the Montague Center Mini Mart.

Town Administrator Frank Abbondanzio requested that the board sign a new electrical supply contract with the Hampshire Council of Government.

He also requested that the vote approve dates for "closing the warrant" of the annual and special town meeting on May 3. The board approved dates for money articles of February 24 and for non-money articles of March 13.



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# MoRe

YEAR 12 – NO.15

EDITOR@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG

OF THE MONTAGUE REPORTER

JANUARY 30, 2014

## Meditation, Prayer and Peace

By LEE WICKS

**MONTAGUE** – It’s a revolutionary idea that a mind made quiet through meditation might lead to a peaceful spirit, and that this spirit can transform a person or a society, yet Gandhi wrote, “I have not the shadow of a doubt that any man or woman can achieve what I have, if he or she would make the same effort and cultivate the same hope and faith.”

If you are interested in silent meditation and personal spiritual development, curious about the role of meditation in self-transformation, and searching for a sense of peace and purpose, an upcoming five-week workshop at First Congregational Church of Montague might be something to consider.

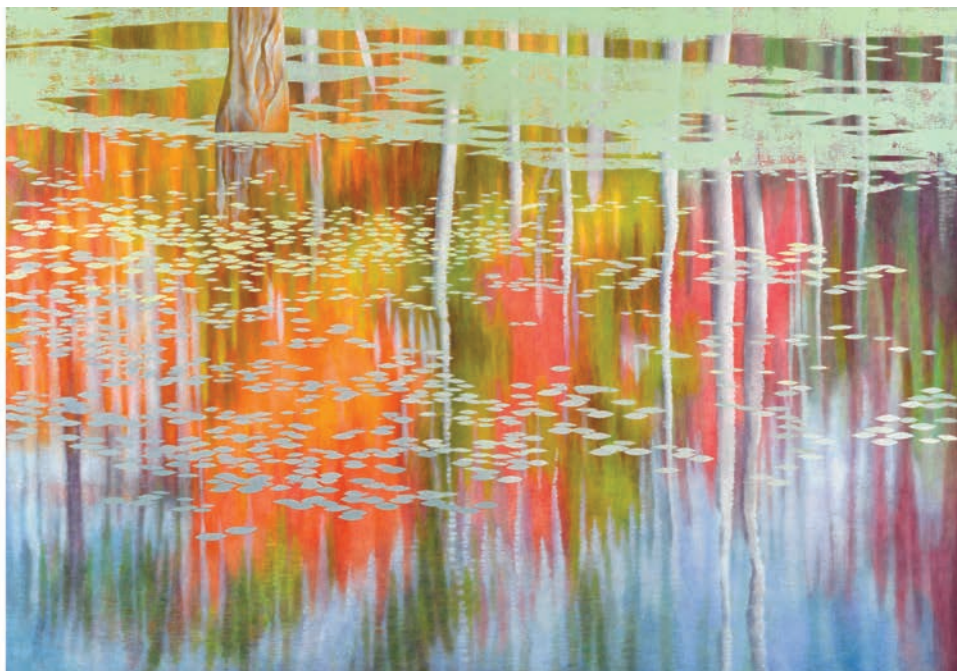
Please note that the dates have changed from last week’s listing in Local Briefs.

Titled, Comparing Notes with Gandhi on the Christ Path, and offered by Armand Proulx from Greenfield, participants will meditate and reflect upon the intersections between prayer and meditation and the spiritual path Gandhi walked.

Armand Proulx has been walking beside Trappist monk, priest and founder of the Centering Prayer movement, Thomas Keating, since the 1970’s.

It was Mr. Proulx who gave the practice its name, “Centering Prayer.” He has devoted himself to contemplative prayer and study and last year he offered a three-week program on Centering Prayer at the First Congregational see **PRAYER** page B4

## New Art at Wendell Free Library



“Three Works,” photographs by the artists.

By **RICHARD BALDWIN**

The Wendell Free Library is proud to present **A Flock of Days**, a two person exhibition of monotypes by Pamela Lawson and oil paintings by Heather Lenz. This is the most colorful and uplifting show we will have this winter.

Three large paintings by Heather and eight monotypes by Pamela fill the gallery with electric colors and vibrant compositions. The parallels between their work make the gallery virtually sing.

Heather and Pamela, friends for years, were surprised by the similarities in their choices of colors when they recently compared their work. They had shared their love of nature, their passion for art, and various techniques for applying paint to flat surfaces when they shared studio space years ago, but were completely unprepared for how closely their colors matched in recent work.

This recognition sparked the idea of showing their paintings and prints together, first at the Groton Library and now here in Wendell.

Pamela lives on a farm in Harvard, and Heather in the middle of the woods in Wendell, so both artists are surrounded by nature.

Pamela’s work in this show is focused on blackbirds and their habitat near her home. Heather’s paintings are based on images of reflections on water from a swamp at the end of her road.

The combination of their technical skills, their close observation of nature and the richness of their imaginations result in a powerful exhibition.

The colors both artists use in works here encompass a full range of hues from bright pinks, reds, yellows, lime green to blacks and purples.

While similar colors are found in New England fall foliage, here the intensity is heightened by the

use of chemical pigments not usually associated with landscape imagery. These off-beat colors and dramatic contrasts really surprise and draw the viewer in.

Heather writes, “...the *Superimposition* paintings are about transience (a kind of movement and change), also how the forces of chance and order, ‘superimposed,’ create the whole.”

She adds, “I build the paint in layers, or veils, as I think of them. The veils are permeable membranes, or divisions, that obscure and add to the layers beneath. Together, superimposed upon each other, they create an ambiguous whole where many things are true at the same time. To me this represents the world as it really is.”

