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The Montague Reporter

YEAR 13 – NO. 21

also serving Irving, Gill, Leverett and Wendell

\$1

EDITOR@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

MARCH 12, 2015

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

That Makes 4: Richard Kuklewicz Joins The Race

By MIKE JACKSON

Richard Kuklewicz, lifetime Montague resident and town meeting member for Precinct 4, has joined Jacobo Roque, Chris Menegoni and incumbent Mark Fairbrother in the running for Montague selectboard.

Kuklewicz has served for twenty years on the Franklin County Technical School district committee, and is its current chair. He is also the town electrical inspector.

I don't have a big agenda, no one burning issue. Just a desire to see if I can help the town," said Kuklewicz. "I think there's value I could add."

He said he felt his experience on town meeting, and dealing with school budgets, would be a boon: "I think I could make a positive impact with some of

the issues that have been hanging around, like the Railroad Salvage, and the Strathmore."

"I'd like to see the town continue to develop," he said. "It's come a long way, but there's still a way to go."

He said he had been considering running for a while and had finally decided the time was ripe: "I think it might be a good opportunity to make some changes in the structure of that board."

Kuklewicz said he inspects the wiring in "five to ten" houses in a given week, a position that comes with a small stipend but that he has been filling "as much for the community service piece of it."

Anyone else who wants their name on the ballot must file nomination papers by March 30. The election is May 18.

Selectboard Sends \$174,000 Request to Town Meeting for Broadband Project

By JEFF SINGLETON

The Montague selectboard, at its March 9 meeting, voted to send an appropriation of \$174,000 for expanded broadband service on to the annual town meeting in May for a vote.

The appropriation would help finance broadband service to the Chestnut Hill and Taylor Hill neighborhoods, as well as a connection between the Montague Center and Turners Falls Fire Departments. The selectboard action came in response to a presentation by Kevin Hart of the town's broadband committee.

The board did not officially endorse the proposal, but wanted to give town meeting the opportunity to make the final decision.

The proposal and appropriation will need to be reviewed by both the Montague Capital Improvements Committee and the Finance Committee. However, the selectboard needed to take action this week in order to put the

see **BROADBAND** page A5

IT'S FINALLY MELTING!



DAVID HOITT PHOTO

Dave Hoitt spotted this mute swan drinking from one of the delicious puddles in the parking lot behind Montague's town hall.

Happy to Oblige: Congressman McGovern Visits Gill Elementary



BLANCHETTE PHOTO

McGovern visited the class, which has been playing an educational game sponsored by a securities industry lobbying and advocacy group.

By ELLEN BLANCHETTE

Students from teacher David Grout's sixth grade class gathered in the entrance of Gill Elementary on Monday morning, excitedly waiting for the appearance of Congressman Jim McGovern.

The congressman was visiting

because the students are participating in the twelfth annual Stock Market Game, run by SIFMA (the Securities Industry and Financial Markets Association). Representatives from the SIFMA joined McGovern for this visit.

Mr. Grout's sixth grade class at Gill has been participating in this

game since the beginning of the year. Working in small groups, students are managing an online investment portfolio, trying to grow an initial fund of \$100,000 by out-investing the other teams in the program.

Initially, the class was enrolled in a separate version of the game called the Capital Hill Challenge, in which participating teams represent their district's member of Congress. While the money they are allotted to invest is not real, everything else reflects the actual stock market each day, and students get to see how the stocks they pick are doing every morning.

Mr. Grout said when the stocks are up the students are happy; when the stock drops they are inclined to panic, and want to sell. The idea is to teach them to hold onto the stocks if they believe in the company, and not get caught up in worrying about it day to day.

There are currently over 3,000 see **MCGOVERN** page A6

LEVERETT SELECTBOARD

Candidate Steps Forward

By DAVID DETMOLD

Tara Acker has decided to stand for the opening on the selectboard that will be created when Rich Brazeau steps down at the end of April with two years remaining on his current three year term.

Other candidates may still come forward before town meeting day on May 2 – Leverett is the only town in the Commonwealth to hold nominations and elections for town offices directly from town meeting floor – but Acker is the first out of the gate.

In a letter of intent published in the most recent town newsletter, Acker said she has lived in Leverett for nine years, is the mother of two children in the elementary school, and has extensive experience working with municipal budget and policy making.

This includes a job as director of Somerville's innovative SomerStat program, a management initiative intended to help analyze, streamline and improve constituent services by tracking departmental financial, operational and personnel data to devise solutions for improving performance.

Acker said she is running because she loves Leverett, and because she "would like the opportunity to help maintain our strong community's values and help develop innovative and sustainable solutions for our town."

Known Unknowns

On Monday, March 9, the selectboard held budget hearings for the

fire and highway departments, with recently appointed fire chief John Ingram and highway superintendent Will Stratford presenting budgets allowing for a 3.5% overall reduction in order to meet the budgetary targets set by the selectboard and finance committee.

The financial boards are trying to allow for a number of revenue wild cards in the coming fiscal year. These include two property tax abatement appeals, one of which could reportedly have a roughly \$100,000 impact on town revenue, if decided wholly in favor of the property owner.

There are also major uncertainties related to the four-town regional school assessment agreement with Shutesbury, Pelham and Amherst and state aid, the latter under the cloud of an estimated \$1.5 billion deficit in the state budget.

Fire Department

In order to meet the 3.5% reduction target in his \$86,627 budget, Ingram said he would have to cut money from line items for training personnel and for response pay for call firefighters, a cut that would depend optimistically on the department having to respond to fewer emergency calls in the coming year. He asked if the town intends to restore the present departmental budget levels after the uncertainties of FY'16 are cleared up.

Tom Powers, chair of the finance committee, responded, saying, "At some point, if [these uncertainties] all come together as a bad storm,

see **LEVERETT** page A7

Shea Operator Will Not Re-apply

By MIKE JACKSON

TURNERS FALLS – The non-profit organization that currently operates the historic, town-owned Shea Theater has announced it will not be submitting a proposal next month for use of the theater.

The news came after Shea Community Theater Inc. informed the town last week that it did not intend to pay utility bills past the end of its current fiscal year on June 30.

"Right now we have a lease through December 31, and one of the obligations is that they pay the utility bill," said town administrator Frank Abbondanzio. "If, in fact, the current board decided they're inclined to exit earlier, maybe we can all work something out."

"It was kind of disconcerting to hear that it wasn't a case that they couldn't [pay for utilities]," he said, "but that they didn't want to."

The town has issued a request for proposals for use of the theater, due April 22.

"We're still looking for some data that was requested," said Abbondanzio. "Mostly we're looking for profit and loss information, for a couple of reasons."

Abbondanzio said he has heard indications the theater had seen declining revenues over the last several years, but had yet to see the figures.

"We need to know what the cost of running that operation is, in case the current operators aren't able to continue," he said. "And potential bidders have asked for that informa-

tion, at the public hearings."

Riverculture director Suzanne Lomanto said that while none of those bidders have made their intentions official, "we've seen strong interest, and some intriguing proposals... There's not going to be any cookie-cutter proposals."

Town planner Walter Ramsey said he is working on a grant application through Green Communities to upgrade the HVAC system.

Abbondanzio added that a \$20,000 item is being sent to town meeting this spring for repairs to the theater's roof.

Shea board president Michael Glazier answered requests for an interview by referring us to last week's press release, which was not sent to the Reporter.

The Montague Reporter

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Not Always So Easy

A busload of fraternity members at the University of Oklahoma caught on camera chanting, in extremely and deliberately offensive terms about their society's exclusion of black students, captured the disgust and fascination of the American public this week.

That this kind of old-school, overt bigotry had been discovered festering under a rock lent a sense of excited relief in the media. Here, finally, was some easy racism: Southern, pasty-faced and privileged, pumping its fist and wearing an ugly blazer.

The weight of a tense public debate about race that has developed over the last year, catalyzed by fatal encounters between police and black men and boys, had finally, for a moment, lifted.

Posted to Youtube by a black student group on Sunday, the Oklahoma incident captured wall-to-wall headlines on Monday, and by Tuesday, the university had shut down and evicted the fraternity and issued its first two expulsions.

The news frenzy sought personal angles. Someone started a website soliciting donations to support the first innocent bystander identified: the frat house's cook, a black man cast into unemployment after 15 years of service. It passed its \$50,000 goal in its first day.

Five hundred miles away, in Ferguson, Missouri, two other men lost their jobs this week, and if news outlets were interested in the unfolding struggle over racial discrimination in America, this would have been their banner headline story.

City manager John Shaw and municipal court judge Ronald Brockmeyer stepped down after their roles in building an institutionally racist extortion racket were called out, not by a blurry 10-second cell phone video, but by a 102-page Department of Justice report.

The Department's detailed investigation concluded that the city uses its police to extract revenue from its citizens, with the burden falling overwhelmingly on African American residents.

The structure of fines that Brockmeyer helped develop locked poor people who were often busted for trivial or questionable offenses, and targeted by biased officers, into Kafkaesque spirals of jail and debt.

A cash-strapped municipality with a majority-white government and police force viewing its majority-black population as a piggy bank, the city was a powder keg even before the police-involved shooting

that touched off last fall's riots.

That Brockmeyer, whose court jailed broke black people over fines originating in parking offenses, turns out to have fixed his cronies' tickets and owes over \$170,000 in unpaid taxes himself, is the kind of predictable groaner we've come to accept in our highly stratified society. He stepped down on Monday.

The next day the city council approved the resignation of Shaw, the city's chief executive.

But Shaw and Brockmeyer weren't the heads of some racist conspiracy—at least not in the sense of Sigma Alpha Epsilon at OU. The Justice Department's review of city and police emails did uncover overt, individual bias. But the big story in Ferguson is in the way this culture of hostility and suspicion at the street level was magnified by bureaucratic and market forces into a machinery of institutional racism that no one intended or designed.

Even on his way out the door, Shaw pointed out that his office "has never instructed the police department to target African Americans, nor falsify charges to administer fines, nor heap abuses on the backs of the poor."

We find it likely this is true—though this was the guy at the top irresponsibly celebrating "all-time records in fines and forfeitures."

The ability of people like Shaw to wash their hands of racial discrimination's filth points to some difficult lessons we need to puzzle through, about power and responsibility, about the law and its enforcement, about the experience of discrimination, and about the intentions of those who benefit from it.

But instead we focus on individual stories, cases, and tragedies, in a way that misses the forest for the trees, and bogs the debate down in particularities. Individual encounters are scrutinized, and we find ourselves arguing over whether Mike Brown, stopped for jaywalking, was carrying stolen cigars, instead of the role the police have in his neighborhood, where jaywalking fines help patch city budget deficits, and 95% of those charged with jaywalking are black.

So it's no surprise the news from Ferguson has been overshadowed by a more trivial and obvious expression of race hate the vast majority is able to unite to condemn.

It's so much simpler when the enemy is just some crew of doofuses, and not our crumbling cities, our disappearing jobs, our overcrowded prisons, and our fear.



You Never Know When Something's Going to Take Hold: Juanita Nelson (1923-2015)

GREENFIELD – On Monday, Juanita Nelson, organic farmer, war tax resister, civil rights pioneer, and inspiration to several generations of activists, passed away in Greenfield at the age of 91.

The following is excerpted from an interview Nelson gave in 2011 to Turners Falls' Monte Belmonte, morning host of 93.9 FM - WRSI. Thanks to Monte for making it available to our readers.

MB: You live on a beautiful hill here in Deerfield, Massachusetts. The more I learn about you, the more I'm coming to realize that you may be the matriarch of the utopian society that so many people are trying to create in the Pioneer Valley.

JN: [laughs]

MB: Do you deny this?

JN: Yes. [laughter]

MB: You are a peace activist.

JN: Well, I don't know what that means. I just try to live, somewhat, what I believe. Talking doesn't do it for me.

MB: You are a locavore, before that was even a term: you eat local vegetables; you were one of the people that founded the Greenfield Farmers Market.

JN: That's right, I did help to found it. Just because I believe people who live over in other countries should eat the food they have, and we eat the food we have. Especially what I can grow myself.

Except, I don't know if I'm going to be growing so much more. I don't know.

MB: You're one of the people behind the free harvest supper that happens in Greenfield every year.

JN: Yeah. But I didn't do much. But I have ideas. Other people execute them. I've very lazy.

MB: I tend to doubt that! And I'm in your house, on Woolman Hill in Deerfield. And it's a small, wooden cabin that you helped to build.

JN: Well, what we did was get most of the material from a house that we demolished.

MB: And that's a big trend now, for people who are environmentally conscious. But when did you do that?

JN: I think in '74. I'll think about it. You know, my remembrance isn't as great as it used to be. It never was very good...

MB: What I love about the Pioneer Valley, when I came out here, is that it opened my eyes to a whole different way of living. But you, Juanita Nelson, have been doing this stuff since the '70s, when we were all having tire fires in our backyard and drinking the gasoline. How did you become the person that you are, the pacifist, the locavore?

JN: Well, I think my partner [Wally Nelson] had something to do with it. But I was born poor, I never had very much. I was born in Cleveland, Ohio—lived in, I always liked to say, the upper slums of Cleveland. I met Wally when he was in jail, and I was a newspaper reporter.

MB: Why was he in jail?

JN: Because he walked out of CPS camp—Civilian Public Service. He wasn't ever going to go and fight, and he joined CPS.

And then he found that that was part of the same thing as being in the military, and walked out.

MB: But this is not something that's happening during the Vietnam War... this is World War II?

JN: Yeah. We met because I was a reporter and was sent on an assignment to the jail. And I remember rather vividly talking with them, especially with Wally.

And to find that he was in jail because he wasn't going to kill anybody—that just struck me.

MB: So many people [say], "If there is a just war, the just war is World War II." What was Wally's mentality in not wanting to take part in that, and what inspired you about Wally's not wanting to take part in a war like World War II?

JN: Well, killing is not a good thing to do. I don't care what it's for!

And of course, I'm not patriotic. I think that's used a lot to induce people to do certain things: "I'm an American!" And we're all just peo-

ple, as far as I'm concerned. And I don't like all this division.

MB: I think the question in a lot of people's minds would be that, when something happens like what happened during World War II, where there is someone who's trying to take over the entire world: what would you recommend, as a pacifist; what would Wally have recommended; and what was the peace movement saying at that time should be the response to something like the Nazi regime, and Hitler?

JN: Non-cooperation.

MB: You and your partner Wally were doing all these things in the '40s. And when people think of pacifism, when people think of non-cooperation—when people think of freedom riders and people who want to get on buses, and sit wherever they want even though they're black—they think of Rosa Parks, they think of Martin Luther King, Jr. You were doing this sort of thing ten, fifteen years before what we view as the modern civil rights movement.

JN: Oh yeah, there were lots of people. There have always been people who have taken it up.

And you never know when something's going to take hold, but you do it because you believe in it, because you don't want to be demeaned, nor demean anybody else.

There were groups. I belonged to a group called CORE, Congress of Racial Equality.

And we did various and sundry things, like going to an amusement park—which never appealed to me particularly, but it was something that people liked to do, so—

MB: But it was a segregated amusement park, and to do it because you should be allowed to?

JN: Yeah. If somebody wanted to go, that they should go.

MB: And this, again, is before what most people think of the modern civil rights movement.

JN: Well see, I guess it sort of bothers me, somewhat, when we talk about somebody started something, somebody did this, and did that.

For instance, like King didn't start

see NELSON next page

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JESSICA LARKIN ILLUSTRATION

LOCAL BRIEFS

Compiled by DON CLEGG

The town of Montague's emergency parking ban has been lifted as of Wednesday. Vehicles can now park on the side of any street, as long as there is enough space for a fire truck to pass.

The regular nighttime parking ban, from 1 to 5 a.m., remains in effect until April 1.

Greenfield Savings Bank in Turners Falls is hosting two public events. At 10 a.m. on Saturday, March 14, Reliable Temps Staffing Coordinators will be available to speak with individuals about community involvement, job seekers, and businesses looking for staff.

And on Tuesday, March 17 from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m., the branch is celebrating St. Patty's Day. Please stop by and join the "Wear'in of the Green," featuring some Irish folk music thanks to Robert MacIntire and his wee friend, Robert Lord.

These two gentlemen are sure to amaze you with their good humor, fancy dress, handsome countenances and quick wit. They may charm the shamrocks off your socks.

