



LAKE PLEASANT MILLERS FALLS MONTAGUE CENTER MONTAGUE CITY TURNERS FALLS

# The Montague Reporter

also serving Irving, Gill, Leverett and Wendell

\$1

YEAR 13 – NO. 23

EDITOR@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

MARCH 26, 2015

## Talks Over K-12 Amherst School Region Continue

By JEFF SINGLETON

AMHERST – On Tuesday, March 24, the Amherst-Pelham Regional School Committee initiated discussion of a proposal to bring the elementary schools of its member towns, which include Leverett and Shutesbury, into the current middle school/high school district. The proposal is essentially a list of amendments to the current regional agreement submitted by a subcommittee called the Regional Agreement Working Group (RAWG).

RAWG was the reincarnation of a previous regional planning committee so this discussion has been in progress for several years. Now the ball is in the Amherst-Pelham school committee's court.

Kip Fonsh, a former member of RAWG, in effect began the discussion with a comment during public participation time. He stated that the RAWG proposal was a "tapestry" with close links between the different recommendations. "If you start tinkering" with specific recommendations, he suggested, it could undermine the document as a whole.

"I hope you will pass [the see SCHOOLS page A7

## Free Meals This Fall for Montague Elementary

By ELLEN BLANCHETTE

TURNERS FALLS – Jim Loynd, Gill-Montague regional school district food services manager, announced to the school committee at their March 10 meeting that the district will be able to offer free lunch for the next school year to all students at Hillcrest and Sheffield Elementary.

Under the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, an alternative method to the collecting of household applications for free and reduced meals is available for schools where there is a high percentage of students from low-income families.

Loynd told the committee that they considered this last year, but it seemed it would cost the district too much. With some changes in the current student population, it will now be possible for the 2015-16 school year to provide free breakfast and lunch to all students at Hillcrest and Sheffield without the need for applications to be filled out by families or reviewed by administrative staff.

This lifts a burden of the processing of so many applications by the staff and also ensures that all students get good healthy meals each day at school. The Community Eligibility Provision requires the USDA to provide this alternative method of meal counting and see MEALS page A3

## What Makes a Fire Department? Never-Ending Training.



MIKE JACKSON PHOTO

Walker Korby, Dave Reborka, and Tyler Mankowsky rehearse ice rescues on Lake Pleasant last Sunday morning.

By TIA FATTARUSO

MONTAGUE – Every Thursday night and one Sunday a month, the Montague Center Fire Department gets together for training. "We need to do that," said training officer Gary Dion. "When you train with people you have confidence going into a burning building with them," he said.

Often they are repeating drills and lessons they have done many times, working with pumps, hoses and ladders, ropes and knots and smoke masks. As a volunteer, rural force, they do not get regular calls to implement what they learn.

"You might find something that doesn't work right and correct it. It's better than trying to figure that out at a fire," said Dion, who has volunteered with the department for 33 years.

### Ice Rescue

Last Saturday night, the department was called to a structure fire on Montague City Road. "We helped haul hose into the house," said Dion. "We were called at 8:30, and out by ten after 10."

The very next morning, the department practiced ice rescue on Lake Pleasant, with a solid 16 inches of ice from this frigid winter to

support them.

Chief John Greene sent volunteer firefighter Walker Korby to an ice rescue training in New Bedford last year. "I came back with knowledge, experience and training materials," Korby said.

"There are improvements in rescue techniques over the years, in styles of teaching and ways of using equipment. There is a safety industry out there constantly innovating."

According to Greene, firefighters were first taught how to put on immersion suits, which keep the wearer warm and buoyant. The see TRAINING page A4

## Board Favors Short-Term Cable Access Contract

By MIKE JACKSON

MONTAGUE – After a volatile, hour-long discussion Monday night, the Montague selectboard decided against issuing a request for proposals (RFP) for the town's cable access contract, but declined to grant the current provider a 10-year renewal, instead endorsing the negotiation of a contract through December 2017.

Selectboard member Mark Fairbrother, who joined the oversight Cable Advisory Committee (CAC) in the fall, called Montague Community Cable Inc. (MCCI) a "broken organization" and "not an organization, effectively, anymore," and advocated for an RFP.

Few present seemed to dispute the idea that MCCI has been underperforming, but there were fierce disagreements over how poorly it is doing, how much a breakdown in the CAC's oversight may have contributed to the situation, and how to guide the organization toward improvement under a new contract.

MCCI board members Mike Langknecht and Veronica Phaneuf said that without a longer-term contract, or at least one with a renewal

see CABLE page A6

## Fairbrother, Roque Face April 8 Party Caucus

By MIKE JACKSON

MONTAGUE – Two of this year's candidates for the Montague selectboard, incumbent Mark Fairbrother and challenger Jacobo Roque, are registered as Democrats and will seek the party's nomination at its caucus next month.

Voters who are either registered Democrats or registered and unenrolled may vote at the caucus, which runs from 6:30 to 7 p.m. at town hall on Wednesday, April 8.

Though on some occasions the party caucus has functioned as a primary of sorts, both candidates are likely to appear on the townwide ballot May 18: Roque has submitted nomination papers at the town clerk's office, and Fairbrother said he also intends to do so. The winner on April 8 will appear on that ballot with a D next to his name.

"Well I'm not 'seeking' very hard, but why not?" said Fairbrother when asked why he was seeking the nomination. "I consider it to be part of the process, and the die-hard Dems who come out to participate deserve the chance to vote in their own process."

"I think it's a smart move to see what happens," Roque said when asked the same question. "I want to see what the numbers look like. I'm still going to work very hard. I've see CANDIDATES page A5

## "Just a Bit of Extra Care"

By LEE WICKS

MONTAGUE CENTER – When John Lankarge pulled his car over during a morning walk, I thought he was going to ask how to get to the Bookmill. This happens all the time in Montague Center, but not this time.

John wanted to admire our dogs, and then he wanted to talk about his own dogs, especially Lilly, a Labradoodle who is a certified therapy dog. I wanted to know more, but he didn't have a lot of time just then. When we finally sat down to talk I realized he doesn't have much free time at all.

Lankarge, a native of South Deerfield who now lives in Montague, is one of those retired people – he retired from Mayhew Steel Products in Buckland, and worked at Pro Brush for thirty-one years until they went out of business – who fill each day with service.

When retirement approached, he decided he wanted to work with children. Now, in the mornings and afternoons he drives the wheelchair bus for children with special needs.

He said, "I love those kids. Those children are angels. One child has a machine that uses eye movement to allow him to communicate. He is



WICKS PHOTO

John Lankarge (left) brings Lilly (bottom, center) to Deb Lane's after-school program at Sunderland Elementary.

brave. They are all brave."

That would be enough for some people, but Lankarge also brings Lilly to the after-school programs at Sunderland and Whately elementary schools where she listens to stories, or appears to. Lilly is a certified reading buddy. She rests quietly while the children take turns and read for ten minutes each. She creates a calm homey atmosphere.

Children gently pet her or rest against her back. Because she does not shed – she has hair rather than

fur – allergies are not a problem. Because she has been so carefully trained, there is never any fear.

When the children take a break from reading, Lilly meanders nearby while they do crafts, and after reading time, interested children can go to the gym and learn some training tips from Lankarge.

Lilly is going to a big dog show in April, and students are excited to help with her training, though the "help" goes both ways. "Working see DOGS page A5



# The Montague Reporter

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About Face Computing

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*August, 2002*



Non-plant objects: An annual community art project.

## Baby Steps, With Community Support

Much has changed since the Montague Reporter launched in 2002.

We expanded our coverage and delivery from an initial three towns to four, and then to five.

We left the nest of Montague Community Cable, Inc. and became an independent nonprofit with its own Board of Directors.

Our offices moved from Third to Fourth Street, and finally onto Avenue A.

We outgrew the smaller, tabloid format -- much as we all loved it -- into a broadsheet, and after some time thought to treat its detached second part as a features section that can stand on its own.

We withstood an editorial transition in winter and spring of 2012-13, and we are currently in a second one in winter and spring 2014-15.

This time around we find ourselves on more solid ground, with no worry that we might have to call it quits -- but slowly bringing together the right team is challenging, especially during the cold season when we tend to operate at a loss.

At this point, we are having trouble growing in the ways that we want. Our annual revenue has been fairly flat for several years, and roughly speaking, we find ourselves gaining subscribers and advertisers on one end at just about the same slow rate as we surrender them to natural circumstances.

A section of our readers are very dedicated fans, and for that we are blessed. Many subscribers tack on an extra ten or twenty dollars at renewal time, which helps us keep our rates low for those who can't afford to do so.

But we're having trouble connecting with the portion of our area's residents who were born after about 1975. This demographic seems to be growing. To meet them, we may have to go online.

It made sense in 2002 to have no website, and no web presence beyond a page maintained on the community website *montaguema.net*.

Around 2010, we gained the capacity to accept payments via PayPal (our account is [montaguereporter@gmail.com](mailto:montaguereporter@gmail.com)).

And in 2012, we registered *montaguereporter.org*, but so far we have only been using it for email -- as many have noticed, we just slapped some stock text up on

the site, and haven't really even edited it.

All along, we've heard the advice that we should develop a website. While the advice has stayed the same, its wisdom has only increased over time.

When we started out in 2002, only 59% of US residents could access the Internet at home. In 2014, 87% could do so. (Over the same period, internet access has grown from 11% to 40% of the world population.)

And while, then and now, our region lags behind the national average in connectedness, the proliferation of mobile devices has in part made up for the lack of middle- and last-mile cable for many households.

It has been fun to feel like a well-kept secret, off the grid in a certain way. Our reluctance to bother with the Internet has probably spurred us to put down deeper roots here in reality, in the "space of places" rather than the "space of flows," as sociologist Manuel Castells put it.

At the same time, we're not exactly a model of low-tech publishing. Rather, we've been using new technology in a piecemeal way: We gather news and workshop articles with writers via email, and upload our finished product in electronic form to our printer.

Don't worry that we are leaping into the unknown. We don't have the time, frankly, to run an online news site. For us, the printed weekly newspaper is still the single central vehicle of our organization's mission.

The limitations of the form are intimately bound to the pleasures it provides, both to readers and writers. Though we may miss a house here or there, we love walking, driving or biking down your roads to deliver you the news.

But it has become clear that, in having so little real online presence, our organization is falling behind.

It would take hours off our office staff and volunteers each week if we could put up pages providing thorough information to subscribers and advertisers.

We will still always be available to talk, but we wouldn't be as bogged down in answering the most frequently asked questions: what subscriptions cost in different locations; our ad rates; how to submit content; and where we can be

found on newsstands.

We would love to share big news, and favorite feature articles, with a potentially wider audience, and draw them toward a paper they may have overlooked or not even heard of.

And as an organization that's always facing fresh challenges and depends on volunteers, it would be very helpful to regularly update our wishlist and "help wanted" listing. We could also become a hub by providing links to other online resources in our towns.

Our longer-term ambition, after those first steps, is to make our archive available to browse in digital form. We have already published a treasure trove of information, and there is no reason to let it sleep in hidden stacks of paper forever.

As a nonprofit that serves the community, we feel the work we've done over the past twelve years should be an active and accessible resource.

Developing a site with these capabilities is a large, one-time project that we want to do right. We have found we can't dip into our weekly operating budget to fund this, but we're convinced it's an investment that will pay off for the paper.

And so, this month, our Board of Directors invites you to join a major capital campaign, in order to fund the development of a real website at [montaguereporter.org](http://montaguereporter.org), and help with some hardware and software updates that go along with it.

We have set a goal of \$10,000. Fundraising materials have been included with this newspaper (if you don't see them, contact [info@montaguereporter.org](mailto:info@montaguereporter.org) and we'll get them to you).

Many of our readers have been generous with us in the past to help see us through times of need. This time, we ask you to help see us into a time of growth.

Please consider what you can contribute, whether it be a small vote of confidence or a cornerstone gift. Let us know if you have any questions.

And thank you, as always, for reading the *Montague Reporter*!

## Letter to the Editors

### Clarifications, Corrections, and an Apology

After a period of months, years actually, and as a result of a number of issues I will not go into here, by last fall the Montague Cable Advisory Committee had placed our Town in a genuinely unfavorable legal position which had become necessary to be addressed by Town Counsel in a series of very difficult conversations with the MA Attorney General's office.

Having for months tried to work with the co-chairs of that committee to avoid this situation, it was clear to me that changes needed to be made ASAP to address and correct the problem, and so I sent Gary and Eileen my now-famous note.

Since then there have been several responses, in the *Reporter* and elsewhere, to my action which, perhaps understandably, have been misleading and less than accurate. I address some of those here.

Firstly, that I publicly humiliated them. In fact I did nothing to them publicly. I sent my note to them. *They chose* to forward the note to others, where it quickly arrived at the *Reporter*.

The *Reporter* then *chose* to publish the note, on the front page no less.

They can't have it both ways: make a private note public themselves, and then voice outrage at being publicly humiliated. That I had "no legal authority" to fire them and that they had been denied due process.

The first is correct; the second is not. I never claimed I did have such authority; in fact I alluded to that in the note. Having received

the note, they didn't actually have to do anything.

I also effectively told them in the note that if they wanted to appeal, we could go to the full Selectboard. Such a meeting could probably have been in executive session if they so desired and the law allowed.

Instead they did submit their resignations but voiced outrage at it all. Again, they can't have it both ways: decline the ability to appeal to the full Board, resign, and then cry foul at the lack of due process.

As to the concern that the full Board of Selectmen did not "censure" me:

Since I have not spoken about this with the Board of Selectmen I don't know what their thinking is, but knowing what Counsel put before us in executive session late last fall concerning all of this, I would speculate that, however uncomfortable they may have been with my action, they understood that it was, unfortunately, necessary.

Having said all of that, I did come to understand that I was wrong to send Gary and Eileen the note as I did. I should have met with them together in person.

Although the basic message would still have been the same, they did deserve to have a meeting and discuss things in person at that time.

I erred in not giving them that option, and for that I do apologize to them, and to all.

Mark Fairbrother  
Montague

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No paper last week of December.  
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Compiled by DON CLEGG

The annual **Easter Egg hunt** at Diemand Farm in Wendell, which had been scheduled for Saturday, March 28, has been **canceled this year**.

Avian influenza has been confirmed as close as the upper Midwest, and is being carried by migratory birds. The farm has decided to keep the public away from its animals for biosecurity reasons, at the recommendation of the Department of Agriculture.

The egg hunt is usually held in the storage shed with the wood shavings, and activities are held all over the farm. All of these are potential vectors for spread of the virus by the public. If a bird at Diemand was to contract the flu, the government would have to quarantine and depopulate the farm.

The driveway and farm store are still open to the public Mondays

through Saturdays, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Please stop by to say hi! They hope to be able to have open houses by summer when the flu threat has passed, and plan to have the hunt back on next Easter.

Greenfield Community College visits Greenfield Savings Bank, Turners Falls, on Saturday, March 28, from 9 a.m. to noon.

Prospective students and their families are invited to learn about **GCC's admission process**, explore the variety of degree and certificate programs GCC has to offer, and realize the many transfer opportunities available, and how you can earn a bachelor's degree on the Greenfield Campus.

Informational packets and brochures will be available. For further details about the event contact the Admission Office at (413) 775-1801 or [admissions@gcc.mass.edu](mailto:admissions@gcc.mass.edu).