Her three large *Superimposition* paintings are composed of several layers of imagery. In “Superimposition” and “Superimposition 2” several trees seem to grow from the see **WENDELL** page B4

## Third Annual “SSS” Show to Open at Nina’s Nook

BY **CHRISTOPHER SAWYER-LAUCANNO**

**TURNERS FALLS** – The third annual “Sensual Sexual Smut Erotic Art Show” will be premiering on Saturday, February 1 at 1 p.m. at Nina’s Nook, 125 Avenue A in downtown Turners Falls, with a reception at Madison on the Avenue on the corner of Avenue A and Third St from 5 to 7 p.m. Music starts at 6.

Nina Rossi, owner of Nina’s Nook, and the curator and organizer of the show is thrilled with both the quality and quantity of work submitted by more than 30 local artists. More than 100 works of art are in the show.

The work ranges from suggestive to explicit, with a high degree of playfulness exhibited in many of the art pieces.

Among the local artists featured in the show are William Accorsi, Luke Buckham, Tim DeChristopher, Edite Cunha, Christina Gusek, Cosima Hewes, Alan Hopkins, Bruce Kahn, Nancy Lautenbach, Jacki Lucchesi, Trouble Manderson, Peter Monroe, Jesse Morrisey, Adam Mulcahy, Paul Root, Charlie Shaw, Jacque St James-Wong, Kevin Slattery, Janice Sorenson, Nelen Soro, Lindy Whiten, Gina Vernava, Jerry Weeks, Tom Wyatt, Jacobie Zaretsky, Belinda Lyons Zucker, Marcia Hendricks, Laura Bunderson, Patrick Beaugard, “ML” and Abigail Wamboldt.

Almost all of the work is for sale, with prices ranging from \$6 to see **NOOK** page B6

## ONE CHAMBER POT, SOME TURNIPS, AND A SLEIGH...

By **LILLIAN FISKE**

**MONTAGUE** – What do these three things have in common, and what do you suppose they have to do with the Montague Library?

The following chronicle of the library’s history was found in an old notebook belonging to Isaac Chenery, dated December 11, 1868 and presented to the library by his daughter Miss Franny Chenery.

Isaac was a prominent figure in Montague and held the office of High Sheriff of Franklin County. He lived on Lover’s Lane, now called North Street, next to the library.

In 1867 Miss Abbie Bailey, a young lady from Andover, while a teacher of a young lady’s school in the Town Hall, first advanced the idea of raising money to procure a small library to be devoted to the use of the school.

By means of an exhibition given in that year, in a combined effort of teachers, pupils, and others of the town, a sum of money was raised sufficient to purchase 142 books.

These were selected by Miss Bailey and kept in a small closet opening from the school room.

A year later, in 1868, the



The town’s first library was in the old town hall, this brick building facing the common.

citizens of the town became interested in a public library, and decided to hold a Fair. A committee was chosen of W.W. Thayer, Thaxter Shaw, E. B. Burnham and Isaac Chenery, who canvassed the town and took everything the farmers or anyone else could give.

The following is a list of donations mentioned in Chenery’s chronicle: A chamber set, an extension table, a pair of steers, 1 sheep, 17 wallets, 1 shawl, 1 barrel of cider, a sleigh, a bureau, 25 hens, 5 turkeys, turnips, potatoes, rye, chickens, corn, lumber-oak wood, 1 side sole leather, and brooms.

Lottery chances were sold on these articles, and \$636 was realized.

A second committee was then chosen, consisting of Shaw, Chenery, Reverends Norton and Cronen, Dr. E. A. Dean and R.N. Oakman, to see if the town would accept the money and furnish a place for alibrary.

At a March town meeting in 1869, the town voted to accept the money and provide a place for it, lighted and heated when necessary, provide a librarian to open the room for the delivery of books not less than one hour per week, and charge each family a fee of one dollar per year for use of the books.

The library was in the town hall, a brick building built in 1858 facing the common. Miss Aloney Chenery was the first librarian chosen.

## WEST ALONG THE RIVER: THE VERY RICH HOURS OF DEEP JANUARY

By **DAVID BRULE**

**ERVINGSIDE** – *How do we get through a winter such as this one, with its Arctic Vortex, Alberta Clipper, and anti-climactic New England Patriots season? By keeping one weather eye out, the other eye on Mother Nature, plus lots of coffee, books, and imagination. Here are notes gleaned from a few days in deep winter; cluttered with anything that comes to mind.*

January 19, 7 a.m. Dark shapes flutter by the upstairs bedroom window in the early light. Snow all day yesterday still drifts down, and birds, finding their feeding spots under snow, are hungry. Downstairs and out the back door I go to shovel their spaces and brush off the feeders. Juncos, sparrows and jays are on the seed almost before it hits the ground.

Back inside to warm up and get the coffee brewing. This morning, in the pot is the hearty Stamell Stringed Instrument Shop’s Celebration mix. The shop, an Amherst institution, is celebrating 25 years of violins, violas, cellos, and music. Proprietor Matt Stamell has kept my bow and fiddle in great shape all those years, and by extension, kept my part of the Valley bright and merry.

Well fortified under layers of wool and down, back out I go again, chair positioned facing southeast, under the open woodshed at the end of the deck. Coffee and books and snow at 30 degrees.

My book this day was a bargain: The Best American Poetry of 1995 (feeling pretty smug and it’s all the more enjoyable because of the used book price I paid at the Montague Book Mill.) Coffee warms fingers and birds drift in to their breakfast, silent and muffled, too busy eating to chirp or squabble.

Decadent rich chunks of Valrhôna chocolate accompany the bottomless cups of coffee this fine morning. I’ve often visited the Valrhôna chocolate factory on the Rhône river near Valence in southern France, where I take my exchange students.

Imagine a factory producing some of the world’s richest chocolate situated right in the middle of some of the world’s best wine country (Côtes du Rhône). For certain ones among us, it doesn’t get any better than that!

My eccentric Snowy Sundays like this involve those delights, coffee and chocolate paired with an heirloom book of snowscapes by my old Impressionist friends, Pissarro, Monet, Sisley, and all.

