



# The Montague Reporter

YEAR 13 – NO. 22

also serving Irving, Gill, Leverett and Wendell

\$1

EDITOR@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

MARCH 19, 2015

## To Restore Original Habitat, Clear Cutting on the Plains

By JOE PARZYCH

**MONTAGUE** – The Anderson Timber Harvesting Company, run by founder Mitch Anderson, his wife Kathy and his sons, Nate and Kyle, is virtually clear-cutting 209 acres of the Montague Plains. The firm is leaving a few select trees to reseed the land so it can return it to what it was prior to it being cleared by early farmers, according to habitat biologist Brian Holt Hawthorne of the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife.

“The sandy, beach-type soil was left as a delta of Lake Hitchcock when the glacier receded, resulting in the breaching of an ice

dam in Connecticut that drained the lake,” Hawthorne said. “The clean, well drained soil keeps mud to a minimum,” he added.

“The soil hasn’t any large stones that would damage the feller-buncher’s cutters or send fragments flying, though a bicycle, TV and other trash dumped under the snow caused damage to the cutting teeth.”

The state is hoping to clear an additional section of landlocked forest that belongs to the Burek family of Montague. The Burek land, composed of several lots, is completely surrounded by state-owned land.

Anderson’s bid of \$30,000 won the company the privilege of clearing the 209 acres

see **TIMBER** page A5



Kyle Anderson’s feller-buncher rests while he confers with Division of Fisheries and Wildlife habitat biologist Brian Hawthorne.

PARZYCH PHOTO

### NEWS ANALYSIS

## Governor’s Budget Sees Little Increase in Chapter 70 School Aid

By JEFF SINGLETON

**BOSTON** – Governor Baker’s new budget is out, and marks the beginning of the state budget process. It contains the latest local aid numbers for the spring local budget season. These numbers include the largest form of state aid to cities and towns, so-called “Chapter 70” state education aid. Levels of Chapter 70 aid will probably not change much, if at all, as the budget works its way through the legislative process.

The new budget shows that nearly all districts in the region are seeing flat Chapter 70. This has generally been the norm since the end of the big increases in education funding nearly fifteen years ago.

Spring budget anguish, featuring cuts in local school programs and requests for unaffordable local school assessments, have also been the norm. Gill-Montague, Amherst-Pelham, Greenfield and Deerfield school districts have all made the headlines in recent months.

This situation is not Governor Baker’s fault. Chapter 70 aid is “formula driven” from year to year, not varying with state revenue or policy projections. Thus it is significant that the latest budget coincides with a review of the controversial Chapter 70 formula.

The review is being conducted by a group called “The Foundation Budget Adequacy Review Commission.” Their work primarily looks at the adequacy of something called the “foundation budget,” one of the key elements of the formula. I will say more on that later.

We tend, in Western Massachusetts, to think

of inadequate state education aid as a problem of small, declining enrollment, rural districts. An analysis of aid distribution in the Governor’s budget suggests this is not true. According to information on the DESE website, only 75 of 325 operating districts in the state are receiving aid increases under the core formula.

The rest have been “held harmless” – given the same amount of aid they received last year, plus an increment of \$20 dollars per student. Districts with flat Chapter 70 aid include some of the largest urban districts in the state.

### Winners and Losers

Table 1 provides some data on the historical dimension of the problem. It shows levels of Chapter 70 to selected districts in the region and state in 2002, 2007 and 2016.

2002 was selected because it represents the end of education reform increases in state funding before the recession that began in that year. In 2007 and 2016, levels of state aid were, and are still, driven by the core formula, as opposed to recession-induced cuts.

Table 1 (on page A6) shows some of the districts in this region that have received flat or even declining state aid since 2002. This generalization applies, for example, to the Gill-Montague regional district, the Northampton district, and the Amherst-Pelham high school district.

Greenfield, on the other hand, has fared better. The district has experienced stable enrollments, coupled with small increases in its local revenues (see discussion of the formula

see **BUDGET** page A6

### WENDELL SELECTBOARD

## With Deal in Sight, Wendell Pushes for Fiber-Optic Internet Signups

By JOSH HEINEMANN

With the start of the budget season, the Wendell selectboard met with the finance committee last Wednesday to review capital expenses, and discuss the effort to get Wendell households a fiber optic internet connection through Wired West.

Now is the time for households in town to sign up and pay a deposit that shows the intention to subscribe once the fiber optic cable is in place. Wired West has calculated that 40% of households

using the proposed fiber optic system will be enough to make it economically viable.

Fin com member Doug Tanner said that if Wendell, Shutesbury, New Salem, and Warwick reach the goal of 40% early, the four towns will form a cluster, and may get priority once construction actually starts. A higher sign-up rate would make the four-town cluster more attractive and make the service more profitable for the provider.

The precise cost of construction is a rough estimate now because Wired West

does not have a certain count of the number of houses, or poles, in Wendell. But their best estimate is that the town will have to borrow \$1.1 million. Not all of that would be borrowed right away, and payments would be small until the sixth year, when they would increase the tax rate on an average house by close to \$13 a month, for an average house assessed at \$164,000.

Tanner emphasized that the increase in town taxes would be more than offset by a decrease in internet costs,

see **WENDELL** page A8

## More Fresh, Affordable Vegetables Coming to Turners Falls

By TIA FATTARUSO

Just Roots, a nonprofit based at the Greenfield Community Farm, wants to increase public access to healthy, local food by connecting people, land, resources and know-how. This summer, that mission is crossing the river to Turners Falls. The organization plans to offer 60 community-supported agriculture (CSA) shares in Turners Falls this growing season, half of which will be donor supported at a lower cost.

“It’s expensive to grow healthy food, therefore it’s expensive to buy it,” Just Roots co-director Jessica Van Steensburg explained. “We try to take money out of the equation.”

Thirty of the shares are offered on a sliding scale of \$500 to \$600, in exchange for about enough produce to feed a family (or friends!) of three to four for 20 weeks, from approximately the end of June to the end of October. Pick-up will be at the Brick House, 24 Third Street, Fridays from 4 to 7.

Jared Libby, director of operations at the Brick House, which is offering the space free of charge, said they were particularly interested in supporting this effort because the other 30 shares will be “donor sponsored” shares.

“This means that low income families can purchase a share at only \$10 per week,” said Libby, “a 60-70% discount. In addition, these shares can be purchased using SNAP benefits, which can really help families access healthy food, and lots of it.”



PHOTO COURTESY JUST ROOTS

Just Roots will also have a stand at the Great Falls Farmers Market this season. The Market will run Wednesdays, from 2 to 6 p.m. on the Great Falls Discovery Center lawn from May 6 to October 28.

Community supported agriculture has become a fairly familiar form for purchasing local and often organic produce. As a prepaid subscription to a share of a farm’s produce for the season, it offers some financial security for farmers and easy, one-stop produce pick-up for the shareholder.

see **JUST ROOTS** page A7

## Practice Makes Perfect



LEFT: Coming out swinging... Abby Loynd at bat during the first day of spring practice for the TFHS Softball Team.

BELOW: Off and running... The TFHS Baseball Team starts the new season, too.



DAVID HOITT PHOTOS



# The Montague Reporter

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## Back to Basics

The towns of Erving, Gill, Lev-  
erett and Wendell have open town  
meetings, as do 21 other towns in  
the county. Any voter who resides  
in those towns can, each spring,  
debate and vote on their town  
budget, bylaws, and other impor-  
tant matters.

Montague is alone in Franklin  
County in having a representative  
town meeting, which it adopted in  
the early 1960's. Orange qualifies  
for one, but has so far declined.  
The city of Greenfield elects a city  
council and mayor.

Representative, or limited,  
town meeting is an odd, interme-  
diate device first used in 1915 in  
Brookline, and amended to the  
state constitution in 1926. Origin-  
ally proposed as an option for  
towns of over 12,000 people, it  
was intended for places that were  
not quite cities, but were having  
trouble managing town meeting,  
or fitting it into one building.

Alfred D. Chandler, who had  
first pitched the idea in Brookline  
and advocated for its widespread  
adoption, felt that too much democ-  
racy was becoming a threat to pub-  
lic administration.

In a 1918 debate at the Massa-  
chusetts Bar Association, Chandler  
warned of "conditions now inten-  
sified in Massachusetts by the ad-  
mission from abroad of large num-  
bers of people whose ignorance  
and political habits are so much at  
variance with native New England  
intelligence, education, and institu-  
tional development."

Arthur Lord, president of the As-  
sociation, found solace in the fact  
most people didn't bother show-  
ing up: "The permanence of the  
town meeting then which won the  
admiration of Jefferson and de Toc-  
queville, neither of whom I suppose  
ever saw a town meeting, would  
today be practically impossible in  
a town of twelve thousand or more  
voters, if it were not for the neglect  
of their duties as citizens by three-  
fourths of the qualified voters."

But, Lord pointed out, "in the  
populous towns some form of rep-  
resentative town meeting will be  
still more imperative when you  
double the number of qualified  
voters," a scenario that "the zeal-  
ous advocates of woman suffrage"  
insisted – correctly – was right  
around the corner.

After women were allowed to  
vote in 1920, the proposed cut-off  
dropped from 12,000 to 6,000.

Has it been necessary? Most  
Massachusetts municipalities larger  
than Montague actually still have

open town meetings. (55 are cit-  
ies, 34 have representative town  
meetings, and 104 have open ones.)  
Andover seems to manage open  
town meeting despite having over  
33,000 residents, if you include the  
women.

Of the towns smaller than Mon-  
tague, 156 have open town meet-  
ings, and only one other elects rep-  
resentatives: Lee, which may do so  
in violation of the state constitution,  
since its population has recently  
slumped below the 6,000 mark.

This suggests that Montague  
is the smallest town in the state to  
use the system legitimately. Or per-  
haps in the world! Maine and New  
Hampshire allow for the institution,  
but no towns in those states are us-  
ing it. In Vermont, only one does  
– Brattleboro, which periodically  
debates the merits of this foreign  
intrusion. And of the eight towns in  
Connecticut that elect town meet-  
ing members, the smallest is Water-  
ford, whose population is more than  
twice Montague's.

Fifty years on, the institution may  
be faltering. Montague is split into  
six precincts, each of which must  
elect 21 representatives. Though we  
still hear from certain quarters that  
our participation in local adminis-  
tration will be the foundation of a  
shining new democratic society,  
most seem to view it as just another  
volunteer gig, and a drag.

According to town clerk Deb  
Bourbeau, four seats are vacant in  
Precinct 1, one in Precinct 2, five in  
Precinct 3, two in 4, four in 5, and  
a whopping seven in Precinct 6. In-  
terested parties may take out nomi-  
nation papers by March 26 and re-  
turn them by the 30th.

The best argument we've heard  
in favor of this representative sys-  
tem is that it spreads the power  
geographically, preventing any one  
village from packing or dominating  
the meeting to push its interests.

To use a hypothetical example,  
a neighborhood full of retirees  
would have the edge over one full  
of young parents, when it comes  
to volunteering to sit through long  
meetings and staying informed  
between them. They might get  
all the road money, and under-  
fund the schools.

But the bigger question may be  
one of civic engagement, and inclu-  
sion, throughout the town.

Maybe it's a coincidence, but  
smaller towns that restrict partici-  
pation at town meeting to an elected  
group tend to have more people rent-  
ing their homes than most towns of  
similar sizes (see Figure 1, below;

## A Note from our Features Editor

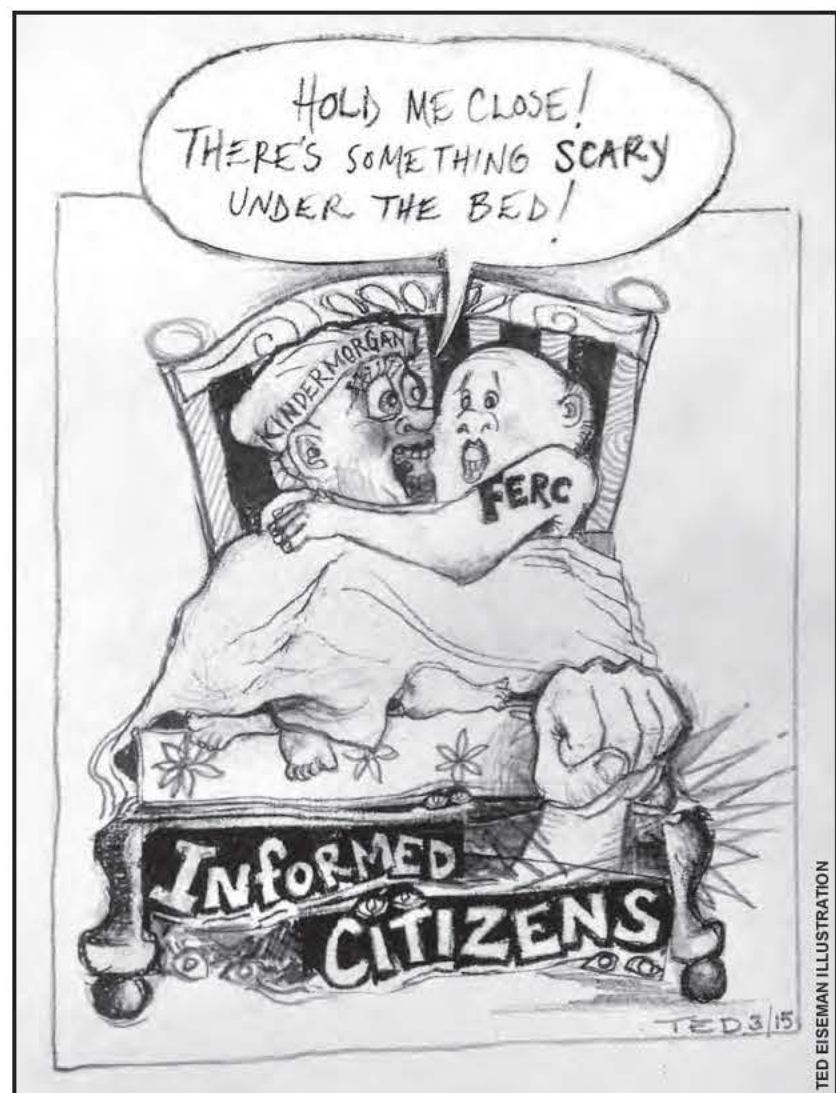
I made an error of omission in  
the Pi Day article ("An Irrational  
and Transcendental Day") in last  
week's *Reporter*.