On a similar note, Barry Deitz will present Ireland and its Writers at the Greenfield Public Library on Tuesday, March 17, at 6 p.m. in the library's meeting room.

Celebrate Saint Patrick's Day by looking at a number of Irish writers

like Stoker, Yeats, and Joyce. The presentation will examine their lives and works, the emergence of Irish Nationalism, and help explain why some writers are immediately associated with Ireland while others are not.

Come learn why this small island produced a body of work that is so central to modern literature. This program, sponsored by the Friends of the GPL, is free and open to the public

Call for artists! Franklin County Home Care Meals on Wheels invites artists of any age to submit original artwork for their t-shirt design contest.

The winning design, selected by an independent team of judges, will adorn the 2015 Walk-a-thon T-shirt worn by over 300 walkers at the event on Saturday, May 2, at the Franklin County Technical School.

All designs must be received by Friday, March 20, at 2 p.m. For more info, visit www.fchcc.org and type in "t-shirt contest."

On Friday, March 20, from 7 to 9 p.m., the Pioneer Valley Institute will present a program on **The Industrial Corridor up the Connecticut River** at GCC's Sloan Theater.

Join Richard Colton, historian and park ranger for the Springfield Armory NHS, and Jim Terapane, state-certified journeyman machinist and president of The Museum of Our Industrial Heritage, in examining the history, cultures and arts, geology, natural life, agricultural and industrial traditions of the Connecticut River Valley.

This PVI promotes the valley through workshops, field trips, art exhibits and seminars for people of all ages. Come celebrate this extraordinary region, its growing diversity of cultures, its history and geologic wonders, its artists and craftspeople, and its great wealth of natural resources. The event is free and open to the public.

Spring is fast approaching, and so are the deadline dates for sign-ups for **T-ball and Rookie League baseball** with the Montague Parks and Recreation Department.

For info call 863-3216, go to www.montague.net and click on Parks and Rec, or visit the Unity Park Fieldhouse at 56 First Street in Turners.

Save the date: The Gill Montague Council on Aging and a building committee appointed by the Montague selectboard have been working with John Catlin of Catlin & Petrovik on a CDBG-funded facilities study regarding the siting and design of a **new or renovated senior center**.

There will be an open public meeting on Tuesday, March 24 at the Montague Public Safety Complex from 5 to 7 p.m.

Members of the committee will be present to discuss the planning process and the conclusions to date. Mr. Catlin will give a brief presentation at 6 p.m., followed by a question and answer period. For more information, call the Council on Aging at 863-4500.

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CORRECTION

A caption we ran with a picture taken at a library event in Leverett last week (March 5, *Art Forgers in Leverett*) incorrectly identified John Wade as Bill Wilson. In the accompanying article, we also incorrectly credited copies Mr. Wade drew of Chinese and Japanese works to Mr. Wilson, though Leslie Fiset also copied such works.

Our investigation is ongoing.

NELSON from previous page that movement – he happened to be there. And it's all right, I'm not against him or anything like that. But somehow, we have to say somebody's a leader...

And I think so very often that's not true. I think people have to be ready for something in the first place.

People have done things many times and nothing has come of it, and then somebody does something and then it happens, because people are ready for it. But we like to deify people, individuals, which I think is too bad. Because I don't think we even know why some things happen.

MB: *You've been in Cleveland, you've been in Pennsylvania. You went to New Mexico for a while. How do you come to live up here on a hill in Deerfield, Massachusetts? And I should say, the home that you're in: it's a very simple wood cabin that you helped to build, with a wood stove that you heat with and cook with, no running water, a well outside, and an outhouse.*

JN: We were living in Philadelphia, not paying taxes and all that sort of thing. And I felt more was required. Or less, whatever you want to say about it.

We met Randy Kehler, who had been in jail because he wouldn't fight in the Vietnam War.

MB: *And he lives locally...*

JN: Mmm hmm. But he ended up here, at this, it's a Quaker installation. There was an alternative school up here at that time, they laid down the conference center. And he wrote us, and said, do you want to be our farmer?

We said, no, we don't want to be anybody's farmer, we just want to farm. Even an unpaid position we

were not interested in.

In the end we were invited to come here. We didn't know anyone except Randy when we came. But I think at least a hundred people worked on this house!

I think once, we had a couple of tomato plants, but I didn't know anything about farming.

MB: *And yet you're one of the people who helped to start the Greenfield Farmers Market, which is not only a great place to get our local farmers together, it brings the whole community together on Saturdays. And the free harvest supper...*

JN: See, what you do if you have any little bit of brains, you make suggestions, and then other people... [laughs]

But anyway, I've lived here longer than I've ever lived anywhere. And it is the most wonderful place. People are wonderful....

MB: *Have things changed in a positive way, in your mind, from where you came from in your early days of war tax resisting, of pacifism, of fighting for racial equality, to where we are now, where we have a black man who's president of the United States. Are we in a better place now?*

JN: I don't think so. I don't think in terms of the color stuff in the first place. Obama is not -- he's not the person I would like to have.

And as a matter of fact, I don't think we even need a president, to tell you the honest-to-gods truth. We're the ones who have to do things, and not do things. I think that's the only way there's going to be any real change. Not too much has changed, but it's one by one. We can change things, but we have to be changed. We have to change ourselves.



TOWN OF WENDELL

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Notice is hereby given that the Wendell Planning Board will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, March 24, 2015 at 7:30 p.m. at the Wendell Town Offices to review the application of Amy Palmer and Robin Heubel for the establishment of a small kennel home dog-sitting business in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40A and the Town of Wendell Zoning Bylaws.

The site is 23 Stone Road. An existing building will be repurposed. All interested parties should attend the hearing. A copy of the application is available with the Town Coordinator at the Town Offices during business hours.



Juanita Nelson in 2010. Photo shared under creative commons license by Icebar1.

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NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD

Budget Requests, and Frozen Pipes

By KATIE NOLAN

Winter weather and water are testing the limits of Erving town buildings. At the March 9 selectboard meeting, highway superintendent Glenn McCrory discussed ways to deal with a frozen water supply line into the senior and community center. Library director Barbara Friedman reported ice dams and water dripping into the library. In a non-weather-related water problem, a water pipe in Erving Elementary School's second grade classroom burst, displacing three classes.

McCrory and water department operator Pete Sanders were notified by an alarm late Thursday night that water was not being supplied to the senior and community center.

On checking that night, they discovered the frozen water main. McCrory said that the water main is frozen underground somewhere between Erving Elementary School and the center, within a span of approximately 60 feet. The center has been closed to the public since Friday, March 6.

McCrory warned that excavation to find and thaw the main could be very expensive. He reported that an excavation earlier this week found frozen soil up to 4 to 4 1/2 feet underground.

The board considered the option of waiting to allow the pipe to thaw naturally as the weather warms. Selectboard chair William Bembury said that, for vulnerable elders, regular visits to the center and to the elder meals are very important, and stressed the need to open the center again.

The board decided that McCrory should rent thermal blankets to thaw the ground along the water main route and discuss with the fire chief, police chief and highway workers how to provide staff for 24-hour monitoring while the blankets are operating.

If thermal blanketing doesn't thaw the main by the next selectboard meeting (March 16), the board may consider other options, such as excavation.

Friedman reported "many leaks" in the library roof. A photo posted on the library's Facebook page shows a bucket on the floor between library bookshelves catching leaking meltwater. Friedman thanked the highway department for clearing snow and ice dams from the roof.

Mahler said that the EES pipe that burst did not seem to be weather-related, because it happened after the warmer temperatures started. He reported that head custodian Steve

Chapman had checked the school's remote water monitoring system from home early Sunday morning, after midnight, and discovered the problem within an hour of the pipe bursting.

Chapman, custodian John Tibbets, principal James Trill and Trill's wife came to the school that night and vacuumed and mopped up water until Sunday morning. The school has kept fans going to dry the affected classrooms.

The school opened on Monday, but three classrooms were unusable. The three displaced classes have been meeting in the music room, a Title 1 classroom, and jointly with another class. Mahler said that the students have been wonderful, treating the displacement "as an adventure."

Mahler predicted that the children would be back in their regular classrooms by Wednesday.

FY'16 Budget Requests

The selectboard reviewed draft fiscal year 2016 budgets for elementary and secondary schools, the highway department, the library, the town clerk, the board of assessors, and the treasurer's office.

Board members questioned department heads about their budgets, and then voted to approve those for the highway department, schools, treasurer and assessors. They asked for additional information for the draft library and town clerk budgets.

Most of the budget requests show small increases, primarily from increased cost of electricity and employee cost of living adjustments.

The entire FY'16 budget request will be determined by March 23, when the board will close the warrant for the 2015 annual town meeting.

School Budget Request

The Erving Elementary School budget of \$2,827,273 is an increase of 4.8% over last year, with the major drivers being added special education personnel, increased electricity costs and increased classroom teacher salaries from step raises, cost of living adjustment, and additional pre-school personnel.

School committee chair Scott Bastarache presented an early draft of the capital planning budget for

the EES building. He said that the school capital planning committee had looked at all areas of the elementary school building and developed a preliminary 10-year expenditure plan.

Bastarache presented the draft for the selectboard's information, promising to provide a revised plan after meeting with the whole school committee.

Library Budget Request

Library director Barbara Friedman asked for an increase in the library budget to increase the hourly rate for the library assistant. She agreed to provide the board with an updated job description to show how the assistant's responsibilities have changed.

Friedman also asked the board to consider additional articles for the library, beyond the operating budget request. She asked for the town to set aside \$25,000 in a fund for future library improvement.

Library feasibility committee member Jacquelyn Boyden characterized the set-aside as similar to saving up money in a savings account and said that, if the town does not use the money for library improvements, town meeting can later decide to use it for some other purpose.

Boyden remarked that having some "seed money" would give the library extra points when applying for grants.

Friedman also asked for town meeting to authorize moving items displayed in the library's Traversari room temporarily to the Pearl B. Care historical building. Friedman said she had spoken to Traversari relatives and they had agreed to the temporary removal.

In addition, Friedman asked for \$2,500 for refinishing the library's "stained, scratched and unsightly" oak tables and chairs.

Town Clerk Budget Request

Town clerk Richard Newton presented a FY'16 budget request \$4,400 less than for FY'15, because there will be only two elections in FY'16.

Newton said that municipal clerk Betsy Sicard is also his assistant town clerk for up to four hours per week, but that has not been reflected in the town clerk budget in recent

years.

The draft budget will be revised to include assistant town clerk Sicard's hours as a line item in the town clerk's budget.

Potential Code Violation

James Hawkins of Franklin County Cooperative Inspection Program wrote to inform the selectboard of a possible building code violation on Northfield Road, where the owner was reportedly renting out a garage heated with a space heater to a residential tenant.

Hawkins' letter noted that the initial report had come from Erving town hall.

Selectboard member Arthur Johnson said he was opposed to town officials getting involved in reporting violations to the building inspector.

Boyden, in her capacity as assistant assessor, said she had received a call from a social service agency reporting on the potential violation, and that she was a "mandated reporter" and was obligated to pass the report along to the building inspector.

The board and Boyden agreed that, in the future, it would be better to ask the reporting party to call the building inspector directly.

Employee Drug Testing

Beth Lux, chair of the personnel relations review board (PRRB), asked the selectboard for clarification on its request that the PRRB develop an employee drug testing policy.

She said that the board originally asked for a policy only for safety sensitive positions, such as vehicle and equipment operators. However, Lux suggested a comprehensive policy for all employees.

Selectboard member Margaret Sullivan said that town counsel felt strongly that only safety-sensitive positions should be subject to drug testing.

Vocational Education Funding

Leo Parent asked the board to write to the governor and state legislator supporting state funding for technical school education.

Sharp will draft a letter for selectboard review at the next meeting.

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Selectboard Field Narrows to Two

By MIKE JACKSON

ERVING – It appears that two contenders, Bud Meattay and Jacob Smith, remain for this spring's open selectboard seat.

George "Moonlight" Davis has withdrawn from the race, after being appointed to the town planning board. He says he wants to focus on that responsibility.

"I'm really honored to be on the board, and looking forward to serving the community," said Davis.

Davis said he would endorse Smith's candidacy. "He's served on enough boards, and paid his dues – he knows how to work with people in this town," he said.

Any additional candidates have until Monday to turn in nomination papers. The election takes place on Monday, May 4.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ERVING POLICE LOG

Report of Motor Vehicle Hitting Child

Monday, 3/2

10:15 a.m. Report of neighbor disturbance on Forest Street. All quiet.

Tuesday, 3/3

8:05 p.m. Assisted Northfield PD with motor vehicle crash on Millers Falls Road.

Wednesday, 3/4

12:40 p.m. Arrested [redacted] on a court warrant.

3:57 p.m. Assisted Orange PD with motor vehicle crash at Hayden Street. Vehicles gone upon arrival.

Friday, 3/6

12 p.m. Took report of mail scam from Warner Street resident.
5:52 p.m. Assisted on scene of

a medical emergency on High Street.

Saturday, 3/7

5:05 a.m. Assisted on scene of a medical emergency on Pratt Street.

3:50 p.m. Suspicious person reported at French King Bridge. Found to be sight-seer.

4 p.m. Report of motor vehicle hitting child, Erving Center. Athol State Police handled same.

9:29 p.m. Suspicious vehicle reported at Freight House Antiques. Gone upon arrival.

Monday, 3/9

12:30 a.m. Arrested [redacted] for operating with a suspended license and speeding.

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BROADBAND from page A1

appropriation on the town meeting warrant, which closes on March 17.

Hart made a lengthy presentation on the history of the project and the rationale for the funding request. The broadband committee was created by town meeting in 2013 and has been working on a proposal that will dovetail with a project in the town of Leverett.

In addition to Chestnut Hill, the project will address the "under-served" neighborhoods of Taylor Hill and Meadow Road to the west.

While most of the rest of Montague is served by the Comcast cable network, this proposal will provide the first extensive broadband service to the town.

Hart also noted that the state has designated the Montague Center Fire Department as an official "community anchor institution" for the local fiber optic network, but the station, unlike the Turners Falls Fire Department, has not been connected to broadband.

Hart and Chris Lynch of Matrix Design Group reviewed the funding plan for the project. Most of the cost will be funded by the construction company, Millenium, and will be recouped from residents who buy into the system. Residents who wish to hook in to the network will be required to pay an initial \$500 plus a monthly fee for service, then a monthly fee of \$95 to \$100 for internet service, or \$125 for internet plus telephone.

While residents served by the system will finance most of the cost of the project, the committee is asking the town to initially fund so-called "Make Ready" cost. This involves paying Eversource Energy (formerly WMECo) and Verizon for inspecting and preparing their telephone poles for broadband use.

Hart estimated the Make Ready cost to be \$132,000 for the Chestnut Hill, Taylor Hill and Meadow Road neighborhoods, and \$42,000 for the link between the fire stations. There was some discussion of the added cost for a police detail during construction, but this was not added to the appropriation approved by the selectboard.

Hart argued that there was a good chance that some, if not all, of the Make Ready costs would eventually be reimbursed by the state. The legislature has passed a bill that designates \$5 million for broadband services to "rural under-served communities." Montague falls into this category.

Hart suggested that if you divide the appropriation by the total number of qualifying households statewide, Montague could be eligible for up to \$500,000.

Town administrator Frank Abbondanzio expressed concern that the state might view a town appropriation as suggesting that Montague might not need state funds.

In an email, Hart called the issue of state reimbursement "the million-dollar question."

"I waited until the very last min-

ute (last night) to have those answers for the Selectboard and Town Meeting," he said. "Until there is a change of leadership at the Mass Broadband Institute," the state agency overseeing broadband construction, "those answers are not available."

Pumping Irony

Bob Trombley, along with two engineers from the firm CDM Smith, requested that the board sign several documents required by the state for funding two sewer pump station projects. The fact that one of the documents announced the award for project construction to Baltazar Contractors, Inc, the lowest bidder, caused a good deal of dismay among members of the board.

Baltazar is involved in litigation with the town over problems encountered in an effort to fix the sewer main coming out of the airport industrial park. The company was recently hired by the state to implement the long-awaited Greenfield Road project, and has now been chosen to repair the pump stations.

Bob Button of CDM Smith said the town could refuse to award the contract to the lowest bidder, but would probably find itself in litigation, which would seriously undermine its ability to receive state reimbursement.

The board reluctantly approved the funding requests, 2-1, with member Mike Nelson symbolically voting in the negative.