And for good measure, before heading out to the chore of shoveling snow from the deck, porch, front steps, sidewalk, driveway, rooftops and fire hydrant, I linger at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century with 10 minutes of time travel

see **WEST ALONG** page B4



Detail from Les Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry, 15<sup>th</sup> century, Pol de Limbourg.



# Pet of the Week

Unlike the famed actress, I was abandoned as a pregnant stray at the doors of Dakin. I'm not one to dwell on the past, and I am more than ready for my debut performance in a happy, loving home! I am a super affectionate kitty who loves to be petted. I definitely do have some "movie star" in me. I



"Sophia Loren"

love to talk and crave attention! I'm curious, playful, and fun. In my foster home, I lived indoors, which I preferred. (P.S. I quickly get past my "stage fright" to sing and dance my way right into your heart!) Contact the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society at (413) 548-9898 or [info@dpvhs.org](mailto:info@dpvhs.org)

## Senior Center Activities January 27 through 31

### 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 not open.

### Monday 2/3

10:10 a.m. Aerobics  
10:55 a.m. Chair Exercise  
1 p.m. Knitting Circle

### Tuesday 2/4

9:30 a.m. Chair Yoga  
Noon Lunch  
12:45 p.m. COA Meeting

### Wednesday 2/5

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

### Thursday 2/6

9 a.m. NO Tai Chi  
10:30 a.m. to Noon Brown Bag  
Noon Lunch  
1 p.m. Pitch

### Friday 2/7

10:10 a.m. Aerobics  
10:55 a.m. Chair Exercise  
Noon Pizza Party  
1 p.m. Writing Group

### WENDELL

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

### ERVING

Erving Senior Center, 1 Care Drive, Erving, is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. for activities and congregate meals. Lunch is at 11:30 a.m., with reservations required 24 hours in advance. Call Mealsite Manager Rebecca Meuse at (413) 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 the Center to confirm activities, schedule a ride, or find out when is the next blood pressure clinic.

### Monday 2/3

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

### Tuesday 2/4

8:45 a.m. Aerobics  
9:30 a.m. Blood Pressure  
12:30 p.m. Painting

### Wednesday 2/5

8:45 a.m. Line Dancing  
9:30 a.m. Blood Pressure  
10 a.m. Chair Yoga  
Noon Bingo

### Thursday 2/6

8:15 a.m. Foot Clinic  
8:45 a.m. Aerobics  
10 a.m. Healthy Bones & Muscles  
Noon Cards

### Friday 2/7

9 a.m. Bowling

### LEVERETT

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

Take-It-Easy Chair Yoga – 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.

## MONTAGUE LIBRARY NEWS

### Valentine Party

There will be a Valentines Party at the Carnegie Library on Saturday, February 8th, from 10:30 a.m. to noon.

Children of all ages and their families can make fun valentine inspired crafts, cards, and other heart themed projects with Ruth O'Mara.

This is a free program and the craft materials will be provided. For more information, contact the Carnegie Library, 201 Ave. A, Turners Falls, 863-3214.



By FRED CICETTI

Q. Are there some good ways to control anxiety without resorting to medications?

You can control anxiety by employing relaxation techniques. When your body is relaxed, breathing slows, blood pressure decreases, and you feel better. This is called the *relaxation response*, which is the direct opposite of the stress response.

Relaxing can counteract the effects of long-term stress, which may contribute to depression, digestive disorders, headaches, high blood pressure, and insomnia.

The techniques I will mention here should not substitute for seeing a doctor about a medical problem. Relaxation techniques are generally considered safe for healthy people, but you should tell all your health care providers about relaxation methods you are considering.

Okay, the following are some techniques:

### MEDITATION

Meditation is used to redirect your attention away from the noise of the mind to the inner self where there is silence and peace. There are many types of meditation. You can do it as long as you like.

There are many devices for moving your attention away from your mind. You can count your breaths, repeat a word or sound to yourself, concentrate on a pleasing

## \$100 Refrigerator Recycling Rebate

The Sponsors of MassSave (Cape Light Compact, National Grid, NSTAR Electric, and WMECO) are offering a \$100 rebate to residential electric customers for recycling refrigerators or freezers through Mass-Save, which encourages reduced energy use.

Participating customers will receive the \$100 rebate and can save as much as \$150 a year in increased efficiency.

Refrigerators and freezers must be in working order, clean and empty, with standard inside measurement of 10 to 30 cubic feet. A maximum of two units per household per calendar year will be accepted.

The program runs year-round, but the special \$100 rebate only lasts through February 2014.

Customers can schedule a free home pickup at 1(877)545-4113 or [www.Masssave.com/Recycle](http://www.Masssave.com/Recycle).

## THE HEALTHY GEEZER

# Relax!

mental image, chant out loud, recite a prayer over and over.

Most meditation is done sitting with the eyes closed in a quiet place. Slow, rhythmic breathing is an important element of meditation.

(I wrote a series of three columns about meditation a couple of years ago. If you would like copies of these, email me at [fred@healthygeezers.com](mailto:fred@healthygeezers.com) and I will send them to you.)

### DEEP BREATHING

With deep breathing, you consciously slow your breathing and focus on taking regular and deep breaths. I like the 4-7-8 technique. You inhale slowly through your nose for a count of 4, hold your breath for a count of 7, and then exhale slowly through your mouth for a count of 8.

### GUIDED IMAGERY

Also known as *visualization*, guided imagery is a technique that involves focusing upon images that make you happy. These replace thoughts that are negative and stressful.

### PROGRESSIVE RELAXATION

For this relaxation method, you focus on tightening and relaxing each muscle group. Progressive relaxation is often combined with guided imagery and breathing exercises.

### BIOFEEDBACK

Biofeedback is a technique you can use to learn to control your body's functions. You're connected to electrical sensors that help you receive information about your body. This feedback helps you focus on making changes in your body, such as relaxation.