Since I have never been able  
to find raw pizza dough in our lo-  
cal Food City market, I didn't list  
them as a place to buy it. Some-  
one said they were sure they do  
stock it, so I went on a mission  
to locate it.

With the help of an employee  
there, we found bagged, frozen  
dough in the Hershey's Ice Cream  
cooler alongside the ice cream  
cakes. The cooler is located next  
to the Brick Oven Pizza depart-  
ment to the right of the entrance. I  
was told customers may also buy  
fresh raw dough from the pizza  
baker in six different varieties.

Good to know! For years, I've  
looked for it in vain in the frozen  
pizza and garlic bread section.

Apologies to Food City for ac-  
cepting this apparent inventory  
gap without a thorough investi-  
gation.



## Letters to the Editors

### Please Keep An Eye Out

Flower arrangements, statuary, animals, cars, and now a gar-  
den cart – which was an anniversary gift from my deceased hus-  
band – were stolen from my property on Tuesday, March 10!  
Really!!

The cart not only has sentimental value, but for many years  
has been a god-send for garden and yard work as a vehicle to  
hold weekly trash.

Please return it – no questions asked.

Peg Bridges  
Montague Center

### Please Vote!

Montague will have a busy May, with  
big election choices for selectman, and town  
meeting.

We should all vote, for OUR representa-  
tion. Select our Selectman candidate and do  
get out and vote May 18.

Betty Tegel  
ADA advocate  
Turners Falls

Montague and Adams, which both  
use representative town meeting, are  
just about on top of one another).

39% of Montague's housing units  
are occupied by renters. (Within  
Turners Falls, it's 49%.) This is not  
a new development, and it sets the  
town apart from most its size.

Some of these tenants are, for a  
wide range of reasons, transient;  
others may be long-term residents  
who either choose not to purchase  
real estate or cannot afford to. But  
feeling included – politically, cultur-  
ally, socially – can make the differ-

ence between moving away and try-  
ing to stay put, in the face of family,  
employment and housing changes.

In a town kept running by vol-  
unteer initiative – and where many  
mortgage and tax payments are  
funded by rent – citing home-  
ownership as evidence of commit-  
ment, as we sometimes do, subtly  
discourages two-fifths of the  
town's households from feeling  
more invested in the community.

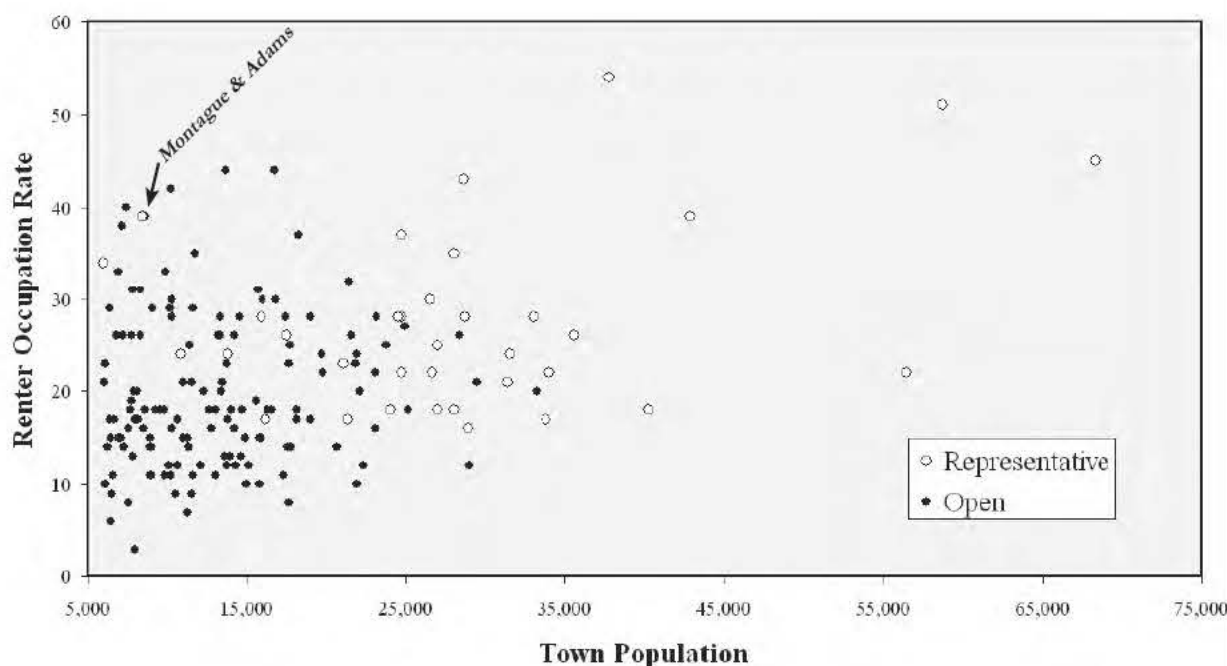
Every town has its insiders. But  
if Montague is having trouble des-  
ignating a mere 1.5% of its residents

to embody the will of the town, it  
should either go back to an open  
town meeting or take the process a  
little more seriously.

Representation is a two-way  
street, and leadership is not a hobby.  
We suggest town meeting members  
in each precinct host regular, open  
forums to discuss neighborhood  
concerns, and how they might be  
brought to the town level.

This may be more work in the  
short run, but it will pay off in time if  
it builds a broader base of participa-  
tion in the public life of the town.

Figure 1: Massachusetts Town Meetings (Population over 6,000)



WE WELCOME  
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Montague Reporter

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JESSICA LARKIN ILLUSTRATION

Compiled by DON CLEGG

**Take the mystery out of fine wines** on Saturday, March 21, from 10 to noon at Greenfield Savings Bank in Turners Falls with local resident Diane Kimball-Hickey, an independent wine guide with The Traveling Vineyard.

Certain types of wine help to enhance and accentuate a fine dining menu choice while showing your expertise as a host or hostess. Kimball-Hickey's knowledge will make any event stress-free so you can enjoy your guests. Sorry, there will be no actual wine "tasting" at this event. However, there will be cheese and crackers so imaginations can run the gamut.

On Saturday, March 21, from 1 to 3:30 p.m., **celebrate the first day of spring at Barton Cove** with Northfield Mountain Recreation and Environmental Center staff. Barton Cove is the site of ancient waterfalls, vernal pools, dinosaur footprint quarries and nesting bald eagles.

Join naturalist Kim Noyes on this two mile leisurely hike. You will observe the first wildflower of spring, search for nesting eagles and explore the rich geological, natural and cul-

tural history of Barton Cove.

Meet at the picnic area in the Barton Cove day-use area, just off Route 2 East (after the Wagon Wheel). Wear sturdy shoes or boots, dress in layers and bring binoculars, if possible. Depending on snow and trail conditions, creepers or snowshoes may be needed. This is a free event. Please call to pre-register at 1 (800) 859-2960.

**Feeling cooped up?** Come out of the cold and get into the music. The All COOP-ed Up 2015 concert series kicks off Saturday, March 21, at 7 p.m. A diverse bill of local roots musicians from the Franklin County COOP Concerts will heat up the Great Falls Discovery Center in Turners Falls.

The program features old-timey and newfangled acoustic folk music, original songs, and sundry Americana.

Artists include: Austin and Elliott, Michael Nix, Orlen and Gabriel, Pat and Tex LaMountain, Joe Graveline, Sue Kranz and Ben Tousley, Russ Thomas, Small Change, Jim Eagan, Roland LaPierre, Charlie Conant.

Suggested donation to benefit the Greenfield Coop Summer Concert Series. This evening is sponsored by

the Friends of Great Falls Discovery Center. For more information about the show, contact: Christopher Thomas Elliott (781) 690-6617. For more information about COOP Concerts, see [www.coopconcerts.org](http://www.coopconcerts.org). For more information about the Great Falls Discovery Center, visit [greatfallsdiscoverycenter.org](http://greatfallsdiscoverycenter.org).

**Hillcrest Elementary School Kindergarten Registration** is on Monday, March 23, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Hillcrest School, 30 Griswold St., Turners Falls.

Children must be 5 years old on or before Sept. 1, 2015. Please bring: birth certificate, record of immunization, proof of residence, photo ID. For more information call 863-9526.

**Gill Kindergarten Registration** is on Monday, March 23 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Gill Elementary School, Boyle Road, Gill. For children who reside in Gill who will be 5 years on or before Sept. 1, 2015. Please bring birth certificate, record of immunization, proof of residence, photo ID. For questions call 863-3255.

The Gill Montague Council on Aging and a building committee appointed by the 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. John 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.

Enjoy an **early spring fitness walk** along the popular canal side bike path in Turners Falls with Northfield Mountain Recreation and Environmental Center staff, on Wednesday, March 25, from 5 until 6:30 p.m.

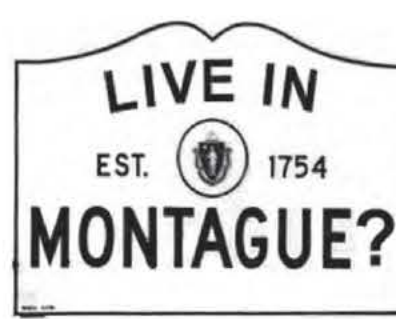
This scenic walk includes views of woods, water and historic mills. Brief rest stops offer opportunities to limber up with simple stretches and balance exercises, and explore local history and spring wildlife sightings.

Kim Noyes and Liz Parson will co-lead this three mile walk along the flat, paved trail. Meet at the Fishway parking area on First Street in Turners (15 First Street.) This is a free event. Please call to pre-register at 1 (800) 859-2960. Directions sent to registered participants.

The **Franklin County Spring Parade** will take place Saturday, April 18, "on the hill" in Turners Falls. The parade is free to participate in, but pre-registration is required.

Any business, organization, or group interested in joining can contact organizer Michael Nelson at 522-0712 or [michaelnelsonmba@gmail.com](mailto:michaelnelsonmba@gmail.com). Friend the parade on Facebook – "Franklin County Spring Parade" – to get updated info.

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



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## GUEST EDITORIAL

By RODNEY MADISON

**TURNERS FALLS** – When local citizens or businesses offer to maintain a planter on Avenue A, the Town of Montague does not require them to buy liability insurance. Until now, I guess.

I run a shop called Madison on the Avenue. Like many business owners downtown, I volunteer to decorate the town-owned planter in front of my store.

As you may know, in 2013, the accessories I use in my planters became an issue brought before the selectboard for discussion. There is no policy stating that a citizen volunteering to decorate a planter must provide insurance. The volunteer committee that oversees the planters was at that time asked to develop fair guidelines, but none have been adopted.

The controversy over my planter began to take a more personal tone last fall, when I appeared before the selectboard to ask permission to

display items in front of the store.

The Board allowed Chief of Police Dodge to bring up questions that were neither on the agenda nor relevant, like my tax and utility payments. In addition, the selectboard required me to produce documents showing that my business is "legitimate."

Chief Dodge also said he'd volunteer to haul "that junk" away, and that I was being "ignorant" to his officers.

I brought in every document the selectboard asked for, but the damage was done. The allegations that my business was not "legitimate" were widely publicized in the media and have hurt my business.

When I prodded town officials to state publicly that my business was, in fact, "legitimate," two members of the selectboard finally acknowledged that it "appeared" that I had fulfilled all requirements. The Chief, however, would only say, "No comment."

The experience left me with lit-

tle faith in our current selectboard, who allowed our public meetings to be used as a soapbox by a town employee with what I can only perceive to be a vendetta against me and my business.

Having found no satisfaction at town hall, the Chief put in a call to the Department of Revenue. I am now under an audit by the IRS. Any business owner in Montague should find this exercise of power chilling.

In any case, I purchased liability insurance for a down payment of \$400, as requested by the town selectboard. Due to the winter snow and ice, I stopped putting merchandise there, and, not wanting to waste money, suspended the policy – which was never for the planter decorations.

Last week I received a letter from the selectboard saying that, since I cancelled a policy providing \$1 million in liability insurance, I have to remove all non-plant items from both the sidewalk and planter in front of my shop. (For some reason it was cc'd to the Chief of Police!)

No other business is required to buy insurance to decorate a planter.