The selectboard also approved a request from Trombley to "amend" the agreement between the town and CDM Smith, adding \$12,500 for consulting services. This pays for consulting services for lining the existing sewer lines and cleaning siphons under the power canal. The board approved the requests.

CDM Smith's Paul Gilbert showed an example of the lining being used to upgrade the sewer lines, which he said could add fifty years to their longevity.

Other Business

The board agreed to send a request from the restaurant Five Eyed Fox in Turners Falls to town meeting to increase the quota of town liquor licenses. If approved by town meeting, the request will then move on to the state legislature.

The board voted to rescind three permits issued to Rodney Madison to place objects on the sidewalk and in a planter in front of his store on Avenue A. The permits were contingent on Madison obtaining and keeping insurance. The board has been informed that as of January the insurance policies were "no longer in effect." According to Nelson, "There is no discussion to have [about the issue]."

The board set fees for so-called "pouring permits," new permits to allow so-called "farmer breweries" to sell alcohol. The ranges were set at \$100 for establishments seating 0 to 50 persons, \$200 for those seating 51 to 99, and \$500 for those seating 100 and over.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GILL SELECTBOARD

Upgrades Approved for FD

By TIA FATTARUSO

Fire chief Gene Beaubien and firefighter Kane Kurtyka explained the fire department's computer and network equipment expenditures totaling \$4,530 Tuesday night, as the selectboard met a day late, in order to make quorum. Greg Snedeker was not present, but chair Randy Crochier and John Ward supported the upgrades with few questions.

The department currently shares its Wi-Fi with the police department and hopes to separate and upgrade the speed of their service from 2.4 to 5 gigahertz to meet newer protocol. Kane explained plans to upgrade two computers and purchase a new one for the radio room in accordance with the current standard of a gigabit of storage.

Plans are also in the works to centralize network storage, "instead of having to remember which computer we saved a file to," Kane said.

Funds will come from the Emergency Management Performance Grant. The department had planned to appropriate a portion from S.A.F.E. (Student Awareness of Fire Education) grant money, but the board decided it makes more sense to keep that money for more specifically student related activities.

The fire department representatives stayed for a conversation about the proposed CodeRED notification system. Beaubien said another fire chief was asking on the Fire Chief Association of Massachusetts's online forum if any towns had questioned or pushed back against CodeRED's license agreement - possibly because that town's counsel was asking about the company's liability in the face of error or failure.

Town administrator Ray Purington said he emailed the sales representative for a copy of the license agreement Friday, but has not heard back.

Crochier and Ward both noted that it would be interesting to know where this question started and where it is going, and asked Purington to keep them updated.

The department informed the board that Engine 2 is getting an open cab heater fixed. The cab was cold for the fire fighters who responded to Friday's fire in Deerfield.

"We've all looked at it many times to see how to fix it," Beaubien said. It was determined best to have it serviced at a registered dealer in Hopkinton, MA, and he hopes it will be ready to be picked up Friday.

Solar Farm?

Tupper Brown attended to speak to the possibility of the town using the Mariamante land for a ground-mounted solar photovoltaic array.

Brown said he had been asked to speak about "whether that discussion or how that discussion can be had to avoid any actual or perception of conflict."

Board member Ward, also president of the Solar Store of Greenfield, intends to contribute a proposal to the project. Brown advised Ward should be dismissed from all discussions.

"The conflict is so obvious and direct," Brown said, that the board should act in direct guidance of the attorney general on such matters. He also noted that he felt Ward "ought not to be rewarded for public service by being excluded from a business opportunity."

Ward said he would contact the state's Ethics Commission for the steps he might take to avoid any conflict issues.

Ward and Crochier were in complete agreement with Brown's advice. Crochier said he would seek town counsel's advisement on the matter, while Ward raised concern about his role incurring additional town expenses through that procedure.

Piano Aged

Purington's research on the piano at town hall, based on its serial number, suggests it is from 1909. According to Pam Shoemaker of the historical commission, the second story of town hall was built in 1910.

Ward said he had heard a story that the second floor had once been the first, and was lifted to have the first floor built underneath it. "If they had the technical skills to do that, they probably left the piano right where it was," he said, acknowledging that it did not seem particularly likely, or at least logical.

The board agreed to allow the piano to be moved, thanked the historical commission, and asked to be kept in the loop.

Other Business

Because of the great amount of snow, the sewer bill, due March 9, of \$21,963 is an estimate but should be caught up with the actual price by next quarter, Purington said.

Franklin Regional Council of Governments is again asking towns if they have any potential sites to nominate for the brownfields program, which Purington said the town has used successfully in the past. "We should think about any sites we might have," said Crochier.

The seasonal liquor license was renewed for Turners Falls Schuetzen Verein, and its public gathering permit has been reviewed and accepted by all appropriate channels.

The agreement acknowledges that fire exits should be kept open at all times, and that police presence is required for crowds over 300.

Purington ended the meeting with the announcement that U.S. Congressman Jim McGovern visited Gill Elementary, which made him feel "pretty damn good."

The board agreed that the visit spoke volumes to the quality of the school, and may send the congressman a thank-you note.

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MCGOVERN from page A1

middle and high school teams from across the country competing for a top 10 spot and a trip to Washington D.C.

Money in Politics

The students chatted with nervous energy as they waited for McGovern, but quieted down as soon as they heard he was arriving.

Everyone gave the congressman a warm welcome as he came into the school and greeted each one individually. Principal Kathleen Bailer and Mr. Grout welcomed McGovern and escorted him back to their classroom.

Once the students were settled, Mr. Grout introduced Congressman McGovern to his students. McGovern made a brief opening statement, speaking about the focus of his attention in the Congress.

He told the class that he feels there is too much money in election campaigns, and that he feels the Supreme Court's Citizens United decision, which said corporations are people, was a bad decision, and that he is working with other congressmen to change it.

McGovern said he feels money can be a corrupting influence in elections, and that he believes Congress has the power to limit the amount of money spent on campaigns.

He is sponsoring two bills, one to limit campaign spending and a constitutional amendment to say, "Corporations are not people." McGovern then invited the students to ask him questions.

Tests and Careers

One student asked what he thought about PARCC testing. McGovern replied that he thought he wouldn't have passed high school if they'd had MCAS when he was in school, because he had trouble taking tests.

He said he felt there is too much emphasis on tests, but also that there should be high, national standards for schools, because students all over the country should have a good education.

The students wanted to know if he invested in the stock market. He said, "I'm not a millionaire, but you don't have to be."

He said the idea is to invest what you can and over time, watching it grow so when you're older you'll

have something and not have to worry about buying groceries and paying the electric bill. He said the stock market isn't just for the Donald Trumps of the world.

Another student asked if he knew what he wanted to be when he was in sixth grade. McGovern said he wanted to be a lot of things, including, for a while, a magician – until his father told him that wasn't a good way to earn a living.

He thought of being an eye doctor after he had some eye surgery because it interested him and he read about it. He told the students he didn't think about running for office until he was in his 30s, when he decided he didn't like the job the official serving in his district was doing.

Everyone thought he was crazy, he said, and worried about his being disappointed when he lost. On his first election night, all the polls showed him losing, and he decided to go home and change his shirt so he would look nice when he gave his concession speech. Only he won.

A Tough Job

McGovern was asked about the "bad things people say in campaigns." He acknowledged this was a problem, and told the students one of the reasons people put on negative campaigns is that they work. He said he likes to find ways to say things in a positive way.

"You want to say what you are for," he said, and pointed out how the media feeds into this because we like to see two candidates go at it. He told the students to pay attention and see if a candidate has anything positive to say, and even to challenge candidates directly to do so.

Another student asked McGovern what a typical day as a congressman looked like. He answered that there was no such thing, but there were certain kinds of things that tended to fill his days.

In Washington, he usually has a morning breakfast meeting with some group in town wanting to talk to him, followed by a meeting with his fellow Democrats to discuss the day's agenda and focus.

There are also end-of-day receptions, meeting with officials or groups. A bad day for him, he said, is when Congress has to stay and vote into the night.

On a good one he gets some time to relax at home and see his kids.

Belief in Science

Mr. Grout told McGovern that the students were very concerned about the environment and global climate change, and asked him to comment.

McGovern said that was one of the most important issues for the world. He pointed to the extreme weather occurring all over the world and said we need to figure out how to change.

McGovern told a story about a trip he took to Mount Kilimanjaro in Africa. He had seen pictures in which the mountain is covered with snow, but when he went to see it, there was only a tiny bit of snow on the very top of the mountain. His driver told him that in the last few years the snow has almost disappeared.

McGovern said the snow cap is very important because it provides water for the people who live down below. The problem, he said, is that many in Congress don't believe in the science that says climate change is real.

He also pointed to the oil industry, which makes a lot of money from fossil fuels and doesn't want things to change. "There are things we can do," he said. "Admire people who make careers in science."

But Why Does It?

Grout asked McGovern to address a question the students have about the stock market. He said they are confused about why the market goes up and down.

McGovern said sometimes the stock market changes because of the overall economy, and that there is enormous competition among businesses.

A student asked him to talk about what he cares about, and what charity he supports. McGovern said what he works on and is passionate about is ending hunger, both in America and around the world.

Then he was asked about media bias, which appeared to surprise him. He smiled at the question and said there is a place for opinion on the opinion pages, but that he

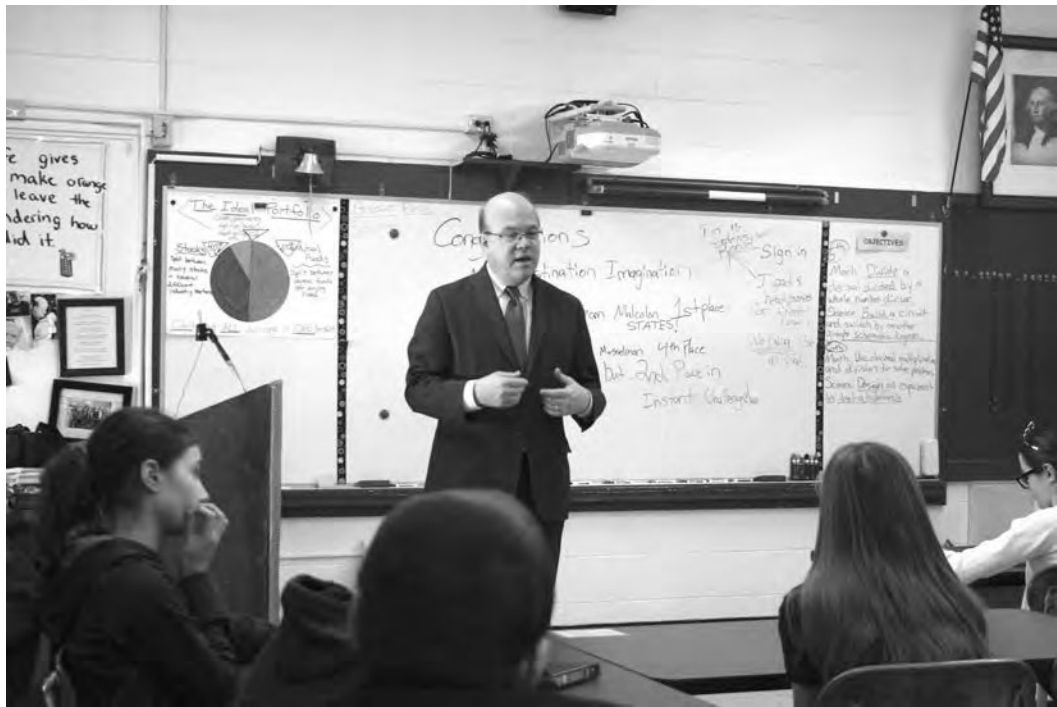
thought the media ought to focus on "facts."

McGovern asked the students what they thought of the stock market game they'd been playing. One young man said he felt they were lucky to be going to a school where they could do this, and learning something practical that they could use in the real world when they are older. He said, "It's not just learning from a textbook – it's doing it."

McGovern told the students that he was surprised and impressed with the quality of their questions and their knowledge, and said he felt like he was talking to college students, not sixth graders.

It was clear that the congressman had made a good impression on the students, who crowded around him after the discussion ended. They all went back out into the entrance way and took a photograph together.

Then their teacher suggested they each take a picture with the congressman, who seemed happy to oblige.



BLANCHETTE PHOTO

McGovern told the class – and representatives of the Securities Industry & Financial Market Association, an industry lobby that runs a PAC – that money can be a corrupting influence in elections.

NOTES FROM THE GILL-MONTAGUE SCHOOL COMMITTEE**School Committee Passes FY'16 Budget**

By ELLEN BLANCHETTE

The Gill-Montague school committee approved an FY'16 operating budget of \$18,347,688 at their meeting on March 10, with a vote of 6-2 in favor of the budget. Members Sandra Brown of Gill and Marjorie Levenson of Montague voted against it.

The operating assessment for the town of Gill is \$1,566,029 – an 8.54% increase. For the town of Montague the operating assessment is \$8,361,116, an increase of 2.59%. The changes reflect an increase in student enrollment in the district for Gill and a decrease in student enrollment from Montague.

Brown said she appreciated all the work superintendent Michael Sullivan and business director Joanne Blier had done in reducing the budget for this fiscal year, but felt that going forward the budget was unsustainable. Her concern was that by voting for this budget it would set them up for more deficits in FY'17, and each year moving forward the budget shortfalls would just increase.

Brown said, "I applaud all the work they've done reducing [the budget] down to make up for the gap. Fixed costs are too high and income too low. Charter and choice are killing us."

Levenson said she agreed with

Brown, asking, "Where does that leave us next year?" She too expressed concern that the budget was unsustainable.

Referencing the high cost of medical insurance to the district through the GIC, she suggested they consider changing the split of 90/10 to 80/20 to reduce costs, which she said was more consistent with contracts in other districts.

Brown expressed concern over the increase in Gill's assessment. She suggested they consider giving Gill an increase over three years and added, "Something has to change."

Misty Lyons of Montague said that she didn't understand not supporting this year's budget because of concerns over future budgets, saying, "We're voting on this year's budget."

Sullivan said he and Blier met on March 2, with Tupper Brown and Michael Naughton, the district's municipal partners on the Tech Panel, and had a productive discussion about revisions to the portion of the Compact known as Table B, in order to reflect budget assumptions for FY'17 and beyond. Sullivan and Blier also met on March 4 with members of the town finance committees, selectboards, and school committee.

As the discussion turned to the costs of choice and charter, Sullivan said, "Charter schools are not

funding their own schools. [Their money] comes out of the district budget."

Jane Oakes of Montague said, "Charter and choice are not the same thing. When we send students to another school through school choice, it costs the district \$3,000 per student. When we send students to a charter school, the cost to the district is \$13,000 per student."

"We lose kids before they enter kindergarten," said Levenson, meaning that a lot of parents send their young children to preschool elsewhere and leave them in that district when they begin kindergarten.

Sullivan agreed, saying that was why the district was investing so much in the preschool, hiring additional Hillcrest staff and providing them with good resources, giving them lots of attention. He said he was hopeful that the enthusiasm of the parents who have children there now would spread to the community and more children would be enrolled in preschool in the district. "It doesn't matter if we lose them to charter or choice," he argued.

The budget approved at this school committee meeting will be the amount that goes to town meetings for approval in May. The next school committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 24, at Turners Falls High School at 6:30 p.m.

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LEVERETT from page A1

we'll have to go back to the voters and say, 'Hey, the department heads are telling us we can no longer effectively run our departments.'"

Ingram was asked whether the recommendations of the fire department study committee – which featured a proposal to hire a fulltime firefighter to staff the fire station in Leverett center during weekdays, when few of the department's personnel are currently available to respond to calls – are off the table entirely in light of budget realities.

"I definitely think it is the way it needs to go, to have a fulltime person so we have coverage during the day, and there are so many regulations that need to be followed," he replied. "It really would benefit the town."

But Ingram also noted that he and training officer Stuart Olsen both responded to the February 18 sprinkler line break at the elementary school "within five minutes" of receiving the call.

Asked if he really made the trip from his North Amherst home to Leverett Elementary in five minutes, Ingram said indeed he had.

Highway Department

To achieve the called-for 3.5% reduction in the highway department's \$371,662 overall budget, Stratford said he would cut the money from maintenance, a broad category on his budget sheet that includes everything from street signs to road and bridge repairs. He also

offered to delay the scheduled purchase of a new backhoe for another year.