Also at GSB on March 28 from

9 a.m. to noon, Danielle Letourneau-Therrien, of **Big Brother/Big Sister**, will **host an open house** in the Community Room. She and her staff can expertly answer any questions you might have regarding the program, philosophy, benefits, rewards, participation and sign-up opportunities.

Big Brother/Big Sister not only provides that extra personal interaction with caring adult role models and youngsters who may benefit by the attention, it also fills a void for the adults who may be looking for that extra connection of caring and sharing with a special friend. This bond often times exists far beyond the scope of the program.

During this open house, it could be worthwhile to sign up children from Montague who may be interested in finding the perfect match with partner programs at Deerfield Academy and Northfield Mt. Hermon Schools. Youngsters welcome.

The **Great Falls Discovery Center Spring Preschool Series** continues on Saturday, March 28, from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. with the topic of Early Signs of Spring.

Children will search high and low to find the signs of its arrival. This program is led by Janel Nockleby and will feature stories, activities,

and crafts for ages 3 to 6 with a parent or guardian. Siblings and friends welcome. If you enjoy the summer Kidleidoscope series, then you will not want to miss these programs.

Held on the grounds of GFDC with some indoors activities. For more info call 863-3221. Sponsored by the Friends of GFDC.

The **Turners Falls Genealogy Gathering** is an informal group which meets monthly on the first Thursday of each month (including April 2) from 6 to 7:45 p.m. at the Carnegie Library, for an informal discussion of family research. The program is facilitated by Sarah Campbell.

The RECOVER Project, a community-driven, peer to peer center that aims to enhance the lives of people in recovery, will host a **Game Night** on Saturday, April 4, from 7 to 9:30 p.m. The event is held in the RPX, at 1 Osgood Street in Greenfield.

Hilarious fun for all ages, this is a family friendly, drug- and alcohol-free event. Free pizza, coffee and water will be available, and snacks and soda will be sold.

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

MEALS from page A1

claiming process as a way to both increase access to child nutrition programs, and reduce paperwork at the district, school and household levels.

The Healthy Hungry Kids Act has set new standards for the kind of food served in school cafeterias, standards the Gill-Montague regional school district has put a great deal of effort into meeting over the last few years. In 2013, the USDA announced the addition of "smart snacks for kids," ensuring vending machines and snack bars include healthy choices.

Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack said of these new standards, "Parents and teachers work hard to instill healthy eating habits in our kids, and these efforts should be supported when kids walk through the schoolhouse door. Good nutrition lays the groundwork for good health and academic success."

"Providing healthy options throughout school cafeterias, vending machines, and snack bars will complement the gains made with the new, healthy standards for

school breakfast and lunch so the healthy choice is the easy choice for our kids."

Sandra Brown, school committee member from Gill, expressed her support for this program and said she knew there were students who would qualify for free lunch but whose parents hesitate to apply.

She asked who knows who currently gets free lunch. Loynd said the paperwork is only seen by a few people who process the applications, and that in the cafeteria, only the site supervisors know who gets free lunch. The students all use the same cards, and no one can tell who gets free lunch and who pays for it.

Under the new program, which will start in September, everyone regardless of family income, will get free lunch in the two schools designated for the program.

Loynd said that over time, as the students who are in the elementary school now progress into the other schools, at some point the entire district should be eligible for free meals. This has to do with calculations of what percentage of the stu-

dent body comes from low-income families.

In considering the program last year, the cost was determined to be too high to the school district but with a new determination of the percentage of the student population that lives below the poverty line and so qualifies for food stamps and other kinds of assistance, the school can now offer this program at no increase in cost to the district.

In fact, Loynd said food services expects to show a small profit (he prefers to call it a "cushion") for the school year. This will allow the department to weather changes in costs of food and other supplies during the school year.

Brown asked how they will count meals for reporting to other agencies once the program is in place. These numbers are part of how the state determines its foundation formula and Chapter 70 contribution to the school district.

Loynd replied that the information will be gathered just as it is now, except that there will be no distinction between paying and subsidized meals.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Superior Court  
Department of the Trial Court  
Franklin County

Publication Notice

To all person(s) interested in the below described land(s) with claims against one or more tracts of land mentioned herein

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Wendell Scholarships  
Help Minds Grow!

The Wendell Scholarship Committee has established a new scholarship for Wendell students, Dollars for Wendell Scholars. Students who live in Wendell can apply by completing the short and easy application.  
Applications for the scholarship are available at local high schools and at the Wendell Free Library. They must be returned to the address below by April 30.  
Our first annual fundraiser was initiated with a mailing to all Wendell residents in February. Donations may be made to Dollars for Wendell Scholars, P.O. Box 232, Wendell, MA 01379 with checks payable to Dollars for Wendell Scholars. Or go to our crowdfunding site: [www.youcaring.com/dollarsforwendellscholars](http://www.youcaring.com/dollarsforwendellscholars).  
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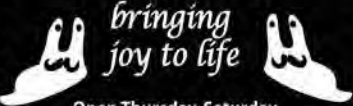
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HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD

## \$110,000 for Elementary School Upgrades Heads to Annual Town Meeting

By KATIE NOLAN

The Erving selectboard voted to buy the property at 34 Northfield Road from the Lavalle family for \$160,000, pending approval by voters at the May 4 annual town meeting. The 2.81-acre property is located between Erving Elementary School and the senior and community center.

Selectboard members cited potential future uses such as a location for senior housing, access between the senior and community center and elementary school, or a future library building site. Finance committee member Daniel Hammock commented, “It does complement the land we own around it.”

The selectboard also voted to classify the property as “unique”, which simplifies the legal requirements for advertising before the town’s purchase of a property.

### Capital Improvements at EES

The selectboard voted to ask the town meeting to approve \$110,000 toward capital improvements at Erving Elementary School (EES). School committee chair Scott Bastarache told the board that a capital subcommittee went through the school in December 2014 and compiled a list of approximately 52 items that needed to be addressed.

From that list, the committee selected six items of immediate importance, and gathered ballpark quotes from contractors or suppliers to come up with the \$110,000 request.

The list Bastarache presented included a new generator, repair of one of the two boilers, HVAC maintenance, window blinds, and new computers.

The town meeting warrant article will state that the school committee will consult with the finance committee and selectboard for specific capital expenditures.

**Generator:** According to the school committee handout, “the current generator is insufficient to power the building and the cafeteria.”

Bastarache expressed disappointment that the school committee was unaware that the town recently purchased three generators for other town buildings, and was not able to join in on the competitive bidding process.

After discussion with the board and the finance committee, Bastarache agreed that the school committee will look at costs for replacement of the current generator by a larger one and at adding a second generator to power just the kitchen.

**Boiler:** “The school is currently running on only one of the

two boilers. If the current one goes down, the school has no ability to function properly.”

**HVAC:** Bastarache said that the HVAC system is currently being serviced by school custodial staff, but should be serviced by certified HVAC technicians to bring the system up to standard (“retro-commissioning”), after which routine annual maintenance should be acceptable.

**Blinds:** Some of the current window blinds need repair in order to comply with state safety standards.

**Technology:** Bastarache said that the school keeps computers in service for approximately 8 years. For the first 4 years, they are used in the computer lab; for the next 4 years, they are used in classrooms and by staff.

Bastarache said that new computers are needed in the computer lab, and 8 of the staff computers need to be replaced.

### Animal Control

The board, minus Arthur Johnson, who is the town’s animal control officer, approved police chief Chris Blair’s request for an increase in the ACO stipend from \$2,448 to \$5,200 for FY’16. Blair researched payments to ACOs in other local towns before requesting

the increase.

In his letter to the board, he also said that at least one other town was interested in forming an ACO collaborative with Erving, paying Erving for the services of its ACO. In this case, the ACO stipend could be further increased to account for the additional work load.

### Other Business

The finance committee and the board met jointly to finalize the fiscal year 2016 budget. The increase in the budget over last year is approximately \$433,000, similar to the amount for FY’15.

Assistant assessor Jacquelyn Boyden said she could provide an estimate of the effect of the FY’16 budget on the tax rate at the March 30 meeting.

Selectboard member Margaret Sullivan reported that the water supply main to the senior and community center is still frozen, and the town is still waiting for the ground to thaw.

The board accepted the low bid of \$10,500 for three storage containers for the highway department, and bid of \$9,280 for a brush chipper, and \$22,900 for installation of a lift at the 18 Pleasant Street building.

### TRAINING from page A1

department has two different kinds.

“You can sweat inside the suits, they’re so warm,” Greene said.

The crew cut a hole in the ice, which “went more swiftly this year,” Korby said, as they cut a first large triangle into four smaller triangles to remove.

The ice rescue motto, said Greene, is “reach, throw, and go,” and is dependent on the condition of the victim and distance from the shore.

First, they would evaluate if they could reach a victim with a ladder or fire hose inflated with air, then if not, whether a victim is able to help themselves with a rope thrown to them, and finally to go out onto the ice with the appropriate gear.

If there is a lot of broken ice or open water, rescuers use an inflatable boat. Otherwise, it is important to understand the different types of ice and what it can support, which firefighters study, along with the physiology of hypothermia, in a night of classwork before the hands-on exercise.

Even with the thick ice at Lake Pleasant, Korby noted its composition. The regular lake ice on the bottom had started to degrade, as ice melts from the bottom up. There was then a layer of compacted snow and frozen rain and melt on top.

In a situation where the ice is stronger in a spot, the department puts in anchors to “base operations from there,” Greene said.

The fire fighters ultimately practiced different rescue techniques designed to help a victim without endangering themselves.

Greene also talked about asking a victim, who, as hypothermia sets in loses the ability to assist themselves, “to put their arms up on the ice and leave them there... so their

clothes freeze to the ice and anchor them.”

### The Burn Trailer

“The most important thing is safety,” said Dion about firefighter training and preparedness. “Scene safety and self safety.” As training officer he is responsible for scheduling the curriculum and noted that it is important to keep things from getting boring to help keep people safe.

Volunteers, who must be Firefighter I and First Responder certified, consequently and repeatedly train in a variety of ways, “keeping it simple, and doing them over and over again,” Korby said.

The Montague Center department recently practiced search and rescue with smoke machines in the old Montague school building. The Greenfield scrap yard allows them to practice auto extrication and peeling apart cars there every year with the department’s own “jaws of life” and large metal shears.

“That’s intense, strong equipment that can do a lot of damage. It’s great to be able to do,” said Korby about having the technical training and skill set to help people.

About five years ago chief Greene received a \$195,000 Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) grant to build a burn trailer fire training facility, located in Sunderland rather than Montague, as it does create smoke. Through the Tri-State Fire Mutual Aid Association all participating departments have access to the facility once a year.

The burn trailer has a maze to practice search and rescue and a tower to climb and rappel.

The burn room uses “regular class A combustibles – wood,” said Greene, with temperature sensors monitored very carefully, to get a

live fire up to a target temperature of 800 degrees fahrenheit, and never over 1000 degrees, allowing fire fighters to experience that heat, and practice extinguishment and how to ventilate.

“Knowing what to expect gives you a little less anxiety when you’re trying to do your job,” said Korby, who has volunteered on three departments since joining Colrain in 2000 due to his interest in fighting wild fires. “You’re wearing heavy turnout gear, but your ears start to get pretty hot.”

The facility also provides liquid propane gas training, which “puts out a lot of fire,” according to Greene, and, “teaches how to coordinate an attack on it.”

The department spent 18 Thursdays last year training and earning a rapid intervention team certification, to prepare them to rescue trapped firefighters.

Greene and Dion also have the fire fighters practice forcible entry, using foam to smother fires, hazardous material, or HazMat training, and of course they “spend a lot of time using engines and learning how to pump, fire hydraulics, how much pressure it takes,” said Greene.

### Training In County

Greene’s extensive efforts over the last 15 years as training coordinator of the county recruit program have helped “get volunteers up to the same level of training” as paid firefighters, said Terry Dunn, retired fire chief of Shelburne.

It also keeps them from having to travel the further distances that volunteers such as Greene and Dion once had to do for training, in their unending commitment to community service. The two firefighters work together on incident management planning.

The Massachusetts Fire Academy has “physical agility and physical capability components, but there’s not time for volunteers to go through such vigorous training,” Dunn explained.

“Certain volunteers come with certain skill sets,” Dunn continued. “When there were a lot of farmers, they knew how to handle machinery and were available. The cows just got milked a few hours later. Lamson and Goodnow would let guys go to get the ambulance or truck.”

He added that “the unique thing for volunteer firefighters, is someone might not be adept at heights, but there are a lot of other productive things they can do for the team.”

With more people working out of town and fewer businesses that let people leave, departments like Montague Center are actively recruiting volunteers with daytime availability.

Training exercises also “get different people working with different people,” Dion said. “We never know who’s going to get [to a call].”

“There’s something that happens when ability to work together and knowledge is critical to the safety of yourself and others. You put differences aside,” echoed Korby.

All the volunteers I talked with spoke of the community that is built amongst them, and of their main motivation of helping the community at large as well.

“We’re not doing it for the money,” said training officer Dion. (Volunteers receive a small stipend.) “We’re all doing it to help protect our community.”

But, he said, “you have to have family support, or it’s not going to work. I’ve missed Christmas and birthdays.”

Dunn added, “It’s a family affair.”



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**DOGS** from page A1

with a dog teaches kids to be patient and follow directions,” Lankarge explained.

At Sunderland Elementary on a recent Tuesday afternoon, Erin Kingsbury, a kindergartener, said, “It’s special to have Lilly come here because she’s a dog that likes to read.”

And Oliver Sackrey, a sixth grader, said, “I’m a real animal lover, and it’s great to have an animal in an environment that usually has no animal. It’s special.”

Their teacher, Deb Lane, said, “It’s not just about a dog; it’s about what a dog does for the kids.”

And Lilly is not an “only dog.” There’s Kimmy, a shih-Poo (a cross between a Shih-Tzu and a Poodle), and Erica, a rescue schnauzer mix. Kimmy and Erica don’t go to the schools, but John brings them to the Farren Care Center every other Thursday.

“A therapy dog is trained to ignore sudden noises, like a wheelchair coming down a hallway, or crutches against the floor,” said Lankarge. “So they are comfortable at the Farren, and the patients

there appreciate the dogs.

“As soon as one reaches out to pet a dog you see the smiles,” he continued. “Once, I brought Kimmy, and a woman in a wheelchair signaled that she wanted to see the dog. She started to hug Kimmy and then began saying, ‘Oh please don’t take her away.’”

It is not uncommon for patients who seldom communicate with people to begin talking and smiling at a dog, said Lankarge, smiling as he always does when speaking of his canine family.

Then there’s the Soldiers Home, a facility he describes as “awesome,” with “fabulous care.” At the Soldier’s Home, recovering veterans have beckoned the dogs to jump into bed. The magnetic affection a small dog can convey with an adoring stare is a form of healing, according to John.

Lilly went to NB Productions in Greenfield where instructors Laurie LaValley and Pam Murphy, from Turners Falls, helped her earn her certification as a therapy dog. They have both worked with and trained dogs for many years, and were instrumental in bringing the

first Motivational Method puppy kindergarten classes to Southern Vermont and Western Massachusetts.

Lankarge volunteers through Bright Spot Therapy Dogs, Inc., a non-profit organization dedicated to placing well-trained certified therapy dog teams in meaningful programs that provide comfort and caring through the human-canine bond.