I am searching for reasons for all of this attention being paid to my business and my planter. This goes far beyond anything I anticipated when I started using unconventional ornaments in my planter.

Is it because the found objects I use as garden ornaments are seen as weird or inappropriate? In fact, there is a long tradition of garden ornaments similar to those I use.

A nationally known exhibit celebrating this cultural tradition is currently on display at Smith

College. *Places for the Spirit: Traditional African American Gardens*, a series of large-scale photographs and essays by Vaughan Sills, can be seen at Smith College's Lyman Plant House through September. (See [www.smith.edu/garden/exhibits/exhibitions.html](http://www.smith.edu/garden/exhibits/exhibitions.html).)

According to the Chicago Botanic Garden, where this exhibit was also shown, "These gardens have a unique aesthetic and cultural significance.... In the deceptively casual or whimsical arrangements are subtle and symbolic reminders of the divine in everyday life and the cycles of the natural world." ([www.chicagobotanic.org/exhibitions/spirit](http://www.chicagobotanic.org/exhibitions/spirit))

I have requested that the issue of requiring insurance for my planter be placed on the agenda for this Monday's selectboard meeting. If they grant me an appearance, I'd love to hear voices of support and dissent.

To find out whether this will appear on the agenda, call the selectboard office, 863-3200 ext. 108, or check online at [www.montague.net/pages/montaguema\\_BOSAgenda/](http://www.montague.net/pages/montaguema_BOSAgenda/).

I would like to thank the majority of the community in Turners Falls for the overwhelming support I have received over this long, drawn-out saga.

If you'd like to see a change in the tone of our town's politics and discourse, remember to make your voice heard by voting in the town election this spring. Our voices do actually count in local elections.

Only 9% of Montague residents voted in the last town election. Register if you need to, and come out and vote May 18.

## HELP WANTED – PART-TIME, TEMPORARY.

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

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NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD

More Frozen Pipes, and Meals for Seniors

By KATIE NOLAN

“Wait for the thaw,” water department supervisor Peter Sanders recommended for the frozen water main at the senior and community center. The center has been closed since March 6 because water is not available in the building.

Over the last week, the highway and water department tried heating the main with thermal blankets. Water department and highway personnel also staffed around the clock shifts for two days using a “torpedo,” a heater that blows out high heat along the water main.

However, according to Sanders, the efforts were not successful, because the location of the frozen section was not known and the frozen section could be lengthy. He said that the main is not frozen at Erving Elementary School at 28 Northfield Road, but is frozen somewhere between the residence at 34 Northfield Road and the center, a distance of approximately 200 feet.

Sanders told the selectboard that Montague, Greenfield, and Athol had similar problems at town buildings, and those towns were also waiting for warmer weather to thaw their mains. He told the board that companies specializing in thawing mains are very expensive, some charging over \$300 per hour for their work.

Interim senior center director Paula Betters told the board she and the recreation commission had discussed using the kitchen and other rooms at 18 Pleasant Street, the former senior center and now the recreation center, temporarily for senior exercise classes and senior lunches.

“Volunteers are ready to clean the rooms,” Betters said. The board approved using the rooms at the

Pleasant Street building temporarily for senior center programs until water is restored to the senior and community center.

Underground is Cold

Sanders recommended, and the board approved, buying a Magikist jet de-icer pipeline thawer for \$2,400, to thaw frozen water supply lines to residential properties. He said that several properties in town have lost water service this winter due to freezing.

Sanders said that Montague owns a Magikist and will help Erving out for now, but it would be useful for Erving to have its own unit. He told the board Montague bought the Magikist several years ago, but has not had to use it until this year, when it has been used “over twenty times.”

Sanders said that there is money in the water department budget to buy the Magikist. He reported that it would not be useful for thawing a large main, such as the one serving the senior and community center.

Generator Bid Award

The board accepted the third lowest bid (\$64,500) for supplying three propane generators to the town, from ANSE of Marlborough.

According to Sanders, the two lowest bidders did not meet the bid specifications, because the generators they proposed did not include delayed transmissions.

Part-Time Maintenance

Betters requested funding for a part-time maintenance/custodial worker at the senior and community center in fiscal year 2016. She said that the center currently has a 9-hour per week custodian, and that more hours are needed to keep the build-

ing maintained.

She cited the need for additional hours for maintenance tasks such as cleaning the kitchen grease trap, changing geo-thermal filters, painting, and floor polishing.

The board approved a line item of \$15,000 for a 19.5-hour per week employee, without benefits.

Senior Center Lunches

Betters told the board she has started researching whether the town could supply senior lunches. Currently, lunches are provided by Franklin County Home Care Corporation three days a week, free to seniors, with a suggested donation of \$2.50 per meal. The meals are prepared off-site, and warmed up at the center by a FCHCC employee.

Betters said that former senior and community center director Polly Kiely had prepared meals on Fridays, purchasing ingredients, preparing them, and cleaning up afterwards. Betters said that since she became interim director in February, she had tried “twisted Tuesday” meals, ordering pizza and preparing a salad, or having potluck meals.

Inspired by the large turnout for Kiely’s Friday meals and the “twisted Tuesday” meals, Betters wondered whether the town could prepare the lunches for the same price as FCHCC. She said that preparing meals would create costs: hiring a prep/line cook for 6 hours per day, purchase of a commercial freezer, and purchase of smallware kitchen equipment.

Selectboard chair William Bembury asked about costs for ingredients and whether the center would need to hire a nutritionist.

Betters answered that more research was needed, but she wanted

to get a sense of whether the board thought the idea was worth pursuing.

Selectboard member Margaret Sullivan suggested, and the board approved, adding an article to the annual town meeting warrant asking whether townspeople favor the idea of the town supplying the senior meals.

Assistant assessor Jacquelyn Boyden commented that a revolving fund, similar to the school lunch revolving fund at Erving Elementary School, could be used to fund senior meal preparation.

Betters also outlined program ideas for seniors in the next fiscal year, including a senior community garden, a computer training program, and an entrepreneurial crafts program, where seniors would create crafts that could be sold to fund activities such as senior field trips.

Other Business

The board awarded the contract for a redevelopment and market study for the former IP Mill to Tighe & Bond. The board interviewed Tighe & Bond and the other applicant, Gorman Richardson Lewis Architects, on March 13.

The board approved Rebecca Hubbard’s request to include a one-page membership letter from the Friends of the Library in the mailings with town tax bills.

The letter describes Friends of the Library as “a group of community members that are interested in promoting the library, its resources, programs and activities.” The annual membership dues are \$5 for an individual membership, and \$10 for a family membership.

LOOKING BACK

10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

*Here’s the way it was on March 17, 2005: News from the Montague Reporter’s archive.*

Hallmark Show to  
Benefit Tsunami Relief

The devastation caused by the December 26 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami has drawn an outpouring of support from all over the world, including Turners Falls.

At the end of April, Hallmark Institute of Photography students’ work will be on display and for sale, and the entire proceeds will be donated to AmeriCares, a nonprofit disaster relief and humanitarian aid organization.

Erving Town  
Meeting Approves!

The select board convened a special town meeting on March 14 to address 11 warrant articles, totaling about \$445,000 in expenditures from the town’s free cash account.

The nearly two dozen town residents present voted to approve all the requests unanimously, most requiring little or

no discussion.

One large item included putting \$100,000 into the account for the continuing closure costs of the Maple Avenue landfill in the village of Farley.

The small landfill was sealed long ago, but board chair Andy Tessier explained that some material is exposed. The state will determine whether the landfill must be completely sealed according to 1980 or 2005 standards.

Questions About  
Plain Road Sand Pit

Mark Stuart has a sand and gravel operation on Plain Road in Wendell, with selectboard permission given on the condition that he apply for a business license by December 31, 2004.

The planning board also wants a site plan and an estimate of the final shape the sand mine will take. So far, Stuart has met neither condition.

After some discussion, the selectboard came to a decision to have the town coordinator draft a letter to Stuart, inviting him to the next board meeting to address these issues.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ERVING POLICE LOG

A Week Without Arrests

**Monday, 3/9**

12:25 p.m. Assisted on scene of medical emergency on the French King Highway.

1:15 p.m. Took report of past larceny at West Main Street.

8 p.m. Took report of phone scam on French King Highway.

8:35 p.m. Took report of one-car crash at French King Highway and Union Street.

9:15 p.m. Disabled motor vehicle, French King Highway at River Road

**Tuesday, 3/10**

1:15 p.m. Report of sinkhole at Dorsey Road near the French King Bridge abutment. MassDOT advised.

**Wednesday, 3/11**

7:10 a.m. Assisted Erving DPW with frozen

sewer main on Northfield Road.

8:20 a.m. Took report of motor vehicle crash at Forest Street.

6:39 p.m. Report of power lines down on Mountain Road. Found to be telephone lines.

**Thursday, 3/12**

2 a.m. Disabled motor vehicle on Northfield Road. Same hit hazard in roadway. Took report.

6:12 a.m. Assisted on scene of medical emergency on Central Street.

10:15 a.m. Assisted on scene of medical emergency on Mountain Road.

**Friday, 3/13**

12:30 p.m. Report of deceased farm animal. Found to be in Wendell. Referred to Wendell animal control.

1:20 p.m. Assisted on scene of medical emergency at Renovator’s Supply.

7:30 p.m. Motor vehicle hit a deer on Northfield Road. Took report.

**Saturday, 3/14**

4:39 p.m. Alarm at Lillians Way. Found to be secure.

4:53 p.m. Complaint of multi-colored pickup racing up and down roadways. Located same and advised owner of issues.

**Sunday, 3/15**

9 a.m. Took report of larceny at Strachen Street.

2:35 p.m. Report of a snowmobile abandoned on Poplar Mountain Road. Under investigation.

Leverett Homeowners Assistance

Thinking about buying a home in Leverett?

Join us for an informational meeting on the Leverett Homeowner’s Assistance “Buy Down” Program on March 23 at 6 p.m. at the Leverett Town Hall.

The program provides up to \$50,000 for income-qualified fami-

lies to buy an affordable home in Leverett.

Applications are due April 15 and the lottery will be held May 7.

Contact the Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority at (413) 863-9781 x 156, or email [alangley@fcrhra.org](mailto:alangley@fcrhra.org) to learn more.

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**TIMBER** from page A1

of timber. The second-highest bidder was \$10,000. Though Anderson's bid was for the removal of timber, they also remove much of the underbrush.

"The Andersons do a great job," biologist Hawthorne said. "We're going to have a firm come in with a Fecon flail brush mower to clean away the underbrush, but the Andersons clear most of the brush with their feller-buncher and chip it with their chipper."

"Their contract specifies that they take everything down to four inches but they remove a lot of the brush, too. They do a fine job, and leave tree stumps just three or four inches high. We like them. They have a fine reputation, and do a lot of work on Fisheries and Wildlife land."

The Cat feller-buncher is a track machine with a 360-degree swing. The business end is a heavy-duty horizontal circular saw with 2-1/2 by 2-1/2 inch square, cupped teeth that cut the tree at the stump in a twinkling. Its arms embrace the tree, holding it upright during cutting and then transporting it to the bunch pile where it is stacked.

**Heavy Duty**

A grapple-equipped Cat 545C skidder, weighing over 24 tons and operated by Kevin Bailey, drags the bunched trees to the processing site. There Nate Anderson, or his

father Mitch, operating a 360-degree-swing 559 Cat and grapple-equipped log handler, smoothly sort, saw into logs, and feed trees and brush into the whole-tree Mor Bark chipper.

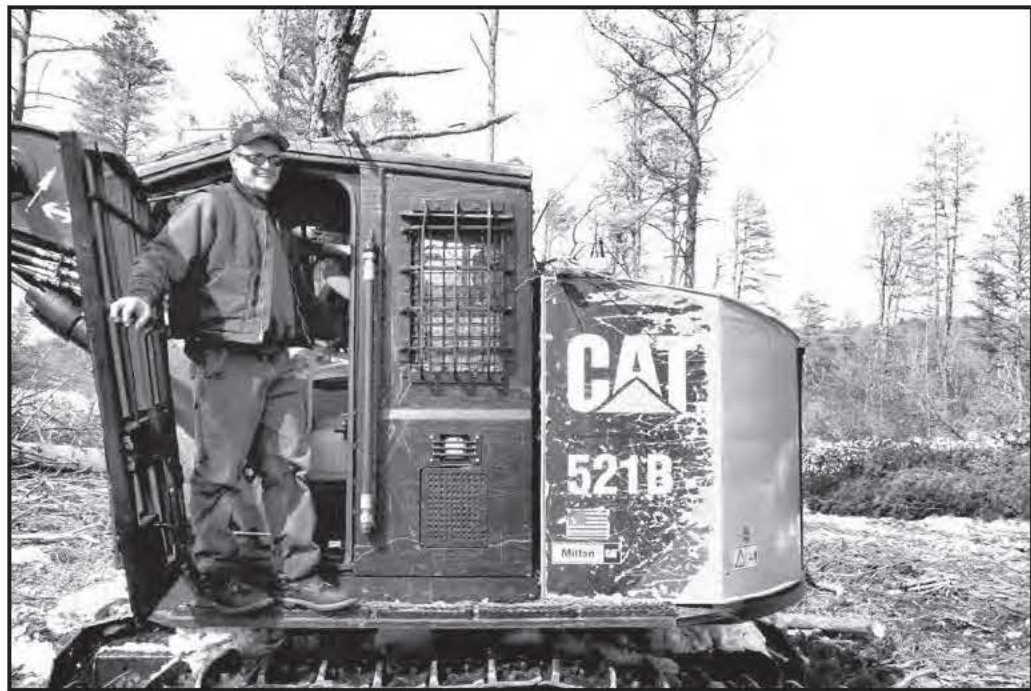
Though Nate and his father keep the entire processing operation going simultaneously, all machines must be in operation. Just one machine out of commission will bring the entire job to a halt.