### AUTOGENIC TRAINING

Autogenic means something that comes from within you. In this relaxation technique, you use both visual imagery and body awareness to reduce stress. You repeat words or suggestions in your mind to relax and reduce muscle tension.

### SELF-HYPNOSIS

In self-hypnosis you produce a trance-like state in which you have heightened focus and concentration. Hypnosis is usually done with the help of a therapist using verbal repetition and mental images. When you're under hypnosis, you usually feel calm and relaxed, and are more open to suggestions.

### T'AI CHI

T'ai chi (tie-chee) is practiced all across China. A person doing tai chi progresses slowly and gracefully through a series of movements while breathing deeply and meditating. Tai chi has been called *moving meditation*.

### YOGA

Yoga refers to traditional physical and mental disciplines that originated in India. Proper yoga practice combines physical postures that participants flow into and then hold before proceeding to the next posture; a focus on breathing techniques that make participants more aware of their bodies, and deep meditation and relaxation.

### MASSAGE

There are more than 80 kinds of massage that manipulate soft tissue. The purpose of massage is to relax the tissue, increase the flow of blood and oxygen, and decrease pain.

Questions? Send them to [fred@healthygeezers.org](mailto:fred@healthygeezers.org).

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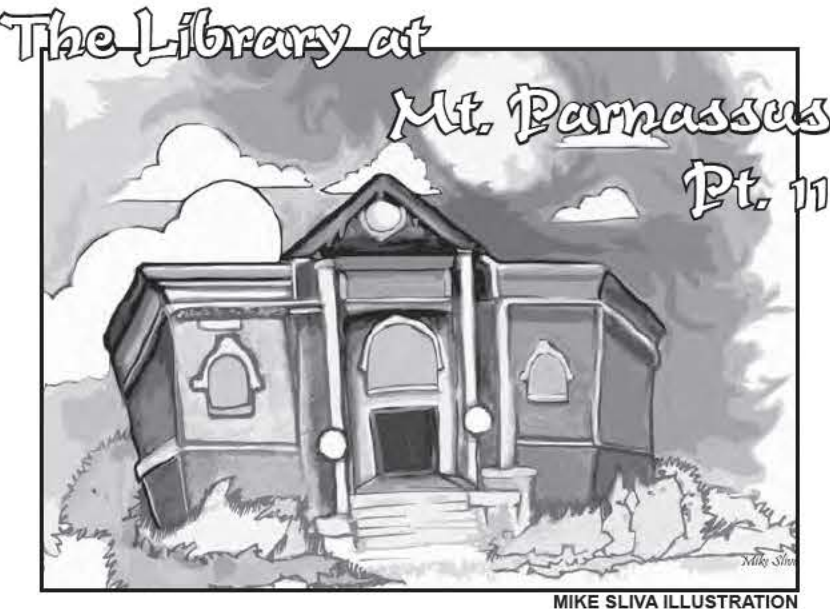
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Old Clare lights the way to further revelations in....



By DAVID DETMOLD

Old Clare, the head librarian, turned and shuffled over to the reserve room, where he kept a pot of coffee perking. Clare liked his coffee strong, and drank it Turkish style, rich, dark and unadulterated, in little cups like thimbles.

The coffeepot too was unusual. It was made of old, green handblown glass. Clare kept a small flame burning continuously under the base of the chamber, where the water rose as steam up through the coffee grounds in the percolator at the waist. The steam condensed in a retort at the top and dripped back down a pair of pelican tubes, which refluxed the liquid through the grounds again, and so on and on, repeating an endless refinement until the elixir at the bottom was as thick and black as tar.

Clare poured himself a dram by lifting up the beaker on a brass spigot cast in the likeness of a rooster rampant at the bottom of the pot: the coffee poured out from the rooster’s cock. Clare was a connoisseur.

“Want some?”  
I wrinkled my nose. “No, thanks. I’m drinking tea.”  
“What’s yer name, young man?”  
“Otis, Clare. It’s Otis.”  
“Otis. Young man Otis. Damned fine name.”

He held the thimble of coffee to his lips and inhaled a little of the bitter brew.

“Seems to me Melantha mentioned your name the other day.”

This caught my attention, but I said, “Clare? May I ask you something?”  
“Sure.”

“How do you get away with smoking a pipe in here? Nobody wants to be seen in public smoking a pipe anymore, and besides, it’s against the law.”

“That a fact?” said Clare,

drawing on his briar and exhaling small cumulus clouds of smoke. He was poking around in the cultch behind the desk. “Still legal in bars, ain’t it?”

I agreed.  
“Care to join me for a snort, then?”

“Yeah.... Let’s go!”

He knocked the glowing orts from his pipe in the metal wastebasket, winked, and said, “I’ll git m’ coat.”

Clare wandered off; I heard him rambling round in the back office.

Left alone in the drafty lobby, I was drawn to venture behind the main desk, to warm myself above the heating vents and take a look around the librarians’ work station.

The light was dim, and for the moment no one was around. I peeked into the cubbyholes, and opened a few of the many drawers and compartments.

I had never been behind the desk before.

Melantha’s desk.  
Here were bookbinding tools and sealing wax. Bits of bone. Drills and augurs.

I knelt down and peered into a lower shelf. There were some canceled stamps torn from their envelopes, an empty pack of Wintergreen chewing gum, a few feathers.

More than steam was rising from the vents; the smell of smoke was in the air.

I turned and saw the wastebasket was on fire.

“Holy shit!” I jumped up and turned over the trash can, stifling the smoky blaze. When I looked, a moment later, there were still some glowing scraps of paper in the pile of debris and ashes on the floor. I picked one out to take a look.

“That’s the very piece of paper I been lookin’ for,” said Old Clare, coming up suddenly behind me.

Continued next week.

