



LAKE PLEASANT MILLERS FALLS MONTAGUE CENTER MONTAGUE CITY TURNERS FALLS

# The Montague Reporter

YEAR 12 – NO. 31

also serving Irving, Gill, Leverett and Wendell

\$1

EDITOR@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

MAY 22, 2014

## Gregory Snedeker Takes Seat On Gill Selectboard, With 59% Of The Vote

By DAVID DETMOLD

Audio engineer, musician, and composer Greg Snedeker can now add the title of Gill selectman to his curriculum vitae. Snedeker beat out Fred Chase, Mac Truck mechanic and president of the Antique Truck Club of America, by a vote of 115 to 79 in Monday's town election, with just 19% of the town's 1045 voters turning out to the polls.

Snedeker, who received the endorsement of retiring selectboard member Ann Banash, after her tenure of seven consecutive terms, was also elected clerk of the selectboard at Tuesday evening's reorganizational meeting of the board.

Randy Crochier received the endorsement of Snedeker and John Ward to become selectboard chair for the coming year.

The meeting took place in front of the colorful set design created by Amy Gordon for the upcoming ACT After School performance by Gill Elementary students of the Wizard of Oz – scheduled for the general public at 7 p.m. on Friday, May 30.

But residents who follow the road to the emerald green at the center of town had better beware

of more than just flying monkeys if they are driving too fast.

Responding to complaints about speeding on Main Road and River Road, the selectboard agreed to speak to both the police department and the highway department about ways to calm the traffic. That might include taking up Main Road resident Jim Tomasi's request for a police cruiser to hide near the Slate Library or elsewhere to catch drivers breaking the 30 mile per hour speed limit on that section of the north-south corridor.

"On Thursday and Friday after work, people are rushing home and moving through here pretty fast," said Tomasi. "I've seen 'em going 50."

see GILL page A4



Boyle Road resident Renee Jenkins casts Monday's 99th vote as election warden Steve Damon looks on.

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

## Board Has Second Thoughts On Cable Access RFP

By JEFF SINGLETON

On Tuesday, May 19 the newly reorganized Montague Selectboard, with Chris Boutwell elected chair, backed away from a tentative plan to put the local access television contract out to bid.

The town will instead wait until the current local access provider, Montague Community Television, undergoes an annual review by the Cable Advisory Committee before deciding on the need for a Request for Proposals (RFP).

[Last week the *Reporter* incorrectly reported the board had voted to issue an RFP. Although the board seemed to have reached a consensus that an RFP would be necessary, it was not part of the final motion to issue a short-term contract extension. Such an extension was deemed necessary because the current contract expired May 19, the same day as the latest board meeting, and MCTV had failed to give the one-year notice required for an automatic extension.]

A relatively large audience attended this portion of the selectboard meeting. Most were MCTV supporters who argued that issuing an RFP prior to the annual review was premature.

Dean Garvin, the current director of the station, stated that an RFP is usually a response to serious concerns about the administration of the station: "You typically issue an RFP when things are in disarray, when people are taking equipment down to Haiti without notifying the town. That's not the situation here."

In response to a proposal by town administrator Frank Abbondanzio, who had proposed an extension that would lead to a longer contract if MCTV successfully responded to an RFP, MCTV board Member Veronica Phaneuf requested that the RFP issue be separated from the

contract extension.

Phaneuf urged the town to wait to make a decision on an RFP pending the review by CAC. "[An RFP] is a lot of board time that might be saved if the CAC came back after the review with a recommendation."

Kathy Lynch, who is the director of a local access station in Easthampton, noted that her organization had missed a notification deadline without being required to respond to an RFP.

Chris Sawyer-Laucanno, a former member of the CAC who participated in writing the original local access contract, also stated that an RFP

see CABLE page A5



MCCI board members Veronica Phaneuf and Dana Faldasz (front left and center), and MCTV station manager Dean Garvin address the Montague selectboard during Tuesday night's discussion of the local access contract. Town administrator Frank Abbondanzio is at the end of table with back to camera.

## Oh, the Places You'll Go: Turners Falls To Boston, On Public Transit

By JEFF SINGLETON

Lillian Fiske of Montague Center remembers when she could take a train direct to Boston. She would pick up the Albany to Boston at the stop on what is now called Depot Road. The street is just before the bridge over the railroad tracks north of Montague Center and you can still see where the train stop used to be.

In Boston, she would get a bus to the state hospital in Taunton, where she was training to be a nurse.

"I sometimes took the milk train, which stopped at every little town along the way," she says.

"Was it delivering milk?" I ask.

"I guess so, I don't really remember," she replies.

Fiske rode the transportation network at a time when many middle-class families still had no car, or shared a single vehicle. Today it would be almost inconceivable to most residents of Franklin County to take a slow-moving milk train to Boston, much less transfer to a job in Taunton.

But as we consider our current public transportation system in light of global warming, it is worth thinking about this not-so-distant reality.

As a matter of fact, you can go directly to Boston from Mon-



tague. I did it several weeks ago.

The route takes too long and does not run consistently. If you need to get there by 9 a.m., you will need to catch the 5 a.m. bus, which is a bit early for most of us.

But there is a lot on the plus side that we miss in the current car culture.

I am not talking about going via Springfield or Hartford on the Peter Pan bus, or down to New Haven on the train. I am talking about taking your very own Franklin Regional Transit Authority (FRTA) from Montague to Orange; then the Montachusett Regional Transit Authority (MART) to Gardner; then another MART bus to the Fitchburg train station; and finally an MBTA commuter rail train into Boston.

Granted, the whole trip took over

see TRANSIT page A6

## After Complaints, Simon's Stamps Takes Measures to Combat Odor Issue

By CHRISTOPHER SAWYER-LAUCANNO

TURNERS FALLS – Simon's Stamps, located across from the Cumberland Farms at 320 Avenue A in Turners Falls, has over the years received complaints from residents about noxious odors and even noise.

The company, which moved from Greenfield to Turners Falls in November of 2009, manufactures a wide range of rubber stamps for companies across the country and even around the world.

The odors were presumably being emitted from the rubber cutting process, which is laser guided.

Angie Thompson, the company's vice president, acknowledges that there were some complaints: "Almost since we moved to Turners we got complaints. First it was about the smell, then about noise, and then about the smell again. We've worked hard to fix these problems, and I think we have."

Simon Alcieri, president of the firm, said that odor had been a problem, as had noise from an exhaust fan. "We've managed to solve the noise problem completely, and have eliminated the odors as much as we possibly can," he said.