"That's why our equipment is new or less than two years old," Mitch Anderson said. "Breakdowns always seemed to happen during miserable weather, and that's why we worked our way up to owning late-model equipment."

"We couldn't do it when we first started out, but we found markets for the material that paid well, and we discovered it was a whole lot easier and a lot more profitable harvesting logs than repairing equipment."

While logging is a very dangerous occupation, the feller-buncher removes the danger of a tree falling on a chainsaw operator, or beaming him with a falling "widow-maker" limb.

The machine operator sits secure inside a heavy-duty metal cab with a heavy-duty metal grill in front of bulletproof glass. This allows him to view his work while shielding him from debris, such as a loose saw tooth or shattered rocks thrown by the saw.



*Kyle Anderson, happy operator of this Cat 521B Feller-buncher pauses from his swift & sure tree felling and bunching operation for a quick photo op.*

The hydraulic motor-driven saw blade spins parallel to the ground at a high speed, with considerable inertia generated by the heavy cutter blade, enabling it to zing through a tree trunk in seconds without slowing down.

The heavy blade continues spinning at a high rate of speed for quite some time after it is shut down, due to its inertia.

**Sandy Soil**

Early farmers considered the Plains a wasteland, despite the White Coal Experimental Farm that demonstrated that by irrigation and the planting of sweet clover, the land could yield abundant crops.

Sweet clover is a bushy, invasive plant with a large root system that grows up to five feet tall, even on poor soil. The root system, which contains nitrogen fixing-nodules, fertilized the soil and added "green manure" when plowed under and left to decay.

Sweet clover is still planted as animal feed and for enriching soil in the West, but for some reason, it was never met with popularity as a useful plant by area farmers. They grew tired of trying to grow crops on the sandy soil, and let it grow back to the trees and brush that the Andersons are harvesting, now.

Biologist Hawthorne hopes to restore the area to an understory of tree oaks, scrub oak, and pitch pine trees by leaving a select scattering of existing trees to re-seed the area.

The purpose of the near-clearcutting, according to Hawthorne, is to encourage a return of a larger population of wildlife, though locals say there were plenty of big deer, both bucks and does, already populating the plains prior to harvesting.

Two to four trailer truckloads of harvested logs go to various saw mills daily, mostly in New Hampshire. Pitch pine is used for flooring and beams. White pine logs are processed into boards and trim material. Oak timber is used for the manufacture of flooring, for use as cord wood, and to convert to wood chips.

Chips are destined to mass burn power plants and to wood pellet manufacturers. About eight 35-ton loads of wood chips are harvested and trucked out daily.

**Working Smarter**

Mitch Anderson, owner of Anderson Timber Harvesting, started logging in the mid-1970s with his brother Scott. They used chain saws and a John Deere 440 skidder. It was a lot of hard work. Scott left for other employment.

Mitch Anderson continued, later joined by his sons, Nate and Kyle. The firm also added six employees as the business grew. Anderson's operation gradually became more mechanized with log loaders, a whole tree chipper, cut-off saw, skidders and a fleet of tractor trailer trucks.

His truck fleet includes four Western Star tractors, two Mack tractors, a Volvo tractor and a Ford tractor. They have two log transport trailers, and six box chip trailers. In addition, they have two Dodge maintenance trucks and a Mack Petroleum tanker.

Yes, they still use a chainsaw to trim logs, at times. The Andersons, who are college educated and would rather work smarter than harder, keep a stable of well-maintained, late model, nearly new equipment in order to harvest and transport forest products safely, productively and profitably.

Saturdays are set aside for greasing and maintenance of trucks and equipment. One piece of equipment out of commission can bring the whole operation to a halt.

"You don't make any money with equipment break-downs," Anderson said. "Keeping the operation going offsets the cost of new equipment. Everyone likes running good equipment."

"We want to keep everyone safe, happy, and productive, working together."



*Eight loads of chips, and between two and four loads of logs, ship out daily from the timber harvest operation on the Plains.*



*Company founder Mitch Anderson climbs into his fuel tank truck.*

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NOTES FROM THE MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

# Board Puts Lynch’s CAC Request on Hold

By JEFF SINGLETON

The Montague selectboard has delayed a vote on whether to appoint Kathleen Lynch to the town’s Cable Advisory Committee (CAC). The unresolved issue is whether her appointment would create a conflict of interest, since Lynch’s spouse, Dean Garvin, is employed as station manager at Montague Community Television (MCTV).

The CAC is charged with negotiating a new license with Montague’s cable television provider, currently Comcast. It also oversees the town’s contract with the local access provider, currently Montague Community Cable Incorporated, which operates MCTV.

Local access provides public, education and television programming on assigned channels. The revenue for this service, which includes weekly broadcast of the selectboard, is a percentage of revenue from the cable provider. Both contracts are currently up for renewal this spring.

Lynch argued that her role as the station manager of Easthampton Community Access Television uniquely qualified her to serve on the committee. She noted that her station had just completed negotiations with Charter Communications, that she would be helping a second town in its negotiations, and that she had negotiated an older cable contract in the “previous incarnation” of MCCI.

“I have gone through this process,” she stated, pointing out that she had a strong background on technical issues like net neutrality because she is part of a “network of cable administrators.”

Board member Mark Fairbrother stated he felt that, due to Lynch’s relationship to Garvin, there was a conflict of interest involving both key tasks of the CAC – negotiating a Comcast license and evaluating MCCI.

Lynch defined conflict of interest more narrowly, arguing that she could avoid votes on “personnel” decisions, and that “the scope of the work the CAC is supposed to cover is beyond that.” Conflict of interest only arises “when votes are taken,” she said.

John MacNamara, a current member of the CAC, stated he felt Lynch was “highly qualified” and doing a “great job” in Eathamptn. But, MacNamara stated, “everyone knows the history of the CAC and the [MCCI] board,” so he felt putting her on the CAC “is not the best idea.”

Conflict erupted over the CAC’s evaluation of MCCI last year. Lynch was a vocal public critic of the advisory committee and its evaluation process. She filed sev-

eral complaints with the state over the CAC’s failure to keep minutes and respond to legal public document requests. The controversy led BOS member Fairbrother to ask for the resignations of the two chairs of the CAC last November. Both did resign, but questioned his authority to do this as an individual member of the board.

MacNamara also suggested that Lynch could instead play a role in helping MCCI improve local programming.

Lynch responded that she was already doing that as a volunteer, pointing to a recent broadcast of a Halloween party.

Town administrator Frank Abbondanzio stated that he had checked with town counsel, who had a “strong opinion” that Lynch’s appointment would produce a conflict of interest.

Discussion turned to whether Lynch could be a non-voting, “*ex officio*” member” of the committee, although this status was not clearly defined. Lynch said as a member of the public she would not have access to key committee documents.

The decision was put on hold. The selectboard asked Lynch to ask the state ethics commission if she could serve as an *ex officio* member.

## Other Business

John Dobosz, the Director of the Parks and Recreation Department, came before the board to announce a “work bee” to remove the “rather large” play structure from the old Montague Center School property.

Dobosz said the event would take place on Saturday, May 9 at 9 a.m. Some members of the Montague Center Fire Department have expressed interest in helping with the project, but Dobosz stated, “we need a pretty healthy crew to get the structure down.”

He suggested volunteers bring tools to help with the project. The structure, he said, would hopefully be placed in the “old blacksmith shop” on town property across the street for storage. For details contact Parks and Rec at 863-3216 or [recdirector@montague.ma.gov](mailto:recdirector@montague.ma.gov).

Town administrator Frank Abbondanzio brought three items before the board. One was a request for a sewer abatement totalling \$36 which the board approved. The second was a change order for sewer lining, an increase of \$25,895. Both requests were approved.

Finally Abbondanzio requested, and the board approved, the appointment of Robert Steinberg to the town’s broadband committee.

The meeting adjourned into an executive session to discuss personnel issues. The next selectboard meeting will be on March 23.

## BUDGET from page A1

below). This year, however, aid to Greenfield has essentially been level funded.

The list of “losers” in the Chapter 70 sweepstakes includes some of the larger districts in the state. Education aid to Boston and Somerville, not generally considered rural school districts, is flat yet again, as it has been for nearly fifteen years (see Table 1).

If aid to Boston and Somerville were not “held harmless,” these two cities would be faced with significant funding cuts.

The list of “winners” in the Chapter 70 sweepstakes is also revealing. School districts in this category tend to be among either the richest or the poorest districts in the state.

Table 1 shows that state aid to the wealthy city of Newton, for example, has increased by over 40% since 2002. On the other side of the coin, Lawrence and Springfield, relatively poor cities both in terms of their demographics and housing values, have received substantial increases during the same period.

Why do so many school districts perennially encounter flat state aid?

The assumption of the foundation budget review process currently under way is that a more adequate foundation budget, a key component of the Chapter 70 formula, will help solve the problem. There is strong evidence that the foundation budget has not kept up with inflation, particularly in the areas of employee health care and special education.

But will adjusting the formula for these factors actually produce more aid to local districts when the numbers come out the other side?

From 2007 through 2009, the foundation budget experienced very high inflationary increases (in the order of 4 and 5 percent). This is probably what a foundation budget adequacy adjustment would produce. But during those years, fully two-thirds of the districts in the state experienced flat Chapter 70 aid under the core formula each year.

Several years ago, former Governor Patrick proposed a state income tax increase which poured a significant amount of new revenue into the Chapter 70 program. But under his proposed budget, fully 45 % of school districts in the state still experienced flat Chapter 70.

## The Chapter 70 Formula

Another common explanation for this dynamic – and for the data in Table 1 – is “declining enrollment.” A careful look at the state aid formula reveals that this is a good explanation, but in part because the formula itself tends to exaggerate the impact of enrollment.

The Chapter 70 formula is based on funding something called a “foundation budget.” The foundation budget is often dismissed as not resembling a real local budget, not having been updated since it

TABLE I. All figures sourced from latest state budget figures

	Chapter 70 (Millions \$)			% Increase/Decrease	
	2002	2007	2016	‘02-’16	‘07-’16
Gill-Montague	6.4	6.2	6.1	-4.6	-1.6
Greenfield	9.5	9.1	12.0	26.3	31.9
Mohawk	7.3	6.0	5.9	-19.1	-1.6
Mahar HS	3.8	4.8	5.3	39.5	10.4
Amherst-Pelham HS	9.4	9.7	9.3	-1.1	-4.1
Leverett Elem.	.27	.24	.28	3.7	16.7
Shutesbury Elem.	.57	.53	.61	7.0	15.1
Frontier HS	2.5	2.7	2.8	12.0	3.7
Deerfield Elem.	.76	.92	1.0	32	8.6
Northampton	7.5	6.9	7.1	-5.3	2.9
Holyoke	59.5	65.1	70.5	18.5	8.3
Springfield	206.6	232.8	309.2	49.7	32.8
Boston	205.6	210.5	212.3	3.3	.8
Somerville	24.3	20.0	19.7	-18.9	-1.5
Newton	11.4	11.0	20.0	75.4	1.8
Lawrence	104.2	123.1	177.6	70.4	44.3
Framingham	9.8	10.6	37.5	282.7	253.8
Massachusetts	3,213	3,505	4,506		

was created in 1993.

The first part of that critique is certainly true, thus the review commission. The second part is not true. The foundation budget for every district is updated each year for enrollment and a federally generated inflation factor.

The basic formula is rather simple. A foundation budget is funded by a local (“minimum”) contribution plus, state funding (Chapter 70). Thus, Chapter 70 equals the local foundation budget minus the local (minimum) contribution.

You calculate this year’s foundation budget for your district, then calculate this year’s local contribution, subtract the latter from the former, and you get your Chapter 70.

If this calculation produces a level of Chapter 70 that is below last year’s, then you are held harmless and given a small per-student increment.

Now the calculation is a good deal more complex. This is particularly true of the minimum contribution, because the state is still phasing in something called the “aggregate wealth model” for determining local resources.

But the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education provides excellent data and shows the calculations for every district in the state on its website. A few years reviewing this data for your district will make you an official Chapter 70 guru. Think about it.

## The Role of Enrollment

Back to the question: will a more adequate foundation budget provide more aid for most school districts in the state? As suggested, the historical evidence suggests that this may not be the case.

The problem may well be the role of enrollment. The formula tends to greatly exaggerate the role of enrollment in calculating annual changes in the foundation budget. It assumes that if your budget is roughly \$10,000 per student

and you lose ten students, the total foundation budget will be \$100,000 lower than if your district did not lose those students.

Since most districts have experienced declining enrollment since the end of education reform in 2002, most districts have experienced very small increases in their foundation budgets.

But the minimum or local contribution is barely influenced by enrollment at all. It is essentially a measure of local wealth compared with all the other cities, towns, and school districts in the state. For most localities, this means the local contribution tends to increase by between two and four percentage points.