"I've already put it off for five years. It was 15 years old, now it's 20 years old. But it has been maintained so well I know it's going to keep going."

Another piece of town property that will have to keep going for another year is the old highway garage, which is in deteriorating condition. For the past two years, town building facilities supervisor John Kuczek has asked for \$75,000 to make structural and roof repairs to the building, which houses equipment for the school, highway and police departments.

At Stratford's suggestion, the selectboard decided to seek Community Preservation Committee funds to rehab the building, which was built in two stages in the 1940s and '50s, rather than try to find funds from the tapped out general levy.

Given the fact that it houses the former headquarters of both the police and highway departments, along with enough road signs to decorate dozens of dorm rooms, could it be considered an historic building?

On the plus side, Stratford said he had received an extra \$75,000 in state Chapter 90 funds, which he will put to use in repaving a potholed section of Montague Road from the safety complex north to Rattlesnake Gutter, along with part of Cave Hill Road.

A new layer of oil and stone will be laid down on Teewaddle, Still

Corner and Juggler Meadow roads, Stratford said. A bridge at the north end of Rattlesnake Gutter needs repair to posts and rails.

The Dudleyville Road bridge at Moores Corner will have to hold for now, but the selectboard encouraged Stratford to plan for the future by requesting funds for design and permitting to replace and enlarge that important bridge, a project which may require land taking on the south side.

Meanwhile, Stratford has directed his snow plow drivers to "ease off on the gas pedal" in response to complaints about mail boxes being knocked down by the mounding snow. Hopefully, winter will ease off first.

Other Business

The personnel board has recommended a 1.4% cost of living increase for town employees, other than teachers and staff at the elementary school, who are in the midst of negotiating a new three-year contract.

Over at the elementary school, repairs from sprinkler line breaks last month have been completed, down to a short punch list. "All the kids are back in their classrooms," said Brazeau, "and they didn't miss a day of school."

The selectboard praised Randall Roberts and crew for expeditious repairs, and all personnel who responded to the emergency at the school.



**TOWN OF MONTAGUE
SENIOR CENTER PLANNING STUDY
PUBLIC FEEDBACK SESSION**

Tuesday, March 24
6 p.m.: Presentation, followed by a Q+A with the architect

Montague Public Safety Complex
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Hosted by the Senior Center Planning Committee

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**Amherst-Pelham School Committee
Delays Regionalization Decision**

By JEFF SINGLETON

AMHERST –The Amherst-Pelham school committee decided on Tuesday to begin to evaluate a regional consolidation proposal at its March 24 meeting. This effectively delays a decision on the issue until the spring of 2016, which would delay any potential consolidation until the fall of 2017.

The committee will be evaluating a proposal that would bring the elementary schools of four towns – Amherst, Pelham, Leverett, and Shutesbury – into the current middle/high school regional district.

The proposal, which is primarily a series of amendments to the existing regional agreement, was submitted by a subcommittee of the school board called the Regional Agreement Working Group (RAWG). The proposal also includes a rationale for the consolidation that describes its purported academic and financial benefits.

When the RAWG proposal was submitted in January, the board hoped to take votes on the amendments at last night's meeting and send the final product to town meetings in the four towns this spring.

That time frame has proven to be unrealistic, as the discussion at Tuesday's meeting made clear.

School committee member Katherine Appy from Amherst began the discussion by proposing that the committee set aside a good portion of its March 24 meeting to discuss the RAWG amendments. That argument was supported by member Rick Hood, who noted that superintendent Maria Geryk was not at the current meeting.

School committee chair Trevor Baptiste of Pelham stated that he had

hoped "for a [formal] proposal from beginning to end," but "we don't have it yet." The committee, he suggested, still needed to discuss the "big issues" which he identified as governance, education, and finance.

Committee members are "not wanting to feel rushed" in these discussions by the need to prepare a document for this spring's town meetings.

Lawrence O'Brien of Amherst requested that the committee ask legal counsel to put together a "formal... regional agreement" that includes the proposed RAWG amendments. This idea was seconded by Appy.

School committee chair Trevor Baptiste said members are "not wanting to feel rushed" in the discussions by the need to prepare a document by spring town meetings.

Hood, on the other hand, suggested the committee should wait on drafting a formal agreement until it had discussed two key issues: 1. What is "the right thing to do" and 2) What will pass all four town meetings. He stated that he felt that the prior subcommittee process had focused too much on the second issue.

Hood also said he wanted better information on the projected financial savings.

Kathleen Traphagen, the vice chair of the committee, said she felt one of the things missing from the RAWG report was a "really convincing" argument about the educational benefits of regional consolidation. She said that she would like to hear

from teachers as to whether there is "really a big problem that kids from towns come in [to the middle school] on a different page."

Traphagen said the committee might have a difficult time convincing Amherst town meeting "unless [consolidation] saves a ton of money or [improves] education."

Stephen Sullivan of Shutesbury, who introduced himself as "a hick," said that for students in his town, "academics are not the issue" in the transition to the middle school. Rather, he portrayed the change as a "culture shock." He said it takes many students until Thanksgiving to be comfortable at the middle school.

Sullivan also faulted the RAWG members from Shutesbury for not explaining the proposal. They "handed it to us and ran away," he declared, calling for a forum in the town on the amendments.

Amilcar Shabazz stressed that he felt confident the committee could address the concerns of member towns with a new regional agreement. For example, if Leverett feared losing its elementary school greenhouse, a concern voiced by one committee member, "write the greenhouse program into the agreement."

"We are already in a region," he said, suggesting that a consolidation at the elementary level simply represents "natural growth."

So the committee will begin a longer discussion of the RAWG proposal at its next meeting. At the same time, legal counsel will apparently draft a new regional agreement with the proposed amendments.

But for now, any potential consolidation of elementary schools into Amherst's district has been pushed back.

**The Battle of Great Falls/
Wissatinnewag-Peskeomskut
Public Information Meeting**

Archaeologist Kevin McBride, Principal Investigator for the study of the 1676 Battle of Great Falls/ Wissatinnewag-Peskeomskut, will meet the public on Saturday March 14 at the Discovery Center's Great Hall in Turners Falls. This first of three informational sessions will last from 1 to 2:30 p.m.

McBride and his team composed of David Naumec (military historian and historical researcher), Ashley Bissonnette (senior researcher) and Noah Fellman (mapping specialist), will present a progress report to the public.

The team is employed by the Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center, and was awarded the contract to conduct a two-year study of the battle/massacre that took place on the site now known as Turners Falls and Gill on May 19, 1676.

The team began its research in early February and will inform the public of the current state of their findings at the meeting.

The specific tasks of this \$60,000 American Battlefield Protection Program grant, funded by the National Park Service, are the following:

1. Develop the research design.
2. Conduct colonial and tribal military history research.
3. Conduct historical and archaeological research.
4. Coordinate tribal history research and perspectives on the battle.
5. Coordinate a public information process.
6. Prepare maps of the project area.
7. Prepare a technical report.

The National Park Service awarded the grant to the Town of Montague which appointed an advisory board to oversee the grant research process.

The Battlefield Grant Advisory Board is composed of the Historical Commissions of the five towns in which battle-related events took place (Montague, Gill, Greenfield, Deerfield, Northfield), the Tribal Historic Preservation Offices of the Narragansett Indian Tribe, the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah), the Nipmuc Tribe of Massachusetts, and the Stockbridge-Munsee Mohican Tribe. In addition, Richard Colton, Montague resident and NPS historian, Paul Robinson, State Archaeologist of Rhode Island (ret), Pat Allen and Patricia Pruitt, former Selectwomen of Montague, are also members of the Advisory Board. The grant is being administered by the Montague Planning and Conservation Department.

The meeting on March 14 is free and open to the public. You are invited to come learn more or contribute additional information to the study.

Refreshments will be served.

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Reunion, Cali-style: Lisa Laczynski, TFHS '92, sent us this photo she took of her mother, retired TFHS teacher and Montague Center resident Betsy Laczynski, with Lisa's classmate Travis Lively, formerly of Erving and currently of sunny Temecula, California.

It was taken at the Monte De Oro Winery in Temecula.

Going somewhere? Take us with you! Send the results in to editor@montague-reporter.org.

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Next training begins March 24. For more information or to register, contact Lorraine York-Edberg at lyork-edberg@fchcc.org, 413-773-5555 x2275, or 978-544-2259 x2275. www.fchcc.org

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The Town of Wendell Energy Committee is hiring canvassers to go door to door in the evening telling homeowners about Mass Save energy audits and signing them up for an audit. Deadline for applications is March 23. Work to begin in April. A CORI check will be required.

Please email nan@itpuzzleworks.net for an application or more information. You may call (978) 544-2741.

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YEAR 13 – NO. 21

B1

FEATURES@MONTAGUEREPORER.ORG

OF THE MONTAGUE REPORTER

MARCH 12, 2015

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS TOUR: THE SLATE LIBRARY

By NINA ROSSI

GILL – Would you donate your mother’s toaster to the library? A rock you found on vacation in Hawaii? For whatever reason, the residents of small towns in New England have in times past donated a strange variety of objects to local libraries.

I’m going on several journeys around Franklin County, poking in the corners and cupboards of local libraries to see what has been pulled out of the flow of time to sit therein with the books.

I have lots of questions about this old custom, and I don’t really expect to find many answers. However, I enjoy musing on small mysteries, and trying on a few theories along the way.

Some of these artifacts, divorced from their narrative, languish in cold storage areas, the almost indecipherable name of their donor identified in brown faded ink on tags that must be, judging by the perfect script they

ROSSI PHOTOS



The lizard, in a more natural habitat.



William Marvel captured this lizard during the Civil War. Its arm has fallen off.

are written in, at least 70 years old. Other collections are housed in display cases under wavy glass, or are even within reach of the curious on top of bookshelves.

Many libraries have moved their collections to the town’s historical society, if that society has a building of its own to house objects. Some directors feel that the role of the library is distinctly different than that of the museum, and therefore they should be kept separate.

In certain instances, surplus items have been sent to be auctioned off, and occasionally a valuable item turns up. In 1989, a copy of the Emancipation Proclamation was found in a junk pile at the Ashfield library, signed by Abraham Lincoln.

The library of today is not the shush-y, strictly serious place it used to be. A variety of children’s

programs at local libraries keeps a lively mix of parents and kids coming in and out, as well as other workshops held for all age groups. The Northfield library is home to a small food pantry; the Sunderland library includes a cafe where a coffee club meets on Fridays; almost every library features rotating art exhibits. It’s more like a community center than a study hall.

The Wendell Free Library invites people to share their “collections” in a display case dedicated to this purpose. Director Rosie Heidkamp says they have offered this opportunity for three years. The rotating display could be books, arrowheads, Lego blocks, or whatever has been of interest to the collector.

She notes that there has also been a resurgence of interest in the history of the town, and says that

see **LIBRARY** page B8

BEER-BATTERED CORNED BEEF

By ERIC DAMKOEHLER

MONTAGUE – Can you smell the cabbage? Saint Patrick’s Day is right around the corner. That green, boiled, stinky vegetable is waiting for the stock pot. The bars are staffing short-term labor, and restaurants will soon stock up on the brisket.

As a teenager, I despised St. Patrick’s Day. I was the CBC, or Corned Beef and Cabbage, guy. With the green sweaters and goofy ties came the ritualistic sacrifice of one cook – me – whose only purpose throughout the seemingly endless shift was to plate corned beef, cabbage, carrots, beets, and a piece of curly parsley.

One after the other, after the other, over and over again.

I have served CBC every St. Patrick’s Day in every restaurant I’ve ever worked in, for my entire career. I had a momentary opportunity to avoid it this year. However, fate has brought me back to that evil dish yet again. By the time this writing goes to print, I

will be so sick of corned beef that I just might consider going vegetarian. The horror!

The funny thing is, after all of these years, I cannot recall one single time in my entire life that I have ever dined on a boiled dinner, as the old-timers call it. And yes, with the CBC comes my annual self-conscious need to tell people that I am, in fact, at least half Irish.

With that in mind, if for some reason or another you will not eat the traditional St. Patrick’s Day meal, I offer this alternative.

I often find the process of creating food as enjoyable as the act of eating it, so allow me to give a little back story. For two weeks I told everyone I knew that I had invented beer-battered corned beef. The unlikeliness of this being true did not deter my shameless enthusiasm.

I was quite certain, as I made sample after sample, that no one had ever thought of this. Never mind that there are volumes of

see **BEEF** page B5



DAMKOEHLER PHOTO

An alternative to the standard boiled fare!

WEST ALONG THE RIVER: WAITING FOR THE DÉBÂCLE



POLLY FRENCH PRINT

By DAVID BRULE

MILLERS RIVER – Restless three months ago, waiting for the delayed arrival of winter, I’ll be quick and among the first to herald the arrival of spring.

I should have been more careful in early January, I got what I asked for: three feet of snow to ski and snowshoe in, to track wildlife, and to admire how all the unfinished garden work was nicely obliterated.

It all got very tedious by March 1. But with a forecast of temperatures in the fifties for the coming week, we can probably conclude, along with the *Farmer’s Almanac*, that winter’s back is broken.

In fact, I noted in my back porch observations a few weeks ago that the first day of spring, according to the natural cycle of things, occurred this year on February 26.

Unnoticed by most house-bound haters of winter, the

sun showed itself to be progressively rising further and further to the east over the village of Millers Falls.

Instead of barely making it up over Dry Hill in Wendell before sending its rays down our Millers River valley onto my porch, the sun is rising a significant number of degrees to the east-northeast, even occasionally being blocked by neighbors’ rooftops, rather than the massive white pine sentinel on the valley rim as during December and January.

I’ve even taken out my broad-brimmed slouch hat to shade my eyes for reading and writing at seven a.m., instead of the wool knit ski hat I’ve worn all winter.

That February morning was the first time that the first downy woodpecker began its territorial drumming that resonated throughout our woods, warning other downys that his boundaries

were being drawn.

Joining him was the early mating excitement in the voices of the birds wintering here, juncos and tree sparrows, lilting silver bells of their voices and calls, as they chased one another, all jealous and flirting.

The great horned owl also began his booming mating call in the evenings from over in the marsh, at just about the same time.

So what of the *débâcle* mentioned above? It’s not the fall of more banks too big to fail, or the collapse of caliphates or kingdoms in the Middle East, not the chaos of revolution.

Débâcle is used figuratively in those situations for sure. But the original, literal meaning of this French word describes the loosening, coming apart and breaking up of a situation that had been frozen and locked in place. Its first meaning refers to the break-up of ice.

The Connecticut has been frozen, locked in place from Sunderland to points north, from the Turners Falls dam, up past French King Rock, and on up into the border lands of Vermont and New Hampshire.

The river has been frozen for most of its length since late December. But I’m expecting

see **WEST** page B4

An Irrational and Transcendental Day

By NINA ROSSI

Saturday is a once-in-a-century mathematical landmark, being the phenomenal date of 3/14/15, or “Super Pi Day” to fans of 3.14159265...

Pi, or more properly π , is the ratio of a circle’s circumference to its diameter. This is a constant number, no matter what the size of the circle.

It’s also an irrational and transcendental number: it will continue infinitely, without repetition or pattern.

It’s a great day to chant these digits, chase your tail, contemplate the mysteries of these seemingly random numbers, bake a pie, enjoy a pizza, or celebrate the concentrically divine.

Those who like the challenge of memorization can bite off as much as they can chew of the over 1 trillion digits that have thus far been computed, and spit them back out at anyone who will listen. Perhaps others will pay homage by making a circle around them as they recite.

This article is just a way to say “Hi to Pi” by pulling out some facts from its very long history, and to share a long-dormant art project of mine that has languished in the basement since the day it was born.

I don’t really understand the more complicated mathematical formulas that are used to churn out these endless numerical iterations, and two decimal places of pi are plenty for me to apply to any geometry problem I have to resolve.

I also like the cool allure of sacred geometry and the comforting (or irritating, depending on your philosophy of inquiry) idea that pi shoots out a trail of digits that never ends and never repeats itself.

Pursuit of an ever-more-exact ratio to express the relationship of diameter to circumference of a circle has occupied some brilliant minds for four thousand years.