He explained that the noise



Maggie Connell, left, and Angie Thompson stand in front of the company's laser engraver. One of the new air filtration tanks stands behind them.

issue was caused by a whirling fan in a tall chimney. He said he worked with Gina McNeely from the Montague board of health, and last year installed what essentially is a "four-foot long muffler." "That corrected the problem," he said. "We haven't had any noise complaints since."

As for the odor problem, Alcieri said he has been researching solutions for years and has installed three different systems to cleanse the air.

Each laser engraver, he explained, has its own suction system, much like a giant utility vacuum, to pull dust and particulate matter directly into a closed system.

These particulates are then fed into a central system

which uses activated carbon to further cleanse the air. But this isn't the end of the air filtration.

A further system, manufactured by Ecosorb, uses an atomization process to neutralize odors on contact before sending the cleaned air up the exhaust chimney.

There is also an air exchange system in place that pulls fresh air from outside and sends heated air outside.

In the winter, a series of baffles mixes the air to enable 75 to 80 percent of the warm air to be recycled into the building. This not only saves on heating costs but continually provides the building with fresher and warmer air.

Although Alcieri said that

see STAMPS page A4

# The Montague Reporter

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## Gas Exports: A Red Herring In The Pipeline Debate

Kinder Morgan’s proposal to build a new natural gas transmission pipeline across rural northwestern Massachusetts has brought about a strange controversy.

It is nearly universally opposed here, inspiring non-binding town hall resolutions even in several towns off its likely route. A steadily growing buzz of activism has spilled from online forums to meetings, hearings and workshops, and finally into the streets.

Our political representatives all seem to be either adamantly opposed or suspiciously silent, and with the exception of local members of the Laborers International Union, who rather bravely pointed out they wouldn’t mind the construction work, nobody else seems to be speaking in the project’s favor.

Those with the most to lose – landowners and stewards of conservation land – are refusing survey access and lawyering up. Even many town governments, including Montague’s, have refused the company access to town-owned land.

The state’s Department of Public Utilities, which can override these refusals, may now become a target of public pressure. But DPU president Ann Berwick, along with her counterparts around the region, sits on the New England States Committee on Electricity, which this winter pitched the idea of an electricity tariff to subsidize new pipeline construction.

This apparent policy goal was a consensus reached by technocrats while the rest of us weren’t watching. Adding pipeline capacity is the simplest-seeming solution to a well-documented, perceived problem.

Those of us who don’t wish to shoulder the cost of this solution are challenged with the task of breaking that perceived problem down into smaller parts, and convincing our neighbors around New England that there are better solutions.

Almost all of us use energy extracted, stored and distributed via potentially dangerous, environmentally destructive, large-scale infrastructure, owned by private companies mandated to turn a profit.

This infrastructure has grown significantly over the last century. We should not be so surprised at the idea that it might grow a little more, nor should we be quite so

incredulous when we learn that its growth might have something to do with us using the energy.

Instead of facing this thorny dilemma head-on, many are chasing a red herring: the idea that, if it can be established that the pipeline is meant to move gas through New England to be liquefied and shipped off to foreigners, the public will unite to defeat it.

There are three problems with this approach – setting aside the faint scent of xenophobia it carries with it.

The first is that most who use this talking point are either extremely vague or incorrect in their understanding of a potential gas export scenario. There are currently no export facilities in New England, and none proposed. One has been proposed in Maryland, which this pipeline would not serve.

There are 21 proposed or potential export facilities in the Gulf of Mexico and along its coastline. Blasting a 250-mile trench through the woods of New England to a covert liquefaction terminal would be a costly way to get fracked Appalachian gas onto a ship.

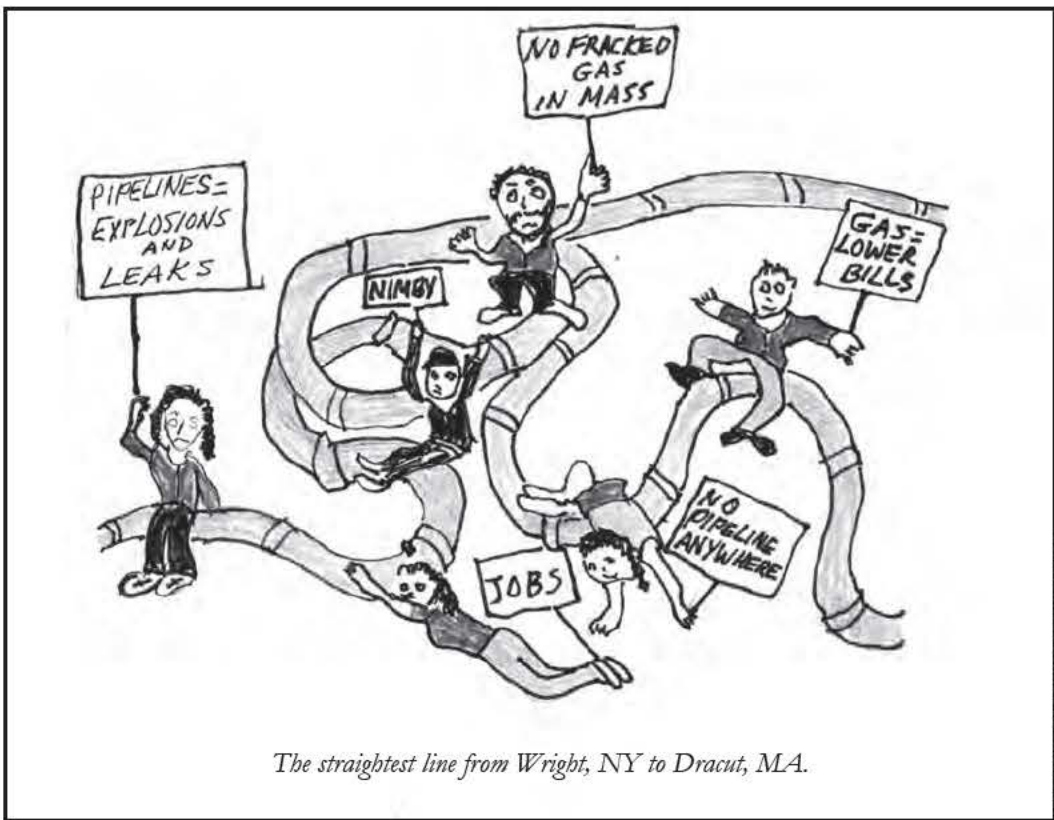
“Why does it terminate on the coast at a dock?,” asks one anonymous internet commenter of the proposed route. It doesn’t – it connects to a gas hub at Dracut, 25 miles inland.