This not only creates a double standard – state school spending is heavily influenced by enrollment, while local spending is not – but the double standard has a mathematical consequence. When you subtract an inexorably increasing minimum contribution from a sluggish foundation budget, you get flat Chapter 70. A higher inflation rate for the foundation budget would help, but not that much.

Part of the reason for this is the well-intentioned tendency to hold school districts harmless to avoid Chapter 70 cuts. What this means is that for most districts, even those which should perhaps receive aid increases under the formula, last year’s Chapter 70 covers this year’s calculation. The historical legacy of the formula is that districts fall further and further behind.

We can see the impact of this dynamic on the school districts in Table 1. Gill-Montague’s Chapter 70 has declined since 2002, but the DESE data shows that its local contribution has increased by nearly 50%.

Northampton has experienced a similar decline in its state aid, while its required contribution has gone up by 72% since 2002. For

see BUDGET next page

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**BUDGET** from previous page

Somerville the situation is even more extreme. The state contribution to local education has declined by nearly 20% during the past decade, while its mandated local contribution has risen by more than 65%.

The central argument here is not only that this is a double standard, but the constant increases in local contributions, unimpeded by enrollment, cause flat Chapter 70.

**Brilliant but Flawed**

It should be emphasized that the minimum contribution is not the real local contribution to education. Local funding for the majority of districts in the state is well above the required contribution in the formula.

The foundation budget is not the true budget for most districts, thus the adequacy review.

Finally, the level of Chapter 70 to districts is generally higher than the amount the formula says they should receive. Thus, the formula is a hypothetical construct, albeit a brilliant one, that constantly tweaks a hypothetical Chapter 70 for reasonable measures of equity and adequacy.

The problem is, the formula is used to distribute real money, and most districts don't get much of it when the numbers come out the other side. The burden then falls on the cities and towns.

This analysis also suggests that many, if not most, districts may not get more money from a more ade-

quate foundation budget. But phasing in such a budget could be a very costly proposition that undermines other state programs.

Advocates for local education sometimes seem to forget about the state university system, community colleges, human services programs, and the Massachusetts universal health care law. The solution proposed is generally to raise the state income tax but, beyond the political realities, this analysis suggests even a tax increase could well leave the majority of districts out in the cold.

There may a better way to distribute Chapter 70 aid that addresses this problem: flat but consistent base annual increases in state aid, periodically adjusted for adequacy and equity.

State education aid would be based on state revenue realities, just as local funding for education is calculated under the minimum contribution. A target could be set at, say, a 2.5% increase for every district, periodically adjusted.

This would encourage long-term planning of local education budgets, and would also take into consideration the needs of other state programs.

But the foundation budget review commission will need to consider, or encourage someone else to consider, the broader problems with this formula. At the very least, the Commission can use its technical capacity to project the impact of a more adequate foundation budget in the real world.



**JUST ROOTS** from page A1

It also grows relationships.

"People are sharing recipes and stories about how they use their food. The feedback that we get is that it's really changed their lives. They remember what the food tastes like," said Van Steensburg.

The farm provides a weekly newsletter with suggestions for recipe planning, storage and canning, and information about what is growing at the farm to be anticipated in the coming weeks' shares. Offering educational weekend workshops and intensives at the farm site, 55 community garden plots and school programming, Just Roots strives to make it easier to integrate healthy food into a lifestyle.

As the Just Roots education coordinator, Anne Louise Burdett sees how children respond to getting to try new and different fresh produce at the "snack market" she has established at the Four Corners Discovery School in Greenfield. The "snack market" is expanding to Federal Street and Newton elementary schools this year.

Burdett said Turners Falls would be a natural extension of this program and, according to Libby, of the Brick House, Just Roots "has already offered to help support our annual youth 'snack garden' project, where we grow things like snap peas, cherry tomatoes, and other healthy snacks for our Teen Center."

"Kids feel really empowered because they get to try something and assert their opinions," Burdett said of the market, where students sample farm produce, rate it, then choose something for a snack.



"They loved trying different flavors, sweet peppers, bitter radishes and sour autumn olives," Burdett said, adding that it is exciting to see "kids walking around eating a whole pepper like an apple."

From cooking classes to help kids and parents cook together, school visits and work parties at the farm to wild plant and bird walks, Burdett said she sees "people being involved in a lot of different ways," that speak to a range of interests and experience levels.

"We want people to feel ownership at the farm," she said, hoping that it is a place where people can learn "how to steward and care for food systems and land in general, [and] observe wildlife."



The group will distribute sixty CSA shares at the Brick House, and also set up a stand at the Great Falls Farmers Market

IMAGES COURTESY JUST ROOTS

Bill McKerchie, one of the farm managers, who is entering his second year at the farm, elaborated on his role in that stewardship. The farm is working to regenerate the quality of the soil, which had "been abused for quite some time," he said, speaking to many years of growing feed corn on the site.

They already use crop rotation, a process of "planting groups of related plants together one year, and elsewhere the next year," McKerchie explained, which helps decrease the "pest pressure" of weeds, insects and fungal disease, and "enables practice of a chemical free farming system."

This year they are adding cover cropping, a practice of planting land not in use for farm production with crops that fix nitrogen, suppress weeds and build organic matter, to further revitalize the land.

McKerchie said this year the farm is growing 30 to 50 different types of vegetables, and he is particularly excited about adding cut greens and salad mixes to the variety this year.

"I'm a big fan personally of arugula," he said, "but it has a little too much flavor for some." They will be offering other new greens, too, from mild mustards to asian greens and baby lettuces, running the gamut of spicy and bitter to mild and sweet.

"People are always very excited about tomatoes," McKerchie said, of which they grow about 25 different types, including 12 heirloom varieties. He noted that folks who eat only local tomatoes sometimes wait up to nine long months to do so.

"What sets us apart is that our CSA is available to a broad range of people," said McKerchie. "People who are traditionally priced out have an option with us... Not everyone has the skill or desire to grow their own food. It's nice to be able to share that bounty. It brings a community together like nothing else."

The donor-supported share program has a lot of financial support this year, including from Baystate Health and Wornatown, but shares are intentionally not free so as to keep in mind the real cost of food production, Van Steensburg said.

"Farmers need to make a living," she said, also pointing out that this type of farming is not subsidized by the government.

In addition to the new shares in Turners Falls, the farm currently provides produce for 100 Common

Wealth CSA shares, a collaborative of four farms, and 40 Senior Farm Shares in Greenfield, with a goal of 50 percent donor sponsored shares. 20 sponsored shares are delivered weekly to Greenfield Gardens Housing Coop as well.

According to Van Steensburg, the beginnings of the farm harken back to 2008, when a citizens group formed to try to find land for community garden space. In looking at municipal properties, they came across a 61 acre farm on Leyden Road, sold to the town in 1849 by who would become the organization's namesake, Justin Root.

The land was a poor farm until the 1950s, as Social Security phased out the role of such farms. After that it was leased to farmers, predominantly for growing feed corn for livestock.

By 2011 Just Roots, Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust, the Pleasant Street Community Garden, Greening Greenfield and the Town of Greenfield helped obtain an Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) from the state for 31 acres of land, which precludes uses of it that would have a negative impact on agriculture.

The town then issued a request for proposals and awarded Just Roots a fifteen year lease on the 61 acres for the purpose of creating the Greenfield Community Farm.

A USDA Community Food Projects grant, for which they were number one in the nation, enabled Just Roots to pay a farmer's salary, and they are now three years into farm production.

They continue to plow forward and expand, with a recent \$100,000 grant from Baystate Franklin Medical going toward design and production of a soup line, "Just Soup," for which they will be holding tastings at the farm. Community feedback will help decide on five final soups, which will result in a winter soup CSA.

This year also brings 30 shares of a new meat CSA, with heritage and rare breeds of pork, chicken and beef.

For more information about the CSA program, apprenticeships, internships and volunteer opportunities, and upcoming programs at the farm, such as the May 25 plant sale, seed swap and pot luck, visit [www.JustRoots.org](http://www.JustRoots.org).



### Community TV Station Seeking ASSISTANT to STATION MANAGER

15 or more hours per week, at \$12.50 per hour.

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Please send resumes with cover letter and references to MCTV, 34 2nd Street, Turners Falls, MA, 01376, before March 29.

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

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**WENDELL** from page A1

telephone cost and television cost. All three of those services will be available through the fiber optic cable.

An article on the town meeting warrant will authorize the borrowing, and a debt exclusion vote will be required after that.

Selectboard member Dan Keller questioned the validity of estimates that varied from \$79 million to over \$100 million, and Tanner answered that all the estimates are extremely preliminary now.

Selectboard member Geoffrey Pooser asked if a household that declined the service would be eligible for a real estate tax abatement.

Tanner answered that the service would be available, and like a school tax for a family without children, or a highway tax for a family that does not drive, it would be just part of the tax burden. A house that does not have a cable going by may be able to get an abatement just like a house with no available electric service may get an abatement.

Selectboard chair Christine Heard asked what happens in ten years or twenty years if a new development makes this fiber optic cable obsolete. Keller said that the cable has a capacity that is not even close to being exploited, and that its lifespan is long.

**Ordinary Expenses**

Other and more ordinary capital expenses include a new police cruiser, an expense that was put

off a year at the 2014 annual town meeting. USDA may help with 25% of the cost, but only after the town pays for the vehicle.

Tanner did not have the highway department word on whether they needed a new truck this year, or whether that purchase is some years off. A ventilation system that would remove diesel fumes from the highway garage and fire department would cost \$35,000, and would require a significant amount of electricity, as well as regular filter changes.

With other towns the Wendell fire department is applying for a grant that would pay for new air packs for firefighters, with lighter tanks that hold more air than the packs that the fire department uses now.

If that grant does not come through, the town may pay \$65,000 for ten new SCBA's (Self Contained Breathing Apparatus), or can wait another year.

**Stipend and Librarian's Pay**

Facilities engineer Jim Slavas has not told Keller what he thinks an appropriate stipend would be. So far he has worked well below minimum wage.

Library trustees want to raise the librarian's pay, but Tanner said such a raise should not be made in isolation.

**Leaks and Gaps**

Pooser brought up the possibility of using Green Community

grant money instead of money from taxation to fix the leaks and gaps in the town hall heating system, and Heard brought up the senior center heater, which has been described as "scary," in the same light.

**Yellow Pages Scam?**

Treasurer Carolyn Manley met the selectboard as the meeting opened and said everything was set for the auction of two town properties at 1 p.m. on Saturday, March 14. She said some people from out of town had expressed interest.

She also said the town is getting a bill of around \$2,000 for advertising in US Yellow. In December 2012 the previous fire chief authorized the advertising for the fire department at \$229 a quarter, automatically renewed, and those bills had never been paid.

The current fire chief ignored the bills, then cancelled the service in January, but the company is demanding payment.

Manley did not want to pay the bill but was wary of additional fees being added.

Board members as a group felt that the service might be a scam, and that only the selectboard is authorized to spend town money. A call to town counsel might clear up the situation.

**Kitchen Update**

After missing several selectboard meetings because she did not feel well, Judy Hall, chair of the kitchen committee, gave an update on

kitchen construction. The new stove is on site, and the hood was either installed, or about to be installed, and the fire suppression system is coming. Work by Franklin County Technical School students has been slow but is well appreciated. Volunteers painted and patched the walls, and Northampton Paint gave the committee a good deal on paint.

When the project is finished a USDA grant will reimburse the town \$7,200 for equipment. With all its equipment inside, sinks, stove, dishwasher, the already small kitchen is even smaller and the committee is hoping to move a refrigerator and freezer.

When the committee formed, the idea of its members was to get the kitchen built and disband, but there are members now who want to continue oversight of the kitchen. The kitchen coordinator will be the contact person for groups and people who want to use the kitchen and he will be in contact with the kitchen committee, and the selectboard will serve as the ultimate authority.

**Zoning Resignation**

Beth Erviti submitted her official resignation from the zoning board of appeals.

**Slavas Repairs**

Sink and toilet drains in the senior center stopped working, so water use there is restricted. Keller said that Jim Slavas fixed a similar problem in the library by opening the box and manually activating the

pump. Both buildings pump their waste water up over the common where it flows by gravity to the town septic system.

The box in the senior center is padlocked, and so Slavas did not activate that pump yet. Slavas spent a day with a service technician from Johnson Controls updating the software on the office building heating system, and there are still problems.

Slavas suggested replacing the controls with a manual thermostat in each room, a process he would do, not all at once, but as he can.

**Town Meeting Back to Monday**

There were complaints, and compliments, after the 2014 annual town meeting, which was held on a Saturday instead of the Monday nights and following nights that has been Wendell's pattern for years.

Fincom member Ray DiDonato said that the same number of people came, but many were different people. Attendance dropped off after lunch, but on the week-nights attendance drops off on the second and third nights.

In July 2014 the selectboard agreed to alternate between week-night meetings and Saturday meetings, and picked Monday, June 8 at 7 p.m. for this year's annual town meeting, pending availability of the town moderator, Kate Nolan. Gretchen Smith, the town clerk, has already said she is available.