MONTAGUE CRYPTOJAM!

“SQUEAKIESTQ FTPU JKIZ, OKE PQITKAHDPJPQE PRPAMEZSQD.” - DTPEZP

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NOTES FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Serious Snowmobile Crash on Plains

**Monday, 1/20**  
11:14 a.m. Report of illegal dumping on Burnham Street. Advised of options.  
1:43 p.m. Request for officers to check on some kids in the Little League dug-out on Montague Street. Services rendered. Kids were playing video games on their phones.  
4:28 p.m. Car off road at Turners Falls and Hatchery Roads. Operator cited for speed.  
5:46 p.m. Fire alarm at Turners Falls High School due to burned popcorn.

**Tuesday, 1/21**  
4:36 a.m. Car vs. deer on North Leverett Road. Damage to car documented. Unable to locate deer.  
12:05 p.m. Removed disorderly student from TFHS.  
12:32 p.m. Injured deer reported on Route 63. Area search negative.  
4:01 p.m. Neighbor disturbance on Fourth Street.  
4:30 p.m. Landlord-tenant dispute on Fourth Street.  
5:43 p.m. Intoxicated patron removed from Shady Glen and taken into protective custody.  
8:59 p.m. Report of vehicle pulling a person on

a snowboard or sled in the alley behind Shady Glen. Investigated.  
9:36 p.m. Neighbor dispute on Fourth Street.

**Wednesday, 1/22**  
7:50 a.m. Assisted with disorderly student who had left TFHS.  
8:30 a.m. Suspicious auto on Union Street in vicinity of recent break-in.  
6:12 p.m. Vandalism to apartment on Fourth Street. Report taken.

**Thursday, 1/23**  
8:45 a.m. Landlord-tenant dispute on Fourth Street. Report taken.  
3:26 p.m. Caller reporting a male dressed in fatigues visiting a Hanna Brook Lane house and stating that he would be on that property next week hunting coyote. Officer spoke with male, who stated he was going around to neighbors advising they will be hunting coyote in the area next week, but not specifically on the caller’s property.  
11:33 p.m. Neighbor disturbance on Fourth Street. Verbal warning issued.

**Friday, 1/24**  
4:10 p.m. [redacted] was arrested on a default war-

rant.  
4:42 p.m. Vehicle slipped out of gear and hit Food City building. Minimal damage to vehicle; no damage to building.  
9:29 p.m. Assisted Erving PD with vehicle rollover near entrance to Barton Cove.  
11:56 p.m. Medication reported stolen from an Avenue A apartment. Report taken.

**Saturday, 1/25**  
2:33 a.m. K9 unit assisted Greenfield PD with search for missing four year old female. Child located.  
4:33 a.m. Caller reported witnessing a drug transaction followed by an assault near Third Street and L Street. Investigated.  
11:54 a.m. Caller concerned about people walking on ice below the Turners Falls-Gill Bridge.  
12:16 p.m. Illegal dumping in Lake Pleasant. Advised of options.  
1:03 p.m. Vehicle parked in Third Street lot damaged in a hit and run accident overnight. Report taken.  
1:51 p.m. Medication reported stolen from a Seventh Street apartment.  
2:12 p.m. Officer spoke

with some Hallmark students who were sliding on Unity Hill.  
4:31 p.m. Report of vehicle sliding off road due to icy conditions on Greenfield side of Turners Falls Road. Greenfield PD advised.  
4:59 p.m. [redacted] was arrested for probable cause.  
6:07 p.m. Shoplifting reported at F.L. Roberts. Suspect identified; summons issued.  
9:10 p.m. Snowmobile accident at Lake Pleasant and Plains Roads. Two parties transported to Baystate Franklin Medical Center.

PUBLIC NOTICE  
RIGHT OF WAY MAINTENANCE

As required by Massachusetts General Law Chapter 132B, National Grid (New England Power and/or Massachusetts Electric Company) hereby gives notice that it intends to selectively apply herbicides along transmission line rights-of-way in the following municipalities:

Gill • Montague

The selective use of herbicides to manage vegetation along rights-of-way is done within the context of an Integrated Vegetation Management (IVM) program consisting of mechanical, chemical, natural and cultural components. In right-of-way vegetation management the pest or target is vegetation (primarily tall growing) that will cause outages and safety issues. National Grid’s IVM program encourages natural controls by promoting low growing plant communities that resist invasion by target vegetation. The selective use of herbicides and mechanical controls are

the direct techniques used to control target vegetation and help establish and maintain natural controls.

Accord Concentrate, also labeled under the name Rodeo, and possibly one of the following herbicides, Arsenal or Arsenal Powerline, will be applied directly to the surface of stumps immediately after target vegetation is cut (Cut Stump Treatment). Garlon 4 or Garlon 4 Ultra will be applied selectively to the stems of target vegetation using hand-held equipment (Basal Treatment). Krenite S or Accord Concentrate, also labeled under the name Rodeo, mixed with Escort XP, and one of the following herbicides, Arsenal or Arsenal Powerline, will be applied selectively to the foliage of target vegetation using hand-held equipment (Foliar Treatment). Applications shall not commence more than ten days before nor conclude more than ten days after the following treatment periods.

Treatment Periods

January 13, 2014-June 2, 2014 Cut Stump Treatment Basal Treatment	June 2, 2014-October 17, 2014 Foliar Treatment Cut Stump Treatment Basal Treatment	October 17, 2014-December 31, 2014 Cut Stump Treatment Basal Treatment
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Further information may be requested by contacting (during business hours, Mon-Fri from 8:00 am-4:00 pm):  
Mariclaire Rigby, National Grid, 939 Southbridge Street, Worcester, MA 01610. Telephone: (508) 860-6282.

NOTES FROM THE ERVING POLICE LOG

Mutual Aid to Montague

**Wednesday, 1/22**  
1:20 p.m. Motor vehicle crash on French King Highway. No injuries. Report taken.  
**Friday, 1/24**  
2:30 p.m. Officer at East Main Street residence for a welfare check requested by a relative.