Someone else insisted to a friend of ours, over Facebook of course, that there was a proposal to build an export facility at Essex. Not true. There is an import and regasification facility in Everett, as well as two deepwater import terminals off Gloucester, built but never used.

Here is the potential export scenario. Pieridae Energy has proposed to build a liquefaction facility in Goldboro, Nova Scotia. It hopes to start operations as early as 2019.

Pieridae has asked Canada’s National Energy Board for a permit to import up to 365 billion cubic feet of gas per year from Maine via the Maritimes and Northeast Pipeline, and liquefy up to 511 billion cubic feet per year to ship. It already has a contract to sell half of that latter quantity to E.ON Global Commodities SE, a German company.

This project is banking on enough excess capacity in New England to both offset the current southward flow on the Maritimes and Northeast Pipeline and garner



The straightest line from Wright, NY to Dracut, MA.

### Help Wanted!

The *Montague Reporter* is seeking one or more safe and reliable drivers to help us out with our Montague and Leverett home delivery routes.

We wouldn’t call it a job, but gas and wear & tear reimbursements, and sometimes tips, are available.

You must have your own vehicle and be available for a few hours between Thursday afternoons and Friday mornings.

Determined cyclists may also be able to help.

Interested? Have someone else in mind who may be a good fit? It’s a great opportunity to contribute to the paper and meet your neighbors!

For more information, call us in the office at 863-8666, or send an email to [circulation@montaguereporter.org](mailto:circulation@montaguereporter.org).

### Letters to the Editors

#### Thanks, DPW!

As cyclists who are often riding to or from Greenfield or Turners on Turners Falls Road, we were pleasantly surprised to find the road swept free from the winter’s sand and grit last week.

Thank you to the Montague Department of Public Works for doing such a great job cleaning up the main roadways. After this winter it couldn’t have been an easy job!

Emily Monosson and Ben Letcher  
Montague Center

#### Issue

Good Afternoon,

The heading for the Erving Police log from 5/15/14, “Potential Elephant Corpse Vanishes,” seemed inappropriate and unprofessional.

The Chief wanted me to request that the titles of our logs not be “funny” in the future.

If you have any questions or concerns please let me know.

Thank you,  
Officer Beth Kaczinski  
Erving Police Department

### CORRECTIONS

We inadvertently credited the picture of Robert Bitzer in last week’s paper (May 15, “Erving: Town Meeting Calls for new Zoning Regulations to Allow Gas Station”) to Katie Nolan. That photo was actually taken by Tom Sharp.

In the same issue, we somehow managed to omit David Brule’s name as the author of the “West Along the River” column.

Apologies to both Tom and David!

an average of an extra billion cubic feet per day northward.

In April 2013, Pieridae’s president, Alfred Sorenson, told Halifax’s *Chronicle Herald* that he was talking with Kinder Morgan about that company’s expansion plans. This March, his company’s website brags, he had an audience with Angela Merkel.

This all sounds quite damning – if the idea that not all the gas would be burned in New England is reason enough to block the development of infrastructure.

But here’s the second problem. There is already enough spare capacity in New England to ship that much north to the Canadians. Having a year-round excess does not prove there is no peak shortfall.

In 2013, somewhere around 890 billion cubic feet of natural gas was actually delivered to New England customers – power plants, industrial users, residential and commercial consumers and vehicles. A conservative estimate of existing total pipeline capacity shows that shippers could have supplied 1.27 trillion cubic feet to the region.

That difference alone would more than cover what Pieridae is hoping to import from New England. Were the Nova Scotia infrastructure in place, and cost not an issue, they could already be fulfilling their contract with the Germans using our 11 months’ spare capacity – and for 30 “peak” days of the winter, we still wouldn’t have had enough gas for our power plants.

This is a problem with natural gas itself: it is extremely energy- and cost-inefficient to liquefy and store it for use during peak demand. New England’s geology doesn’t provide us with underground caverns to store the gas in.

In our cold-then-hot environment, our energy use is “peaky,” and so if we are to rely on gas as our main energy source, we will have to build so much capacity that exports can co-exist with domestic use anyway.

Which brings us squarely to the third problem: the perceived shortfall during those 30-odd cold days still needs to be addressed. It is not enough to insinuate that this issue has been invented because private

companies will profit from adding capacity.

Berwick, the head of the DPU, is a Patrick appointee who helped develop the Green Communities Act. She also sits on the state’s Energy Facilities Siting Board, which may ultimately be the most influential state voice in the federal process down the road.

If this proposed pipeline is truly a bridge too far for natural gas in Massachusetts, she and those around her will need to be convinced that some combination of other solutions – increased imports of more costly LNG, peak-shaving, leak-patching, investment in renewables and efficiency, and simple old-fashioned reduction – can address this perceived shortfall.

That argument, made carefully and cogently in defense of these wild and beautiful lands, should now become pipeline opponents’ focus. Not where the gas is coming from, not where the extra gas might go, and not who may or may not stand to make money on the deal.

Just what we would lose, and why we don’t have to.

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**PHONE (413) 863-8666**  
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JESSICA LARKIN ILLUSTRATION

Compiled by DON CLEGG

The **Leverett Historical Society** will be having their annual plant and used garden book sale fundraiser on Saturday, May 24 from 9 a.m. to noon at the Leverett Town Hall in Leverett Center. Master Gardener Dawn Marvin Ward will be on duty to help assist with plant choices and general garden questions.

Plant donations can be dropped off behind the town hall during the week prior to the sale. Garden & cook book donations can be dropped off outside the Leverett Library (covered entryway) or town hall prior to sale.

For more information contact

Dawn 367-9562 or [dmward@crocker.com](mailto:dmward@crocker.com).

Also on Saturday, May 24, from 10 to 11:30 a.m., Greenfield Savings Bank will host **Bingo** with Linda Ackerman calling. The bank will provide cards, prizes and light refreshments.

Bingo is free but reservations are mandatory. Call Christina or Kerry at 863-4316 to make a reservation.

The **Greenfield Annual Memorial Day Parade** is set for Monday, May 26, beginning at 10 a.m. The route begins on Federal Street at the Middle School, stopping at the Federal Street Cemetery for services, then continuing down Church and Franklin Streets for services at the library.

The parade will then continue to the Veterans mall for additional services honoring Veterans from World Wars One and Two, as well as Korea and Vietnam.

The **Turners Falls Memorial Day Parade** is Monday, May 26. The parade will begin at the Dis-

covery Center at 10:15 a.m., then march down Avenue A to the War Memorial for wreath laying and ceremonies. All are invited to participate.

The **Erving Memorial Day Parade** will be held on Monday, May 26 at 10 a.m. Parade participants should gather at the Renovator's Supply parking lot at 9:30.