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# Pet of the Week



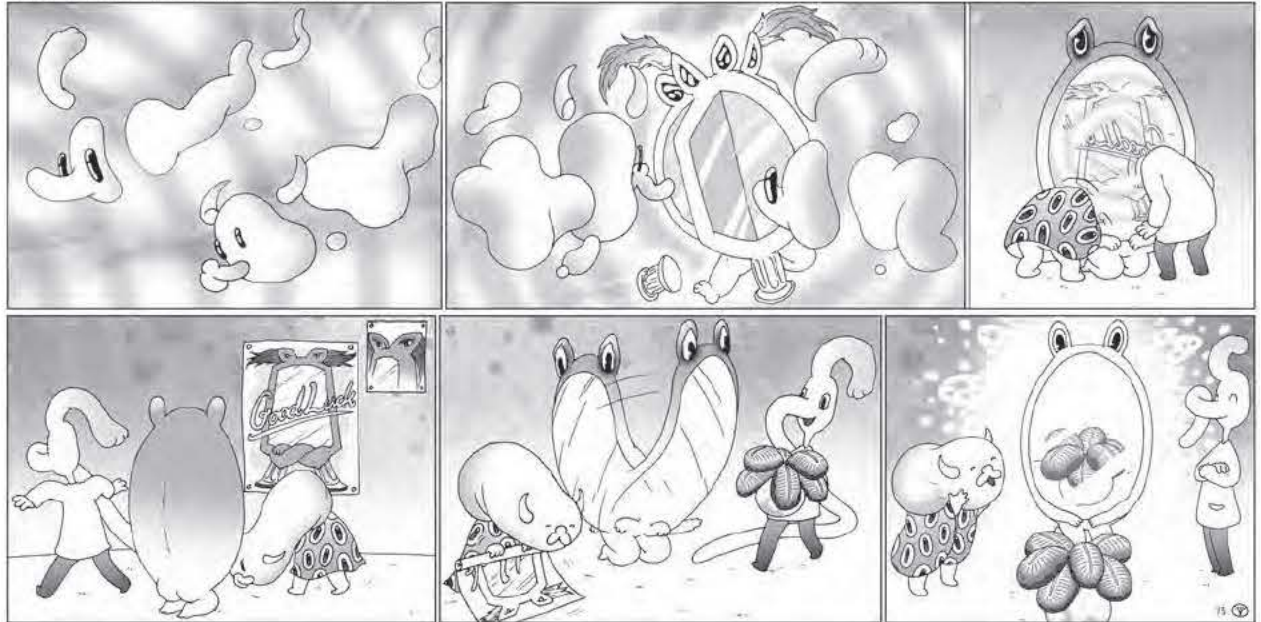
GEORGE

My name is George and I'm nine years old. I may come off as a little shy at first but boy am I a love bug. I love to be petted, am super friendly and

would love to just hang out in your lap or with you on your couch. I came to Dakin because I was living outside in a cat colony. It was getting weird, so when it got cold outside a very nice person brought me here so I could stay warm for the winter! Look no further, I am an indoor and outdoor cat! I have been around dogs and other cats. I'm used to a serene household. I'm just an overall laid back and mellow cat. Don't I sound perfect? Come in and meet me!

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

## WEIRD HEALING by OVERTURE



Overture is based in Shelburne Falls. Check out [opertura.org](http://opertura.org).

## Riverculture: Call For Videos

Turners Falls RiverCulture is looking for videos to shown during *River's Song*, a day long event on Saturday, May 16 in downtown Turners Falls. Submit videos under 6 minutes and suitable for all audiences by April 15. Videos should address the theme of WATER: symbol of life, redemption, transition, fertility, death and rebirth.

*River's Song* was conceived as an innovative, year-long study combining the arts and the environment to

give voice to a diverse constituency along the Connecticut River basin and highlighting its ecology. River's Song is a collaboration with UMass-Amherst's Asian Arts & Culture Department, regional arts organizations, environmental and historic preservation groups. More at [turnersfallsriverculture.org](http://turnersfallsriverculture.org) or [fac.umass.edu/Online/RiverSong](http://fac.umass.edu/Online/RiverSong). Contact Suzanne LoManto at (413) 835-1390 or [riverculture@gmail.com](mailto:riverculture@gmail.com).

### THE HEALTHY GEEZER

## Breast Cancer, Part 2



JESSICA LARKIN ILLUSTRATION

By FRED CICETTI

*This is the second installment of a three-part series on breast cancer.*

The most common breast cancer symptom is a lump. Other symptoms include swelling, skin irritation, nipple pain or retraction, and an unusual discharge. Early diagnosis saves lives. The combination of a mammogram, a clinical breast exam and self-exams is recommended by healthcare experts to reduce breast-cancer deaths. A mammogram is a breast x-ray. If mammography finds an abnormality, confirmation by biopsy is required. In a biopsy, a tissue sample is taken for analysis. About 2/10 percent of mammograms lead to a cancer diagnosis. About 10 percent of women examined will need another mammogram. Only about 10 percent of those women will need a biopsy. Out of those biopsies, 80 percent will come back negative for cancer. Women 40 and older should have

an annual mammogram and breast exam by a healthcare professional. As long as a woman is in good health and would be a candidate for treatment, she should continue to get mammograms and exams. Research has shown that self exams help find breast cancer. Self examination teaches women how their breasts feel normally and to notice changes. Ultrasound and MRI are other diagnostic tools. Ultrasound uses high-frequency sound waves to outline a part of the body. Breast ultrasound can focus upon something picked up by a mammogram. Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) use radio waves and strong magnets instead of x-rays. They can be used to examine cancers found by mammogram. Most women with breast cancer have some type of surgery. Surgeries include lumpectomy to remove only the breast lump and surrounding tissue, a mastectomy that removes part or all of the breast or can be more extensive to include lymph nodes and muscle tissue. Radiation therapy is another form of treatment. It uses high-energy rays or particles that destroy cancer cells. This treatment may be used to destroy cancer cells that remain in the breast, chest wall, or underarm area after surgery. Medicines are also used to treat breast cancer. Chemotherapy employs intravenous and oral drugs that can kill cancer cells in most

parts of the body. The anti-estrogen drug tamoxifen has been used for many years to treat breast cancer. Hormone therapy is a cancer treatment that removes hormones or blocks their action and stops cancer cells from growing. Hormones are substances made by glands in the body and circulated in the bloodstream. Some hormones can cause certain cancers to grow. If tests show that the cancer cells have places where hormones can attach (receptors), drugs, surgery, or radiation therapy are used to reduce the production of hormones or block them from working. The hormone estrogen, which makes some breast cancers grow, is made mainly by the ovaries. Treatment to stop the ovaries from making estrogen is called ovarian ablation. Hormone therapy with tamoxifen is often given to patients with early stages of breast cancer and those with metastatic breast cancer (cancer that has spread to other parts of the body). Hormone therapy with tamoxifen or estrogens can act on cells all over the body and may increase the chance of developing endometrial cancer. Women taking tamoxifen should have a pelvic exam every year to look for any signs of cancer. Any vaginal bleeding, other than menstrual bleeding, should be reported to a doctor as soon as possible.

*If you would like to ask a question, write to [fred@healthygeezer.com](mailto:fred@healthygeezer.com).*

## Senior Center Activities March 23 to 27

### GILL and MONTAGUE

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

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

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

#### Monday 3/23

10:10 a.m. Aerobics  
10:50 Chair Exercise  
Noon Pot Luck & Bingo  
1 p.m. NO Knitting Circle

#### Tuesday 3/24

9:30 a.m. Chair Yoga  
Noon Lunch  
1 p.m. Painting with David Sund  
5 p.m. Community Meeting at MPD

#### Wednesday 3/25

10:10 a.m. Aerobics  
10:30 a.m. Monthly Health Screening  
10:50 a.m. Chair Exercise  
12:45 p.m. Bingo

#### Thursday 3/26

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

#### Friday 3/27

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](mailto:coa@leverett.ma.us). Take-It-Easy Chair Yoga – Wednesdays at 10 a.m. at the Town Hall.

Drop-in \$5 (first class free). Senior Lunch – Fridays at noon. Call (413) 367-2694 by Wednesday for a reservation.

### WENDELL

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

Call the Center for a ride.

### ERVING

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

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

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

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

#### Monday 3/23

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

#### Tuesday 3/24

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

#### Wednesday 3/25

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

#### Thursday 3/26

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

#### Friday 3/27

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

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Who should I find in the deli department?

# The Library at Mt. Parnassus Pt. 63



MIKE SLIVA ILLUSTRATION

By DAVID DETMOLD

Iona. It seemed too good to be true. I motioned toward her shopping basket, piled high with filo dough, ground lamb, a round of kefalotyri cheese, a heavy can of Mi-nerva brand extra virgin olive oil, some prosciutto and ripe figs.

We both looked down at her basket, then Iona put it on the floor while she turned back to the counter to select a pound of kalamatas.

I stuck my hands in my pockets and waited while she ignored me. Was that the coupon I had forgotten? No, just a useless raffle stub I'd stuck in my pocket days ago. I tossed it in the air and waited.

As she bent to put the olives in her shopping basket, I saw a silver earring gleam. It was silver, shaped like a small double-bladed axe. I put my hand to my heart, and felt its twin there, in my breast pocket. The thought came to me: she must have lost someone close to her not long ago.

"Let me," I said. I reached down to take the basket, but so did she. Our eyes met. "Let me help you."

"I heard you the first time," she said.

I heard a twanging noise, electric in the air between us. I let go, but so did she, and the basket tipped over, spilling its contents on the floor. People around us stood and stared, and we hastened to gather up her groceries.

But as she reached to pick up the prosciutto, the ripe figs, I felt a tearing pain in my chest, and put my hand to my heart again. She looked at me, and I saw her eyes were inexplicably filled with tears, obscuring their gray light. Tears, more tears, came spilling, and she dabbed them with her fingers, doing nothing to stem the flow.

What caused this pain? I felt it too, like an arrow in my heart, its sharp point cleaving cartilage and beating muscle to find the throb of blood and stir the ashes at its core. Such bitter pain, such helpless wounds, who would ever want to feel this way again?

"I'm heading to the Golden Mean," I said stupidly. "Your old haunt. Care to join me?"

"No. I've spent too long at the Golden Mean." She dried her eyes.

"Well," I said, reaching for the last fig, which had rolled beneath the grab and go case, "This is no way to celebrate Valentine's Day. What are you doing later?"

"Watching Die Hard with a Vengeance on the VCR," she said bitterly.

"That doesn't sound romantic."

"No," she agreed. "It doesn't." But this time I saw her smile.

I was smiling too, walking the blue streets at night. Iona had agreed to meet me, but I had some time to kill.

Across the Avenue in the library, a golden light was shining in the fanlights and from the circular window high above the front door. A glowing mist was rising from the darkness by the landing, revealing and obscuring everything.

I imagined Orville in the reading room, asleep with his worn copy of *Life* upon his knee. Creon snoozing with his Aristophanes. The python stretched out on the heating grate, deep in molt. And Melantha, upstairs in the clerestory, at play with the dark haired stranger, the master of the library.

I crossed over to the park, where Iona said she would meet me after putting her groceries away. I still had time.

I walked along the shadowed path. The young trees stood there, leafless in winter moonlight. The silent fountain, frozen still. Venus was rising in the west, low above the power lines, and in the distance I saw Old Clare walking down the Avenue with Klee, on their way back from the bar. On another night, I would have been walking with them.

I waited in the temple, in the soothing silence of the colonnade. The marble pillars rested on their massive plinths, their plain capitals holding up the architrave, uniting earth and sky.

No one was about. The crack bazaar was closed for now. In the naos, the fire had died, but the embers were still glowing.

The naked crab trees stood quietly by, waiting for spring, when they would leaf and flower and scatter their pink and white and salmon petals in the breeze, perfuming our dusty town for a few precious days.

I walked out to the woods behind the temple, gathering branches and pine boughs in the dark. I would lay a fire and wait for Iona to appear.

Soon she would come walking down the path to meet me, and we would sit and look across the fire at one another. In silence, at peace with the world and ourselves, for one night at least.

Peaceful and content, we would have no need of words. What use are words between us? Words, what use are they, these words?



This concludes  
The Library at Mt. Parnassus.

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

# Collapsing Mill Ruins Pose Danger; Dead Swans Rest on River Ice

Monday, 3/9

10:01 a.m. Caller from James Avenue reports two males in neon colored shirts soliciting for tree work. Officer advises that this was Jim's Tree Service. Gone on arrival.

11:02 a.m. Burglar alarm set off by cleaning person at Our Lady of Czestochowa.

11:10 a.m. Officer reports that snow just slid off the roof of a large barn onto Smiarowski Road and that the road is now blocked. DPW advised.

11:55 a.m. Reporting party received a video text from a Vermont phone number showing a male party attaching what appears to be a silencer to a firearm. Number traced to Brattleboro; Brattleboro PD advised.

1:58 p.m. Officer reports encountering a disorderly person while working on a detail on Meadow Road. Investigated.

2:15 p.m. Caller from Unity Street reports that he has not received any mail in two weeks, although the post office confirms that deliveries have been made. Caller speculates that this is related to an ongoing issue with another tenant in the building. Advised of options.

3:51 p.m. Report of threatening/harassment in conjunction with an ongoing neighbor dispute on Unity Street.

4:10 p.m. Caller concerned that the abandoned Railroad Salvage building is a huge safety issue; he has seen teenagers going in and out of the building and is concerned that it could collapse on them. Caller advised to contact town and/or DPW.