Their special volunteers serve in a wide variety of settings including hospitals, nursing homes, schools, libraries and other facilities where therapy dogs are needed.

You can find numerous photos of Lilly and the elementary school children she visits at the website, [www.bright-spot.org](http://www.bright-spot.org). At this site people can learn about training and volunteer opportunities, a perfect fit for people who love dogs and want to help humans find happiness.

Lankarge makes it all look easy. “So many people need just a bit of extra care,” he said. “The things I am doing are fun things. The bus driving, the dogs, I’m enjoying myself.”



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### HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GILL SELECTBOARD

## Zoning for Cannabis, Digging for Leaks

By BEVERLY KETCH

March 23rd’s Gill selectboard meeting began with project updates.

All 16 of the security locks for classroom doors in Gill Elementary School have now been installed. Unfortunately, a central bar-lock for the double doors to the common room would make the doors non-compliant with A.D.A. regulations for door width.

To complete the project a solution must be found, and selectmen are planning to work with the facilities manager to find a solution cheaper than replacing the doors which is estimated at \$2,370. If new doors prove to be the only solution, the project will have gone a third over the original budget estimate.

Selectboard member Greg Snedeker mentioned that this spring’s gradual thaw was good news for the sewer study, and manholes may be lifted on Thursday, as the study will proceed as weather allows. This will allow the town to stay apprised of any possible ground water leaks.

### Pot Zone

A planning board meeting at 7 p.m. on April 9 will include a public hearing on a medical marijuana dispensary bylaw. The bylaw will allow appropriate zoning regulations in the event that an approved and licensed person applies to the town

to open a dispensary there. Banning such businesses is not allowed by the state.

Zoning would possibly include requiring a security study at the applicant’s expense. Bylaws would include that any registered marijuana dispensary would be on property at least 300 feet from schools, and in a stand-alone building in a commercially zoned area.

State winter recovery assistance is allotted in the amount of \$22,639. All repairs must be completed by June 30. These repairs can include filling pot-holes, sealing cracks in the road, replacing broken signs and repainting road striping.

### Wet Earth

For many years there has been a leak in the town hall basement that floods the assessors’ office.

An exploratory dig around the foundation has been proposed to find out how to repair this worsening problem.

John Ward suggested that it may be possible that while the equipment for this dig is at the town hall, that the site could also be evaluated for the possible installation of a ground source heat pump, which is being explored as a possibility by the energy commission.

These possibilities will be discussed with highway superintendent Micky LaClaire and local contractor Doug Edson.

### Stable Funds

The selectboard meeting was followed by a posted meeting of the finance committee.

Joanne Blier, the Gill Montague Regional School District’s business manager, spoke to the selectboard and finance committee.

She began with explanations for the 8.7% increase (up \$124,701) in the Gill percentage of the education assessment of fiscal year 2016. Part of the reason for the increase is that past years’ percentages had been quite low.

Ray Purington added that this savings in past years had allowed the town to prepare for a future increase with an Education Stabilization Fund of \$138,600. It is possible that even with the increased percentage this year, this fund may remain untouched and available for future years.

### Announcements

A pancake breakfast will be held by the Friends of Gill on Saturday, March 28 from 8 to 10:30 a.m. Adults are \$6, and kids under 10 \$3. It will benefit the college scholarship program and feature maple syrup from Rolling Ridge Sugar House. Apple pies will be available for purchase.

A dog and cat rabies vaccination clinic will take place at the regional dog shelter, Saturday, April 4 from noon to 2 p.m.

### CANDIDATES

 from page A1

been going door to door, talking to my fellow citizens.”

Roque said he has been campaigning in Precincts 2 and 6, and has begun putting up lawn signs.

“There are times the caucus is packed, and you get lines out the front door,” said Democratic Town Committee chair Jay DiPucchio, adding that he had no prediction whether this would be one such busy year.

If any potential candidates for town office who were registered Democrats as of December 31 wish to seek the party’s nomination for selectboard or any other seat, they must contact DiPucchio by 5 p.m. this Saturday, March 28.

A Democratic endorsement means a candidate does not need to turn in regular nomination papers at the town clerk’s office. The deadline for that is Monday, March 30.

According to town clerk Deb Bourbeau, Richard Kuklewicz has turned in his nomination papers, and as of Wednesday, Christopher Menegoni has not yet turned in the papers he took out.

“I’ve always been unenrolled,” explained Kuklewicz, when asked why he wasn’t seeking the party endorsement. “Had I thought of it sooner, I might have enrolled so I could go to the caucus.”

“But I think that the [town clerk] nomination process is fine, for getting on the ballot.”

“I’ve been enrolled as an independent since 1994,” said Menegoni. “I usually vote for the Democrats, but I’m not going with any specific party.”

### Town Meeting Openings

Also as of Wednesday, only six candidates had turned in nomination papers for the twenty-three empty seats on town meeting.

According to Bourbeau, it appears that only in Precincts 2 and 5, Millers Falls and downtown Turners Falls, have enough candidates taken out papers to fill the empty seats.

Tina Verchot and Kim Niedewicz will vie for the one vacant seat in Precinct 2.

In Precinct 5, Alice Johnson, Max Armen, and Rodney Madison have turned in papers for the precinct’s four vacancies, and a fourth has additionally taken papers out.

Precinct 6, covering the southwest portion of town and the home precinct to selectboard member Mike Nelson, has seven empty seats, a full third of its delegation. Three residents have taken out papers there as of Wednesday afternoon, and no one had returned them.

Louise Deren has turned in papers for Precinct 3, and two other candidates have taken them out. There are five openings there.

And no one has yet stepped forward in Precinct 1, Montague Center, which has a deficiency of four delegates, or Precinct 4, which needs two.

Bourbeau said she anticipated having to call write-in candidates and convince them to volunteer for the responsibility.

“This is pretty much what it’s looked like for the past ten years,” she said.



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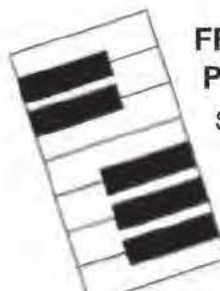
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## CABLE from page A1

clause, the group would have difficulty securing loans to move into a new facility, a plan it has been pursuing for several years, and in planning necessary technology upgrades.

### Without “Adult Supervision”

“It is obvious and true that the CAC dropped the ball for several years. The reviews just didn’t happen. No doubt about that,” Fairbrother told Langknecht. “You stated in an email earlier last year... that because the CAC didn’t do its job in evaluating and overseeing the station, the CAC was responsible for any deficiencies in the station’s performance.”

Langknecht denied making such a claim. The two argued, and Fairbrother promised to find the email.

He later provided the *Reporter* with a copy of a response Langknecht wrote in July 2014 to questions from then-CAC chair Eileen Dowd, stating that “any determinations made during the performance review must reflect the failure of the oversight body to fulfill its responsibilities under the agreement.”

“What that basically says is you’re telling the CAC that without adult supervision, we can’t do our job,” said Fairbrother.

Langknecht said he did not agree with that sentiment in any case. “We are responsible... if they don’t review us, that doesn’t mean that we don’t have to provide public access.... We’ve been responsible for everything that goes on at the station.”

Langknecht suggested that a new contract could provide a set date for a review, and that MCCI and the CAC share equal responsibility for making sure it happened.

“All we’re interested in is getting the proper guidance, putting a plan together, demonstrating to the town of Montague that we have done what we said we would do, and hearing from the town of Montague whether that was good enough, whether we need to do more of this or less of that,” he said.

According to Fairbrother, when asked what the organization’s ten-year plan was, Langknecht had responded in an email, “and I believe this is a direct quote: ‘we don’t have one.’”

Langknecht again objected to this: “I’m going to have to ask that you produce these, as opposed to pulling them out from memory, because it’s absurd. I don’t know what the heck you’re talking about. If you don’t have a real problem with MCCI, stop making stuff up.”

Fairbrother cited the same July letter to the *Reporter*, but Langknecht did not write “we don’t have one”. In that letter he wrote, “Any other discussion of future plans for MCTV should be a collaborative effort between MCCI and the [CAC], as per the Agreement.”

### Individuals, and Output

Phaneuf said the tumult itself has been preventing the organization from attracting the volunteers it needs to rebuild.

“We’ve been working on long-range planning, but there’s a lot of things out on the table here that make it a little difficult for people who are volunteering their time to come in and do,” she said.

“I thought [the CAC] was supposed to be the selectboard’s arm, and work with getting feedback from the town and helping to guide us in what we’re delivering, as volunteers on a board....

“If you don’t think we want more board members, and if you don’t think I would love to step down and have someone take my place – but with all this stuff going on, it’s a little hard to get members.”

“All I see is personal attacks,” said Charles Kelley, who identified himself as a public access producer. “This has been highly politicized, and nothing is getting done.... This is not constructive, this is destructive. And what you’re destroying is something I happen to love.... This is ridiculous. Let’s just move forward.”

Town meeting member John Reynolds spoke in favor of a three-year contract. “This baloney about they can’t do anything in three years is just that.... They can get a renewal after three years, but let’s see the steps started.... It has nothing to do with individuals, it has to do with output.”

Jeff Singleton, also a town meeting member, said he had brought a petitioned article to town meeting in May that would tie a contract with MCTV to a requirement of increased local content.

“I think we’d like to see some recognition that there’s a problem that needs to be solved,” he said. I’ve noticed recently there has been a definite uptick in local stuff on that station, and to me that’s a very good sign, but there is a fear... that then there’ll be a long-term contract, and that’ll stop.

“Personally, I want to see MCCI’s long range plan for going forward.”

### A Lot of Hand-Holding

“Obviously it has become very personal, and that’s a shame,” said John McNamara, who has joined the CAC. “The station does not appear to be managed properly. We wouldn’t be sitting here if we had droves of volunteers, and programming was coming out our ears....

“When you work with volunteers in the community, it’s a lot of work. It’s a lot of hand-holding. But it’s worth it.” McNamara said the station’s lack of evening hours is “unheard of at any access studio.”

He also acknowledged that the CAC had been negligent in its oversight, “but a lot of focus has been put on that CAC, and a lot

of members, as we all know, have been blown out by it. And they are also volunteers, I might add.”

“I don’t know why we don’t get more of our young folks involved,” said town meeting member Patricia Pruitt, who also warned against putting out an RFP: “I think that whether it’s a 30-month contract, a 1-year contract, or whatever we should all agree on, I don’t want to see the station go away from the town’s management.”

Betty Tegel, also a town meeting member, said the station is “a huge asset to the community, espe-

cially to seniors and the disabled population.”

Tegel recommended all parties “sit at a round table, with your written ideas, in a friendly atmosphere.... This is community television that many of us depend on.”

Tegel said she was frustrated with the continued rancor over the contract. “Volunteerism is difficult, and to recruit them and to keep them is a real struggle....

“I’ve seen this on television time and time again, trying to work on this agreement, and I’m getting tired of it myself. I’d like to see us

move forward on this.”

### Moving Forward

Selectboard member Mike Nelson made a motion to support negotiation of a contract with MCCI through December 31, 2017, with a clause for renewal through the end of 2025. Member Chris Boutwell amended it to ask the CAC and MCCI sit down to discuss it.

In the end, the board unanimously agreed to this course of action. Any negotiated contract must be ratified at town meeting.

## MORE NOTES FROM THE MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

# Pump Stations and Streetscapes

By JEFF SINGLETON

The March 23 Montague selectboard meeting began with its usual “public comment” period. Local resident John Burek came to the board meeting with two questions, and then posed a few more questions later in the discussion.

Burek began by asking about the impending sewer pump station project on First Street.

Burek stated that he recalled the station being “rehabbed” in late 1990s with what he called “state of the art” equipment. He wondered why the pump station needed an expensive reconstruction now.

Selectboard member Chris Boutwell stated that he had looked down the manhole at the station and “you wouldn’t believe the corrosion.” He also said the pump station is in a “high water area.”

Not entirely satisfied, Burek then asked about a building that, he believed, had been sold at a recent auction for approximately \$40,000 but had an \$80,000 IRS lien on it.

Town Administrator Frank Abbondanzio stated that the lien was the responsibility of the buyer, who was presumably aware of the situation.

Suzanne Kretzenger next asked about truck and tractor trailers coming down Millers Falls Road and attempting to make right turns in Millers onto Route 63.

The result, she noted, was frequent jackknifing, accidents and traffic jams – a threat to “public safety.”

Jeanne Golrick stated that there were problems at the intersection, which she called “dangerous and deadly,” with trucks coming from all directions.

The selectboard directed the town administrator to discuss the issue with the police chief and highway department director, then report back to the board.

### Procedures

Golrick also asked about the status of the town “policy and pro-

cedure manual” which she stated had not yet been issued, despite promises made “two to two and a half years” ago. She linked the manual issue to potential staffing changes at town hall.

Abbondanzio responded that the manual was not ready for public discussion because the selectboard has not voted on it.

The staffing issues, according to Abbondanzio, involve proposals to change the Treasurer and Clerk from elected to appointed positions. These changes have not been approved by either the selectboard or Montague Town Meeting.

Golrick then asked about the status of policies concerning the planters on Avenue A. Abbondanzio stated that these would be reviewed at a meeting of the planter committee in April.

### Detours

At this point, Burek commented on problems with the signage marking the Greenfield Road reconstruction project. Beginning Monday, March 30, Greenfield Road will be closed between Hatchery and Randall Roads, but northbound drivers on Turners Falls Road still encounter a detour sign directing them down Hatchery Road.

Boutwell noted that a public announcement concerning the project had mistakenly stated that the roads were in Greenfield, not Montague.

It was then suggested that the detour signage is the responsibility of the company managing the project, Baltazar Contractors, Inc.

This resulted in the public comment period ending on a jovial note given the rather poor historic relationship between the town and Baltazar.

### Beer and Parades

Lefty’s Brewing Company came before the board with a request for a one-day beer and wine license for an event at the Shea Theater, for a Greenfield Police

Department comedy function on May 8. The board approved the request.

The board also approved a request for a parade permit for May 16 from Riverculture’s Suzanne LoManto. The parade, which starts at 3 p.m., will go from the Discovery Center to Unity Park and then return via First Street.

It is part of a day-long series of events sponsored in conjunction with the University of Massachusetts that will celebrate the Connecticut River.

LoManto stated that one such event will involve making and painting large cardboard fish, which will subsequently be carried in the parade. The selectboard approved the request.

Golrick, noting that other villages in Montague contained or abutted rivers, asked if Riverculture is involved with villages outside of Turners Falls. LoManto responded that the organization publicized, but does not organize, events outside of Turners Falls.

Advocate Betty Tegel urged LoManto to be sure that handicapped parking spaces were left open during the events. LoManto agreed.

### Other Business

Frank Abbondanzio requested that the board sign agreements with the Berkshire Design Group for work on the Avenue A Streetscape Improvement Project. The board signed the agreements.

Abbondanzio then requested that the board appoint town accountant Carolyn Olsen to the Greenfield-Montague Transit Authority (GMTA). The board approved the appointment.

The GMTA used to provide public transportation to the towns of Greenfield and Montague, but currently only owns the facility that houses and repairs vehicles of the Franklin Regional Transit Authority (FRTA).