The parade will start at 10 and will go up to Veteran's Field for a ceremony. All are welcome to march.

**Kidleidoscope Tuesdays** returns to the Great Falls Discovery Center on May 27 from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. Come learn about our neighbors who share our home in the Connecticut River Watershed. Kidleidoscope is a kid-friendly, hands-on environmental experience for young children.

Each topic includes a story, interactive games, and a craft to introduce you and your child to the natural world.

Programming is recommended for ages 3 to 6 with a parent or guardian. Find out more current info and programming by joining the Friends of the Great Falls Discovery Center on Facebook, or visit [www.greatfallsdiscoverycenter.org](http://www.greatfallsdiscoverycenter.org)

**Quartermania** is back at St. Kaz's, 197 Avenue A, in Turners Falls on Wednesday, May 28. Vendors & crafters set up at 5 p.m., doors open at 6 p.m., and the event

starts promptly at 7 p.m.

Come and place quarter bids on items valued up to \$20 provided by artists and vendors. Items valued between \$21 and \$30 require 50-cent bids. For items valued between \$31 and \$40, you'll need at least 75 cents, and for items \$40 and up, bids start at a dollar.

If you place a bid, your paddle is in the air, and your number is chosen, you WIN. The five-dollar entry fee gets you one paddle. Additional paddles are \$1. All proceeds go to local non-profits and charitable causes. Come and show your support and don't forget your quarters.

The opening Day for the **Bernardston Farmers' Market** is Saturday, May 31, from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m. in the United Church parking lot.

The Leverett Elementary School PTO will host a **local wine tasting and silent auction** on Saturday, June 7 at 6:30 p.m. at the North Hadley Sugar Shack, 81 River Drive (Route 47) in Hadley. Tickets are \$25.

Order forms are available at LES or mail a check to LES PTO, 85 Montague Road, Leverett, MA 01054. Include your name, address, phone number and email, and the PTO will mail you tickets.

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

## Pipeline Forum Set for June 3 At Greenfield Community College

**GREENFIELD** – WHMP Radio and Montague Community Television are presenting a community forum on the proposal by the Kinder-Morgan company to build a gas pipeline that would run through several Franklin County towns.

The two-hour forum on the proposed pipeline and on related energy and environmental policy issues will be held on Tuesday, June 3 from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Greenfield Community College Dining Commons which seats 300.

Among the panelists will be: 2nd Berkshire State Representative **Paul Mark**; 2nd Franklin State Representative **Denise Andrews**; Senior Attorney **Shanna Cleveland** of the Conservation Law Foundation; Director of External Affairs **Eric Johnson** of the ISO-New England; **Bruce Winn** of the Berkshire Environmental Action Team; journalist **Mike Jackson**, who has covered the proposal for *The Montague Reporter*; and Executive Director **Leigh Youngblood** of the Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust.

Confirmation is pending on appearances by other experts in public utilities and the natural gas industry. Kinder Morgan's proposal will be reviewed, but the corporation declined to send a representative.

The forum will be hosted by WHMP Franklin County Bureau Chief Chris Collins, attorney Bill Newman, host of WHMP's Bill Newman Show, and WHMP reporter Mary Serreze. The forum is free and open to the

public, and some time will be allotted to give audience members an opportunity to speak.

The first hour of the program will focus on the gas pipeline proposal and its impact on the region's laws and regulations, local resources and property – and how the siting and approval processes work.

In the second hour, the participants will address energy policy including natural gas and renewables, safety concerns, and how energy policy decisions are made.

The forum is co-produced by Greenfield Community Television and Easthampton Community Access Television.

The program will be broadcast live on WHMP 1240 AM/1400 AM/96.9 FM and live-streamed on local TV cable access stations in Montague (Channel 15) and the following areas:

Greenfield (GCTV); Amherst Media (ACTV); Easthampton (ECAT); Northampton (NCAT); Frontier (FCAT); Athol/Orange (AOTV); Northfield/Bernardston (BNCTV); and Shelburne Falls (Falls TV).

It will also be available live on WHMP.com and [gctv.org](http://gctv.org). It will be rebroadcast on WHMP the following morning, June 4, from 8 to 10 a.m. The forum will also be cablecast on Montague Community TV Channel 17 after the event.

A podcast will be available after the forum on WHMP and the video will be posted on MCTV's vimeo channel: [vimeo.com/mctvchannel17](http://vimeo.com/mctvchannel17).

### PUBLIC MEETING MONTAGUE CABLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Montague Cable Advisory Committee will hold a public meeting on Wednesday, May 28, from 4 to 6 p.m. in the first floor conference room at Montague Town Hall.

The purpose of the meeting is to discuss and approve the recruitment of additional members to the CAC for the purpose of establishing a sub-committee to perform the review process of MCCI/MCTV. The CAC will discuss and establish review guidelines as referred to in various documents.

In addition, the CAC will be suggesting dates to meet with COMCAST personnel in order to continue negotiations about the COMCAST cable contract.

## Montague: Election Results

By REPORTER STAFF

Only 393 registered voters, or 6.81 percent of the total of 5772 eligible voters in Montague, cast their ballots in Monday's election which saw all town-wide candidates for election and reelection unchallenged.

Montague has a total of 5772 registered voters.

Michael Nelson picked up 369 out of the 393 votes cast to return to the selectboard. Other unopposed incumbents – assessor Paul Emery, parks and recreation committee member Dennis Grader, library trustee Alice J. Armen, Stanley Zera, of the Montague Housing Authority and board of health member Michael Nelson – were all returned to office.

Also winning election for three-year seats as library trustees were Carolyn Clark and Steven Winters. Sharon Cotrell, a long-time trustee running this time as a write-in candidate for the one year position, was also successful.

Voters returned Christopher Boutwell, who ran unopposed as the candidate for the three-year non-veteran Soldier's Memorial Trustee and Donald Girard for the one-year non-veteran seat.

Lawrence Parker won as a write-in for the three-year veteran's trustee position.

Incumbents Sandra Brown of Gill and Michael Langknecht of Montague, both running unopposed, returned to the GMRSD school committee.

They will be joined by April Riepold, from Montague, who was elected to the unchallenged seat left open when Shelly Clark declined to seek reelection.



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## RECYCLE

## BOTTLES &amp; CANS

Week of May 26  
in Montague



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## GILL from page A1

Tamara Grimard, of 11 River Road, brought her young daughter Sophia with her, along with a petition signed by about ten neighbors, asking for stricter control of speeders along River Road, which she said is commonly used as a short cut for commuters to Route 2.

"It's getting pretty bad," said Grimard. "I've had to jump off the road sometimes. It amazes me that so many people do travel that road, and travel so fast."