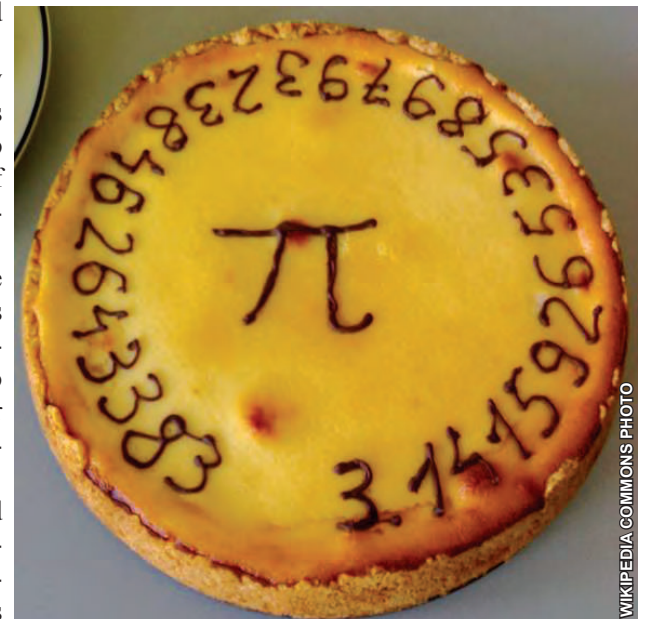
Earliest guess-timates of this ratio put it at about 3 and 1/8 (there were no zeros or decimals back then).

This could be figured out with a string around a circle, and noticing that the circumference was three times the diameter with a bit more than 1/8 and a bit less than 1/4 left over.

This was useful enough until the Greeks became obsessed with attempts to “square the circle” by computing a square that would be equal in area to a circle.

Early attempts involved inscribing a polygon inside and outside of a circle, putting the result somewhere in between the greater and lesser numbers. Archimedes used two 96-sided polygons and came up with a figure somewhere between 3 1/7 and 3 10/71, which

see **PI** page B4



WIKIPEDIA COMMONS PHOTO

Pi Pie, created at the Delft University of Technology.

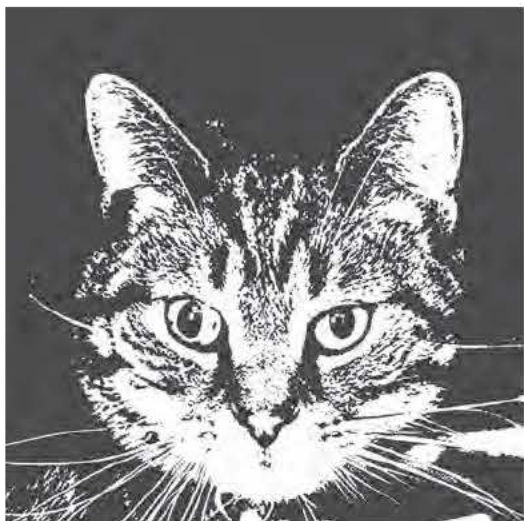
Pet of the Week

Hi, I'm Phoenix and I am looking for a new place to spend my days. I am very nervous here at the shelter and would love to have a quiet home to just relax in. I do well with other cats, and I have even lived with a dog!

I think I would do well with older kids who can give me the time to adjust and come out of my shell.

Once I'm comfortable I love to play with toys that jingle, crinkle and crackle, and if they look like a mouse it's all the better!

So if you're looking for a companion to spend your days with and keep your other cats company while you're away, then I'm your man!

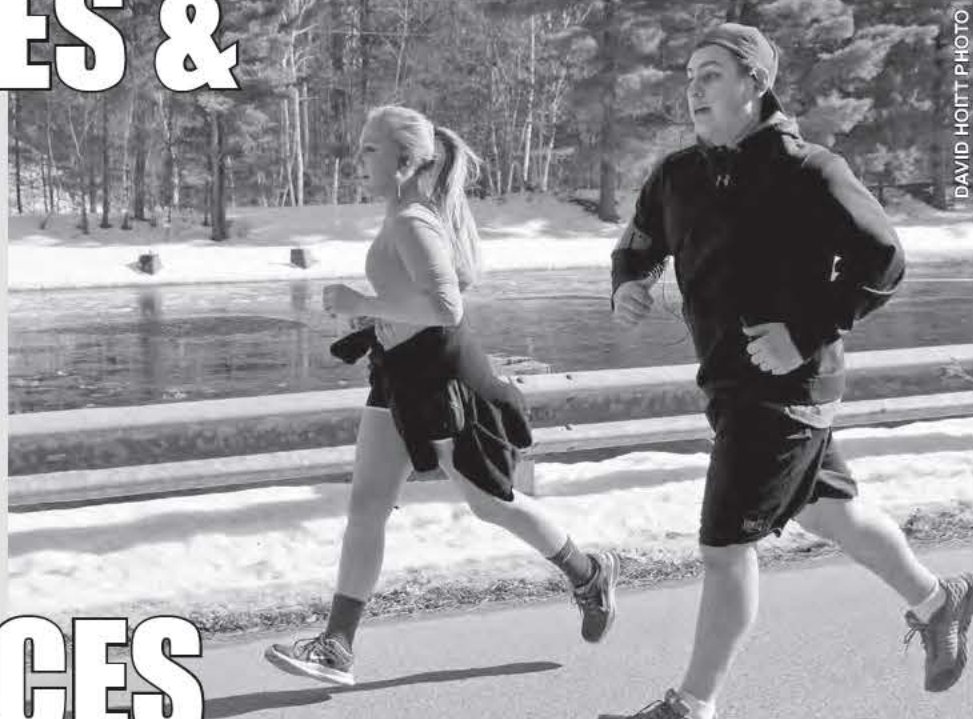


"PHOENIX"

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FACES &

With a "spring" in their steps, Cassidbe and Cullen Wozniak take advantage of the pleasant weather to exercise along the Turners Falls Power Canal. Their spring sports practices start on Monday.



DAVID HOJIT PHOTO

PLACES

"Jetsons The Movie" at the Wendell Free Library, Saturday March 21 at 4 p.m.

Excellent 1990 film adaptation of a classic TV show. This is an all ages / family movie, being shown as an afternoon matinee (show starting at 4 p.m., starting with the short subject ("Fireball XL5" episode). Fun for the whole family.

This is the next in the monthly series of Science Fiction/Fantasy and Horror/Monster movies at the Wendell Free Library, located in the center of Wendell, MA. Free admission.

For more information about the Wendell Free Library visit its web page at www.wendellfreelibrary.org or call (978) 544-3559.

Future screenings include:

- April 18: **"The Invisible Man"** starring Claude Rains, Gloria Stuart, William Harrigan, Henry Travers, and Una O'Connor.
- May 16: **"Short Circuit"** starring Ally Sheedy, Steve Guttenberg, Fisher Stevens, and Austin Pendleton.
- June 13: **"The Village Of The Damned"** starring George Sanders, Barbara Shelley, Martin Stephens, and Michael Gwynn.
- July 18: **"Videodrome"** starring James Woods, Sonja Smits, Deborah Harry, and Peter Dvorsky.
- August 15: **"Psycho"** starring Anthony Perkins, Vera Miles, John Gavin, and Janet Leigh

THE HEALTHY GEEZER

Breast Cancer, Part 1

There are many forms of breast cancer. Infiltrating ductal carcinoma (IDC) is the most common form. It starts in a duct, then breaks through the duct wall and invades the tissue of the breast. At this point, it can metastasize through the lymphatic vessels and the bloodstream.

Lymph plays a major role in breast cancer. It is a fluid that carries immune-system cells through lymphatic vessels. Lymph nodes are small collections of these cells in the vessels. Almost all lymphatic vessels in the breast connect to lymph nodes under the arm.

Cancer cells that enter lymphatic vessels can spread and begin to grow in lymph nodes. This is why doctors check the lymph nodes to see if breast cancer has spread.

Ductal carcinoma in situ (DCIS) is the most common type of noninvasive breast cancer. The term "in situ" means the cancer is confined to its original site. DCIS denotes that the cancer cells are inside the ducts but have not spread through the walls of the ducts into the surrounding breast tissue. Nearly all women diagnosed at this early stage of breast cancer can be cured.

There are many risk factors for

breast cancer:

- The risk rises with age. About three quarters of women with breast cancer are older than 50 when they are diagnosed.
- Breast cancer risk is higher among women whose close relatives have the disease.
- A woman with cancer in one breast is at high risk of developing a new cancer in either of her breasts.
- Women who started menstruating before age 12 or who went through menopause after age 55 have a slightly higher risk of breast cancer.
- Having multiple pregnancies and becoming pregnant at an early age reduces breast cancer risk.
- Long-term use of hormone replacement therapy (HRT) after menopause increases your risk of breast cancer.
- Drinking alcohol is linked to an increased risk of developing breast cancer.
- Obesity is a breast cancer risk, especially for women after menopause.

Evidence is growing that exercise reduces breast cancer risk.

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



JESSICA LARKIN ILLUSTRATION

By FRED CICETTI

This is the first installment in a three-part series on breast cancer.

Breast cancer is second – behind lung cancer – as the leading cause of cancer death in women. The chance of developing invasive breast cancer at some time in a woman's life is about 1 in 8.

The female breast is composed primarily of milk-producing glands (lobules), ducts that connect the glands to the nipple, and soft tissue. Breast cancer is a malignant tumor that has grown from breast cells.

Nearly all breast cancers start in the ducts or lobules of the breast. The cancer can spread (metastasize) to other parts of the body, but it will continue to be defined as breast cancer.

Senior Center Activities March 16 to 20

GILL and MONTAGUE

Gill / Montague Senior Center, 62 Fifth Street, Turners Falls, is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Congregate meals are served Tuesday through Thursday at noon. Meal reservations must be made one day in advance by 11 a.m.

All fitness classes are supported by a grant from the Executive Office of Elder Affairs. Voluntary donations are accepted. Council on Aging Director is Roberta Potter. Kitchen Manager is Jeff Suprenant. For more information, to make meal reservations, or to sign up for programs call 863-9357. Messages can be left on our machine when the Center is closed.

Monday 3/16

- 8:30 a.m. Foot Clinic (appointment)
- 10:10 a.m. Aerobics
- 10:50 Chair Exercise
- 1 p.m. Knitting Circle

Tuesday 3/17

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

Wednesday 3/18

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

Thursday 3/19

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

Friday 3/20

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

LEVERETT

For information, contact the Leverett COA at (413) 548-1022, ext. 5, or coa@leverett.ma.us. Take-It-Easy Chair Yoga – Wednesdays at 10 a.m. at the Town Hall. Drop-in \$5 (first class free). Senior Lunch – Fridays at

noon. Call (413) 367-2694 by Wednesday for a reservation.

WENDELL

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

Call the Center for a ride.

ERVING

Erving Senior Center, 1 Care Drive, Erving, is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. for activities and congregating meals.

Lunch is at 11:30 a.m., with reservations required 24 hours in advance. Call the Mealsite Manager at 423-3308 for meal information and reservations.

For information, call Paula Beters, interim Senior Center Director, at (413) 423-3649. Transportation can be provided for meals, shopping, or medical necessity.

Call to confirm activities, schedule a ride, or find out about the next blood pressure clinic.

Monday 3/16

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

Tuesday 3/17

- 8:45 a.m. Chair Aerobics
- 10 a.m. Zumba Fitness
- 10:45 a.m. Senior Business Mtg.
- 12:30 p.m. Painting

Wednesday 3/18

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

Thursday 3/19

- 8:45 a.m. Aerobics
- 10 a.m. Tax Prep for Seniors
- 10 a.m. Healthy Bones, Muscles
- Noon Cards

Friday 3/20

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

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*"Execrable verse," said the stranger,
dropping the Valentine card back in the rack.*

The Library at Mt. Parnassus Pt. 62



By DAVID DETMOLD

"I'm sorry," I said. "I didn't write it."

"No? Come my friend, you have to help me." He touched my arm. "I'm looking for a lyre."

"That shouldn't be hard to find. It's not like searching for an honest man."

"Now don't misunderstand me." We walked through the produce section, past the glistening mangoes and mounded clementines. He took my arm. "Tell me, Otis. You seem like a reasonably happy man."

I laughed. "I guess I am. Reasonable. And happy."

"Why don't I believe you?" He turned and put his hands on my shoulders and looked at me with his dark brown eyes. He put a hand on my heart. The touch was strangely soothing. Suddenly, I burst into tears.

"Come now," he said. "If I were looking for a man who couldn't tell the truth, I would need to look no further."

"That's so," I agreed, wiping my cheeks. "I'm really very lonely."

"There. That's not so bad. You find friends where you least expect them. True?" I nodded. "That's better." He clapped me on the shoulders. "Hope springs eternal."

"That's just the trouble. Damn it."

We'd reached the deli case again, and now we heard Lucius laughing overhead. He was still sitting cross-legged on the grab and go case, indifferent to the stares of distracted customers dashing past in all directions. They must have thought he was part of the holiday display. He had a wreath of baby roses twined about his brow.

Lucius had managed to get hold of a bottle of sparking cider, and as we watched he knocked the top off and poured the bubbling contents over his head, shaking his curls and fanning out his wings and chortling with glee. He tipped his head back and drank the rest of the bottle off in one long gulp.

"But it's not a liar I'm looking for tonight," said the tall man beside me. Suddenly I felt lightheaded and giddy. "Not a liar, but a lyre!" He produced a curving instrument of tortoiseshell and horn from the folds of his cloak.

The store's sound system was still putting out the gentle strains of samba. The tall man passed his hands lightly over the strings and a strange harmony came forth.

"Why, that sounds lovely. Why would you want to replace it?"

"Oh, the instrument is fit enough," he said, "but I'm missing a string." He pointed up at Lucius. "He stole one," said my new friend, in a stage whisper. "He says he only needs it for one night, but I need it too!"

"Lucius plays?"
"He needs it for his bow."

I looked up at Lucius, naked on the display rack. "What bow?" Lucius shrugged and spread his hands in mute self-exculpation.

For another moment, the tall man stood and listened to the piped store music, strumming gently at his lyre. Again the soothing descant melody fell from his fingers. "For the music I will play tonight," he mused, "I will need at least five strings, and all the skill my hands possess."

"If I were you," I told him, "I'd go see Melantha at the library. She seems to have everything in the world hidden behind her desk. She might find an extra string for you."

"As it happens, I'm going there next." The tall man smiled and slung the lyre around behind his cloak, and took me in a warm embrace. "Thanks, my friend, and well met." I closed my eyes and breathed in his scent of bay leaves and honey. "May you find that which you seek."

He let me go, and as he said good-bye the harsh clangor of stone on steel rang out, interrupting us. A server behind the deli was sharpening the disc of the power slicer with a pumice stone.

The grating noise went on and on, like a train slowly braking as it pulled into the station, and when I looked back again to say goodbye the stranger was gone.

I stood blinking in the fluorescent light, and in a moment turned and nearly ran smack into Iona, my old flame from the Golden Mean. She was leaning forward looking at the olives in the deli case.

The grating noise ceased as suddenly as it had begun; the blade was sharp enough. She looked up, and in the mirror her eyes met mine.

Like a fool, I waved to her, even though she was standing right beside me. Was she smirking? She turned and looked at me.

"I've never seen you outside of work before," I said. I felt I was smiling sheepishly.

"How do you like me in the marketplace?" she asked.

"Just fine," I said.

Continued next week.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Fusebox Sabotaged; Green Marble Shot

Monday, 3/2

9:16 a.m. Caller reports illegal dumping in her yard on Turners Falls Road. Advised of options.

12:49 p.m. Officer reports multiple spots on the bridge over the river by the Housing Authority and Paper Logic where rebar is sticking up. Same is creating a hazard; could puncture a tire. MassHighway advised.

1:05 p.m. Neighbor disturbance on Unity Street. Peace restored.

3:26 p.m. Caller from Avenue A reports ongoing issues with odors in her building that make it impossible for her to live comfortably. Advised of options.

5:43 p.m. Caller reports receiving five phone calls from "FW Financial"; male party on the other end makes obscene comments then disconnects. Referred to an officer.

6:19 p.m. Copied via radio that TFFD is responding for a report of sparks from a water heater on Second Street. Patrol units notified.

Tuesday, 3/3

8:43 a.m. Neighbor disturbance on Unity Street. Investigated.

9:23 a.m. A juvenile was arrested at Franklin County Technical School after assaulting the school resource officer.

9:28 a.m. Report of threatening/harassment on Unity Street. Advised of options.