That facility suffered a fire last year. The FRTA is currently in the process of finding a site for a new facility to house its vehicles.

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**SCHOOLS** from page A1

proposal] on to the towns,” Fonsh concluded.

The school committee conversation began with Rick Hood of Amherst stating that he thought there were two key questions: what’s “the right thing to do,” and “can the agreement pass all four towns?”

Hood suggested that the school committee decision should be made by the summer or early fall of this year. If the proposal fails, then the committee should look at a pre-K through 6 elementary region.

Katherine Appy of Amherst interjected to say that if an elementary option was considered, the towns would have to recreate the earlier regional planning committee. An elementary district, which would no longer simply be an extension of the middle school/high school district, would by state law require a different process.

Hood then went on to say that he had always been in favor of re-

gionalization because it “simplifies things” in two ways. First, he noted, it saves money, in this case projected at around \$600,000. While this might not seem a lot in the context of the total budget and town assessment, Amherst had recently closed a school to save \$800,000. However, he said, the committee should revisit the savings estimate “to make sure it is real.”

The other way regionalization simplifies things, he argued, is to create a “less complex” administrative structure that “frees up time for education.” Hood also suggested that \$600,000 in savings was an “educational benefit.”

Hood argued, however, that the thirteen-member school committee in the RAWG proposal was perhaps “too big.” He suggested a seven-member committee, with four representatives from Amherst and one each from the other towns.

Hood stated that he was also concerned about finding school com-

mittee members willing to serve four-year terms, suggesting that the committee consider two years.

Finally, Hood made a forceful plea to consider strengthening and empowering the local school councils, which are mandated by the state to serve every school. He suggested that the councils should be given more power to decide on key issues, like the greenhouse at Leverett Elementary School.

**“Cookie-Cutter” Fears**

Sarah Dolven of Leverett said she agreed with Hood on many issues, including governance. She called a 13-member committee “unwieldy,” but said she felt that limiting the board to seven members “concerns me as well.”

Dolven said a key concern of Leverett’s is the “sustainability of our school,” whether the towns regionalize or not. She also said that Leverett residents “need to learn more about Amherst and how it

works.” There is a fear, she said, of a “cookie-cutter system” but, in fact, Amherst has “three very different elementary schools” in their system.

Finally, Dolven stated that regionalization would mean significant salary increases for teachers in some of the towns, which she thinks would be a potentially positive outcome. This “needs to be part of the discussion,” she said.

Lawrence O’Brien of Amherst also said he agreed with Hood, but asked about the method of electing a smaller committee. Hood and others stated that the election method would be the same as the RAWG proposal: district-wide voting for every position with residency requirements.

O’Brien also saw regionalization as an opportunity to address a key issue: “what is the authority of the administration [and] what is the authority of the school committee?” He said he was “tired of that debate.”

Katherine Appy of Amherst said she agreed with many of the previous comments but stated she had doubts about the idea of a smaller school committee. She said the feeling in the smaller towns might be that the responsibilities might be “too much for one rep.” “We’ve been a regional district for a long time,” she noted, suggesting that adding a few elementary schools would not be that big a change.

Stephen Sullivan of Pelham, as he has in the past, complained that there had been virtually no discussion of the proposal in his town. The school committee there “met for twenty minutes total,” and did not have enough information to deliberate on the issue.

Sullivan suggested that the savings estimates for consolidation were old, and that the committee needed more information about “what Amherst is doing” with its elementary schools.

“We don’t have the answers,” he said. “No forum, no nothing.”

gionalization as an “altruistic goal.” However, he argued, he feared proposing to reduce the size of the school committee while increasing the size of the region could cause the debate to “spin out of control.”

Baptiste said he felt that there is a fear of losing local control “in every town.” Residents will question whether the financial savings are worth it, or “just shifting the problem.” He said he supported the district-wide election method, which would reduce “factionalism.”

Amilcar Shabazz, participating remotely on Skype, asked if it was possible for a community to join the district “now,” presumably by a vote of an upcoming town meeting, if they so choose.

Appy replied that this would not be possible without a new regional agreement in place approved by all four towns.

Shabazz went on to argue that bringing in the elementary schools would not constitute a significant institutional change. He noted that there are now 2,641 students in a region that comprises all four towns. Regionalization would add a relatively small number of teachers and students.

There was more discussion of the role of the school councils, and whether they could become “mini school committees.” O’Brien asked what would happen if Leverett chose to be a magnet school. Who would make that decision? The law “is silent on that,” he stated.

**Next Steps**

The discussion concluded with Baptiste suggesting that the committee should continue the process with focused discussions of specific elements, or “big issues,” of the RAWG proposal. Dolven suggested that town school committees be invited to these discussions.

Shabazz, noting that the committee has “a lot on its plate,” suggested a summer retreat.

A member of the audience applauded the committee for the quality of the discussion, but said she was “extremely disappointed” that the meeting was not televised.

NOTES FROM THE LEVERETT SELECTBOARD

# Tough Budget Readied

By DAVID DETMOLD

After socking away an extra \$162,166 in the assessors’ reserve fund to handle the possibility of adverse rulings in two property abatement appeals – one seeking a reported \$10 million reduction in total valuation – pending at the state level, the town is hoping departments will be spared anything worse than across the board 3.5% budget reductions in the coming fiscal year.

Those cuts are already built into the \$5.6 million (a 0.3% increase from FY’15) annual budget presented at a joint hearing of the selectboard and finance committee on Tuesday.

But another wild card exists: the chance the town of Shutesbury may vote down the regional school assessment formula that has governed spending for middle and high school students at the Amherst-Pelham Regional Schools for the last 20 years or so. This may yet cost the town an additional \$116,000 in FY’16. Leverett won’t find out which way Shutesbury has voted on the regional assessment until the day of town meeting itself. Both towns hold annual town meeting on May 2 this year.

“We are working on a second budget,” to bring to town meeting, said finance committee chair Tom Powers on Tuesday.

That budget would be presented if Shutesbury votes to abandon the formula that has had each town in the APRS district spending exactly the same amount of money per pupil in favor of a statutory regional assessment formula that is weighted by factors including the overall wealth of each community in a school district (the state calculates Leverett as wealthier than Shutesbury).

Powers said the second budget, now in draft form, would seek additional cuts for all town departments – along with the Leverett Elementary School – of up to 8.5 to 9%.

Cuts of that magnitude would certainly mean layoffs and reduction of services in the coming fiscal year, said outgoing selectboard chair Rich Brazeau, who is stepping down at the beginning of May, one year into his current three-year term.

“The other option,” said Powers,

in the event Shutesbury votes down the regional school assessment formula, “is to look at the other budget and say, ‘That’s totally untenable,’ and to go to the voters for a Proposition 2½ override,” which would depend on a townwide ballot following town meeting.

If town meeting were to choose to go that route, an override vote might be put off until the fall, compounding the budgetary uncertainties for the elementary school and town departments.

**Acker Stumps, Shively Reenlists**

After listening to this gloomy fiscal forecast, Tara Acker, who is running for the seat that will soon be open on the selectboard, was undeterred. At a sparsely attended candidates night forum following the budget hearing, Acker said she was still ready and willing to serve.



Tara Acker

“I have municipal experience, though not in Leverett,” she said. After working for the Department of Environmental Protection, with a degree in environmental policy, Acker said she went back to the Kennedy School of Government to pursue further studies, after which she took a job supervising the city of Somerville’s performance based budget program, an innovative project called SomerStat.

In this program she worked closely with department heads, and interfaced with the media on initiatives like Somerville’s becoming “the first city in the nation to measure happiness.”

“We could tap into that!” said town administrator Margie McGinnis, as the mood in the meeting room grew lighter.

“Wait until after town meeting,” advised Brazeau.

“I’d love to run for selectboard,” said Acker, a nine-year resident of Leverett, who has two children in the school. “I put all of this energy into this city I adore – Somerville – but I love Leverett even more.”

“I know I have a lot of homework to do, to understand the hearts and minds of Leverett citizens. I’m very open minded and I would love to hear from you. I would appreciate your support.”

Brazeau said, despite the budget problems the town faces, “I could not think of a better group of people to work with.” In case anyone was measuring, he added, “I’m happy. I’m out of here!”

Long-serving selectboard member Julie Shively said she has decided to stand for re-election.

“I’m pretty excited,” said Shively. “We might actually have an affordable housing project that will get somebody an affordable house.”

She was referring to the town’s Community Preservation Act funded affordable housing project, which will award by lottery on May 7 subsidies that will total up to \$50,000 for median income homebuyers to purchase homes in Leverett, which will retain their affordability subsidies over time through deed restrictions.

Shively added she wanted to serve another term in order “to continue to work on regionalization” for Leverett to potentially join a unified K-12 regional school district with Amherst, Pelham and possibly Shutesbury.

Tom Powers, running for re-election to the finance committee, said, “It’s a job that needs to be done... I’ll stay on for another term and see if we can get over some of these hurdles.” On the subject of elementary school regionalization with Amherst-Pelham, Powers said in an era of declining enrolment, “I think the financial health of our town continues to rely on having that option in our pocket.”

Will Stratford said he would run again for town tree warden. “When residents call, I help them out,” he said.

Asked if he would keep Leverett’s roadside trees off the town’s newly installed broadband wires, Stratford said, “I’ll try.”

**Loss of Control?**

Chairperson Trevor Baptiste of Pelham weighed in by lauding re-

## Montague Broadband Commission Meeting

The Montague Broadband Commission will meet on Monday, March 30 at 6:30 p.m. at the Montague Center Fire Station, 28 Old Sunderland Road, Montague.

This is an open, posted public

meeting for updates on bringing broadband to unserved areas of Montague including Chestnut Hill, Taylor Hill, and Meadow Road, as well as the future of the whole town.

## GCTV Airs Adolescent Mental Health Series

Greenfield Community Television (GCTV) is re-broadcasting a series of shows filmed in 2011 on Child & Adolescent Mental Health over the next several months.

The shows were produced by Drew Hutchison of Local Bias Productions, and feature Garry L. Earles, LICSW, interviewed by KC Scott, host of the GCTV program *Come To Think Of It*.

Each episode is being aired for an entire month, Tuesdays at 6 p.m. and Wednesdays at 8:30 p.m. They can also be accessed through GCTV’s on-demand feature at [gctv.org/videos](http://gctv.org/videos).

April’s episode is Episode 2, on Attention Deficit – Hyperactivity

Disorder.

ADHD is the most diagnosed childhood psychiatric condition, affecting 3-5 % of children. Many are not diagnosed with this condition until adults, after having endured potentially decades of an inability to focus and stay on task, resulting in incomplete projects. Oftentimes those with ADHD also have OCD and learning disabilities.

While the conditions also afflict adults, the focus and emphasis of the shows is on child and adolescent mental health. The programs are intended for educational and informational purposes only and are not to be considered or used as diagnostic or therapeutic tools.

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## PARADISE GAINED

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"Then he said to Jesus, 'Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.' And Jesus said to him, 'Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.'" (Luke 23:42-43)

This person was being punished for his crimes, probably robbery in which a murder was committed. No one could come to his rescue. One man was acting like all the rest. The one in the middle was different. He was innocent. The crowd was saying "Save yourself," but Christ would not. If He did, He could not save you, me or the thief.

While Christ was dying, He saved the thief.

Would you ask Christ to save you?

This is as written.  
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## Shoe Show

"Promenade of Shoes" opens April 2 at Nina's Nook. Carefully sculpted and detailed shoes enshrined in miniature dioramas by Belinda Lyons Zucker are tributes to well known shoe icons such as Dorothy (*The Wizard of Oz*) and Elphaba (*Wicked*) and other well known characters. Additional sculptures celebrate the symbolic aspects of footwear as more than just the perfect accessory.

Companion shoe paintings and cards by Nina Rossi complement Zucker's show. Ending May 2.

Reception with the artist to coincide with the Third Thursday in Turners Falls evening of events on April 16. Nina's Nook is next to the Black Cow Burger Bar at 125A Avenue A, Turners Falls. Details: (413) 834-8800 and [ninasnook.com](http://ninasnook.com)

## Town Hall Hosts Kissing Booth Fundraiser for Montague City Road Project, April 1

Several of Montague's elected and appointed officials will be hosting a kissing booth fundraiser this Wednesday, April 1 to raise funds for a planned multi-modal enhancement project on Montague City Road.

The project, which will go out to bid later this year, aims to improve safety and access for a section of the road between Solar and Masonic avenues that also serves as a section of the Franklin County Bikeway.

"We're planning to see near-

ly all the costs defrayed," said town planner Walter Ramsey, "but have been told the town is ineligible for reimbursement for the monster truck ramp."

Ramsey said town hall staff came up with the fundraiser idea after a slumber party screening of Charles Schulz' 1966 classic *You're A Competent Municipal Administrator*, *Charlie Brown*.

The event starts at 5:30 p.m. in the upstairs meeting room at town hall, 1 Avenue A. Light refreshments will be served.

## Connecticut River Play at Erving Elementary, April 15

You are invited to join the children and staff of the Erving Elementary School for *A Connecticut River Tale*, an original play with song and dance.

*A Connecticut River Tale* is the story of four children who go on a wild adventure to unlock a secret of the Connecticut River.

It is the story of life in 19th century Franklin County, with all the excitement, mystery and danger of a time gone by.

Performances will be on Wednesday, April 15 at 10 a.m. and 7 p.m. in the school gym. Admission is free. For more information please call (413) 423-3326.

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## GREEN GRAVES

By SHIRA HILLEL

**MONTAGUE**—Americans have literally lost touch with death. For many, the death of a loved one can be an alienating event, sanitized and institutionalized.

Death has also become expensive. Most funerals today are part of a multi-million dollar industry run by professionals. Emotionally vulnerable, grieving people can be manipulated when making funeral planning decisions for a loved one.

“Funeral advocacy and education is a calling,” said Judith Lorei of Montague, an advocate and educator with Green Burial Massachusetts, a volunteer-run non-profit. The organization, a project of the Funeral Consumers Alliance (FCA) of Western Massachusetts and Eastern Massachusetts, aims to educate consumers about their rights and options for after-death care and disposition. The

FCA tries to inform people about issues that include consumer rights, the cost of services, environmental impacts, and caring for the newly deceased.

According to Lorei, the average price for a funeral that includes a wake, embalming for viewing, a casket, burial plot and interment is about \$10,000 – a burdensome expense many families feel pressured to meet in the name of honoring their dead.

“We spend more time researching before buying a car than we do planning our own deaths,” said Lorei. Over the past year, Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust has been working with Green Burial Massachusetts on a plan to establish Massachusetts’ first green cemetery that will be open to all. In order to provide a final resting place in a permanently protected natural setting, they plan to take 50 acres of conservation land to use as a green cemetery.

see **GRAVES**  
page B5

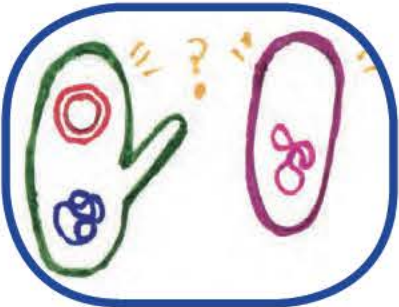
## Losing Ground to Gene Transfer

By EMILY MONOSSON

**MONTAGUE CENTER** – We live in dangerous times. Infectious diseases are rapidly evolving beyond our medicinal reach, returning us to the pre-antibiotic age.