9:30 p.m. Possible rollover crash on Route 2 westbound. Discovered to be on Route 2 at Chappell Auto Sales in Gill. Assisted Massachusetts State Police on scene.  
**Saturday, 1/25**  
8 p.m. Suspicious subject at French King Bridge.

9:13 p.m. Assisted Montague PD with a snowmobile crash on the plains.  
10:05 p.m. Assisted Montague PD with a domestic disturbance on Bridge Street.  
10:40 p.m. Report of suspicious activity on Lillians Way. Subject knocking on

doors. Same gone upon arrival.

**Sunday, 1/26**  
1:48 a.m. Criminal application issued to [redacted] for operating a motor vehicle that was unregistered, uninsured, and wearing illegal plates.

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LOOKING BACK: 10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Here's the way it was on January 29, 2004: News from The Montague Reporter's archive.

G-M School Enrollment Dropping

The Gill/Montague Regional School District expects to lose some \$620,000 in state Chapter 70 aid due to a drop in enrollment of 148 students this school year. The changing enrollment figures will increase Montague's share while decreasing Gill's.

Present at the school committee's meeting were three dozen teachers concerned with ongoing contract negotiations, some with signs reading "Two Years is Too Long."

Residents Reject Zoning Changes

The division of Erving's Commercial/Residential zoning into three distinct designations – Rural/Residential, Central Village, and Village Residential – failed to

receive two-thirds majority after 3 hours of discussion at a special town meeting.

Hardly a word was spoken in favor of the proposed bylaw changes which would, in part, limit new housing stock to just 8 per year.

When accused of being anti-growth, planning board chair Jeff Dubai said the town had "won the lottery" with Northfield Mountain hydroelectric facility providing the town with roughly 90% of its tax base, and that commercialization of the town's rural landscape wasn't needed.

Night at the Hot Spot

Friday night's Pageant open mic had an overwhelming turnout of 60 people, most of whom stayed the whole 4 hours of performance ranging from acoustic guitar sets to poetry, as well as a new punk band from Greenfield called the *Me and Thems*, who set the picture frames askew with their volume and energy.

The event was organized as a

CD release event marking the end of the Avenue A Music Project's 18-week session, and had directors of the teen center as well as local youth busy all that day, practicing sets, moving furniture to make space, setting up the PA system, and hanging artwork in preparation.

Final Budget Meeting

Montague's selectboard hosted the fourth and final planning session with department head, including Library director Sue San Soucie, Health Director Gina McNeely, senior center director Bunny Caldwell, parks and recreation director Jon Dobosz, and veteran services director Leo Parent.

Level funded budgets were proposed across the board, with the one exception being San Soucie who asked for the reinstatement of a \$2,000 cut from last year's budget that would allow the library to be eligible for state library aid through the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners.

WEST ALONG from page B1 with Marcel Proust.

His dense chapters are taking me a lifetime to read, just two pages at a time of a Sunday morning. With Proust you can start anywhere you want in his books, it's always daunting and elegant, he mystifies with a vocabulary of a lost century, and lively archaic verb tenses such as the past anterior, the imperfect and pluperfect subjunctives.

That helps keep the literary cobwebs from building up! No matter, just Proust being Proust. I can deal with that, maybe ten minutes per week, but on a full tank of coffee!

The afternoon is filled with the vision of the snowy owl in Old Deerfield, massive white bird, embodying the spirit of the Far North. He and dozens like him are spending the winter in the Sunny South of southern New England where the temperatures only go down to 15 below!

Hunting both day and night, he pauses on fence post, or wings up to the peak of the unpainted barn, and calmly surveys the North Meadows of Deerfield with piercing yellow eyes.

There's time, too, to slap on skis and head out up under the French King Bridge to Northfield Farms along the frozen Connecticut, yet keeping an eye on the time, since of course it'll soon be Brady vs. Manning, the Patriots and the Broncos. We'll keep our hopes up for Old New England this improbable season of Sundays.

"The snow turns us back 200 years."  
— Donald Hall

January 21. The radio tells us it's on its way, by 1 p.m. it'll start. Good. If it's going to be winter, then bring it on. We can't really enjoy summer without getting through a

hard winter, as of old.

If it does come down in the afternoon, I'll be off before dusk to walk the ancient landscape of Peskeompskut, out to the rocky point of my youth, the point where the spirit of the ancient people dwells and comes forth in the winter landscape, at the appointed time.

We'll walk through the whispering pines with the veils of snow filtering down through branches. Ice fields over tribal campsites now, dotted with ice-fishing shacks, snow drifts under the sweep of eagles' wings.

But it's still morning, and while I'm still grumbling over the dismal showing of the Patriots this past Sunday, the white-throated sparrow arrives to get ready for the storm. He's the only one of his clan wintering over in this yard of the house by the west-flowing river.

I call him Fred. With his distinguished white dash about his face and chin, he appears the venerable sage of the yard, and I call him Fred because he reminds me of Fred Oakes, the eternal embodiment of the enduring English teacher.

This English teacher, if you're not from here, and didn't attend our local high school, always wore what we called long ago, a "cookie duster" of a white moustache, a carryover from an earlier time, before they came back into style in the 60s.

Fred the teacher had his own trademarks for sure: moustache, bemused and patient eyes peering through horn-rimmed spectacles, calm, and as I said, eternal.

He taught right up to the end of his life, dealing with decades of struggling clueless scholars wading and falling through Shakespeare and other now-forgotten English poets that they no longer teach in high school.

So I always greet Fred the Spar-

row when he comes calling, and I see my old English teacher come back again to peer over my shoulder, to see what it is I'm trying to write.