Crochier said he was concerned also for customers at the Gill Tavern, who sit outside in fair weather, at an intersection that has become confusing with what he termed "tractor turns" curving out the right angles of ill defined travel lanes.

"I share your concerns," Crochier told Grimard and Tomasi, "and we can definitely talk to the police and highway departments."

So slow down and enjoy the spring scenery, and get a ticket to the student play instead of a speeding ticket along the way.

The selectboard acted with caution on a number of spending requests that were on the agenda.

Instead of signing off on highway superintendent Mick LaClaire's request to spend state Chapter 90 funds to chip seal Atherton, Munn's Ferry and Dole Road, and to reclaim a portion of Dole Road where frost heaves have been particularly bad, the selectboard asked to have LaClaire come talk to them in person, prepared to defend his request and to explain the schedule by which he determines which roads are up for repair in any given season.

"Some of these are dead end roads," said Crochier, a resident of

Munn's Ferry, "and don't get much traffic. Is more work needed on River Road, or elsewhere?"

He added, "I think we do have a schedule, but I don't know what the schedule is."

Crochier also said LaClaire should explain the reason why some highway materials, like loam and gravel, are being stored at a gravel pit in Bernardston, just across the town line, a subject that was raised in the recent candidates' forum.

He said the reason was probably to save time for the highway crew when working on road projects at the north end of town, far from the highway yard, but he felt the public should hear that explanation directly from the highway superintendent.

Town administrative assistant Ray Purington said a last minute request for capital spending at the elementary school came too late to be placed on the annual town meeting warrant.

Two items concerning capital projects at the elementary school were tabled until the selectboard can schedule a special meeting with Michael Sullivan, Gill-Montague superintendent, to discuss them.

The first of these would replace the locks on interior doors so that teachers can lock their classrooms from the inside, in case an intruder enters the school with intent to commit harm, at a cost of about \$8,000.

The second would wall off the section of the cafeteria furthest from the stage to create closets, a meeting room for teachers, and a room for one on one counseling sessions for students with special needs, who currently lack a private setting for such sessions, at a cost of about \$40,000.

## STAMPS from page A1

the problem is not going to be 100 percent eliminated, he feels that they have made very thorough efforts to correct the problem.

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection agreed. In March of 2014, the DEP found, after a thorough inspection of the manufacturing facility, that it was in complete compliance with "air quality regulations" and "toxic use reduction regulations."

The terse summary in their letter states: "MassDEP did not observe any violations."

Experiential evidence bore out the DEP's finding. This reporter, who was present during manufacturing, did notice the slightest of odors when he stood directly in front of the state-of-the art laser engraver, but when he moved just a few feet away, he could not detect even a hint of smell.

The facility, which employs 23 people, does all the production work on site: from processing orders, to making stamps, to shipping the final products. Orders, generally received on line, are quickly turned into stamps.

The computer-controlled laser-engraver transfers words and images from the digital image, producing a quick and exact replica.

Once the stamp is made, it is fitted onto a custom-cut wooden backing. Most stamps also receive wooden handles that are fitted by hand to the stamp.

Alcieri said his business was engaged in "manufacturing an obsolete product that nobody needs." But clearly a number of people want that product, as his sales are worldwide.

He likens rubber stamps to candles: "You don't really need candles either, but a couple of companies in Franklin County seem to be doing quite well selling them. We're pretty much doing the same thing."

He said his main clients are small businesses who use the stamps to label products. Scrapbookers, hobbyists and many folks who want to create invitations also buy stamps from the company.

While Alcieri did not comment directly on how sales were heading, he did say he was glad that the long recession seemed to be coming to an end. "We're a manufacturing business in Massachusetts," he said. "Not too many can say that these days."

In 2013 Simon's Stamps was awarded "Gold Manufacturer of the Year" from Marking Devices Publishing, the industry's top award.

Sawmill River Arts Gallery  
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On Saturday, May 24, the Sawmill River Arts Gallery, at the Montague Book Mill, will host artist demonstrations from noon until 3 p.m.

Member artists will demonstrate their fine craft and art processes including painting, weaving, photography, herbal balm making, jewelry making, and gourd carving.

Joan Levy, Sawmill  
River Arts Gallery  
member, carves a  
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JOAN LEVY PHOTO

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**CABLE** from page A1

was premature. He advocated for more consistent annual reviews by the current CAC.

The only person in the audience who seemed to support an RFP was former CAC chair John Reynolds. Reynolds argued that an RFP did not have to be viewed negatively but rather as an opportunity to improve the station's operation. "There's nothing wrong with looking in the mirror to see if you're still there," he noted metaphorically.

After some discussion, the board, concurring with Mark Fairbrother's suggestion that the extension contract would terminate on December 31, 2014 without renewal, took the RFP requirement out of the proposal made by Abbondanzio and voted unanimously to approve a contract until December 31, 2014.

This left the RFP issue for another day, dependent in large part on the results of the CAC review.

If the review, expected to be completed in July, is positive, and the selectboard accepts the CAC's recommendation, a new contract would be issued. Should the selectboard feel the need for an RFP, it is likely they would issue one in October.

**Sewer Upgrades and Updates**

In other matters, the Selectboard voted to approve a variety of proposals to begin sewer upgrades approved by the recent annual town meeting. The proposals were made by Water Pollution Control Facility director Bob Trombley, who was

assisted by Paul Gilbert and Robert Button of the consulting firm CDM Smith.

The board voted to allocate \$312,000 to begin the design process for upgrading two of the sewer system's pump stations, pending input from the town's legal firm Koppelman and Paige.

The board also approved funds for sewer lining and cleaning a pipe that goes under the power canal in Turners Falls.

Trombley went on to discuss a range of other issues before the board. These included a new procedure for billing those bringing septage to the treatment plant; an update on the effort to remove grit and debris from plant equipment and a request to begin a hiring process for a new full-time laborer and a part-time secretary.

Selectboard member Mike Nelson asked Trombley for advice to sewer users. Trombley responded that "only what goes through you and paper to wipe it off" should go into the system.

He warned about non-biodegradable wipes, which clog sewer systems, saying that the problem "is so bad there are conferences going on" about it.

**Conservation Projects**

Town Planner Walter Ramsey came before the board to discuss two related restoration projects on the Sawmill River. He was accompanied by two members of the Franklin Conservation District, Deborah Shriver and Carolyn

Shores-Ness.

The first project involved the river bed and bridge at South Street near Montague Center. The second focused on eliminating the remnants of a bridge abutment at the end of North Street, also in Montague Center.