In just over a century, we have rendered impotent some of our most precious therapies, and there is plenty of blame to go around.

Whether it be doctors pacifying pushy, anxious parents; the agricultural industry preventively treating livestock, or worse, simply encouraging livestock growth; or hospitals fending off recalcitrant infection – we have all contributed to the rise of the superbug.



The story of antibiotic resistance begins a little over a century ago with two of the most important discoveries in modern medicine: that disease can be caused by bacteria, and that bacteria can be killed selectively. Almost as soon as antibiotics hit the post-World War II market, one after another began to fail.

In his 1945 Nobel acceptance speech for the discovery of penicillin, Alexander Fleming warned that overuse and under-treatment of disease could result in resistant bacteria. But it was already too late.

Our first lesson in moderation had come and gone, as antibiotic resistant strains of staph, strep, and

pneumonia had already cropped up during the war. One could almost watch resistance evolve.

### Strategy of Overuse

Attempting to control dangerous strep infections in new recruits, the US Navy treated hundreds of thousands of trainees with prophylactic doses of the drug sulfadiazine.

Rheumatic fever, scarlet fever, and respiratory disease incidence dropped almost immediately, but sulfa-resistant strep emerged just three months after the initial phase of treatment.

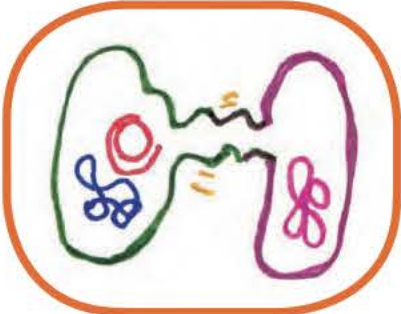
Similarly, penicillin was losing ground. As Fleming had feared, one of the greatest factors in the decline of antibiotic effectiveness proved to be overuse.

Then, in 1950, as if to throw fuel on fires of resistance, scientists discovered that antibiotics added to livestock feed accelerated growth, moving animals more quickly from farm to table. Even better, antibiotics helped cut production costs.

It was an apparent win-win for the farmers struggling to meet the booming postwar demand for meat and for customers craving an affordable, protein-packed meal. Antibiotics weren’t just for the sick and dying anymore– they had become an integral part of “what’s for dinner.”

The majority of medically im-

portant microbes now resist one antibiotic or more, and words like “nightmare” and “catastrophic” are increasingly cropping up in the medical literature. It is not just hyperbole. Like Aesop’s Hare, whose overconfidence led to a predictable loss against Tortoise, our hubris may very well cost us our health – if not our lives.



Certainly our current situation is not for lack of understanding; we know far more about bacteria and evolution than Fleming could have dreamed. Yet we continue to play “whack-a-mole” – simply changing antibiotics as resistance pops up – until we run out of options.

It is time to reconsider our strategy and pay homage to evolution if we are to preserve these lifesaving drugs. A single *Staphylococcus aureus* cell, for example, like most bacteria, can within days give rise to millions, if not billions of daughter cells.

### Bacterial Hanky Panky

Bacteria reproduce by cloning. The parent cell divides into two daughters that in turn generate their own daughter cells on and on as one cell exponentially yields hundreds, thousands, and then millions of new

see **BACTERIA** page B4



NINA ROSSI ILLUSTRATIONS

## WEST ALONG THE RIVER: The Back Yard Archaeologist

By DAVID BRULE

**ERVINGSIDE** – On a snowy afternoon this past Friday – the first day of Spring no less! – I sat with my feet warming in front of the fire, reading through a series of essays by John Hanson Mitchell, the editor of *Sanctuary*, the quarterly journal of the Massachusetts Audubon Society.

That magazine has just recently ceased publication after a long run of 200 issues, to be replaced by an annual collection of stories written by various staffers from the different Audubon sanctuaries across the state.

One of the essays involved Mitchell and some musings about occasional artifact finds he made in his garden.

It struck a chord in me, since over the past forty years I’ve made similar archaeological finds in my own yard, and by stretching a point, even within the walls of my own house!

Now I certainly can’t claim to be a *bona fide* archaeologist, given all of the accumulated degrees one needs to access that elite club of university-trained and certified specialists, but I have dug plenty of holes in the ground in my time, and I have found plenty of artifacts. And I’ve put plenty of artifacts into holes, either purposely or by accident, for future archaeologists to find and wonder about.

My dig-site is a fairly limited one, being my back yard, and certain parts of this old ancestral homestead. I do have something of an out-of-the-ordinary realm in which to dig: my very own family has been living and farming on this site for the last one hundred and forty years.

So my archaeological finds have a per-

sonal touch: most of the stuff in the ground hereabouts was put, left, or lost by people I knew, or heard about in my own family oral history. When I come across objects in the ground here, I can often connect them with a person, that person’s history and life story; I can almost tell how that object came to be left in that spot.

My finds range from the mundane, banal hammer heads, broken shovels, scrap metal, nails and all, to even living organisms like ageless lilacs and peonies planted generations ago, and that continue flowering year after year.

Let me further explain.

My collection has some treasured finds, that perhaps only carry meaning for me, yet each of these objects tells a story.

For example, I have the iron rim of a wagon wheel, found just under the surface near where the old barn stood. I can connect that wheel with the wagon in an 1880s photograph of my great grandfather Judah. He and his wonderful horse Old Dan drove that wagon between the Millers Falls Company factory on our street up to the train depot in the village of Millers Falls.

In fact, near the wheel rim I found a massive horseshoe from a draft horse, more than likely Old Dan, who is pictured with Judah in that Howes Brothers photo. The rim stays outside near the woodshed, but Dan’s horseshoe has a place of honor near the fireplace where I’m now toasting my toes on this gray snowy day in March.

In my hole digging, I’ve turned up a box of rusty old Millers Falls Company screwdrivers, probably stashed under the floorboards of an old chicken coop, now long gone. But for generations, family members

see **WEST ALONG** page B5

## Croquembouche for Too Many

By ERIC DAMKOEHLER

**TURNERS FALLS** – Croquembouche (kroh-kuhm-BOOSH uh huh wee) is French for “crisp in mouth,” but for all those who’ve had the responsibility of making it, croquembouche is synonymous with “pain-in-the-rear.” In its most simple form, croquembouche is a pyramidal stack of cream puffs with a hardened caramel coating. If you are a “foodie,” you already knew that.

Foodies, or epicures, know everything about food. At least, they think they do. They are like the back seat drivers of the restaurant business.

Their comments on internet-based review sites always give them away. They start with something like, “Anyone who knows anything about cooking knows that you should always . . .”

They intentionally imply that they know something about cooking. So why are they the ones who are eating, and not cooking? Don’t like it? Make it yourself!

The other irritant, though

I’m slightly drifting from the topic here, is the foodie that complains about slow service when he or she ordered a two-inch-thick steak well-done. It’s the incessant “Are we there yet?” coming from the back seat.

Croquembouche is a foodie favorite. It has just enough pain-in-the-rear appeal to it for the ultimate pain-in-the-rear customer, or dinner guest, should you dare to feed these people, who actually become more obnoxious when they’re pleased. Then the comparisons come out, about this

chef and that restaurant and it just never ends. For the sake of everyone’s sanity, a sort of let-them-have-their-profit-oles-and-eat-them-too compromise, I will teach you a couple of simple tricks to make the process a little bit simpler.

First off, buy the cream puffs. In today’s fast paced “work, shovel, cook, sleep, repeat” life you’re wise to let someone else do the baking.

In all reality, the hard part is the sugar, and there are no ways around that.

The second trick is to use a filler. For instance, take an upside down soup cup or small cereal bowl and put it in the center of the plate or platter you intend to use.

Last, add some chocolate covered strawberries to the first row as a solid, tacky foundation. For clean up, I

see **PUFFS** page B4



DAMKOEHLER PHOTO

Croquembouche.



# Pets of the Week



## ELLEN “CHUBBS” & Moo Moo

Oh hello there readers, we are MooMoo and Ellen (she got stuck with an unflattering nickname we don't like, only because she's large).

We're old friends with a lot of love to share.

When we get comfortable in our new place with new people we intend to go back to being bigtime lap cats.

We're great with other cats and would be happy to live with them, in fact we're hoping to keep living together as a family. We hope love will keep us together and are crossing our fingers.

We love people and think we would do well with kids, and even with dogs!

One of our favorite things to do is lie around in boxes or paper bags. It's difficult to explain why, but it's weirdly satisfying.

We also have a tendency to sleep around your neck like a scarf to do our part to lower heating cost.

So stop on down today and meet us. You will fall in love instantly!

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

## Senior Center Activities March 30 to April 3

**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 3/30**  
AARP Tax Prep by appointment  
**NO SCHEDULED PROGRAMS**  
**Tuesday 3/31**  
9:30 a.m. Chair Yoga  
Noon Lunch  
1 p.m. Painting with David Sund  
**Wednesday 4/1**  
10:10 a.m. Aerobics  
10:50 a.m. Chair Exercise  
12:45 p.m. Bingo  
New Senior Center Opens  
**Thursday 4/2**  
9 a.m. *NO Tai Chi*  
10:10 a.m. Tech Tutor  
10:30 a.m. Brown Bag  
Noon Lunch  
1 p.m. Pitch  
**Friday 4/3**  
10:10 a.m. Aerobics  
10:50 a.m. Chair Exercise  
Noon Pizza Party  
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, temporarily at 18 Pleasant Street, Erving, is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. for activities and congregated meals.

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

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

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

**Monday 3/30**  
9 a.m. Tai Chi  
10 a.m. Osteo Exercise  
12:30 p.m. Quilting  
**Tuesday 3/31**  
8:45 a.m. Chair Aerobics  
10 a.m. Zumba  
12:30 p.m. Painting  
**Wednesday 4/1**  
8:45 a.m. Line Dancing  
9:30 a.m. Blood Pressure  
10 a.m. Chair Yoga  
Noon Bingo  
**Thursday 4/2**  
8:15 a.m. Foot Clinic  
8:45 a.m. Aerobics  
10 a.m. Healthy Bones, Muscles  
11 a.m. Brown Bag  
Noon Pitch Card Game  
**Friday 4/3**  
9 a.m. Bowling  
11:30 a.m. Home Cooking  
12:30 p.m. Beginner Quilting

# FACES & PLACES



Last Thursday's "Imaginary Show" at Madison on The Avenue. Among the performers were event organizer Tarynn O'Wonderer (left), and John Landino of the Who's Who? Band (Right).  
Photos by G. E. Lomax, Hallmark School of Photography student.

### HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GILL POLICE LOG

## Telephone Tax Scams

<b>Friday, 3/6</b> 7 a.m. Franklin Road resident reported a tax scam by phone. 12:50 p.m. Motor vehicle accident on Route 10. 6:50 p.m. Located injured bird on French King Highway. Assisted owner with same. <b>Saturday, 3/7</b> 8:50 p.m. Suspicious motor vehicle and people reported at Main Road business. Under investigation. <b>Sunday, 3/8</b> 3:20 p.m. Erratic operation of truck reported on North Cross Road. 5:15 p.m. Suspicious motor vehicle reported on River Road. All set. <b>Monday, 3/9</b> 7:40 a.m. Minor accident at intersection of Main Road and Route 2. 9:50 a.m. Firearms issue at North Cross Road residence. 8:30 p.m. Assisted Erving PD with motor vehicle accident on Route 2. <b>Wednesday, 3/11</b> 8 a.m. Background check on Main Road resident for Naval Academy. 1 p.m. West Gill Road resident reported IRS scam by phone. 4:45 p.m. Sick fox reported at Main Road residence. 7:07 p.m. False fire alarm at elementary school. <b>Thursday, 3/12</b> 7:10 a.m. Subject on French King Bridge. Checked OK by officer. 4:15 p.m. Dog complaint on Dole Road. Located owner from Lampblack Road. <b>Friday, 3/13</b> 6:45 p.m. Section 12 on Boyle Road resident for mental health issues. <b>Saturday, 3/14</b> 1:20 p.m. Suspicious motor vehicle on Highland Road. Checked OK by officer. <b>Sunday, 3/15</b> 6:15 p.m. Tree in roadway creating hazard. Police removed same.
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### THE HEALTHY GEEZER

## Breast Cancer, Part 3



By FRED CICETTI

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

Breast cancer strikes most often when men are in their sixties.

Male breast cancer? Men do have breast cells that can become cancerous. The disease is uncommon in men. It represents only 1% of all breast cancers. Because of its rarity, many men aren't aware it exists. And that's a problem.

For unknown reasons, the incidence of male breast cancer has been increasing. About 2,000 men in the U.S. are diagnosed with breast cancer annually.

Young boys and girls have a small amount of breast tissue made up of a few ducts. At puberty, female hormones in girls make breast ducts grow, milk glands form and fat increase. The male hormones in boys prevent further growth of breast tissue. Men's breast tissue contains ducts, but only a few if any

lobules.

The most common symptom of male breast cancer is the same as it is for women: a lump. Other signs include: skin dimpling, a new indentation of the nipple, redness or scaling of breast skin, a clear or bloody discharge from the nipple.

Some risk factors for male breast cancer are:

**Age.** The average age for a man diagnosed with breast cancer is 67.

**Family.** About 20 percent of men with breast cancer are related to someone with the disease.

**Genes.** About 7 percent of breast cancers in men are inherited.

**Radiation.** There's a higher risk to men who underwent chest radiation treatments when they were younger.

**Klinefelter Syndrome.** Men with this syndrome make lower levels of male hormones—androgens—and more female hormones. This can cause gynecomastia, benign breast enlargement. Men with this condition may be at greater risk of breast cancer. Many medicines used to treat ulcers, high blood pressure, and heart failure can cause gynecomastia, too.

**Estrogen.** The risk is small for men who take estrogen—the main female hormone. Estrogen drugs may be used to treat prostate cancer.

**Liver disease.** This can increase your risk of gynecomastia and breast cancer.

**Obesity.** Fat cells convert androgens into estrogen.

**Alcohol.** Drinking alcohol raises the odds that a man will develop breast cancer. The risk increases with the amount of alcohol consumed.

If a man has a family history of the disease, he should consult a doctor about regular testing. Diagnostic tests for men include a clinical breast exam, mammograms, ultrasound, biopsy and, if indicated, a nipple discharge exam.

Breast cancer treatment for men is similar to that given to women. Some men may need only surgery. Others will need surgery and radiation, chemotherapy or hormone therapy.

There isn't much tissue to a man's breast, so removing the cancer usually means excising most of the tissue. The procedures that are used on women to save breast tissue aren't practicable for men.

Most men with breast cancer require a modified radical mastectomy. In this procedure, a surgeon removes the entire breast and some underarm lymph nodes, but leaves chest muscles intact.

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

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# OYSTERGIRL'S GUIDE TO REAL LIVING

By VANESSA QUERY

Hello Montague! Your new friend Oystergirl here. In my last column, I told you about my inclinations towards a more natural, simpler life. I promised to share with you my experiences and findings. I promised to start with hygiene and personal care.

I have a very live-and-let-live approach to my hygiene. I agree to not bludgeon my body's natural cleaning processes into submission with the use of synthetic commercial products, and in exchange, my body stays clean and socially acceptable with just a tiny amount of work on my part.