3:45 p.m. 911 caller reports dumpster on fire in an alleyway behind Kali B's. TFFD and officers advised. Second 911 caller advises same; also stated that some people are attempting to throw snow on it. Officers clear; fire out; dumpster company advised by TFFD.

11:23 p.m. Report of suspicious vehicle on Linda Lane. Vehicle and operator sent on their way.

Wednesday, 3/4

12:52 a.m. Male 911 caller reports that he was just assaulted in front of the Rendezvous on Third Street. Caller states that he was struck multiple times by an unknown male. Caller became uncooperative bordering on disorderly and refused to provide additional details. Officer spoke with Rendezvous employee, who stated that the caller refused to pay his bar tab. Investigated.

2:20 a.m. Officer out on Third Street with male from earlier assault call. Caller's vehicle ticketed for multiple parking violations and towed.

3:35 a.m. 911 caller from Third Street reports past burglary/breaking and entering. Caller just returned home to his apartment and found that his Playstation 3, games for

PS3, and laptop are missing. No evidence of forced entry; only landlord has key. Report taken.

5:06 a.m. 911 caller reports trash truck fire behind Family Dollar on J Street. Truck dumped burning load on ground in parking lot approximately 20-30 feet from building. TFFD brought fire under control; operator contacted his company, who will clean up.

6:27 a.m. Two-vehicle accident at Montague Street and Dell Street. Both vehicles towed. No injuries.

7:21 a.m. Vehicle into snowbank at Unity Street and Hillside Avenue. Passersby were able to help operator get vehicle back onto road.

9:28 a.m. Caller reports erratically operated vehicle near Canal Road and Fifth Street; possible struggle between driver and passenger. Area search negative.

10:32 a.m. Following up on previous breaking and entering call, an officer responded to a Fifth Street apartment whose resident is suspected of stealing items. Item brought to station.

10:52 a.m. Caller reports that someone on H Street appears to have opened a WMECO account in her name fraudulently. Referred to an officer.

11:41 a.m. Caller from Lake Pleasant complaining of train idling for past two hours. Contacted Pan Am and advised them of the complaint; employee stated that train would be moving shortly.

12:47 p.m. Party into station to report that someone may have shot at her house on Turnpike Road last night; there was a "pop" noise, and siding is damaged. Advised of options.

2:05 p.m. Multiple reports of suspected drug activity on T Street. Referred to an officer.

9:40 p.m. Party from Unity Street into station to report ongoing harassment by neighbor. Advised of options.

Thursday, 3/5

11:35 a.m. Warrant arrest on Fifth Street.

1:37 p.m. Caller from Turners Falls High School requesting that an officer retrieve some contraband from his office. Services rendered.

4:27 p.m. Caller from G Street reports loud noises and screaming coming from neighbor's apartment. Responding officers stated that the cause of the noise was a child playing a video game, getting upset, and stomping.

5:13 p.m. Caller from Turnpike Road reports damage to his yard caused by a vehicle en route to the manhole on Millers Falls Road. Caller states that

it looks like a giant plow truck just drove through his yard and broke a couple of his trees. Investigated.

5:14 p.m. Caller from Lake Pleasant reports that the signal arms at the train crossing have been down for 45 minutes, but she has yet to see a train. Cars are stopping and waiting but then going around the arms. Spoke to Pan Am dispatcher; they will send someone out to this location.

Friday, 3/6

7:00 a.m. Caller from Unity Street reports that the power to his apartment has been shut off; he suspects that his neighbor, with whom he has been engaged in an ongoing situation, is responsible. Responding officer escorted caller to basement, where three fuses were found turned off; it was clear that the fuses had been tampered with. Investigated.

9:38 a.m. Motorist complaining of rebar sticking up from the bridge by Paper Logic creating a hazard. Issue previously reported to MassHighway on 3/2. MassHighway contacted again; repair is scheduled to be completed later today.

1 p.m. Caller requesting assistance with a deceased animal next to the dumpster behind her building. Caller does not know what kind of animal it is; just that it is not a skunk, raccoon, or opossum. Responding officer advises that it is an opossum; removal will be a landlord issue. Caller advised.

4:11 p.m. Party from Turnpike Road into station with a green marble that may have been "shot" at her house, causing the damage that she previously reported. Officer advised.

4:40 p.m. Caller reports that 10 minutes ago, he watched a female party driving back and forth in the area of Fourth and L Streets with two children on the hood of her car and two on the trunk. Caller was very concerned for the wellbeing of the children. Referred to an officer.

5:15 p.m. Party into station advising of two giant potholes at Turnpike Road and Montague City Road. Message left for DPW.

5:41 p.m. Party into station to speak with officer regarding ongoing neighbor dispute on Unity Street. Advised of options.

7:11 p.m. Caller from G Street reports noise coming from upstairs neighbors: screaming, yelling, possibly throwing things, and running across floor. Neighbors advised of complaint. Child had been playing a video game and

became upset upon losing; same scenario as last night.

10:05 p.m. Needle reported between two doors of building at corner of Avenue A and Fifth Street. Officer retrieved item. Caller stated that her daughter told her that she found two needles yesterday in front of the door and threw them in the trash.

Saturday, 3/7

4:56 a.m. Report that car went over snowbank and struck barrier at New Street and Grand Avenue. Party located in vehicle had minor head lacerations and claimed that there was another party in the vehicle who ran away. Officer checked area for second party. Vehicle's identification number did not match VIN associated with plates. Officer seized plates from vehicle.

10:19 a.m. Caller reports that there is a substance coming up out of a manhole cover and leaking into a brook near the Bridge of Names. Officer and DPW advised; MCFD on scene due to possible contamination. DPW reports that Water Pollution Control Facility pump is not working. On-call person will respond.

6:59 p.m. Motorist reports that a section of Greenfield Road is flooded and possibly hazardous. Officer checked area and found minor flooding between Ferry and Meadow Roads.

7:14 p.m. Motorist reports several icy spots on Route 47. Officer drove length of road and did not notice any spots that were excessively icy.

7:45 p.m. Party into station reporting an "extremely large" pothole at Turnpike Road and Montague City Road; stated it was large enough that he thought he lost a tire when he hit it. Responding officer advises that pothole is about 1.5 feet in diameter and 4 inches deep. DPW notified; will have someone check it tomorrow morning.

8:51 p.m. Assisted Greenfield PD in locating a vehicle involved in a hit and run accident in the last half hour.

9:20 p.m. Report from motorist that lights at Seventh Street and Avenue A were not cycling properly. Officer checked lights; everything seems OK.

Sunday, 3/8

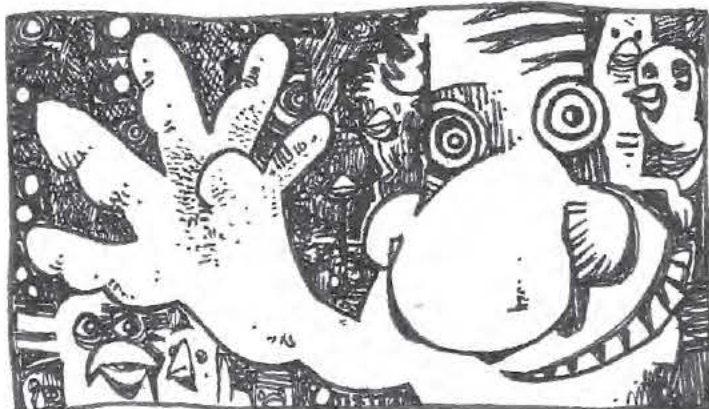
1:14 p.m. Fire alarm triggered by burnt food on Fifth Street. Services rendered.

2:11 p.m. Request to mediate neighbor dispute on Unity Street. Peace restored.

7:20 p.m. Suspected drug activity reported on Central Street. Area search negative.

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WEST ALONG from page B1
the first signs of the *débâcle* to appear soon.

When I was young and living during the '50s and '60s in our snug family home on the hill over the Narrows, before the days of Vermont Yankee and the effects of climate change, the river always froze over, just as it did this year. We could cross from Unity Park over the river to Barton Cove and back on two feet of ice, something not possible for the past forty years or so.

The nuclear plant closed this year, so no more heated water releases into the Connecticut, what do you know? The ice is back. Coincidence? Cause and effect? It'll take many more winters to decide.

But just as forty years ago, the

first open patches of river will appear at the Narrows and the French King, where the current is the strongest. The first hooded mergansers will appear, fishing in the open water. The booming at night of the expanding river ice sheet will be heard again even into the bedrooms of houses along the river.

Soon the river will be opening more and more with melting snow, the ice shelf will begin to break up, and as the river swells, it will begin to move entire football fields of broken ice down river where it crash and grind into the red rocks of the Narrows.

Then pressure will build, as ice and rock resist each other and struggle until the blocks of our river glacier finally are forced to give in

to the rock, and sideslip along the shore, riding the rising current, groaning and complaining their way slowly downstream to the falls.

This year, that break-up, that *débâcle* will be worth waiting for. It will happen in a few weeks or a month, and it will renew an interrupted rite of spring. It's kind of reassuring.

Governments and banks may fail, but for the time being, at least this year, we can be sure that our river will free itself in the break-up of its ice. Our river will remind us that it still flows as it has for 12,000 years, with an inexorable timeless force, through the lives of those of us who inhabit its banks.



PIE from page B1

averages to 3.1419. Pretty good work, but still inaccurate.

In came the Romans, and the Western world succumbed to centuries of war, religious intolerance, decadence, barbarians, and plague.

Mathematics in the rest of the world progressed during this time, particularly in Arab societies, where they discovered zero and used decimal places. Knowledge spread with increased trade, and by the sixteenth century, mathematicians were calculating pi using polygons with 32 billion sides.

With unusual amounts of patience and fortitude, the German-Dutch mathematician Ludolf van Ceulen calculated pi to 35 digits, using laborious multiplications, divisions, and square roots that took years. His results were published in 1596.

After his death, more efficient methods of calculation were discovered, using arctangents, and the mathematician Euler found formulas that enabled the calculation of 20 places of pi in a single hour by the 18th century. The concept of an infinite number was introduced to mathematics during this era.

Digit-finding progressed competitively throughout the 1800s, culminating in William Shanks' computation of 707 digits of pi. No one discovered there was a mistake in his 527th digit until 72 years later.

There have been, still are, those amateur calculators who set out to prove the great brains wrong, and are convinced by their own answers that there has been a conspiracy to hide the true ratio from the public, since theirs is obviously correct.

One of these mathematical cranks almost convinced the Indiana state legislature in 1897 to endorse his particular version of pi – 3.2 – as the legal ratio in that state.

Luckily, a visiting professor stumbled upon this bill in the house of representatives and managed to stop it.

The next great leaps were taken using mechanical desk calculators in the 1940s. The number's one thousandth digit was calculated in 1948.

Enter ENIAC the following year, with 19,000 vacuum tubes of computational power – a whopping 2037 digits were churned out in merely 70 hours!

From then on, computer machines became increasingly faster and more powerful, and the digits have mounted up til our present-day unbelievable 1 trillion, with still no discernable pattern in sight.

In modern times, human competition has shifted from the discovery to the memorization of these digits.

The current Guinness-confirmed champion, a Chinese chemistry student named Lu Chao, managed to recite 67,890 digits of pi from memory.

Clearly these are strangely talented people, as are most of those who chose pi as their life's work throughout the ages.

To this day, "circle-squarers," or cyclometers, are out there with a

compass and straight edge, preaching the validity of their own (wrong) results in the face of voluminous argument to the contrary.

My own little pi obsession, hidden in the basement for ten years, is a strange cross breed: a textile pi.

I imagined that a colorful, three-dimensional display of the first 100 numbers of pi in some unusual juxtaposition might display some sort of pattern. Translating from one medium to another, I cut colored fabric in a spectrum from white (zero) to orange (nine), to lengths in inches corresponding to the first 100 digits of pi.

I then sewed these strips of fabric end to end, with zero being a line of corded white fabric sewn between its adjacent numbers. I then used this long strip of colorful pi to cover a long piece of foam tubing, coiling the whole thing up in a spiral that used 3.14 feet as a base circumference.

As a visual pun, I took 20 white gloves and stuck the fingers (digits) through these coils of fabric. It was not a very pretty looking thing, after all this effort, and – no surprise – yielded no pattern.

Not understanding the more advanced math, like many other cyclometer cranks, didn't deter me from pursuing pi. The unwieldy sculpture, proving nothing, is stuffed in a far corner because it displays a conceit I'd rather not have to face every day.

But at least it's hubris with a long history: from musicians who've "played" pi by assigning notes to numbers, to poets who've worked it out syllabically, artists and others seek to know this unknowable number in whatever way we can.

Let 3/14/15 be a day to contemplate the mysteries of the universe, and pursue this knowledge with the tools at our disposal, especially the making and eating of circular foods.

Pi Crust (minimal math method):

Grate a stick and a half of frozen butter into 2 cups of flour. Mix it in further with a pastry knife or a few forks.

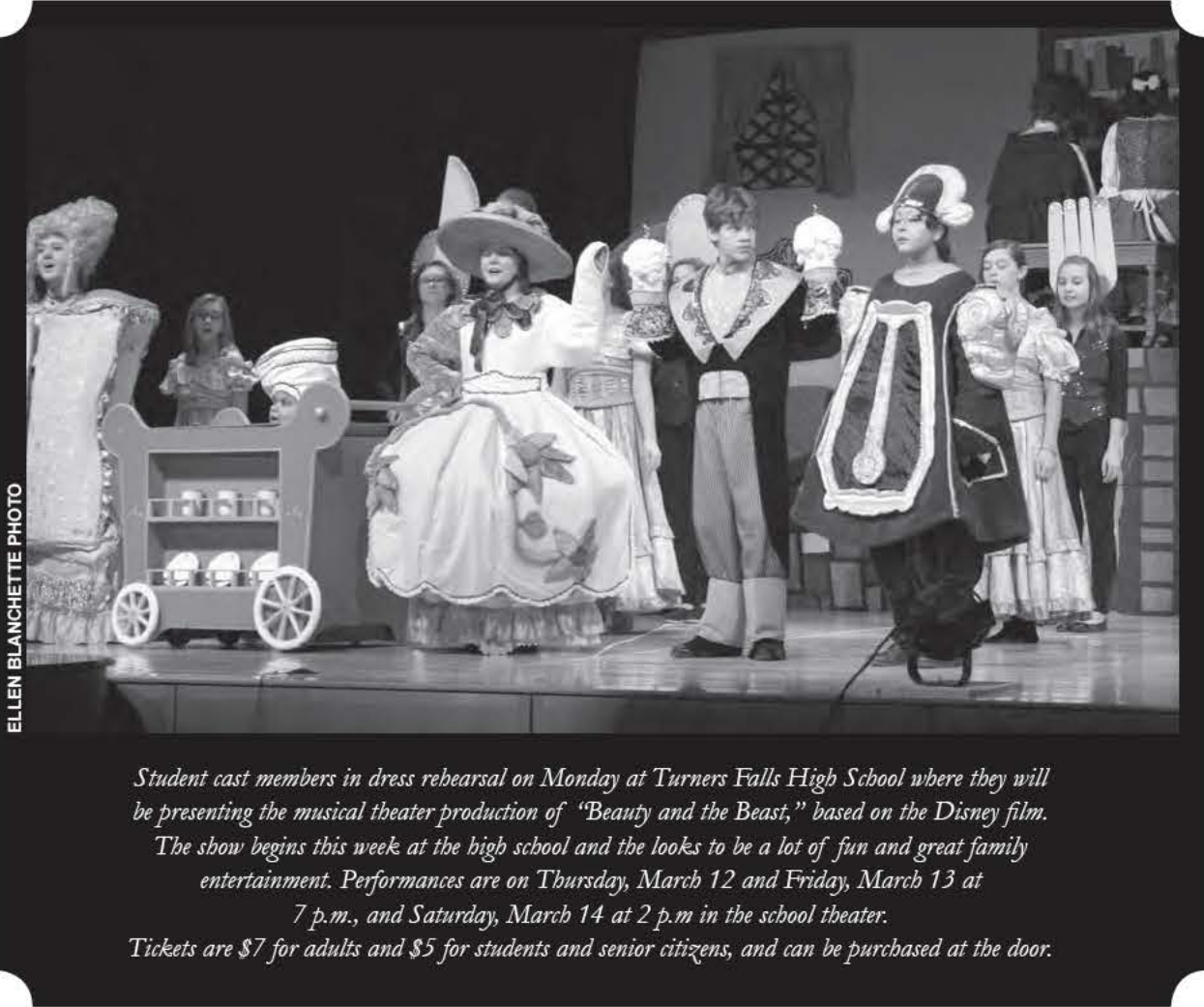
When everything is very small and the butter bits are all coated and separated by flour, add cold seltzer water just until it is a workable consistency to form into two balls, then let it rest in fridge for 15 minutes. Roll each ball out on a floured board to get two circular crusts for your pi.