Both projects have been approved but the Conservation District members wanted the town to co-sign a "letter of intent" before the project was moved on to the Conservation Commission. The board agreed to cosign the letter.

Audience member John Reynolds asked about damage to the South Street bridge during a previous phase of that project.

DPW head Tom Bergeron replied that damage had been done, but fixing it is not "at the top of the list" for his busy department.

**Other Business**

In other matters, Ramsey asked the board to execute a lengthy license agreement with the First Light allowing the town to use company land for the RiverCulture block party.

The board approved a request by Albert Cummings for a Memorial Day event at the Veterans Memorial on Avenue A.

A civil service list for the police department was certified and Abbondanzio informed the board that the town will be required to put out a new RFP to develop the Powers Block in Millers Falls.



## Wendell Board of Health Grants Its First "Simple Living" Variance

By KATIE NOLAN

The Wendell board of health determined unanimously that the non-electric apartment proposed by Jonathan and Susan von Ranson for their Lockes Village Road property meets the requirements for a conservation-oriented housing variance.

In April, spurred by the von Ransons' "simple living" proposal, the board adopted a conservation-oriented housing variance process that allows for alternative water, heating, and waste disposal systems.

Under the variance process, the board of health may sign off on the building or occupancy permit for an owner-occupied home that meets the standards of the state sanitary code, but lacks electricity or running water.

After reviewing the von Ransons' application at their May 16 meeting, the board determined to approve their design for waste disposal, heat and hot water.

The von Ransons received approval from the Wendell planning board in 2009 to build the "simple living" apartment in their barn.

The apartment will not be wired for electricity and will be outfitted with a hand pump, a masonry

stove for heat and hot water and a composting toilet.

The couple plans to move from their current house on the property and live in the apartment once it is built and approved for occupancy.

Jonathan von Ranson said, "We'd like to get full legality because we'd like to establish the right to live simply..."

"We hope the process is winding up because at age 72 and 73 we're playing footsie – and shouldersie and backsie – with old age and would like to get settled!"

The conservation-oriented housing process adopted by the board calls for an initial inspection of the home and annual re-applications and inspections to assure that the protection of health is equal to or greater than for state-code-compliant dwellings.

Like other applicants for building permits, the von Ransons need to get signatures from town and regional boards and inspectors.

These include the board of health, the fire chief for fire safety concerns, the building inspector, the plumbing inspector, and the electrical inspector.

Jonathan von Ranson said the couple will be working with the inspectors to obtain the other necessary signatures.

**NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD**

## Special Town Meeting Will Address Gas Pipeline

By KATIE NOLAN

Opponents of the Kinder Morgan, Inc.'s proposed natural gas pipeline through Erving and other Franklin County towns asked the selectboard to vote a moratorium on the project or go on record as opposing it. About a dozen people attended the Monday night selectboard meeting.

Citing "dangers to water, land, ecology and air" from the pipeline, Moonlight Davis of Strachan Road asked the selectboard to slow the project until the citizens of Erving can become more informed about it. "The town needs to take a position," he said.

Morningstar Chenven of Strachan Road said that, although the proposed pipeline route in Erving is on private or state land, the pipeline's compressor stations use toxic chemicals, and "will affect all the citizens of Erving."

Chenven also observed that the Erving fire department would need to respond for any fires, explosions or environmental cleanups related to the pipeline.

Conservation commission chair and historical commission member David Brule asked the board to keep the commissions aware of all developments in the pipeline project. He reported that part of the proposed route is through land that the ConCom holds a conservation restric-

tion for.

Brule reminded the board that any part of the route passing through wetlands would need to be permitted by the ConCom, and that the historical commission would also weigh in because it is charged with inventorying and protecting historic properties in Erving, including Native American artifacts.

Jeanie Schermesser of Maple Avenue said that sensitive historic areas and prehistoric caves had been documented in Erving during the Route 2 realignment project.

Jeff Dubay of Mountain Road noted that the ConCom can't stop the pipeline -- it can only regulate it under existing laws. He warned that large corporations, like the Kinder Morgan pipeline company, "don't play very fair. They don't have our interests at all."

Gary Burnett of High Street suggested that rather than the selectboard making a decision, "it should go to everybody in town," either by petition or through a town meeting article.

Selectboard chair Eugene Klepadlo agreed, saying, "In order for the issue to be decided, it should be put to everybody in town, not just the three members of the board."

Selectboard members Margaret Sullivan and William Bembury both agreed with Klepadlo.

Klepadlo added that the towns-

people should get "both sides of the story," and put a moratorium or pipeline opposition to a vote at a special town meeting.

The board asked administrative coordinator Tom Sharp to schedule an informational meeting with Kinder-Morgan representatives, the board and townspeople.

The pipeline issue will likely be included on the warrant of the special town meeting already planned for June 23.

**Other Business**

The board signed a contract with Tighe & Bond for \$4,750 to conduct a pre-restoration asbestos survey of the Boiler Building stack at the former Usher Plant on Arch Street. The money will come from the fund set aside for Usher Plant re-development.

Dubay, a member of the Usher Plant re-development committee, said that the asbestos survey is necessary before putting restoration of the stack out to bid.

Sharp praised police officer Beth Kaczinski, police chief Chris Blair, fire chief Philip Wonkka and the recreation commission for working quickly to organize a Memorial Day parade and ceremony for Monday, May 26.

That event will start at 10 a.m. in Millers Falls.

**HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ERVING POLICE LOG**

### Report of Suspicious Male in the Weatherheads Parking Lot

**Monday, 5/12**

11:35 a.m. Report of a black bear in the High Street area. Gone upon arrival.

2:50 p.m. Report of a hit and run crash on Lester Street. Motor vehicle struck by box truck; no injuries.

5:40 p.m. Report of motor vehicle damaged while passing another motor vehicle crash. Report taken.

**Tuesday, 5/13**

9:30 a.m. Motor vehicle crash: hit raccoon on Route 2 in Farley area. Report taken.

11:36 a.m. Tractor trailer unit blocking railroad crossing on East Main Street. Same removed.

**Wednesday, 5/14**

2:45 p.m. Criminal application issued to [redacted]

[redacted] for operating a motor vehicle with a revoked license.

10:50 p.m. High Street resident called; had locked self out of house. Assisted on scene.

**Thursday, 5/15**

6:05 a.m. Report of a disturbance at an East Prospect Street residence. Located subject who was in distress. Same transported to Franklin Medical Center.

10:55 a.m. Assisted Wendell PD with motorcycle crash on Montague Road.

2:40 p.m. Report of youths jumping off Dorsey Road Bridge into river. Spoke with same, advised them it is unsafe to do so. Youths agreed to stop.