4:39 p.m. Complaint regarding train stopped on tracks for 10 minutes at Lake Pleasant railroad crossing. Pan Am contacted; they will have someone check it out.

5:00 p.m. Report of parties soliciting without a permit on Park Villa Drive. Investigated.

5:11 p.m. Party reports that a male was attempting to take photos of her and her children at Hillcrest School today. Advised of options.

8:27 p.m. Two-car accident at F.L. Roberts; one person injured. Report taken.

9:01 p.m. New report from ongoing neighbor dispute on Unity Street. Advised of options.

9:29 p.m. Unwanted person in Second Street apartment. Party taken into protective custody.

Tuesday, 3/10

6:20 a.m. Caller from Millers Falls Road reports that he can see 2-3 foot high flames coming from his neighbor's chimney. TFFD advised and en route.

7:47 a.m. Neighbor distur-

bance on Unity Street. Advised of options.

8:22 a.m. Caller reports that a garden cart that she uses to take her trash out was taken from in front of her house on Center Street overnight. Report taken.

10:04 a.m. Caller from Fourth Street reports that her dog was attacked by a dog that lives in the same building and sustained serious injuries. Vet hospital paperwork provided. Attacking dog verified to be current on rabies vaccine. Copy of call and vet paperwork left for animal control officer.

10:34 a.m. Complaint that a sidewalk at Turners Falls Road and Millers Falls Road has not been shoveled all winter. Investigated.

12:46 p.m. Car into snowbank on Hillside Road. No injuries. Citation issued for failure to stay in marked lanes.

1:06 p.m. Salvation Army employee reports finding used needles in their bathroom trash. Items retrieved and will be disposed of.

1:39 p.m. Several callers concerned about swans on the ice under the dam. Two or three swans appear to be deceased; one may still be alive. Environmental police notified.

2:12 p.m. Caller requests that an officer be present when he picks up his child from school today due to issues he had yesterday with another parent. Referred to an officer.

3:01 p.m. Report of male party standing on sidewalk outside Pizza House screaming and yelling at passersby. Officer spoke to party, who will be going home at this time.

3:15 p.m. Report that a very large chunk of ice has fallen from the roof of an apartment building into the alley between Third and Fourth Streets. Spoke to property manager, who is aware of issue and has people out there removing ice today, as well as caution tape in the area.

4:20 p.m. Caller reports that while she was picking up a friend, a tote bag containing "everything" — checkbook, license, cards, etc. — was stolen from her car. Caller later came in to lobby to report that she had found the bag and that nothing was missing. Caller felt terrible but was

thankful for the help!

6:28 p.m. Report of people inside Railroad Salvage building. Officers sent two male parties on their way and advised them not to go in there again.

7:52 p.m.

\_\_\_\_\_ was arrested and charged with operating under the influence.

Wednesday, 3/11

7:22 a.m. Request for officer to assist with child who is refusing to go to school because it is a half day and therefore a waste of time. Services rendered.

9:58 a.m. Fire alarm triggered by burnt bacon on Third Street. TFFD on scene.

3 p.m. Complaint regarding loose dog in Grand Avenue area forwarded to MPD from dog shelter. Officer located dog's owners and advised them of the leash law.

6:11 p.m. Caller advised that there is a male party in a parked truck full of trash near the Discovery Center; he is going through the bags, and trash is falling all over the road. Referred to an officer.

Thursday, 3/12

7:38 a.m. Report of black ice at intersection of Fifth and L Streets; a truck spun out taking the corner but is on its way now. DPW advised; area sanded.

7:55 a.m. Report of snow, ice, nip bottles, and beer cans on sidewalk at Franklin and East Main Streets where children wait for the school bus in the morning. Caller states that she already spoke to the DPW and that they referred her to MPD. Officer left detailed message for property owner.

8:25 a.m. Vehicle into snowbank at Christopher Lane and Turnpike Road. No injuries.

9:39 a.m. Officer reports large pothole on Highland Street and requests that DPW be contacted to put a barrel in it. DPW advises that pothole may have been caused by work done by the Water Department; will contact Water Department to have the issue resolved.

11:50 p.m. Party into lobby reports that he was jumped and hit with a gun on Fourth Street and that his cell phone was stolen. MedCare contacted for transport. Greenfield PD

and state police advised to be on lookout for suspect. Contacted Verizon to ping stolen phone.

Friday, 3/13

7:36 a.m. Walk-in report of a pickup truck on fire near Scotty's and Millers Falls Road. TFFD en route.

8:38 a.m. Request for officer to pick up a syringe that was found in a front yard on Avenue A. Services rendered.

1:29 p.m. Walk-in report of several large potholes on the General Pierce Bridge. MassHighway notified.

2:12 p.m. Caller requests to have on file that two weeks ago, she was nearly struck by a white GMC Sierra whose driver apparently could not see due to the number of items in the cab and the bed of the truck. Caller was unable to get plate then, but saw truck again today. Referred to an officer.

2:42 p.m. Ongoing threatening/harassment on Unity Street. Advised of options.

Saturday, 3/14

2:10 p.m. Hit and run accident on Park Street; suspect vehicle should have significant front end damage as it pushed a parked vehicle the equivalent of several car lengths down the street. Investigated.

Sunday, 3/15

12:05 p.m. Caller from Central Street complains of loud music and what sounds like furniture being moved around upstairs. Officer spoke to both parties; no noise upon arrival.

1:12 p.m. Caller from previous call providing additional information based on a conversation overheard between the landlord and the other tenant. Officer advised of call.

1:42 p.m. Third call from Central Street resident expressing additional concerns about her upstairs neighbor. Officer advised of call.

3:14 p.m. Upstairs neighbor from Central Street in to station to speak to officer regarding situation. Advised of options.

7:02 p.m. Report that a silver Toyota Tacoma extended cab truck backed out of a driveway on Maple Street, hit the telephone pole a couple of times, scuffed the caller's vehicle, then left the area. Officers will be on lookout.

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MOUNTAIN from page B1

ordinary were telephone-booth-sized metal boxes with front doors at the peaks of its two hills.

We were at the Bunker, a Cold War-era, nuclear bomb-proof facility originally designed to house the Strategic Air Command. The SAC was for decades the command responsible for the timely and responsible use of the nation’s nuclear weapons.

The Bunker is currently home to the Five College Book Depository and, as I learned on the tour, is being considered as a space to house all of Amherst College’s back-up servers.

Adaptive reuse of historic buildings is a subject familiar to many readers of *The Reporter*, and The Bunker is a strong example of the potential inherent in these spaces. It is one of three anthropogenic mountain spaces I’ve managed to discover in Western Mass.

A Good League Hence

Mountains hold special cultural significance to many of us. I was raised in Vermont by hobby naturalists, and our eroded mountains constantly beckon to me with Clif Bar-sized quests.

Here in Western Mass, the Mt. Holyoke Range was very influential to the New England-based Transcendentalists. Their artistic contributions were the dissenting voices at the beginning of the modern conservation movement.

Even in our time, in densely settled Southern New England, our mountains offer spaces that are still overwhelmingly natural. But among these wild mountains, there are many of another type, falling squarely in between the bastions of nature that they once were and something more like a parking garage.

Many cultures across the globe have “King in the Mountain” stories. These tales usually involve a protagonist, often a military leader, who is dead. The tale goes that this leader is magically asleep inside a mountain, but will emerge to save his people again at a later date, after a pre-determined sign.

Holy Roman Emperor Frederick’s alarm clock is set to go off when the eagles stop circling the mountain that he rests within. Other “King in the Mountain” leaders include Montezuma in the southwest, St. Wenceslas of the Czech Republic, King Arthur, and many more.

(“Good King Wenceslas” is not really a Christmas song but a “King in the Mountain” story: “Yonder peasant, who is he? / ‘Where and what his dwelling?’ / ‘Sire, he lives a good league hence / Underneath the mountain.’”)

Mountain structures used today often have eerily similar purposes to those described in folklore. The most direct connection to “King in the Mountain” legends is in facilities operated by the government for use in times of emergency.

Mt. Weather, in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia, is designed to house all of Congress. Raven Rock in Pennsylvania can play host to the Pentagon. Our warrior-leaders can retreat into these mountain fortresses in times of conflict and then later emerge in victory.

We walked into The Bunker and stood in a very long hallway. It was spacious, the ceilings high. The light was the ambience of ultraviolets reflecting off concrete – everything was concrete.

There were flat dollies, with huge bins containing books. The bins looked like the ones that I was accustomed to seeing full of butternut squash on flatbed trucks in the fall. We entered a room full of old card catalogs and display cases, the kind that museums use, like tables with glass tops.

One of them contained a relic of archivist humor – inside the glass was a cardboard box, labeled in museum-style notation: “Carton, folding, reusable / Kraft paper, water based ink / Connecticut River valley area Massachusetts / Circa 2004 / Artist Unknown.”

Aaron Hayden, facilities manager and tour guide, was discussing the benefits of using the room for back-up servers with members of the IT department. Discussion flowed from the benefits of the building’s natural cooling effect on servers, to the near impossibility of it losing power, to its important role in the ARPANET, the predecessor to the Internet.

After this assertion and the purring murmurs that circulated the room, the IT people moved with the dreamy awareness of pilgrims who suddenly find themselves alone in St. Peter’s.

Demilitarization

The Bunker changed ownership in 1972, and has been used for civilian purposes ever since.

At that point in the Cold War, the missile masterminds decided that the Soviets would be able to target something as small and concealed as The Bunker itself. This would negate its use of Bare Mountain as a 1,000-foot basalt shield between it and Westover Air Force Base, which was where they had assumed the missiles would fall.

The Strategic Air Command sold the Bunker to the Federal Reserve Bank. In its second life in the pre-digital days at the dawn of the Information Age, huge spaces were



Traces of the site’s original function persist.

required to store data, and the Fed stored reams of paper records here.

The Fed held on to the Bunker until 1992, when Amherst College purchased it for \$250,000 and created the Five College Book Depository. Now in its third iteration, The Bunker is a place to store all of the books that no one wants to read.

The Book Depository is where books go to die, or possibly to sleep – at least until the eagles stop circling.

The librarians at the time of its creation used a simple measure to decide which books to exile from their sun-lit aboveground campuses. They could tell which books hadn’t been checked out in the decade since the switch to the ISBN (International Standard Book Number) system by seeing which books were still categorized under Dewey Decimal (books were switched to the new system when they were checked in).

The books in the Book Depository are organized for maximum efficiency of space. They are stored on sliding bookcases to eliminate the space wasted by the aisles required by mortal humans. Secondly, they are organized by the height of the book’s binding, so that there is no wasted vertical space.

Books occasionally do leave the Bunker. They are requested and delivered to on-campus libraries through Inter-Library Loan. There are two full-time librarians who work in this windowless mausoleum.

Aaron Hayden, our guide and historian, made the original recommendation that the Bunker be purchased and used to store books. Yet he claims to have never read *The Abortion*, by Richard Brautigan. In this book, one of his classic pseudo-memoirs, Brautigan writes about a San Francisco library that houses only unique homemade books, hand-delivered by their authors. But Brautigan’s library has the same problem as our Five College libraries: “This library is not large enough and couldn’t begin to hold all the books that have been brought in over the years.”

Back in 1970, probably under the influence of psychedelic drugs, Richard Brautigan manages to foreshadow the existence of our very own Five College Book Depository. The extra books at his library are sent away to their own mountain: “...most of the books themselves are in hermetically-sealed caves in Northern California.”

Storage Wars

My biggest take-away from this project has been that these “uncanny mountains” are everywhere.

As mountains are effective at being the free box of the literary world, they are also great at storing other things.

Iron Mountain, the storage corporation that drives flashy trucks all over Boston, has repurposed a derelict mine in northwestern Pennsylvania. It’s a mountain where people store incredibly valuable things. Bill Gates’ entire Corbis film collection is stored here, including the photograph of Albert Einstein sticking his tongue out.

Mt. Pony, a 791’ monadnock in the Virginia Piedmont, holds the National Audio Visual Conservation Center. Its story is parallel to that of the Bunker: It was built originally as a Cold War shelter and recently repurposed to archive the Library of Congress’ complete audio-visual collection.

In addition to the Bunker, Western Mass has two other known anthropogenic mountain spaces. They are both pumped-storage hydroelectric facilities.

These power plants pump water up to a mountaintop reservoir when energy demand is low, then generate power by releasing the water to flow down to a lower reservoir through enormous turbines when demand is high.

Both the Northfield and Bear Swamp hydro plants are buried deep inside their respective mountains. The scale of the spaces built inside these mountains is enormous.

Inside Northfield Mountain, the powerhouse’s cavern is 328 feet long by 70 feet wide, and 14 stories tall. I would traverse its length in 110 paces.

I helped Toby, the contractor working on the *Reporter*’s building, take some measurements of it, and we calculated that 48 of our building would fit inside the Northfield Mountain powerhouse.

People work inside these mountains around the clock. Although there’s plenty of information about these places, it was hard to figure out why they were built inside the mountains, as opposed to on the surface.

Anne Harding, who works at Northfield Mountain, said: “I believe [it’s] built inside [the] mountain to preserve the natural beauty of the area...”

When I asked Vanessa Pilotte of Brookfield Renewable, owner of the Bear Swamp hydro facility, she wrote: “An underground powerhouse... was considered the most cost-effective design.”