Typically, while I'm musing on such arcane images, Maggie the Rescue Shepherd comes bursting into the yard, scattering pesky squirrels and screaming jays in temporary panic, and bringing me down to earth.

Maggie who lives a few doors up the street is a great connoisseur of cheeses. She pokes me with her damp nose and inquiring eyes, and prods me to get her a sample or two. She loves *gruyère* rinds and an occasional left-over cheddar slice, has been known to accept *brie*, but has no use for the more exotic *fromage bleu*, other than to perhaps roll in it to make her more appealing to potential suitors.

Speaking of suitors, there's some pairing going on already out there: two squirrels are acting way too coyly to be brother and sister, with much sniffing under tails and teasing, rolling around, courting, showing off suspended upside down on the maple branches.

At the edge of the yard, a pair of glorious pileated woodpeckers are hitching themselves up and down a favorite poplar tree of theirs. They whoop and hammer at the trunk, co-operating on knocking the devil out of a dead branch. Woodpecker love is in the air.

Such is the way some of us keep the deep winter days, with the promise of more snow and cold coming on. Yet, we have heard rumors that the Red Sox equipment caravan will soon be leaving Fenway Park for Florida, and the past year's deep winter notes show us that the redwing blackbirds will be here in three weeks, the first harbingers of the next cycle of the seasons.



PRAYER from page B1

Church in Montague that drew twenty-five people.

To attend this new workshop, you do not need to be a member of the Church. You do not need to know much about meditation or prayer, or Gandhi, though participants will read *Gandhi the Man*, by Eknath Easwaran (available at World Eye Books in Greenfield).

The 90-minute sessions will run from 6:30 to 8 p.m. on Tuesday nights from February 4 to March 4. The cost, covering the five sessions, is \$40.

Pastor Barbara Turner Delisle of the First Congregational Church of Montague has been meditating for more than twenty years. And praying, of course. Her prayers happen all throughout the day; she has ongoing conversations with God, whereas she sets aside particular times for meditation, which she studied in the United States and in India with Deepak Chopra.

To her, both prayer and mediation are tools that can help people navigate their complicated stress-filled lives. "It's a technique for coping," she says. "I hope anyone who is curious or searching will know they are welcome."

This philosophy of inclusion is imbedded in the mission of the Church which states on its website that, "No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you are most welcome here!"

In addition to this workshop, last spring the Church offered yoga

classes for gardeners, and the aforementioned workshop on Centering Prayer.

These programs and others open the doors of the Church, making it a community resource for spiritual exploration.

Perhaps a first step towards the hope and faith Gandhi references would be this workshop, where the intersection of meditation and prayer and spirituality and social change can be explored with neighbors and friends.

I'm going to give it a try and report on the experience in this paper.

As a pragmatist, advances in neuroscience proving the positive effects of meditation on the brain impress me. Doctors are recommending meditation to relieve stress and lower blood pressure.

That alone would be enough for me, but there's more. We live in a world divided by hatred and disrespect, where anger has too many people on the edge of violence. So, I'm searching for quiet personal solutions that can lead to acts of kindness and understanding.

There's something I can learn just a few doors away from my home – why not?

Interested people should register by calling the church at (413) 367-9467) and leave a message. In case of bad weather, a message will be left at this number.

The deadline for registration is Sunday, February 2.



WENDELL from page B1

swamp itself. The ground in all three works is composed of soft reflections of foliage following sharper vertical tree reflections. These are then contrasted by horizontal images of reflections of the sky or of plants on the water and smaller lily pad shapes scattered across the surface.

The rhythm established by the use of many smaller shapes against the softer background is not unlike musical chords in motion. The brilliant colors make for an overall vibrancy. The works of Philip Glass and Steven Reich come to mind.

In Pamela's prints the focus is clearly on the main character, the blackbird, particularly the male with its bright red slash on its wings. In several of these pieces the bird is presented front and center either at rest or flying.

In the other works a flock of blackbirds are scattered throughout the compositions especially in "Murmur". You can almost hear them calling back and forth, particularly in "Watching 2" and "Listening".

In "Watching 1," "Watching 4" and "Listening 4" Ms. Larson contrasts both blacks against bright reds and sharp geometric shapes against the organic forms of birds and grasses. This makes for very dramatic compositions.

The partially over-painted images of other blackbirds suggest

the passage of time, as if the scenario has been repeated over and over.

Pamela writes of her process, "I enjoy the dynamic quality of creating a monotype on a smooth Plexiglass surface. I use this technique because of the unique gestural qualities derived from working with rollers, fingers, rags and brushes.

"I like applying thick paint to create dense, dark color and lifting paint to uncover subtle light or brilliant whites. It is a quick process, the painting finished in a few hours, then printed on paper."

The combination of these paintings and prints with their similar palettes and focus on their experiences of nature make for an intense and dramatic exhibition.

You can view more of both artists' work at their websites. Heather Lenz at [www.heatherlenz.net](http://www.heatherlenz.net); Pamela Lawson at [www.pclawsonart.com](http://www.pclawsonart.com).

Please stop by and see this unusual show. We guarantee you will enjoy it. There will be a reception this Saturday, February 1, from 1 to 3 p.m. when you can meet the artists.

The exhibition runs from January 21 through February 28 in the Herrick Room at the Wendell Free Library. Hours are Tuesdays, 3 to 6 p.m.; Wednesdays, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Saturdays from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., and Sundays noon to 2 p.m.



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## ARTS &amp; ENTERTAINMENT



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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.

## EVERY TUESDAY

The Millers Falls Library Club: Free after school program. 3:30 to 4:45 p.m.

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

## EVERY WEDNESDAY

Carnegie Library: Children and their families are invited to come enjoy stories, crafts, music and snacks. 10:15 to 11:30 a.m.

## EVERY THURSDAY

Arts Block, Greenfield: Thursday Night Jazz, *Ted Wirt and John Harrison*, 5 to 7 p.m.