**Friday, 5/16**

6 p.m. Arrested [redacted] on a warrant.

**Saturday, 5/17**

10:15 a.m. Motor vehicle crash on North Street: dog hit by car. Owner on scene. Report taken.

**Sunday, 5/18**

12:12 a.m. Report of a suspicious male hunched over the guardrail on Old State Road near the trailer

park. Checked area, gone on arrival.

3:33 a.m. Motorist reported female walking on Route 2 in the area of the French King Bowling Alley, upset and waving her arms around at cars. Checked area, unable to locate.

10:07 p.m. Report of a suspicious male in the Weatherheads convenience store parking lot. Report taken.

**Monday, 5/19**

2:30 p.m. Dispute reported at Maple Avenue. Was verbal in nature. Report taken.

3:05 p.m. Report of harassing phone calls on Northfield Road. Report taken.

5:15 p.m. Disabled motor vehicle on French King Highway. Motor vehicle removed.

7:20 p.m. Medical emergency on High Street.

**Tuesday, 5/20**

7:45 a.m. Resident into station to report stolen property. Report taken.

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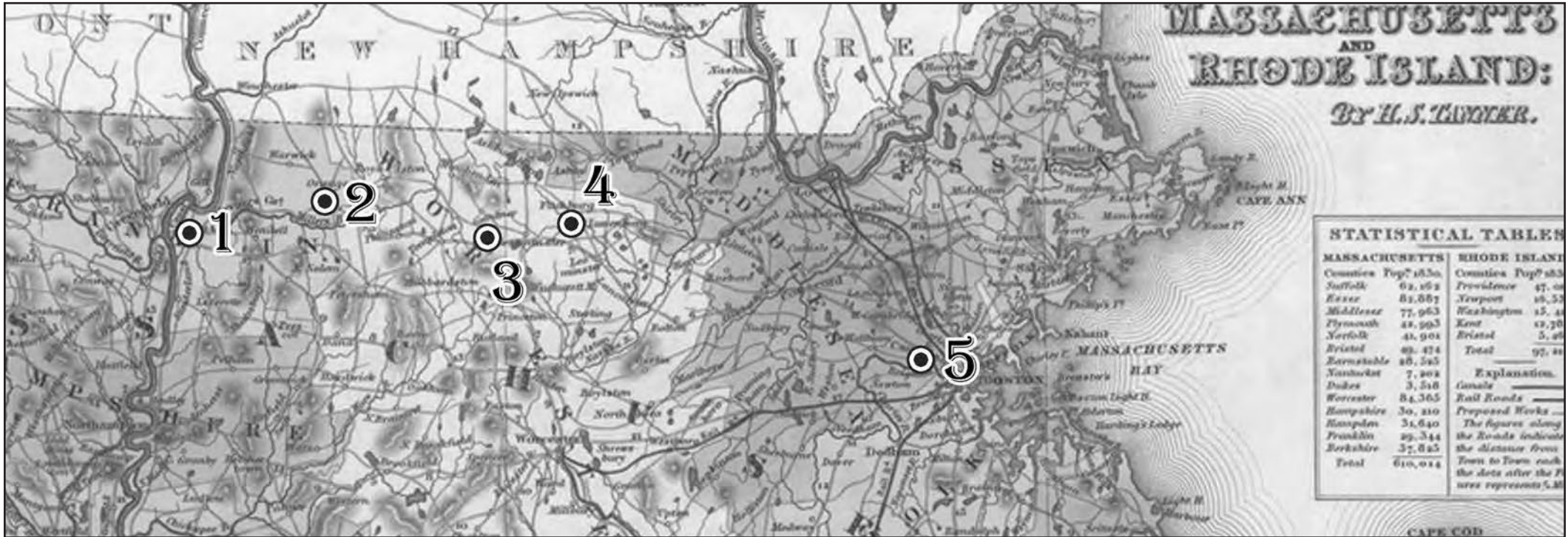
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**TRANSIT** from page A1

four hours, but there was plenty of compensation. I met the kind of colorful and talkative people who tend to take public transportation.

I had a relaxing cup of coffee at Fuzzy’s coffee shop at the Fitchburg train station, where I talked to Fuzzy about his business.

I saw many small declining former factory towns, and many big box stores, which seem to be replacing the factories as employment centers. I saw a lot of junky stuff, both natural and man-made, piled up by the side of the road.

I read a newspaper, and part of a book. I did not sit in traffic for ten minutes at the Concord rotary.

The total cost of my trip to Boston was a mere \$7.25, since I qualify for the over-60, half-price fare.

Most passengers would pay twice that amount – \$1.50 for each bus, and \$10 for the commuter rail – for a total of \$14.50.

Here is how it is done:

🕒 **1. Turners Falls to Orange**

The FRTA Orange bus I start with leaves Greenfield at 7 a.m. and passes through Turners Falls about ten minutes later. (There is an earlier bus that leaves Greenfield at 5 a.m., which you need to take if you want to make this trip in the summer.)

The Orange bus goes through Millers Falls and then down Route 2, through Erving, and exits at the first Orange exit. It passes through Orange Center, a rather attractive former mill town, and then east toward Athol.

The FRTA Orange route used to go all the way to Athol, but last year that town pulled out of the Franklin Regional Transit Authority and joined the Montachusett Regional Transit Authority. The FRTA line now ends at Hannaford supermarket at the Orange town line.

There are six people on this bus: me, a disabled veteran who gets on in a motorized wheel chair, a young man who is visiting grandparents to work sugaring their maple trees, a man and his daughter who are making a connection with the daughter’s grandparents, and a very enthusiastic man whose destination is unclear.

There is a good deal of discussion about whether the Hannaford is in fact in Orange or Athol. There are different views on this, and the enthusiastic man says that the town line runs right down the middle of Hannaford’s: the meat is in Athol, and the vegetables are in Orange.

Everyone is in a good mood, and is happy I am taking the buses and

train to Boston, although they indicate no desire to go to Boston themselves. They all want to make sure I stand in the right spot in front of Hannafords to make the right connection.

The young man working on the maple syrup trees is very interested in the history of transportation in the region, and particularly the railroads. He tells me that I should go see a display on the topic at the Northfield Mountain recreation area.

At Hannaford I get off, and so does the man with his daughter. When she sees her grandmother drive up she has to be restrained from dashing into the parking lot.

🕒 **2. Orange to Gardner**

I get on the bus to Gardner, which is driven by a grouchy bearded driver. He is grouchy because the bus is running late and he encounters construction and slow moving trucks. He has to radio ahead to ask the connecting bus to wait in Gardner.