These hidden spaces we’ve created are part of a folkloric legacy that spans millennia. Many of these places are as legendary to us mod-

erns as King-in-the-Mountain stories were to our predecessors.

One way the worthiness of buildings is measured is by how well they can be re-used, and how many different purposes they could potentially serve. Do anthropogenic mountains fare well under this metric?

Although Aaron Hayden, referring to The Bunker as a “big basement,” thought not, I see a future with a need for these spaces. The Bunker has already served three purposes, and with the addition of the back-up servers, a fourth is on the horizon.

But what about those cavernous voids created for hydropower? It’s hard to imagine what other use underground spaces of this magnitude could serve.

One possibility is the need for ever-larger server farms. Google and other corporations that operate data centers already require huge spaces, and spend great amounts of money cooling them. Some already are so big that engineers ride bicycles to get from point to point inside them.

Security, a boon offered by all mountain spaces, is on their minds as well. The Pirate Bay, the pioneering torrent downloading organization, recently moved their servers to a sub-montane location after their building in Stockholm was raided by police.

To us humans, mountains have always stood for wild, indomitable things. Mt. Olympus was un-climbable, and the home of the Greek Pantheon. Tolkien’s Lonely Mountain held Smaug’s coveted fortune.

These themes that originate in classics and fantasy translate into the real-world benefits that mountain construction offers. Security, invisibility, and natural climate control are characteristics that those involved in storage and archival industries value highly.

While the threat of atomic weapons creating a need for an Arthurian warrior-president has passed from most people’s minds, these spaces are aging well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century with new missions and purposes.



GARDEN from page B1

coupled with an enduring belief that it will happen.

We too are optimistic in the face of much tragedy. We hang onto the joy of being alive and want to look forward even as we review our past. It’s a way of staying young. Spring is the ultimate optimist’s season of new growth and new life in the world. It is a bittersweet season in its shortness; it requires close attention so that no little new thing is missed. Watch for the return of the Redwings, the lilt of the Song Sparrow, pussywillows and peepers in the marshes, the first crocus and daffodil.

As the vernal equinox approaches, be optimistic and if you are impatient as well, get yourself down to the incredible beauty of the annual bulb show at the Smith College greenhouse; it’s on now and will be running daily from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. through March 22. This year’s theme is Monet’s garden at Giverny, and it is gorgeous!

Happy spring to all gardeners and all lovers of the season!



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## ARTS &amp; ENTERTAINMENT



JACK COUGHLIN ILLUSTRATION

## 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:

Avenue A Storefront Galleries,

#106-#112 Avenue A: *In Like a Lion, Out like a Lamb: An Exhibition That Anticipates Spring!* Art that addresses the change of seasons, transformation, rebirth and hope. Artists include Gary Smith, Ann C. McDonald, Louise Minks, Patricia Hayes, Kerry Stone. On display through April 12th.

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.

## CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS:

Wendell Free Library invites artists to submit applications for two-dimensional work to exhibit in the Herick Meeting Room gallery. Applications accepted at any time. See [www.wendell-mass.us](http://www.wendell-mass.us)

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. For more information and membership requirements: [www.sawmillriverarts.com](http://www.sawmillriverarts.com) and Kerry Stone: (978) 544-5463/ [famstone5@hotmail.com](mailto:famstone5@hotmail.com) or Susan Essig at 357-9709.

## EVENTS:

## THURSDAY, MARCH 19

The Brick House, Turners Falls: *Open Mic*, all ages welcome, usual performances include singer/songwriters, poets, storytellers, rappers, and bands. Anyone with a creative passion can take the stage, 6 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Half Shaved Jazz*, 8 p.m.

## FRIDAY, MARCH 20

Greenfield Community College, Main Campus, Greenfield: *36th Annual Pottery Seconds and More Sale*. Entrance fee of \$5

for the Friday night preview, 6 to 9 p.m.

Greenfield Community College, Sloan Theater, Greenfield: *The Industrial Corridor up the Connecticut River*, a talk by Richard Colton, historian, park ranger for the Springfield Armory NHS, and Jim Terapane, state-certified journeyman machinist and president of The Museum of Our Industrial Heritage. 7 p.m.

Arts Block, Greenfield: *Comedy Night*, \$, 8 p.m.

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

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



*Acoustic and bluegrass music by Charlie Conant – one of the many performers on Saturday, March 21 as part of the All COOPed up concert at the Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls, 7 p.m.*

## SATURDAY, MARCH 21

Winterberry Farm, Colrain: *Spring Sheep Shearing!* Gwen Hinman from NH will be shearing 27 sheep, starting about 11 a.m. There'll be gorgeous fiber everywhere- natural and hand-dyed, in fleece and in yarn. Music, food and fiber demonstrations. Watch and learn about spinning, weaving and needle felting. Nubian and colored mohair goats, angora rabbits and poultry to enjoy. [www.winterberryfarm.org](http://www.winterberryfarm.org), 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Greenfield Community College, Main Campus, Greenfield: *36th Annual Pottery Seconds and More Sale*. 10- 2 p.m.

Carnegie Library, Turners Falls: *Life-Sized Candyland* Children of all ages and their caregivers are invited to come play the biggest game of Candyland. Enjoy sweet treats and make a cute craft, too! 10:30 a.m.

Memorial Hall, Shelburne Falls: *6th Annual SYRUP, One Sweet Performing Arts Festival* featuring Piti Theatre Company's Innocenzo, a musical-clown world

premiere for all ages, \$, 3 p.m. and Nimble Arts' RUCKUS! A Cirque Spectacular, \$, 5 p.m.

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. Performers include: Musical artists include: *Orlen and Gabriel, Michael Nix, Pat and Tex LaMountain, Joe Graveline, Sue Kranz, Jennie McAvoy, Russ Thomas, Small Change, Jim Eagan, Roland LaPierre, Austin & Elliott, Fritz & Gail, Charlie Conant*, \$, 7 p.m.

Montague Common Hall: *Gender Role Free Contra*, 7 p.m.

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: *Brook Batteau*, 8 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *The Wildcat O'Halloran Band*, not your father's Blues Band! 9 p.m.

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

## SUNDAY, MARCH 22

Buckland-Shelburne Elementary School, Shelburne Falls: *Nimble Arts Circus Workshops*. 2 p.m.: Aerial Silks, 3 p.m.: Juggling, \$, see <http://ptco.org/shows/syrup/>

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

Greenfield Public Library: *Cooped Up at the Library Concert Series*. Featured musicians this month are Pat and Tex LaMountain. Each program begins with an open mic from 2 to 2:30, main performance at 3 p.m.

Green Fields Market, Greenfield: *Valley Time Trade* orientation. No registration needed, bring laptop or tablet if you have one. [www.valleytimetrade.org](http://www.valleytimetrade.org) for more information, 4 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Harmaniac Brothers*, swingy, jazzy, Old Time Music, 8 p.m.

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

## MONDAY, MARCH 23

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Nora's Stellar Open Mic Cabaret*, 8 p.m.

## THURSDAY, MARCH 26

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Now's The Time* jazz sextet, 8 p.m.

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

## FRIDAY, MARCH 27

French King Bowling Center, Erving: *Wine & Canvas fundraiser for Relay for Life Team "Keep Smiling!"* Paint a masterpiece, enjoy a glass of wine with friends, support a good cause! Sign up at [wineandcanvas.com](http://wineandcanvas.com) or call (413) 522-2778, 6 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Uncle Hal's Crabgrass Band*, 6:30 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Dimma Dim* Dan Putnam's new band playing Rock, Reggae & Funk 9 p.m.



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LANDINO from page B1

a big boost when he attended Camp Hazen, a junior leadership program in Chester, Connecticut. There he met his first mentor, Nick Krachina of Florence.

“Meeting Nick changed my direction,” said Landino. “I became proficient in ink drawing and, after my second year at camp, I began making nature scenes such as trees, hills, and mountains.”

During his secondary school years from 1962 to 1966 at Southington High School, John added water colors to his repertoire, painting scenes from nature like beach scenes and picturesque paths.

The Turners Falls resident’s work was featured in art shows in New York, San Francisco, and New Haven for more than 35 years. During that time he continued to draw and paint, while adding sculpture and performance art to his already well-plumed artistic cap.

“In 1979, I was trying to add three-dimensionality to my work when I finally realized that I should do sculpture. I eventually took a metal sculpture class in New Haven, where I was living.”

By 1987, Landino started to exhibit his metal sculptures in galleries. His first show in the Big Apple that year took place on the day Nelson Mandela was released from prison. Landino created many large metal sculptures while also doing kinetic wind sculptures on structures such as buildings and telephone poles.

“I tied giant spinnaker sailcloth to the top of a building eight stories up,” said the irrepressible 69 year old, “and let it fly over the streets of New York. To be honest, it was dangerous: the wind gusts could have pulled me off the ground. I was younger then.”

Dada Dino

John Landino has played guitar with many bands. He was a member of “Whatever,” a popular group on the lower East Side that rocked the joint at CBGB, the onetime mecca



Landino’s voice has returned and he is playing out again.

of punk rock in New York City. The members of the group wore puppet heads.

(If you want to see Landino in action, catch the video “Last Man on Earth” on YouTube. Just type in “john landino” and view any of about 15 of his videos that are posted.)

Part of his rehabilitation these days is participating in Turners Falls bands. In the music world he’s known as Dada Dino. His current band in Turners is “Dada Dino and the Whirlers.”

“The response has been great,” said Landino. “I’m very gratified because I’ve always tried to be active in supporting the local community, using arts and music.”

Landino managed an open mic event at the Rendezvous bar for three years. “I wore a cape and a top hat,” said John with a smile, “and ran the show like the ringmaster of a circus. We had people coming from Brattleboro, Northampton, and Holyoke.”

Currently, he has begun to draw replications of anatomical drawings from *Gray’s Anatomy*. He’s been asked by a Northampton gallery to

do a showing of medical drawings this spring. “I made drawings of my surgical reconstruction in order to do visualizations to help me heal,” he said.

While pursuing his love of music and art, Landino worked for more than three decades as a recreational therapist. He received a bachelor’s of science in the field from UMass-Amherst in 1971 before doing graduate work at Southern Connecticut State College in New Haven.

He was director of recreational therapy at Yale Psychiatric Institute for 10 years before starting his own private practice, and he moved to New York and conducted another practice there for some 20 years.

John Landino feels he’s a different man today. “I’m living every second of my life,” he said.

“I’ve learned how precious life is. After working with psychiatric patients for so many years, I thought I had learned how to be empathetic. But now, I know a human being can expand his empathy and compassion for others by leaps and bounds.”



BEAST from page B1

teaching staff and lots of rehearsal time surely paid off and was evident in the flawless performance.

The high-tech TFHS theater contributed to the director’s ability to integrate the soundtrack, allowing the cast the freedom to concentrate on their parts, sing with confidence and dance together joyfully.

Brittany and Christopher Nailos, both teachers at TFHS, did a fine job of directing this production.

The part of the Beast/Prince was played by Owen Ortiz whose gentle singing voice conveyed great sensitivity as befitting the seriousness of the Beast’s condition and his transition to a more caring human being, making him mortal man once more.

Throughout the show, Ortiz kept to the truth of his character. His was an excellent performance.

Playing the part of Belle was the lovely Rachel Savinski. Elegant, graceful, with an excellent singing voice, Savinski carried the part and the show forward with her devotion to the heart of who Belle was: smart, inquisitive, not just another pretty face.

Belle is the center of much of the drama, with both the Beast and Gaston (played by Nevan Shattuck) vying for her favor.

Shattuck offers a strong performance with many of his scenes filled with action and drama as he works to defeat the Beast.

Both men start with intimidation but only the Beast/Prince learns to be kind and finds a way to connect with Belle as a friend.

The themes of this show seem to fit perfectly with the feelings teenagers experience. Feelings of being different, or of being liked or not liked based on ap-

pearance.

Being judged not for who you are but for what people think you are, based on what you look like. The twists of the story hold the attention but the underlying theme is what makes it relevant and real, even when the cook is now a teapot, the butler a chandelier, the household staff now household items like a feather duster and cutlery.

In a strong supporting role, Joanna Browning plays Mrs. Potts who, as part of the Prince’s household, has been turned into a teapot. She sings under dance numbers and leads musical performances, contributing greatly to the strength and consistent quality of the music throughout the show.

All of the cast members did a wonderful job of musical performance with powerful singing and dancing throughout.

In addition to those already mentioned, other cast members were, Chase Blair as Lumiere, Keara Deery as the Wardrobe (not an easy role to play) Andrew LaPenta as Monsieur D’Arque, Journey Smalls as Chip, Maggie Sroka as LeFou, Madison St. Marie as Cogsworth, Hailey Trott as Babette, Riley Wood as Maurice.

Maya Pezzati, Kelly Rchorka and Emily Sisson play the Silly Girls.

Members of the Ensemble were Catherine Bezio, Samantha Bocon, Alora Deforge, Reagan Fiske, Cailyn Gobeil, Kristen Leamy, Danielle Lively, Mercedes Morales, Catie Reynolds, Julie Sprankle, and Sarah Studlien.

Crew, stage, sets, costumes, were all spectacularly executed and coordinated in this performance.

Congratulations to all involved!



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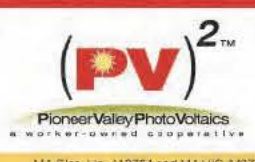
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