Montague Center Library: *Music and Movement with Tom Carroll & Laurie Davidson*. Children and their caregivers invited. 10 o 11 a.m.

## EVERY FRIDAY

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

## ART SHOWS:

Augusta Savage Gallery, UMass, Amherst: Jose Tonito Rodriguez: Inkterventions on display through February 14th.

## AUDITIONS:

Mutton and Mead Medieval Festival seeks Actors, Singers, Musicians and other performers for Shire Cast. Montague Common Hall, Montague Center: Feb 7th, 4 to 8 p.m. Feb 8th & 9th, 10 to 6 p.m.; snow dates Feb. 10th & 11th, 4 to 8 p.m. [www.muttonandmead.com](http://www.muttonandmead.com).

## CALL FOR POETRY:

2nd Annual Slate Roof Press Poetry Chapbook Contest. Contest winner's work is published by Slate Roof and author becomes a full member. Submit no more than 28 pages of poetry. \$25 reading fee. Deadline (upload/postmark): March 31, 2014. Full contest guidelines: [www.slateroofpress.com](http://www.slateroofpress.com) or <http://http://slateroofpresscontest.submittable.com/submit>.

## EVENTS:

## THURSDAY, JANUARY 30

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Blue Pearl*, blues/jazz, 8 p.m.

## FRIDAY, JANUARY 31

Greenfield's Annual Winter Carnival, Main Street, Greenfield. Live ice carvings downtown, artists sculpting ice throughout the day. Cribbage Tournament, all ages. Registration begins at 5:15 p.m., \$, Youth Center. Mul-

tiple events continue throughout the weekend at Beacon Field and the Youth Center.

Arts Block, Greenfield: Juke Joint Jazz hosts *The Bi-Focal Duo* featuring Ken Forfia on piano and Vernon David on cello performing their repertoire from Chopin, Debussy, Chick Corea and other classics. \$, 8 p.m.

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: *Pamela Means*, jazz, folk, rock, 8 p.m.

## SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 1

Bruce's Browser, Athol: 9th Anniversary event. Readings by



Documentary film "Food For Change" by filmmaker and Montague resident Steve Alves screens at various locations and times. Archival footage of Turners Falls, interviews with local folks on the history of food co-ops. See listings.

area authors including: Quabbin historian J R Greene; Allen Young; paranormal investigator and author Joni Mayhan. Food, raffle prizes and discounts available. Open 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Wendell Library, Wendell Center: Reception for exhibit: *Flock of Days*, paintings by Heather Lenz and Monotypes by Pam Lawson, 1 to 3 p.m.

Academy of Music, Northampton Food for Change movie showing, \$, 2 p.m. Proceeds benefit Amherst Community Co-op.

Nina's Nook, Turners Falls: *Third Annual Erotic Art Show* opens. Reception 5-7 p.m. Sensual>Sexual>Smut, exhibit of local artists ranging from mild

to wild in the tiny gallery, and then mingle with the artists at the reception at Madison's on The Ave. Show on display through March 15.

Montague Community Hall, Montague Center: *Square Dance to live old-time music*. \$, 7 p.m.

Wendell Free Library, Wendell: Movie night showing *Island Of Dr Moreau*, 7:30 p.m.

Arts Block, Greenfield: *The Woman Songwriter Collective with June & The Bee*. "All Things Loved and Left-Behind", an evening of heart-warming and heart-aching original songs. \$, 8 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Dedicated to Delilah*, 80's pop rock and ballads, 9 p.m.

Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: *Ketch-Fyre*, classic & modern rock, \$, 9:30 p.m.

## SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 2

Sunderland Public Library: screening of the upcoming PBS American Experience documentary, *The Amish: Shunned*, 2 p.m.

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: *Ray Mason*, indie rock, 2:30 p.m.

## TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 4

Fine Arts Center, UMass Amherst: *American Idiot*, \$, 7:30 p.m.

## WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 5

Sunderland Public Library, Sunderland: *Food For Change*, film screening and talk with filmmaker Steve Alves, 6:30 pm

## THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 6

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: *The Collected Poets Series* featuring George Drew, Ravi Shankar, & Nancy White, 7 p.m.

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

## FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 7

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: *Bark Juice* with special guest Kenneth Coulson, alternative, earth jam, 8 p.m.

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

## SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 8

Central Congregational Church, Orange: Food For Change, provocative new film that looks at the current resurgence of food co-operatives in America, and their unique historic place in

America's economic and political landscape. Sponsored by North Quabbin Community Co-op and Mt. Grace Land Conservation Trust, free, 7 p.m.

Route 63, Millers Falls: *Electric Carnival*, 60's classic rock, \$, 9:30 p.m.

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: *Alan Williams*, singer/songwriter, 8 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Peter Pan by Ja'Duke*, \$, 7 p.m.



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This puzzle by William Accorsi was the only one fit for a family paper.

**NOOK** from page B1  
\$1,300.

Rossi said it was her partner, Caleb Wetherbee, who originally suggested the idea to her for the original exhibition.

Rossi was immediately enthused, and began to organize the show. Due to its overwhelming success the last two years, she knew it was worth repeating. She said that this year she had more time to plan and acquire work.

It was not difficult to attract interest among local artists. Even in the summer, she noted, artists were beginning to inquire about submit-

ting for this year's exhibition. By early winter Rossi was "delightfully overwhelmed" with art.

Due to the very limited space in her tiny gallery, she teamed with Rodney Madison at Madison on the Avenue for a space to host the reception. Many of the larger works will also be on view there.

Among the delights awaiting viewers are Jackie Lucchesi's corsets, Bruce Kahn's photo-collages, William Accorsi's playful wooden puzzles, a stunning nude photograph by Peter Monroe, and Rossi's own "obscenity blocks" and Valentine's Day cards.



SAWYER-LAUCANNO PHOTOS

"Wonder Bra," by Edite Cunba.

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