Pi-zza Pi Crust:

Big Y and Foster's both sell a bag of ready made raw dough for less than \$3.14 that makes one pi. You can't beat that for convenience and it's really pretty good.

Try something different with gourmet ingredients: slices of pear, sautéed red peppers and onions, and gorgonzola cheese. Or spinach, bacon, and sliced plum tomatoes, sprinkled with garlic oil and blessed with smoked gouda.

Have a Happy Pi Day!



ELLEN BLANCHETTE PHOTO

Student cast members in dress rehearsal on Monday at Turners Falls High School where they will be presenting the musical theater production of "Beauty and the Beast," based on the Disney film. The show begins this week at the high school and the looks to be a lot of fun and great family entertainment. Performances are on Thursday, March 12 and Friday, March 13 at 7 p.m., and Saturday, March 14 at 2 p.m. in the school theater.

Tickets are \$7 for adults and \$5 for students and senior citizens, and can be purchased at the door.

LOOKING BACK: 10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Here's the way it was on March 10, 2005: News from the Montague Reporter's archive.

Moving Forward on Dry Hill

At the Montague selectboard meeting on March 7, there was an attempt to gain some ground on the contentious issue of public access to the Dry Hill Cemetery, on town-owned Dry Hill Road in Millers Falls.

James Senn, whose land abuts both sides of Dry Hill Road along Wendell Road as far back as the cemetery, told the board his grandfather had blocked off the public road many years ago. Since then, it has been difficult for relatives, genealogists, or sightseers to visit the graves in the old cemetery without traveling a long washed-out side road. An electric fence and No Trespassing signs further discourage pedestrian or vehicular traffic to the public cemetery.

Board member Allen Ross said, "There should be no limitations on Montague citizens going up the historic road now. The town has to have access to its cemetery. I move the town mark the historic road and create access on the existing route, and declare it open to the residents of this town."

The motion to survey and mark

the historic Dry Hill Road and open it up first to pedestrian traffic, and then to consider how to improve it for vehicular traffic, carried two to one.

Waxwings Flock to Town

Flocks of cedar waxwings and robins add a lively dimension to Turners Falls in late winter. The birds love the ornamental fruit trees wise community planners have placed in the tree belts.

At the foot of Third Street hill, sleek cedar waxwings and plump robins enjoy the fruit of the Washington hawthorne that hangs on the tree through the winter. Some years bohemian waxwings, straying from their wintering grounds in the north-central states, appear in town with their more common local cousins. So far this year, the bohemians have not appeared, but bird watchers, who know that Turners is attractive to these delightful visitors, do come looking.

Both waxwings are elegant birds. The cedar waxwing is a crested brown bird with a black bill and eye stripe, and the yellow band at the end of his tail is smaller and sleeker than the robin. He has a small red sealing wax spot in the middle of his lower back, not always easy to see.

The bohemian waxwing looks similar to the cedar waxwing, but is a heftier brown bird, with white wing patches and reddish undertail markings. The waxwings come in flocks to good feeding sites at their pleasure, and are not accurately predictable.

Permits for Portable Garages?

On March 7 the Gill selectboard reacted to resident complaints that building inspector Jim Cerone, of the Franklin County Cooperative Inspection Program, had been issuing letters to people in town who had put up the tent-like parking structures, and instructing them to take out building permits for them. The board received this information dubiously.

"There are now four or five residents of Gill that Mr. Cerone has been around saying they need permits," said board member Ann Banash. "Why, if their office has told everyone they are temporary structures and they don't need a permit?"

Banash, who has one of the portable garages up at her home, said "I didn't get a letter. It appears to be somewhat selective. Who gave Mr. Cerone the authority to do this?" The select board pledged to clarify the matter with Cerone.

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BEEF from pg B1

books and websites entirely dedicated to deep-frying everything, and I mean everything.

It wasn't until I had exhausted the original ego boost that came with my proud creation that I actually sat down and typed "beer battered corned beef" into an internet search engine. When I hit the "return" button, imagine my dismay as I scrolled through page after page of my "invention."

Anyway, here's the recipe:

To begin, prepare your *mise en place* (gather everything you need). This should include your deep fat fryer preheated to 350 degrees, or a pot filled with oil, should you be lacking this essential piece of equipment. Included herein is your corned beef, which you either bought, or brined for five days, boiled, cooled and trimmed.

Prepare the batter by whisking together one part beer with one part flour. The measured amounts will change depending on how many people you are feeding. You may use whatever type of beer you have available, though a light ale is generally preferred.

The flour can be the flour you have in the cabinet, or you can use rye flour or corn meal – or some combination of all – to give another level of flavor. Changing the flour may change the consistency of the batter; adjust accordingly.

Add some whole grain mustard or dry mustard to the batter, again being careful not to change the consistency too much. Add some fennel, cumin, or your own spin.

Reserve some flour to dredge, or coat, the corned beef before dipping it into the batter. I am always surprised by how little you actually need for this stage of battering.

Cut the corned beef into strips, about a quarter-inch thick and a manageable length. The size is entirely contingent on the size of your fryer, plates, and guests, and whether you intend to use it as an appetizer or entrée.

Bring the batter very close to the fryer. Some cooks will create a drip area for the inevitable mess that will

result by placing parchment paper or aluminum foil beneath the area where the meat will be transferred to the fryer.

Dredge the pieces of corned beef in the flour you reserved, and then dip into the batter. Allow your fingers to get dirty!

As you remove the corned beef from the batter, allow the excess batter to drip off, but don't obsess over this step.

Slowly allow each piece to enter the fryer, so that it can begin to cook before it sinks to the bottom. If you neglect this step, it will stick to the bottom of the basket or pot and become very difficult to remove without damaging.

Cook the deep fried corned beef 'til it's done. How long, you ask? Probably a couple of minutes.

But, as a professional chef, I cannot answer that question without breaking an unspoken rule in the industry. There is also a two-minute rule. In the industry, if a server asks a cook how long until a certain table's food is finished, the cook will have an automated response. Cooks have very little understanding of actual time. They have what is known as "cook's time."

My default answer is always "two minutes," regardless of how long it will actually be. If something is very near completion, I will abruptly change my answer to "ten seconds."

If I am in the weeds, or backed up, my answer will be "an hour." That's it. It's either ready in two minutes, or ten seconds, or an hour. Can you appreciate a smiling server a little more now, knowing that even the simplest question will likely lead to aggravation?

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

Check out his blog at thesobersouschef.com.



Wendell Free Library: Recent Paintings by Donna M. Horn

By RICHARD BALDWIN

The Wendell Free Library is pleased to present an exhibition of new work by Donna M. Horn, Wendell resident. Donna received a local Cultural Council grant last year to produce a series of paintings focused on monsters, ten of which are featured here.

These works continue a series Donna has been working on for years. In addition to these she includes a number of recent paintings in which she experiments with new materials. The combination makes for a fun and intriguing show which will delight all viewers.

Monster and fantasy imagery appear in nearly all cultures and throughout history. They are found in fine art, crafts, architecture, and more recently in comic books, science fiction film, cartoons, tattoos, the list goes on. They are often terrifying, meant to frighten.

Donna, however, puts her own spin on hers. The monsters here are puzzled, curious, surprised, frightened, humorous and above all, charming. All are friendly, and all but two here are soft and fuzzy somewhat like stuffed animals. These are monsters for everyone to love.

The smallest of the monster paintings, "Disheveled Monster in a Humid Summer Field", is a delightful image of a pink fuzzy small monster holding a flower in a field with a flock of crows flying overhead.

"Disheveled" is a perfect word to describe this one. He/she seems surprised and shocked, perhaps by being seen by the viewer in some forbidden place.

In "Very Posh Monster with Flowers", illustrated with this article, we see almost the opposite of the small "Disheveled Monster". The monster also holds a flower but here the overall feeling is one of bewildered satisfaction. The way light shines from above coupled with how light seems to emanate from the painting itself convey a sense of reverence, even holiness.

Each of these ten paintings express feelings that are all too familiar to the viewer, yet are hard to pin down in just a single word or two. It is not altogether clear whether the monsters are reacting to something perceived outside themselves or some internal stimuli or both.

The remaining nine paintings in the exhibition are continuations of Donna's work with fantasy and figure. The largest of the three, "My Happy Place", is a combination of acrylic paint, glitter, plastic flowers, and small beads. A small seated figure, portrayed as a Hindu Goddess, is in the center surrounded by a garden of shimmering delights. In traditional rendering the Goddess often has numerous pairs of arms.

Here Donna achieves the same effect with colorful waves like hair that spread out and upward framing the figure's head. Where in more traditional paintings the animals depicted are often tigers and lions, here there is a rabbit in the right foreground. The story behind this painting is that Ms. Horn invited residents via a local Listserv to send in images of their Happy



Donna Horn, "Momma Monster"

taking ourselves super seriously. When I get stressed and blocked and people start to get me down, I paint monsters, and it brings it all back into perspective for me. The monsters are adorable, and silly, and self-important, and they are us.

"The other paintings, the ones with the women really are about breaking through, busting out of the atmosphere, into an inner space. They can be said to represent the breaking free from a block. The monsters deal with the silliness of the outside world, the other paintings deal with gaining access to the inner world, which is boundless."

Donna Horn has been making art for most of her life. She earned a BFA degree from UMASS Amherst where she studied painting with Leonal Gongora, James Hendricks and Jeanette Cole.

She has shown in numerous venues in western Mass, has participated in the area's annual Interface event and more recently had one person exhibitions at the Deerfield Gallery in South Deerfield and the Wendell Library. She is the recipient of a number of awards, and her work is in many local collections.

Ms. Horn emphasizes that she does not like to talk or write about her paintings. They need to stand on their own. In her typical succinct manner she says "Painting eliminates the obligation to explain."

You are invited to come and enjoy this latest work by one of Wendell's finest. You can also see more of her work at donnahorn.wordpress.com.

The exhibition runs from March 6 through May 2 in the Herrick Room at the Wendell Free Library. Hours: Tuesdays, noon to 6 p.m.; Wednesdays, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Saturdays, 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.; and Sundays noon to 4 p.m.

Richard Baldwin is on the Wendell Free Library's art exhibition committee.

Pellet Bag Recycling!

Franklin County Solid Waste Management District's recycling program for wood pellet bags is proving to be very popular with residents at the thirteen municipal transfer stations that are offering the free program.

Residents of Bernardston, Buckland, Charlemont, Conway, Deerfield, Leverett, Montague, Northfield, Orange, Rowe, Shelburne, Warwick, and Wendell can bring their pellet bags to their own transfer stations. In addition, Greenfield Transfer Station accepts pellet bags for free from any Franklin County resident. Ask Transfer Station attendants where to put pellet bags.

WOOD PELLETS ONLY! Other plastic bags are not accepted; do not include feed bags, soil bags, pesticide bags, or stretch film. The outer wrap from a delivery of a pallet or skid of pellet bags IS accepted; cut it into 4 or 5 pieces.

All bags must be empty and dry. Wet bags will cause the entire load to be rejected by the recycling company. Pellet bags are baled and shipped to Trex to be recycled into plastic lumber.

Important: shake out all wood pellets before recycling. Gill resi-

dent Ray Purington shares a tip: "I keep a pair of rugged scissors on the shelf above the pellet stove and cut open the top of the bag an inch or so below the heat-sealed area. I cut across both sides of the bag, about 1/2 - 3/4 the width of the bag, stopping in the middle. That way, the cut flap remains attached, and I've got a smooth 'spout' that doesn't trap pellets when I pour from it."

When the bag is empty, cut open the bottom of the bag to fully release any pellets. Store bags flat and then roll or fold the pile into a pellet bag that has been cut at the top only. Do not ball up or crumple the bags.

A Massachusetts Community Innovation Challenge Grant and a grant from MassDEP funded start-up costs for this program. The program was launched in the fall of 2014.

For more information see www.franklincountywastedistrict.org/PelletBagFlier2.pdf.

Questions? Contact the Franklin County Solid Waste District at (413) 772-2438, or info@franklincountywastedistrict.org.

MA Relay for the hearing impaired: 711 or 1(800)439-2370 (TTY/TDD). The District is an equal opportunity provider.

Place. This painting is her own contribution.

The other figurative paintings are "Dreaming" and "Breaking Through". In both a figure is portrayed floating upward against a background, sky at the top, ground at the bottom, filled with glitter and small bangles.

The backgrounds are dark, but in "Breaking Through" the figure is surrounded by streaming light as in a moment of illumination. The titles, again, accurately describe the feeling in each work.

The remaining six small paintings are similar to one another, each like a bejeweled garden, filled with fantastic sparkling shapes and glitter. They are very much like jewel boxes with bits and pieces winking at the viewer. They would fit perfectly in the landscape of the film Avatar.

Each of these paintings is coated with a thick transparent layer of clear acrylic medium. This fixes the glitter and beads and collage pieces in a shallow relief enhancing the feeling of looking into a magical terrarium. As in all her paintings the frames are part of each piece, chosen with care and often painted.

Donna writes, "...the monsters are about the silliness of human beings. We are silly cute monsters

JULIA RABIN PHOTO



Donna Horn, "Very Posh Monster with Flowers"

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Book Review

Dissolving the Grip of Fear

By LEE WICKS

LEVERETT—I confess; I drove to the Mount Toby Meeting House on Sunday with some trepidation. The Leverett Peace Commission was hosting a book launch for Penny Gill written, *What in the World is Going on?*

Subtitled “Wisdom Teaching for our Time,” the book is presented as a record of conversations Ms. Gill has had with Tibetan teacher, Manjushri. Not “sit down and let’s talk in person” conversations. These teachings came to Ms. Gill as a voice in her head, unbidden at a time of great despair, and she sat at her computer and acted as a scribe. Manjushri is an ancient bodhisattva in Buddhist tradition, associated with wisdom.

On the way there I thought: *what if I don’t believe her? What if I insult my friends on the Leverett Peace Commission? What hope can there possibly be in our very troubled world?*

After an hour, I did believe her, but it would not have mattered if I didn’t. Manjushri’s message, delivered through Ms. Gill’s talents as a teacher, is compelling and optimistic.

Ms. Gill is graceful and self-effacing. She is a Mary Lyons professor of Humanities at Mount Holyoke College where she has taught

political science for forty years. According to Jim Perkins who introduced her and first met her when he brought his granddaughter to a tour of Mount Holyoke, Ms. Gill is a beloved professor. That was easy to see on Sunday.

Her wit is harder to uncover within the pages of the book, which is dense and challenging. Ms. Gill compared it to a bullion cube, and that image of a hard flavor-packed entity that has to be dissolved before it can be used serves a reader well.

Ms. Gill says, “It should be read in small pieces in no particular order.” One reader told Ms. Gill that she opens the book each morning to a random page and reads herself to accept the lessons that appear.

And what are those lessons?

A few years ago, troubled by environmental degradation, partisan politics, war in the Middle East, hunger, inequality and any other so-

cial ill you can name, Penny Gill was in despair, filling page after page of her journal with rants. She felt, as many do, powerless. Then she heard a voice that said, “We don’t see it that way.” According to Gill, it was Manjushri speaking for himself and other teachers, and presenting a different interpretation of our time.

Manjushri reassured Gill we are in a time of great transition and tremendous energy. We are poised to expand our consciousness and address deep fears, which do not serve us. Much of the book addresses fear and breaks it down into two kinds.

There is the fear of immediate real danger: the tiger in the grass. That fear serves us and keeps us alive. But the other fear, the fear that keeps us counting to make sure we have more than the other guy, that causes corporations to gobble up “market share,” fear of the other that creates suspicion among people of different faiths: this fear is harm-

ing our spirits, and the planet.

Ms. Gill summarized, “If we could dissolve the grip of fear on our hearts, we would know what to do and move on. Society has separated thinking from knowing from the heart.”