I spend almost no money on personal care products – and when I do, it can literally take years to use up a single one. Sometimes I make my own, mostly with stuff that's already in the house.

I roll in and out of bed with ease, go through my day without needing to sniff myself or check myself in mirrors. I am uninhibited and unself-conscious about the state of my hygiene. Especially as a woman in our culture, frankly this can be sadly rare.

I was not always this way.

I grew up with a very mainstream approach to hygiene: daily bathing; store-bought chemical soap and shampoo; shaving and scenting and masking; compulsive checking, picking, sniffing, and scrubbing; self-consciousness to the extent of paranoia about the social acceptance of my cleanliness; the whole slam.

It took years to go from the constantly-compulsively-cleaning agent of mainstream synthetic hygiene I grew up as, to the crunchy, hairy, au natural, only mildly dirty hippie you smell before you.

Here's the short version of the story: It began when I was about 20, when I learned about the cultural (and economic) construction of personal care and was exposed, for the first time, to people who were neither mainstream in their body care nor gross.

I also learned how cleaning our bodies with products, especially chemically-based ones, destroys our body's natural cleaning process and pheromone release.

Did you know that many parts of our bodies are self-cleaning?

I'm sure you know a few of our self-cleaning systems: our digestive tract and kidneys are famous, as is our liver. The lymph nodes and lungs are also part of the team that rids our bodies of toxins, but fewer people know that our skin is self-cleaning as well.\*

Crazy but true! And all of our self-cleaning mechanisms work best when we don't interfere with them too much, or overload them with toxins (such as synthetic hygiene products).

When we regularly use things like soap and shampoo (even "natural" ones), we tell our bodies that they don't need to clean themselves anymore. So, that self-cleaning process turns itself off.

Use of these products perpetuates itself. You can't go too long without them, once they're part of your routine. If you stop using a cleaning product you're accustomed to using, your body will likely go through a

really dirty stage: You've stopped cleaning it, but it's still not cleaning itself, either.

When you give up hygiene products, it takes time for your self-cleaning process to come back.

But it does come back.

And your body will thank you. And you say you're welcome, and then eventually you will say, "No, thank YOU," because you will be so relieved that you don't have to worry about putting so much stuff on and in your body for the sake of hygiene.

My approach to hygiene is about how to at once encourage your body's natural cleaning process and not be a social pariah (not for hygienic reasons, in any case).

It is about finding a balance between embracing your body's human odors and unnecessarily offending others with them.

It is about spending a whole lot less time, money, and energy fussing with your body. It is about freeing you from all that maintenance, so you can live your life more fully. It is about conserving resources and your sanity.

So, if you'd like to achieve a personal care routine that is low-hassle, low-cost, low-time, and eco-friendly, body-friendly, and mind-friendly, read on!

Stop using soap all the time on every bit of your body.

Years ago, I lived in Scotland and worked for a woman who presented herself rather conservatively. I was surprised to find out that she never used soap on her body. She said that soap messed with the pH balance of our skin.

I was inspired. Not necessarily because of the pH thing, but because it simply had never occurred to me that not using soap was an option (let alone that not using it might be better than using it).

So, I stopped using soap on my body. I would go through the same body-cleaning routine in the shower, only just using soap on my hands, and letting water do the rest. There's no real difference, except that my skin is less dry (because soap dries it out), and sometimes I get compliments on the lovely smell of my skin. "What do you use?" Hahaha!

Now, I use liquid castile soap (which I buy in bulk and dilute to about 4:1) to wash my hands and occasionally other bits that need some extra attention.

Stopping the seemingly compulsory and constant use of soap over every bit of my body was one of my first forays into more natural hygiene practices. Stay tuned for my next column, in which I'll tell you how I gave up shampoo (gasp!) and regular showering (double-gasp!). I will also continue to share tips and tricks for when your body does need a little extra hygiene help.

Thanks for reading! Your comments and questions are very much welcome.

*Vanessa Query, aka Oystergirl, digs all things local and sustainable, and identifies mostly with the paleo/ancestral movement. She blogs about food and philosophy and more at theycallmeoystergirl.com. She welcomes responses and questions at oystergirl@montaguereporter.org.*

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

# While We're Waiting To Defeat Drug Addiction (And Diabetes), Let's Get Some More Safe Needle Disposal Options In This Town

Monday, 3/16

12:49 a.m. Request for officer to remove uncooperative male party from Rendezvous. Party transported home.

8:53 a.m. Caller from Greenfield requests that an officer check an address in Turners Falls for her car, which may have been lent by her daughter to someone she does not want driving it. Car located; caller advised.

3:24 p.m. Caller from Highland Street reports that as she was packing to move last night, two female, light colored, poodle/Labradoodle type dogs just walked right into her house through the back door. No tags. Both dogs are friendly; however, one is growling at her small dog. Animal control officer advised and en route.

5:18 p.m. Disturbance (verbal disagreement) in Aubuchon Hardware parking lot.

Tuesday, 3/17

9:32 a.m. Caller reports encountering an aggressive unleashed beagle type dog while walking his dog on Old Sunderland Road this morning. Animal control officer advised.

9:43 a.m. Caller from Old Sunderland Road states that his neighbor has taken issue with the fact that he raises pigs and has been spying on him from his property, taking pictures of his property, and sending emails to various agencies including the Board of Health. Advised of options.

2:39 p.m. Report of large branch down on Greenfield Road and nearby properties without power. WMECO notified and on scene.

6:11 p.m. Report of large tree blocking East Chestnut Hill Road. Per MCFD, request placed to DPW to remove tree with bucket loader.

7:47 p.m. Black ice reported on Millers Falls Road in Millers Falls. Officer will contact DPW.

10:24 p.m. Complaint regarding train idling at Lake Pleasant railroad crossing. Caller already contacted Pan Am, who stated that it would be another hour.

10:45 p.m. First of two calls from Central Street resident who advises that her upstairs neighbors are using the common washer and dryer in the building, disregarding her requests that the machines not be used after 10 p.m. Caller advised to contact landlord.

Wednesday, 3/18

9:18 a.m. Caller from

Chestnut Street concerned that a fence between her and her neighbor's property is starting to come down and could damage her neighbor's vehicle. Advised of options.

9:56 a.m. Request for officer to dispose of a syringe found near the ATM at Freedom Credit Union. Services rendered.

12:40 p.m. Officer removed a large box from the side of the travel lane on Unity Street, moved it to the side of the road by a bush, and requested that the DPW pick up the box and dispose of it. DPW advises that they were unable to locate the box but did remove a swimming pool from the road.

4:05 p.m. Report of gas left on in a Fifth Street apartment. Building occupants advised to evacuate. TFFD on scene. Building cleared; occupants allowed to return.

5:25 p.m. Report that a rock was thrown through window of caller's vehicle on Avenue A while she was at work today. Officer advises that the damage does not appear to be malicious; the heavy wind today may have been the culprit.

6:57 p.m. Report that something hit and cracked a bus window on Franklin Street. Officer spoke with bus driver and passengers. The rock that broke the window was located, but no one saw anyone throw it.

8:07 p.m. Vehicle stopped for not dimming lights for oncoming cruiser. Operator advises that he flashed his high beams to warn the officer about a loose dog in the road. Same dog was struck by a vehicle on Turners Falls Road (see next call).

8:08 p.m. Passing motorist reporting dog struck by a vehicle at Turners Falls Road and Hatchery Road. Operator that struck the dog is on scene and uninjured. Dog was alive upon officer's arrival but passed away shortly thereafter. Dog transported to emergency vet. Owner later came to MPD and spoke with an officer.

11:09 p.m. Report of car into tree on Federal Street. Citation issued; report taken.

11:31 p.m. Caller reports that he was walking a friend's dog and discovered a syringe sticking into a snow bank on Montague City Road. Referred to an officer.

Thursday, 3/19

12:49 a.m. Suspicious vehicle on Fifth Street took off as officer approached.

Unable to catch up to it.

12 p.m. Animal control officer following up on a complaint regarding people walking their dogs near the end of Greenfield Road where the bridge is and not picking up after them. No violations observed.

2:06 p.m. Complaint regarding harassment and disorderly conduct on Dry Hill Road. Advised of options.

7:55 p.m. Suspicious vehicle reported in Green Pond Road neighborhood the past couple of nights. Officer spoke to operator, who was showing a vacant trailer in the area to a friend.

Friday, 3/20

7:57 a.m. Caller from Fifth Street reports that he can hear his upstairs neighbor's child running around; requests that an officer speak with them. Upon arrival, the neighbor was just leaving with his child; stated the child just woke up.

2:14 p.m. Caller requests to speak with an officer regarding a physical altercation that her child was involved with today at TFHS with another student. Advised of options.

4:16 p.m. First of five accident reports in rapid succession from Unity Street due to icy conditions. Several vehicles damaged. Road closed temporarily.

5:06 p.m. Two car accident on East Chestnut Hill Road. Both cars towed. Officer reports that road conditions at this location are terrible. DPW notified.

5:57 p.m. Caller reporting a theft of copper piping from a Second Street property that was discovered on November 4, 2014; caller was just notified of theft, hence the delay in reporting. Referred to an officer.

6:12 p.m. Car into tree on Swamp Road. Vehicle winched out. Report taken.

6:55 p.m. Caller from Turners Falls Road reports that two hours ago he heard a loud noise outside his home and just noticed that it appears that someone hit the snowbank outside and struck some of the bushes in the front yard. Advised of options.

7:27 p.m. Report of fraud on Fifth Street. Advised of options.

8:01 p.m. Caller from Burnett Street reports seeing footprints near his vehicles and house. No entry made. Advised of options.

8:47 p.m. Clerk at Connecticut River Liquor and

Wine reports that there is a male party outside who has attempted to have several individuals purchase liquor for him; the last party was highly intoxicated. Clerks refused to sell to them. Officers spoke to party, who was somewhat agitated, and sent him on his way.

Saturday, 3/21

8:37 a.m. Water main break at Masonic Avenue and Sherman Drive. Water Department en route; TFFD advised.

9:30 a.m. Car reported off of North Leverett Road. Officer requests that DPW be contacted as the outer roads are becoming icy.

1:04 p.m. Delivery driver from Ce Ce's Chinese Restaurant reports that he delivered \$88 worth of food to an East Main Street address, and the male party took the food and went back inside without paying. Investigated.

1:39 p.m. Request for officer to pick up syringes that were found in the road on Fifth Street.

3:09 p.m. Two-car accident at Seventh Street and Avenue A. No injuries.

3:22 p.m. Prisoner broke sprinkler in cell 2. Officers and TFFD advised. Med-care contacted for laceration on prisoner's head, which may need stitches. Prisoner transported to Baystate Franklin Medical Center and then to Hall of Correction.

3:29 p.m. Report of ongoing trouble with landlord on East Main Street. Referred to an officer.

8:29 p.m. Structure fire on Montague City Road. House fully engulfed; all occupants out of building. TFFD and fire marshal on scene. DPW contacted for barricades; WMECO contacted as lines from house may be falling shortly.

Sunday, 3/22

10:09 a.m. Report of possible chimney fire on School Street. MCFD and TFFD notified.

3:39 p.m. Caller advises that smoke is coming from her central vacuum unit. She may have sucked up a hot coal; doesn't know how to get inside canister in the basement to fix the problem. MCFD contacted.

11:20 p.m. Investigated missing person case out of Greenfield; Third Street resident states that he saw the missing female on Avenue A earlier on Sunday and she seemed OK at that time. Greenfield PD advised of findings.

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### Dudek Tax Service

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MA 01376

Frank J. Dudek

Kelly Berthiaume

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413.775.3327 - Cell

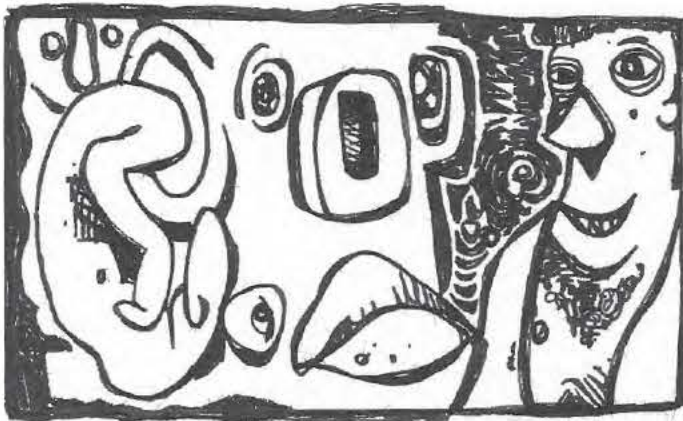
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PUFFS from page B1

recommend a hammer and chisel.

Now comes the hard part. Prepare an ice bath large enough to fit a small saucepan into. Using that small saucepan and a wooden spoon, melt two and a half cups of granulated sugar with two thirds cups hot water. If you have a candy thermometer, stop reading this article.

For everyone else, allow the sugar to melt and boil over high heat, stirring constantly, until the color begins to darken.

The darker the color, the harder the sugar will be when it cools. When the color is a nice light brown, or resembles that of caramel, take the pan off the heat and dunk it in the ice bath, just for a few moments to stop the cooking process, stirring all the while.

Quickly and frantically dip two cream puffs at a time in the sugar, and glue them together. Scream at the top of your lungs when the molten sugar sticks to your fingers, and shake it off.

It's important that you get as many cream puffs stuck together as you can, so don't go running off to bandage yourself now.

If the sugar hardens, put it back on the burner and stir until it is syrupy again.

If you used the chocolate covered strawberries on the first row, and were careful in selecting your plate ware, you should be able to glue two by two, and then start gluing one on top of the other, in a circular way around the plate, until you get something like a pyramid.

Now, for the spun sugar, there will be yards of tiny and shiny sugar hairs, gleaming in the smoke burn-

ing from the splatter of sugar on the stove top.

You can either dangle the melted sugar above the croquembouche-like-thing and let strands of sugar drape over it, or just collect all of the residual strings that are now getting permanently hardened to your counter top.

Or you can attempt to make spun sugar, or just plop another strawberry on top.

When you're finished, and satisfied, turn off the smoke alarm, then announce to anyone who cares to know, "There's your (expletive) croquembouche!"

You think it's over, do you? Local pastry chef Mark Wikar recently told me a nightmarish tale about an elaborate event he hosted at Captain Toby's restaurant on Nantucket. "There were so many people in the room that the temperature rose past eighty, causing my sugar that held it all together to melt, causing my croquembouche to start to fall apart onto the dance floor."

Wikar also suggests to use the ice bath, in addition to cooling the sugar, for the burns you will have on your fingers.

There you have it, Croquem-pain-in-the-bouche.

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



BACTERIA from page B1

cells – by any measure, an impressive amount of DNA replication.

Not all of it perfect, though. With each new generation comes the potential for mutation. And mutations are a source of variation for evolution.

And though most mutations are of little or no benefit, it only takes one alteration in the right place, and voilà, a key enzyme in a bacterium is no longer a suitable target for chemical attack.

When these advantageous traits are selected, evolution happens. The explosive population growth of bacteria means that a beneficial mutation can infiltrate a population within hours.

As impressive as rescue by this sort of de novo mutation may be, bacteria have an even more efficient means for acquiring resistance.

For so-called sexless organisms, bacteria are incredibly agile genetically.