The idea of an expanded and loving consciousness is not new. It can be found in all religions, but it is very accessible here and helpful for those who follow no organized religion.

Manjushri and Ms. Gill offer examples of “Lights going on all over the world. Maybe you have not yet turned on your lights, but you see that your neighbor has, and you do too. If you could see the planet at twilight from a great distance, you would see the lights go on, one by one, twinkling.”

Another message I liked: “Perhaps humans who are learning to live a compassionate heart-centered life are the T-cells of the universe.

In our bodies, T-cells fight infection. In our world, heart-centered people each make tiny T-cell like decisions and all together these can create change.”

In his review of the book, Jim Perkins wrote, “The optimism of Penny Gill’s book rests in the promise of a rapidly changing and deepening sense of who we really are, not autonomous individuals in competition with each other, but as ‘participants in a plan we have not originated or authored.’ Rather than thinking of ourselves as a flawed, cruel, greedy, and doomed creature, we might better understand the present moment as a glorious, if extremely dangerous moment in the evolution of consciousness.”

Ms. Gill’s questions, and Manjushri’s responses, are never falsely optimistic. The challenges we face as a society are vast, and that is readily acknowledged. One path is offered here. Seekers might want to check it out and use this book as a guide to be closely read and slowly digested. A deeper understanding of the nature of our fears would be liberating. Discussing the book with friends would nourish the bonds of community.

I left Ms. Gill’s talk feeling comfortable with a mystery. What writer has not read his or her words at the end of a session and wondered where they came from? Didn’t Joan of Arc hear voices? Didn’t the God of the Old Testament speak into the void, saying, “Let there be light?”

We fearful frightened humans need all the help we can get. Manjushri has much to teach and Ms. Gill is a keen kind teacher, too. They make a good team.

The book is available at the Balboa Press website, on Amazon, and at local bookstores.



Penny Gill, at the Mount Toby Meeting House.

So Long, Winter!

By REPORTER STAFF

Spring promises rebirth from winter dormancy, and you might want to celebrate this journey by immersing yourself in The Imaginary Show at Madison on the Ave on Thursday evening, March 19.

Five acts during the evening create an auditory bridge between the seasons: Max Armen, Derrick Hart, Tarynn O’ wonderer, Filthy Luger (Bryan Gillig and Andrea Glampyre), and Daddy Dino and the Who’s Who? Band.

Responding to the music with projected images will be the role of photographer Joseph McCormack.

Tarynn O’ wonderer is back in the area from a stay in Berlin, Germany and is busy collaborating with local musicians and artists on various projects.

Her roots as a musician are unusual and involve a sort of spiritual serendipity: she was hitch hiking across the US and was given a special guitar pick.

Images of a guitar appeared to her afterwards in her meditation practice, and when someone then gave her a gift of a guitar, she started to play.

O’ wonderer is a self taught singer-songwriter who describes her music as “real, raw, sometimes wild, sometimes touching... depending on the day and on my mood.”

Her songs contain meta-

phor and wordplay, and sometimes contain cultural and political commentary.

Like many musicians, she says she has a feeling for sound and vibration and how it “accesses an altered state or a deeper place within oneself or deeper connection with people and place around you. All of us, on some level, have a spiritual connection to what we do with our music. We are definitely taking people on a journey.”

What started as a therapeutic exercise for herself has also become a sound therapy she uses with other people, sometimes working specifically to support musical process and clear creative energy blocks with others, but also to provide what one witness describes as a “chakra energy tune-up” experience.

Her therapeutic one-on-one sessions use drums, tuning forks, and other instruments to create vibrations and frequencies that one may participate in, or simply become an immersed receiver of sound.

With a variety of performers as well as visual treats, an eclectic evening beckons us beyond the dirty snow piles of middle March. Gather new energy in the soundscape and see what sprouts from there!

The show starts at 6:30 p.m. at Madison on the Ave, 104 Avenue A, Turners Falls.

Saturday, March 14: United Arc Annual Auction

GREENFIELD—Help the United Arc celebrate its 14th Annual Spring Auction on March 14 from 4 to 5 p.m. at Greenfield Community College’s Cohn Family Dining Commons. All proceeds benefit critical support services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. Suggested admission is one non-perishable food item or toiletry for The United Arc’s food pantry.

The program will feature a live auction, silent auction tables, raffles, a penny social, door prizes and more. Items include an opportunity to be a

Lefty’s Brewer-For-A-Day, a week in a mountainside condo at Stowe, an African Safari, ski and golf packages, spa and wellness services, fine art, housewares, and a private lunch, state house tour and photo with Senate President Stan Rosenberg. Hors d’oeuvres will be served and a cash bar will be available.

The United Arc’s Auction program will also have a number of opportunities to fund a project or activity that enriches the lives of individuals in the Arc’s family support and adult services programs. This event

will help the United Arc fill funding gaps.

The United Arc has provided comprehensive and individualized support services to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities throughout the Pioneer Valley and North Quabbin region since 1951.

Attendees who RSVP by Friday, March 13 will be entered for a special drawing.

Register with Siiri Paton at (413) 774-5558, email siiripaton@unitedarc.org, or register online at www.unitedarc.org.

Friday, March 20: Sunwheel and Sky-Watching

AMHERST—The public is invited to witness sunrise and sunset associated with the spring equinox among the standing stones of the UMass Amherst Sunwheel on Friday, March 20 at 6:45 a.m. and 6 p.m. These Sunwheel events mark the astronomical change of seasons when days and nights are nearly equal in length in the Northern Hemisphere.

UMass Amherst astronomer Christopher Thibodeau will discuss the astronomical cause of the sun’s changing position during the hour-long gatherings. He will also explain the seasonal positions of Earth, the sun and moon, and answer questions about astronomy.

The exact time of the vernal equinox this year is 6:45 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time on March 20. This ushers in the beginning of spring.

From the Sunwheel in Amherst, observers standing at the center of the standing stones see the Sun rise and set over stones placed to mark the equinoxes.

The Sunwheel is located south of McGuirk Alumni Stadium, just off Rocky Hill Road (Amity Street), about one-quarter mile south of University Drive. Visitors to the Sunwheel should be prepared for especially wet footing this year. Rain or blizzard conditions cancel the events. Donations are welcomed.

Sunday, March 29: PVSO Plays Sibelius and Rachmaninov

DEERFIELD—At 7 p.m. on Sunday, March 29, Pioneer Valley Symphony music director Paul Phillips will conduct a concert commemorating the sesquicentenary of composer Jean Sibelius, with his *Tempest Overture* and Symphony No. 3 in C Major, Op. 52.

Also on the program is the Pioneer Valley Symphony debut of

pianist Jeffrey Biegel, performing Rachmaninov’s popular and virtuosic *Piano Concerto No. 3 in D Minor, Op. 30*.

The Pioneer Valley Symphony Youth Orchestra will perform a short, informal concert in the lobby at 6 p.m., followed by a pre-concert presentation by Amherst professor David Schneider at 6:15 p.m.

There will also be a silent auction to raise funds for all PVSO programs.

Advance tickets are \$25, \$20 for seniors and \$6 for children and students.

See pvsoc.org/single-tickets. Group rates are available. Contact Susanne Dunlap at (413) 773-3664 or susanne@pvso.org.

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ONGOING:

EVERY SUNDAY

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

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

EVERY MONDAY

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

EVERY TUESDAY

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

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

EVERY WEDNESDAY

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

EVERY THURSDAY

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

EVERY FRIDAY

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

EXHIBITS:

Great Falls Discovery Center,

Turners Falls: *An exhibit of historic photographs of villages, hamlets and hollows, reproduced from the collection of the Swift River Valley Historical Society* on display in the Great Hall. On display through March 28.



Sassy, jazzy blues by Lexi Weege in Wendell at Deja Brew on Sunday, 3/15, 8 p.m.

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

UMass Fine Arts Center, Amherst: *Ethel Poindexter & Barbara Hadden: Looking and Thinking*, large scale abstract paintings and sculpture from industrial materials, main gallery of the Hampden Gallery. Diane Englander: *Making The Next Thing*, two-and three dimensional works on display in the Incubator Project Space. On display through March 31.

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS: Wendell Free Library invites artists to submit applications for two-dimensional work to exhibit in the Herrick Meeting Room gallery. Applications accepted at any time. See www.wendell-mass.us Turners Falls RiverCulture is looking for art that addresses

the change of seasons, transformation, re-birth and hope. The exhibition will be in the Avenue A Storefront Galleries from March 14 to April 12. All media will be considered- painting, photography and sculpture. Artists may submit up to 6 works. Email jpegs of your work along with a short description to riverculture@gmail.com. Contact Suzanne Lomanto at (413) 835-1390 or visit www.turnersfallsriverculture.org Sawmill River Arts, Montague Center hosts an informational meeting on Monday, April 13 at 5 p.m. for artists interested in joining their collectively-run gallery. Please respond by April 6 if you are interested in attending.

Wendell Free Library, Wendell: Documentary film and discussion *American Revolution: The Evolution of Grace Lee Boggs*. Explores Boggs's lifetime of vital thinking and action, traversing the major U.S. social movements of the last century, 7 p.m.

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Caleb Wetherbee* performs at the Great Falls Discovery Center, 7 p.m.

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: *Jim Armenti*, 8 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Barrett Anderson*, Hypno Boogie Blues! 9 p.m.

The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Dana Osterling & Sara Rachele - AngryGal Records Showcase*, 9:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, MARCH 14

Memorial Hall, Shelburne Falls: *Rossini's La Donna del Lago* presented by The Metropolitan Opera Live in HD, \$, 12:55 p.m.

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

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: *Mark Nomad*, 8 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Free Range*, 9 p.m.

SUNDAY, MARCH 15

Frontier Regional School: The Country Players Present Agatha Christie's *And Then There Were None*, \$, 2 p.m.

Wendell Free Library: *Out of Bounds: Adventures in Transformation*. A celebration of the publication of Sandra Boston's memoir. Brief readings, Q&A; Refreshments, 5 p.m.

The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *TNT Karaoke*, 9 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Lexi Weege*, sassy, jazzy blues, 8 p.m.

MONDAY, MARCH 16

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Bingo!* 8 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Grave Diggers Union* for St. Paddy's Day, 8:30-11 p.m.

THURSDAY, MARCH 19

Greenfield Community College, Greenfield: *Senior Symposia hosts Will Fregosi*. Presentation on *Russian Opera: Tsars, Tatars and the Soul of a People*. Fregosi will trace the long and colorful history of Russian opera from tsarist encouragement through the horrific persecution of artists and composers under Stalin. The talk will feature music from the Romantic operas of the 19th century to the political satires and patriotic epics of the 20th and the bold new work of 21st -century composers, who are spreading their tradition to the West. Downtown campus, \$, 2 to 4 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Half*

Shaved Jazz, 8 p.m.

FRIDAY, MARCH 20

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Patty Carpenter Trio*, 9 p.m.

SATURDAY, MARCH 21

Wendell Free Library, Wendell: *The Jetsons Movie*, SciFi Matinee hosted by Robbie Heller. All ages / family movie, 4 p.m.

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *All COOPed Up Concert!* A diverse bill of local roots musicians from the Franklin County COOP Concerts, old-timey and newfangled acoustic folk music, original songs, and sundry Americana. 7 p.m.

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

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no show

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LIBRARY from page B1

since Wendell does not have its own written history book besides featuring as part of regional ones, Pam Richardson is writing a Wendell volume.

Heidkamp was not aware of any donations to the Wendell library that might be hanging around from times past, so instead of driving up there, I went over to Gill to visit the Slate Memorial Library and librarian and director Jocelyn Carlos-Santos.

In 1909 the Slate family donated \$8,000 to build a library, and ground was broken for a two-room building on Main Road in Gill center in 1921. As late as 1984, a bathroom was finally added. The little chairs in the children's section were made by a carpenter not yet out of his teens, in 1847. They are sturdy and graceful over 150 years later, and serving their original purpose, unlike some other antiques in the building.

At this library, artifacts are within easy reach on top of the bookcases lining the walls of the main room. It's nice that these old objects are accessible and can be picked up — with permission, of course — and examined. As suits the rural setting, most appear to be useful objects from the farms and homes of previous centuries.

One curious cast-iron piece looks like it was a smoker or steamer of some type, but the exact usage has been forgotten over time, and the tag offers no explanation of what must

have been an obvious function at one point.

An internet search later turned up a picture of such a device: it was a **hot iron used for pressing clothes**. Hot coals were put in the body of it, and the upper spout let smoke, rather than steam, escape. This dreary job was more unpleasant for previous generations than I ever imagined.

A board with iron spikes sticking out of the middle presents itself more clearly on the attached tag: "**Hetchel** used by Anna Stoughton, b 1784 d. 1873. Donated by her grandchildren, Charles Stoughton Phelps and Mary E. Phelps."

Research on "hetchel" was rewarding: this spiked board was used to process flax, from which linen could be woven. The stems of the flax plant require a lot of labor to break down into suitable fiber; they need to be fermented, crushed, then combed through these metal tines to separate them into long, smooth, straight fiber used for weaving linen called "line flax" and fluffy short leftovers called "tow" useful for non-wearable woven goods.

Colonists grew and processed flax for their own use until cheap, plentiful cotton took over the textile market in the late 1700s.

There is no flax fiber processing in the US presently. All of our linens are imported due to the still prohibitively intensive processing involved in getting these fibers separated. Flax is instead grown for its seeds, used in linseed oil, and the stalks, which by the time the seeds

are mature have grown too woody to become line flax, are often burnt or chopped to be used for industrial fillers of various kinds.

Some diehards do grow and process their own little patches of flax, but with instructions to break up the fibers by driving over them with your car, it's not too tempting.

Looking around the room at the collection on top of the bookcases, an exhausted **beaver top hat** sits next to an elaborate, heavily padded leather hat case. A **table-top stitching device** looks like it might predate the treadle machine.

A **World War I German army helmet** appears to be sized for a child's head. There's a perforated tin box, which was an **ancient space heater**, running on hot coals.

These are just what is being displayed downstairs at the Slate. A small natural history collection has retired to the upstairs.

Clearly only meant to be a storage area, this bitterly cold attic also holds several **spinning-wheel frames** and outdated, leather-bound **encyclopedia volumes**, stacked among discarded holiday props and other miscellany.

On a windowsill, cold winter sunlight falls on the hide of an **ancient stuffed lizard** of some kind. He's eighteen inches long, and one of his front legs has fallen off and is laying nearby. An **old photograph** propped next to it shows this or a similar lizard on top of a very bristly cactus.

Did someone in town bring this back from an adventure in the southwest? The tag informs us that William Marvel caught this lizard in the Civil War, and stuffed it himself. Marvel-lizard's hard black beaded eyes keep the details of this story a secret.

On the same shelf lies a **slab of metal**, rusted and pitted; the tag says it was from Havana Harbor. Part of a war ship? Who was poking around in the harbor, and why were they trying to retrieve stuff?

After examining the photo I took of the tag, I was able to read: "From the battleship Maine sunk in Havana Harbor February 16, 1898." When I looked into this, I found that the armored cruiser's sinking remains a mystery. Over 200 sailors died. Researchers believe it most likely was the result of some design flaw in the barrier between a firebox and munitions storage in this steam powered vessel.

The incident was exploited by proponents of the Spanish American War, which began later in the year. She lay in the harbor until raised and scuttled in the Straits of Florida in



This German military helmet, or pickelhaube, seems to have been made for a very small head.

1912. This piece of corroded metal must have come from that era, saved by someone working on that project, perhaps?

In a box below, **smooth river stones** of curious shape are nestled together under a blanket of fine dust. A board holds the spread **wings of a butterfly**, though a label proclaims this to be an "artificial" sample.

Some of these objects are symbols of a forgotten past, significant in some cases for representing a way of life long gone even by the time they were donated. Others are embedded in a narrative we have no access to from our present.

Did the impulse to preserve and display these items arise because of the enormous changes that their donors had seen in their lifetimes? Did they sense that relentless progress would eradicate all traces of these earlier ways? Were they more patriotic, more civic-minded?

Perhaps there weren't any "historical societies" with building space to house objects in their time. Or maybe out of sheer love for their dear little two-room library, they were moved to offer this tribute to the ancestors of Gill. Who knows?

For our next installment, I'll be moving on up the road to a library I've always wanted to visit: the Dickinson Library in Northfield.



Remember the Maine? This piece of pitted metal at the Slate Library should help you.

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