When bacteria reproduce, much like us their genes are handed down from parent to offspring, vertically. Just as we carry our genes on linear double-stranded chromosomes, bacteria, too, carry their genes on a double-stranded chromosome – but the bacterial chromosome is a single loop of DNA.

Bacteria also possess extra bits of DNA on small rounds called plasmids that are central to the DNA trade.

Like modular storage units, plasmids contain 20 or 30 “auxiliary genes” that encode biological toxins, enzymes enabling the digestion of novel food, or antibiotic resistance, among other things.

When bacteria reproduce, just as the single chromosome is copied and passed on to offspring, plasmids can be passed from parent to daughter.

But here is where things get weird. While we humans hold tight to our genetic stock, passing it like a carefully tended trust fund vertically from one generation to the next, bacteria pass plasmids from one cell to another like day traders on the stock-exchange floor.

In a process of so-called bacterial sex, when bacteria are in close proximity, a hair-like thread of cell membrane extends from one cell to another forming a “conjugal bridge.” Plasmid DNA is transferred horizontally between bacterial cells.

In environments like our guts, crowded with bacteria, plasmids can be passed around like juicy bits of gossip. Even more bizarre, plasmids can pass between different types of bacteria. Unlike us, bacteria share genes with siblings, friends, and neighbors.

This horizontal gene transfer provides bacteria with an unimaginably deep and interconnected gene pool. And that is a concept with which we are just now coming to grips.

Our use of antibiotics has given

pathogenic bacteria no other option but to evolve into superbugs; and we are inching backward toward the days when disease triumphed and families hid in their homes, away from diseased neighbors, wary of catching their death. How do we avoid this post-antibiotic-age scenario?

Defensive Hygiene

Put simply, we must reduce our evolutionary footprint. Of the 37 million pounds of antibiotics consumed in the United States, about 7 million pounds are tossed down our throats or injected directly into our veins. A whopping 30 million pounds are fed to pigs, chickens, and cows.

The emergence and spread of antibiotic resistance in a society that didn't grasp the power and the nuances of evolution is, perhaps, forgivable. But that is no longer the case. We are all responsible in one way or another, and we must all contribute to the solution.

Prevention is the most obvious defense against infection and rapid evolution. Surgery patients are now tested pre-op for problem bacteria; those who test positive are sent home with antibacterial soap and instructions to wash daily from head to toe for a week.

Some hospitals now use ultraviolet sterilizers that roams the halls at night; or public health teams now work with custodial staff to identify problem spots for contamination.

Increased hospital hygiene practices are paying off in the form of reducing the number of cases of some types of hospital-acquired infections.

But hygiene can only get us so far (and, in some cases like the widespread use of antibacterial soaps, it can backfire – whether because we are killing off beneficial bacteria, or because bacteria may evolve resistance to these as well).



NINA ROSSI ILLUSTRATIONS

Vaccination is one of the most effective ways to prevent infection, but bacteria, unlike viruses, which are the target of most vaccines, are a notoriously difficult target.

Even when new vaccines do emerge, we live in an age where the benefits of vaccines are questioned by a vocal minority, and the push against vaccination has had an impact. But that is a topic for another day.

Responsible Medical Use

When antibiotics are absolutely necessary, the best we can do right now is to reduce selection pressure. In the few instances where there are good alternative antibiotics, removing and replacing antibiotics, or cycling, may work to reduce selection, allowing the evolutionary clock to “reset” as resistance genes fade from the population.

Careful reintroduction of antibiotics in combination with others can help keep resistance at bay (when more than one target is attacked si-

multaneously, resistance is far less likely to evolve).

For most antibiotics, the best way to buy time is to dramatically reduce use. “Before prescribing antibiotics, we must take a moment to ask, ‘Are these really necessary?’” urges physician and Center for Disease Control spokesman Arjun Srinivasan.

“Of the patients receiving antibiotics, half will receive unnecessary or inappropriate therapy.”

Today, there are indications that physicians, at least, are getting the message. When asked how my young son should treat the weekly turf rash burned into his arms and torso – an all-too-common affliction of high school and college athletes in these days of artificial turfs – his pediatrician suggests forgoing the antibiotic cream for soap and water.

We carry around a huge load of bacteria, many of which may shape our lives in ways we have yet to understand. Indiscriminately killing all of them while aiming at only one or two no longer makes sense.

Improving diagnosis (is the infection bacterial or viral, if bacterial is it already resistant?) is critical to delaying the evolution of resistance.

So important, that both the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the United Kingdom (by way of the famed Longitude Prize) are offering multimillion-dollar rewards for the development of rapid tests.

There is also hope for new antibiotics. Most recently researchers at Northeastern University and their colleagues reported discovery of teixobactin, an antibiotic they claim may even “avoid development of resistance.”

**Resistance from the FDA**

But medical practices and patient demands are only part of the problem. When 80 percent of antibiotics in the United States are consumed by farm animals primarily for growth promotion, the role of agriculture in pathogenic resistance becomes undeniable. The European Union banned antibiotics in animal feed, back in 2006; reports suggest subsequent reductions of some resistant bacteria in livestock.

Still, the US Food and Drug Administration remains resistant to aggressive regulations of agricultural antibiotic use. Rather than following the EU's lead, the FDA instead asks that veterinary drug companies voluntarily take charge, re-labeling drugs so that those important for human use are reserved for the prevention, control, and treatment of infection. It is a strategy even some within the agency question.

Yet, there is hope. McDonald's recently made headlines by pledging to cut back on “antibiotics important to human medicine” in their chickens, a step at least, in the right direction.

The evolution of resistance is inevitable but its pace is not. We have imposed powerful selection pressures. It's time to discover a new way: a way to save the patient without killing the antibiotic.

*Adapted from: Unnatural Selection, by Emily Monosson. Copyright © 2015 Emily Monosson. Reproduced by permission of Island Press, Washington, DC.*

*The author is an environmental toxicologist who lives in Montague.*



## LOOKING BACK:

### 10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

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

#### Starlight Diner Closes

The Starlight Diner in Erving will close March 28, following six years of serving home-style American cuisine to local customers and tourists alike.

While summer was always the roadside restaurant's busiest season, owner Pam Tierney said she was usually able to survive the winters. But such is no longer the case.

"Unfortunately it's the way of the world these days," Tierney said. "It's the same with many small restaurants and small businesses. It's the economy. It's hard to survive...It was a lifelong dream and I'm glad I did it, and I'm glad I'm done." Tierney plans to take the summer off and catch up on her home life.

#### Office Rehab Planned for Gill Town Hall

On March 21 Roger Augustine, of Augustine Builders in Gill, came before the selectboard in response to a letter the town sent to three local contractors soliciting bids for constructing individual offices inside the town hall for the town clerk, the tax collector, and the town administrative assistant.

Privacy and security issues, and

#### Sheffield Stage Temporarily Closed

The stage at the Sheffield School is off-limits until the fire curtain can be re-rigged, Gill-Montague Regional School District Superintendent Sue Gee reported at the school committee meeting. "This is something we absolutely have to address," she said, as it is a safety issue.

Use of the auditorium is limited until repairs are made, which Gee hopes will be completed by early April.

#### Recycling Rates Increase in Erving

At the March 21 Erving selectboard meeting, a communication from the Franklin County Solid Waste Management District pegged Erving's recycling rate at 35.8%, up from 28.8% the previous year.

Through their recycling efforts, town residents not only saved on town waste disposal costs, but were able to save 1476 trees from being cut down, according to the district's estimates. Erving has curbside recycling on Wednesday mornings.

#### protection of computer data, prompted the board to look into partitioning off one side of the first floor meeting room at the town hall, where the staff have their desks and files.

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## A Ghoulish History of Funerals in America

Prior to the Civil War, caring for and preparing the dead for burial on family farms or in local cemeteries was both a domestic skill and a family responsibility.

The Civil War changed the way Americans went about preparing their dead for burial. There were many men who were killed in battle far from their homes. Shipping bodies by train back to their families was smelly and unsavory.

\This created the need for a new profession: that of undertaker.

Funeral embalming was a relatively new development at that time, but had proven itself on the battlefields. Soldiers were prepared for shipment back home for burial using embalming techniques.

Abraham Lincoln’s embalming popularized the practice. After Lincoln was assassinated in 1865, his body was taken from Washington, D.C., by train to be laid in a tomb in Illinois. The train made 11 stops along the way, so that the public could pay their respects.

The 1654-mile journey took 13 days, during which the body was viewed by hundreds of thousands of people. They had to keep the body preserved and presentable until it reached its destination. Repeatedly people commented on how good the president looked.

Lincoln’s embalmers used a form of the arterial embalming method developed in Europe where an artery was opened and the body flushed of blood and filled with a chemical preservative.

A little over 10 years after Lincoln was laid in a tomb, there was an attempt to steal his remains and hold them for ransom. The plan was thwarted by the police, but rumors that the grave robbing was actually successful had circulated for years.

In 1901, before moving Lincoln’s casket to a vault, Lincoln’s son decided to allow the coffin to be opened to view the remains to be sure Lincoln was indeed inside.

J. C. Thompson, one of the men who viewed the body 36 years after Lincoln had died, later said, “Anyone who had ever seen his pictures would have known it was him. His features had not decayed. He looked just like a statue of himself lying there.”

It was reported that his features were still recognizable and the wart on his cheek was still there. His chin whiskers remained and his hair was still thick (though his eyebrows had disappeared).

### GRAVES from page B1

“We aim to use land where people can hike or picnic as well as bury loved ones,” explained Lorei. They need flat dry land, away from a flood zone, with road access.

Years ago, Lorei studied Mortuary Science. Those studies included science classes, such as anatomy, chemistry, embalming, cosmetic reconstruction, legal issues and ritual funeral practice. She then got a job at a funeral home. “It is a business,” she realized. Lorei recounted how her former boss had said to her that she was “great with the families and great with the technical stuff, but not great with the sales.”

Trends in the funeral business have been changing. As local funeral homes struggle with the costs, there are now funeral home chains—large companies that have bought out local mom & pop shops. Being owned by a larger company allows overhead costs to stay down. It also means the funeral business has become less personal, and those lower costs “are not being translated to the public,” according to Lorei.

Lorei said that the cremation rate in the United States has soared over the last decade. She reasoned that this is due to the fact that cremation is significantly less expensive than burial, as well as the increase in a person’s mobility over the course of their lifetime, leaving them feeling less tied to a specific place. Cremation allows for more flexibility, as cremated remains may be buried or scattered, or used in numerous creative ways.

While cremation is much greener than conventional burial, it still requires fossil fuel to sustain a temperature of 1400°-1600°F for several hours. Cremation releases air pollutants and crematory smokestacks vary in their ability to capture pollutants, depending on their model and age, but none capture them all. Still, according to the Green Burials website, “within the context of an individual’s lifetime use of fossil fuels, a single cremation has a relatively small carbon footprint.”

More and more people are becoming aware of the environmental impact of burial practices. Conventional cemeteries bury caskets six feet under the ground. They line the grave hole with a prefab cement liner around the sides to prevent the ground from shifting. They use caskets made from steel metal or varnished hardwood, and they embalm the bodies with chemical embalming fluid such as formaldehyde. “All this goes into the ground,” said Lorei.

Green burials dispose of bodies after death in an ecologically sound way. The goal of green burials is to be as biodegradable as possible, promoting decomposition rather than making a preserved time capsule.

Green burials bury bodies three to four feet under the ground to promote decomposition, despite the fact that with time, there may be a depression on the surface of the ground above where the body once was, and they often need to add top soil.

They do not embalm bodies. They do not use a grave liner. Caskets, if used, are biodegradable. The grave marker is usually a small flat plaque, rather than a large tombstone.

“Natural burials give people a way to take more ownership of their grieving process, and often allows an opportunity for more meaning,” said Lorei.

Green burials do not have to be in an enclosed gated cemetery with headstones lined up and manicured lawns that rely on chemical fertilizers and lawnmowers for upkeep.

It can be in a field, meadow or the forest. For many, “natural burials feel closer to the cycle of life,” said Lorei.

Lorei spoke about the growing movement in this country to go back to caring for your own dead. It has grown along with the resurgence in interest in home births and hospice care. “It is part of today’s zeitgeist that people are returning to natural ways, buying local, and eating organic.”

Whether people choose green burials or not, Lorei wants people to know that they don’t have to buy a complete package deal from a funeral home. “You can make your purchases a la carte. The more you do on your own, and in advance, the cheaper it will be.”

“You can buy biodegradable caskets online made of cardboard, wicker or banana leaves for as little as \$80,” said Lorei.

“It is possible to pick up the body from the morgue if the person died in the hospital, transport the body, prepare the body and have a home wake without the assistance of paid professionals,” said Lorei.

An unembalmed body, if kept cool with dry ice packed underneath the organs, can remain fully intact for three days, she explained, making it possible to have wakes at home.

FCA of Eastern Massachusetts has guidelines posted on their website explaining how to do this on your own.

To learn more in person, Green Burials Massachusetts will have a table at the upcoming Franklin County Home Show and Green Fair, which will be held over the April 21-22 weekend at the Franklin County Fairgrounds in Greenfield.

Online resources include: Funeral Consumer’s Alliance: [www.fcaemass.org](http://www.fcaemass.org) or [www.funeralconsumerswmass.org](http://www.funeralconsumerswmass.org); [www.greenburialma.org](http://www.greenburialma.org); and [www.peacefulpassagesathome.com](http://www.peacefulpassagesathome.com).

### Jewish Burials Are Green Burials

*Ashes to ashes, dust to dust.*

Ecclesiastes

There are many different burial traditions in the world. In Jewish communities, the Chevra Kadisha, or holy burial society, prepare deceased members for burial according to the ancient customs of Jewish tradition.

Chevra Kadisha is considered among the greatest acts of kindness, as it is done anonymously, without pay, only out of respect for the deceased.

The rich and poor receive the same modest treatment, as “everybody is equal in death.” Traditional Jewish burials do not embalm bodies, for there is no viewing. Bodies must be buried as soon as possible.

The body is washed with water alone and dried. All make up and nail polish is removed, and the body is dressed only in linen shrouds.

The caskets used are made of unvarnished pine wood, secured with wooden dowels, not metal nails. Jewish cemeteries are considered hallowed ground.

A tahara or purification ritual ceremony is involved that involves pouring water over the body and reciting prayers of purification.

### WEST ALONG from page B1

who lived in this house made a living at the Tool Shop up the street, and more often than not, in that thrifty Yankee way, took a few sample products home with them, just in case.

This was a farm house down here on the Flat, built on the edge of the high terrace of the Millers River flood plain. That terrace forms what we river-side dwellers call a *bankin’*. That is the down slope at the edge of the terrace which served as the farm dump. Over the *bankin’* it went, and out of sight!

All over the Flat here are refuse dumps that go back a hundred years, and are full of household objects that could no longer serve: bedsteads, chairs, shoes, window frames, and of course lots and lots of broken glass.

I can connect some of those objects with family, especially the old shoes: either the old-fashioned high-top work shoes grandfather used to wear, or the clumpy grandmother shoes that could not possibly have been comfortable.

But not only have we dug things up, but we’ve also put things in the ground: almost nine dogs and three cats have been laid to rest for some future digger to find.

On one occasion, in burying a beloved dog in his favorite spot under the old lilac bush, we turned up a Paleo-Indian point that dates

from around 7,000 B.C. That point was either lost, or was placed there for some ceremonial reason, back when mammoths and caribou roamed through our backyard.

Our archaeological finds have not been solely confined to the garden.

One notable discovery came when I was pulling the old kitchen apart, stripping the walls from the inside out to the exterior boards, one hot summer morning in August.

The whole family was away, so I had the place to myself, ripping out horsehair plaster and old laths held by square, vintage 1870s nails hammered into rough hewn true-to-measure 2x4’s. It was filthy, dirty, hot work done in a cloud of black, grimy one hundred and thirty years-old dust.

But the historian in me found as much enjoyment in this job as did the carpenter’s zeal to get the job done and cleaned up. In ripping out the old wainscoting, I found scraps of rose-colored wall paper that was new when my great grandparents first proudly put it up.

Fallen into the spaces between the exterior and interior walls was a small calling card, with the signature of Charles Smith, written in the impeccable penmanship of the 1880s. Charlie, as the family called him, was a boy of ten when he died in 1893. My grandfather Abe, born after his brother Charlie’s death,

always said it was the “black diphtheria” that took him.

Years later, I found the death certificate that gave the cause as typhoid. He was hurriedly buried at night, the first child laid to rest in the new Highland Cemetery. My poor granduncle died so young in the room above the kitchen. Somehow, the artifact of that ten year old wound up in my grimy hands more than a hundred years later.

Not far from the calling card and other debris in the wall, I found several coins. In the old days, carpenters often placed coins or pennies in the wall as they were building a new house, just for some occasional archaeologist like myself to find. The coins dated variously from the 1860s, with one being a penny from 1872, when the house was built.

When I rebuilt the kitchen walls and wainscoting, I put a sort of time capsule back into the wall with one of the old pennies from the 1860s, a new penny from 2000, and a note for some future carpenter or archaeologist, telling them who we are, or were.

As the old adage says, gold is where you find it. And, if you’re living in an old family homestead, simple artifacts become treasures as good as gold. They have a story to tell, and can connect the occasional archaeologist to context, and to the people upon whose shoulders we stand.

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#### HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ERVING POLICE LOG

### Hard Times on Swamp Road

<b>Monday, 3/16</b> 5:55 p.m. Assisted on scene of medical emergency on Mountain Road. 11:16 p.m. Noise complaint on Mountain Road. Same quieted down. Report taken. <b>Wednesday, 3/18</b> 2:20 p.m. Alarm at Box Car Restaurant, Erving Center. Owner advised. 4:08 p.m. Alarm at Box Car Restaurant, Erving Center. Owner on scene. <b>Thursday, 3/19</b> 9:15 a.m. Disabled tractor-trailer unit at Northfield Road. Assisted with traffic	until repaired. 1:50 p.m. Mail box destroyed on River Road. Report taken. 7:27 p.m. Motor vehicle vs. deer on State Road. Report taken. <b>Friday, 3/20</b> 2:31 p.m. Arrested [redacted], for straight warrant out of Dudley District Court. 2:31 p.m. Criminal application issued to [redacted], for unlicensed operation of a motor vehicle. <b>Saturday, 3/21</b> 7:20 a.m. Report of use of a motor vehicle	without authority, Forest Street. 10:08 a.m. Criminal application issued to [redacted], for use of a motor vehicle without authority. 6:29 p.m. Report of man lying in a snow bank at North Street and Swamp Road. Services rendered. 8:30 p.m. Disabled vehicle on Swamp Road. Same removed. <b>Sunday, 3/22</b> 10:55 p.m. Criminal application issued to [redacted] for operating with a suspended license and failure to inspect.
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It is difficult  
to get the news from poems  
yet men die miserably every day  
for lack  
of what is found there.

- William Carlos Williams

edited by Patricia Pruitt

Readers are invited to send poems  
to the Montague Reporter at:  
177 Avenue A  
Turners Falls, MA 01376  
or to: [poetry@montaguereporter.org](mailto:poetry@montaguereporter.org)

forests in march

in march the forest  
is swaddled in wind  
a potter's wheel of busy-  
ness while the hand  
figures spring

soon a maroon of  
buds will grasp along the boughs  
before their open show  
they wait  
in patient virginity

and with all this  
the blood of earth  
emits its wild fragrance  
above each newly broken  
aperture from adolescence

like a collective-  
showy pallets of frilly bells  
and woodland hyacinths  
breathe nature's kilim  
woven above the crust

I no longer define spring  
as merely 'immanent'  
rather-  
life in rapture

Alice Thomas  
Greenfield

Yellow Air

Dusk approaches on a February afternoon.  
The yard is soaked in a yellow haze that  
Lights the dismal winter day with  
Warm reflections and hopes of spring.

Shadows defy the luminous surge  
But light prevails, the glow still there  
That I wish would linger and keep out the night  
So that I might play as I do in summer.

Hiking the trails these late afternoons  
I see the yellow, I'm part of the color.  
I trudge along on the animal trail  
That leads over the ridge and back down to dirt road.

Now yellow air sinks in burgeoning shadows.  
It makes its way to a resting place and  
As it must, settles - still - as the night descends.  
I'll stay patient if tomorrow brings  
Another yellow afternoon.

Kate Moruzzi  
Leverett

Once in Platanakia

Once in Platanakia, just before dawn  
We ventured to the quiet grove  
In anticipation of the nightingales' song.

Those casual days are so long gone  
When the moon and the stars shone above  
Once in Platanakia, just before dawn.

The path was pitted where we walked along  
In tandem, arm in arm, in love  
In anticipation of the nightingales' song.

The magical stars winked off and on  
As we ascended the hill to the grove  
Once in Platanakia, just before dawn.

Though no bird yet sang, we still pressed on  
In the stillness of morning nothing seemed to move  
In anticipation of the nightingales' song.

Then a first note burst the morning calm  
Uniting us there and in our love  
Once in Platanakia, just before dawn  
In anticipation of the nightingales' song.

Christopher Sawyer-Lauçanno  
Turners Falls

Letting Go Poem

What is it but our love  
moving together, multiplying,  
joining that larger love?  
It is not another mouse beneath the fridge  
when we think we hear the invisible  
clatter of this.  
And what of forgiveness.  
I could have never, that first time  
leaving the murdered self in the hands of  
another, forever. I might have  
made off in my truck that day  
with my clothes and my sewing machine  
and not sung at all as I wiped the window  
clear. I might have snuck back, grieving  
for the dead womanchild he feasted on.  
Was it a choice, to hear the birds and  
know he loved them too, that monster?  
From all that, even then, a greater love.  
And now, a love so sure the dead  
do dance we do. A love between us  
obeying our compassions  
inextricably part of that larger power.  
We understand destruction.  
We understand a lot past the pornography of the body  
that love permits us to examine and it swells and shrivels  
and the consequence of miracles.  
The percentage of our invention increases with  
our willing imagination. Do not imagine love,  
lay down your large life and feel forgiveness.  
Examine the small perfect thing if that is your way  
but let the big thing vault among your blindness  
hugging its energy around you.

Nina Rossi  
Turners Falls

Prose Poem with Objects and Sky

Sit down. Let the morning go round and round the rotary.  
Reassurance in motion, relocation beyond hear and now. North  
Is the hardest direction to face for there lies true light.  
Benign as the air is for winter she has cold feet.  
Some day she will have to shift pronouns at least. Night left  
Nothing to chew on. The landslide inches down. Distance accumulates.  
A tired blue fading above.  
The steel ruler lays across the red pencil box. By inch 17 rests  
The yellow pencil eraser. The red pencil is bordered on one end by a green pen,  
On the other, by a blue. It makes so little difference to anything moving.  
She wants to say Watteau Sky. But she isn't sure what she sees in a cloud  
arrangement. She's been wanting to say "Watteau sky" for days. She must say it.  
Not knowing has held her back, but she must, she must say it.  
Watteau Sky. There's a Watteau Sky above me.  
In the same way she prefers to call the merry-go-round, Flying Horses.

Patricia Pruitt  
Turners Falls

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

the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, she currently  
writes on the topics of ecology and sustainability for  
which her work is well-received at readings, writing  
groups, and a salon.  
Nina Rossi is an artist, poet, and gallery owner of Nina's  
Nook.

Chris Sawyer-Lauçanno writes his poems in and around  
the many other forms of work he engages.  
Kate Morruzzi writes poems in Leverett.  
Patricia Pruitt edits *The Poetry Page* and sometimes  
indulges in it herself.

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## ARTS & 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.

The Pioneer Tavern (Formerly The Rt.63 Roadhouse), Millers Falls: *TNT Karaoke*, 8:30 p.m.

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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 Exhi-*



*Noche Cubana with William Rodriguez and De Lomas y Sones. With congas, bongó, bass, piano, flute, saxophone and vocals, De Lomas y Sones delivers an evening of deeply grooving Cuban sounds! Arts Block Cafe on Saturday, March 28th at 8 p.m.*

*bition 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.

Nina's Nook, Turners Falls, *Promenade of Shoes - Belinda Lyons Zucker*. Paper shoes and diorama box shrines by Belinda Lyons Zucker and paintings by Nina Rossi. Opening reception during the April 16 Third Thursday event "A Night of Conversation about the Arts". Work on display 4/2 to 5/2/15.

#### CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS:

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

Seeking Cool Cats for a special feline feature at Nina's Nook in Turners Falls June-July 2015! Fantastical, floppy, funny, frumpy, foolish, just let the fur fly for this show of fine art and craft. Also seeking practical cat items such as treats, toys, collars, etc. Interested consignors please contact Nina Rossi, [naban@verizon.net](mailto:naban@verizon.net) (413) 834-

8800. [www.ninasnook.com](http://www.ninasnook.com)

### EVENTS:

#### 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.

Deerfield Academy, von Auer-Sperg Gallery, Deerfield: *The Art is the Cloth: A Series of Reflections*. Reception for exhibition exploring ways in which contemporary tapestries call attention to themselves as cloth. Weavers from Canada, Mexico, and the United States. On display through 4/30. Reception 5-7:30 p.m. Helena Hermmarck, one

#### SATURDAY, MARCH 28

Shelburne-Buckland Community Center, Shelburne Falls: *Greater Shelburne Falls Area Business Association Annual Auction*. Fund-raising auction with over 100 items from local businesses and work from local artisans. Refreshments, \$, 6 p.m.

Arts Block Cafe, Greenfield: *Noche Cubana with William Rodriguez and De Lomas y Sones*. An evening of Cuban music, \$, 8 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *The Reprobate Blues Band*, 9 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Here We Are Now, Imitate Us: A Nirvana Tribute Night*, 9:30 p.m.

#### SUNDAY, MARCH 29

Leverett Library, Leverett: *Reception for artist's forgeries*. 2 p.m. Some works donated to the silent auction to benefit the library, Auction closes at 4 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *John Sheldon*, 8 p.m.

Rendezvous, *TNT Karaoke*, 9 p.m.

#### MONDAY, MARCH 30

Greenfield Community College, Main Campus, Greenfield: *Young @Heart Chorus*. Back by popular demand! The mission of the Young@Heart Chorus is to present a unique and positive image of aging through the creation of originally staged musical and theater performances that incorporate songs not commonly sung by older Americans. *Young@Heart* provides a not-for-profit musical outlet for the elderly of Western Massachusetts in the form of vocal concerts and/or stage presentations. Join us for music and free food! 12 p.m.

#### WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1

GCC Downtown Center, Greenfield: *Senior Symposia: MASS MoCA: What's It All About?* \$, 2 p.m.

Wendell Free Library, Wendell: *Adult Art Class*. Ongoing, weekly adult art classes, call the Library for details, (978) 544-3559, 6 to 8 p.m.

#### THURSDAY, APRIL 2

Smith College, Northampton: *The Encounters and Possibilities of Cross-Border Literature*, author Shirin Nezamafi discusses her writing in Japanese exploring ideas about translation, national identity and literature. Reception follows. 5 p.m., Brown Fine Arts Center.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *The Roosters*, classic rock by Bruce Sco-

field & Mark Feller, 8 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Fall-town String Band*, 8 p.m.

#### FRIDAY, APRIL 3

Arts Block Cafe, Greenfield: *Jim Matus & Larry Deryn: Laoutar & Piano*. Laoutar plays beautiful melodic lines with some dissonant twists and trancey rhythms; pianist plays original compositions incorporating elements of jazz, modern classical, folk, world and improvisation, \$, 8 p.m.

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

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SUN 3/29 9pm FREE  
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# All Star Team “An Honor”



DAVID HOITT PHOTOS

Liam Ellis (L) and Nick York (R) at the Western Massachusetts Senior All-Star Game played at the Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield.

By MATT ROBINSON

**SPRINGFIELD** – On Friday, March 20, two of Turners Falls’ best basketball players, Liam Ellis and Nick York, competed with the best-of-the-best in the Hall of Fame All Star game in Springfield.

“Being selected to the All Star team is a great honor,” York said before the game, “and at the beginning of the year, if you asked me if I would be playing in this game, I would’ve said no in a heartbeat.”

The game capped off very successful high school careers for both players. It was their last opportunity to play as high schoolers. It was the last time they represented Turners Falls in a basketball game, and the very last time they played as teammates.

“We have been playing together since 6th grade,” York said. “and [Ellis] is one of the main reasons I am where I am today as a basketball player.”

Asked before the game what he expected of it, Ellis had a simple answer: “To have a



Nick York passes to a team mate during the Western Massachusetts Senior All-Star Game at the Basketball Hall of Fame.

good time. I know a lot of these guys and we have a lot of respect for each other. We’re just going out to compete and have fun.”

“I don’t know a whole lot about the other guys other than it should be a very fun game,” York added. “There is a lot of talent out there, and I am beyond grateful to be playing with these guys.”

Ellis and York were assigned to the White Team for Friday’s game. In the regular season, the two were an integral part of a small squad. Both of them rose to the occasion, week in and week out. Many times in the season, both of them played 30 plus minutes.

However, on a 10-man squad, neither Ellis nor York saw much playing time. Like most All-Star games, it wasn’t a competitive, aggressive contest. The goal was just to play, have a little fun and show off some skills.

When the final buzzer sounded, White had fallen to Red, 98-88.

In their senior year, Ellis and York led Turners Falls to an amazing record of 19 and 3, won the Hampshire Championship, and made it to the Western Massachusetts Final Four. They finished the regular season with a school record, 18 and 2 and, during Senior Night, Liam entered the very exclusive 1000 point club.

Both players benefited from seasoned coaches, a strong work ethic and hundreds

and hundreds of hours of practice. Although the curtain has been lowered on their high school basketball careers, both players tell me they will play baseball this spring.

And as far as college ambitions, neither is sure where they are going yet. “I have a few good opportunities, but I’m still deciding which will be the best fit,” Liam explained. “Coaches want me to play point guard in college.”

As for York? “I haven’t fully decided on what to do in college in terms of sports, but both baseball and basketball are possibilities right now,” he said, “but I am leaning more towards baseball I think.”

The Turners Falls athletic program has produced thousands of productive student athletes. The lessons they learn on the field supplement the lessons they learn in the classroom.

Its fall sports include football, field hockey, volleyball, golf, soccer, and cross country. The winter sports are basketball, cheerleading, swimming, and ice hockey.

Spring season, featuring baseball, softball, track and field, and tennis, is starting now.



Liam Ellis goes for 3 during the Western Massachusetts Senior All-Star Game.

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