The bus winds its way through Athol and then towns like Philipston and Templeton. These are places which have been only exit signs on Route 2 over the years.

There are a lot of fir trees in this particular area, a kind of subarctic microclimate. There is also a lot of excavation.

I have been listening to the young woman right behind me, who is explaining to the even younger woman next to her that although she grew up in Templeton, she went to high school in Gardner because her mother taught there. Also her sister was a nationally competitive swimmer and Gardner had a good swimming facility. Her sister then went to a very good university on a scholarship, but her grades plummeted because no one told her to get up in the morning...

I am really not “eavesdropping” in the classic sense, because the woman who went to high school in Gardner is talking in a loud voice over the din of bus noises. She is less than three feet from my left ear.

I turn and ask her where all these people on the bus, which is more than half full, are going.

“Well, I didn’t take a poll,” she says, but then informs me that a lot of them are high school students visiting the local community college. The public transportation system in central and western Massachusetts serves a lot of community college students.

I ask the bus driver, who has now cheered up considerably, if it

is clear where I pick up the Fitchburg bus at Gardner. A very large young man wearing a very stained t-shirt tells me the Fitchburg bus stops very near where our bus ends, and that he will be sure to show me where to get on, because he, too, is going to Fitchburg.

He is a friendly and enthusiastic man, accompanied by a woman whose t-shirt is also very stained. As it turns out, they are headed for the Salvation Army store in Fitchburg, which they say is the best Salvation Army store in the region.

This bus ends at Gardner City Hall, which I have never seen before. Indeed, I have never seen Gardner, despite passing it literally hundreds of times, beyond the Dunkin’ Donuts and Wendy’s just off Route 2.

The stop in front of city hall is crowded. The bus to Fitchburg is running late, so everyone has settled in to watch the Gardner Department of Public Works struggle to clean out a clogged sewer.

An older man with a Red Sox hat shakes his head at the sewer problem and laughs in a “there they go again” kind of way.

🕒 **3. Gardner to Fitchburg**

The bus from Gardner to the Fitchburg train station finally arrives and heads through Gardner and on to Route 2.

Now we are really moving, and the bus driver is having an animated conversation with several of the passengers.

She gets into a laughing fit about something, and I fear she will miss the exit. But no problem, she is on top of the situation.

The man in the stained shirt is describing, in graphic detail, a bloody fist fight he has recently had with another man. It sounds like this fight took place in a jail.

This is a fast trip, and the reader may be glad to know I have not much to say about it.

As noted earlier, this particular bus is apparently financed for, or by, the local community college, so it does not run between Memorial and Labor Day.

The haphazard (and seemingly irrational) financing of the state public transportation system certainly needs to be a topic of discussion in the coming months, as regional transit authorities implement state-mandated “Comprehensive Service Analyses.”

Another problem is that there is nearly an hour wait at Fitchburg,

which makes a three-hour-plus trip to Boston a four-hour-plus trip.

The wait is not so long if you start the process with the earlier route that leaves Greenfield at 5 a.m. Ouch!

🕒 **4. Fitchburg to Cambridge**

The Fitchburg train station is pleasant and relatively new. The waiting passengers are also pleasant, and do not seem particularly anxious that the train is a bit late.

An older man, speaking in animated Spanish to a friend, nods to me and promises the train will be here soon. He seems to think he knows me.

The Fitchburg train station is the home of “Fuzzy’s,” a coffee and sandwich shop which is open during the day. I stop and talk to Fuzzy about the sandwich business, which is apparently a kind of semi-retirement gig for him. He used to run a large restaurant in Fitchburg, but now gets to leave work by 6 p.m. at the latest.

Fuzzy encourages me to come behind the front counter, where he shows me how the storage is organized. This is a relatively cramped space, so you need to be well-organized. Some boxes are stored on top of his prep table, which is not ideal. Apparently the previous owner had storage going up to the ceiling. This is impressive, because the ceiling in a train station is very high.

I relax with a cup of coffee and read my book. The Hispanic man periodically walks by, assuring me that the train will soon come. I now think he realizes I am not from Fitchburg, so he is trying to make me feel welcome.

The train to Boston arrives and I get on the second deck. The train is part of the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority commuter rail system.

It passes through places like Littleton and Ayer, then into Concord. It then heads for Waltham, stopping right on the campus of Brandeis University. The Hispanic man gets off at Brandeis.

Train culture is different from bus culture – more affluent, more laptops; more reading, fewer conversations; no stained shirts. There is a very nice, very clean bathroom at the end of the car.

The conductor periodically walks through punching tickets. He looks like a conductor out of central casting – for example, out of that famous early Twilight Zone episode “Next Stop Willoughby.”

The episode is about a New York ad executive who is suffering from 1950s angst. He keeps falling asleep, imagining he is transported back to a 19<sup>th</sup>-century small town called Willoughby.

I will not give away the ending in case you have not seen it.

Thinking about Willoughby, I have almost missed my stop. Next the train stops and lets me and others off in Porter Square in Cambridge before heading on to Boston.

I am transported to post-modern Porter Square, which is in Cambridge just west of Harvard Square. I walk up the long stairs to Massachusetts Avenue and head toward Harvard Square passing old stores, new stores, the classic Harvard-Epworth Church, the Cambridge Common, and finally Harvard Square itself. To be honest, it’s great to be back.

🕒 **5. Oh, The Things You Can Do!**

The streets are crowded with pedestrians. The buses are crowded with people from all walks of life: stained T-shirts, overpriced trendy ones – everyone rides public transit in Boston.

The light at Garden Street has turned green, but a motorist, obviously not from Cambridge, is trying to figure out what to do. A classic Boston situation, even though this is Cambridge. The street configuration is very confusing. Signage is virtually non-existent, and the driver is lost.

It is obvious what is going on but the cars behind her are honking in anger. Their drivers scream that she must be a complete idiot who should know where to go but is deliberately holding up traffic.

Ahhhhh. I am starting to rekindle my old inner Boston mojo. It is time to tell one of the motorists to calm down – he may not realize it, but the honking and yelling are making the situation worse.

More importantly the noise is in fact an invasion of my own privacy. You see, there are other people walking around who don’t want to listen to this stuff.

The driver of course does not agree with me, but the exchange has the virtue of turning his anger from the motorist confused at the green light toward me. I am now the complete idiot.

It’s nothing personal, of course, so I helpfully suggest that if driving in Cambridge is so upsetting, maybe he should take the bus.



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**Snack Shack Attendant**  
Montague Parks & Recreation Department

The Montague Parks & Recreation Department is accepting applications for a P/T Snack Shack Attendant position for the summer. This individual is responsible for selling food and beverage products to the general public at Unity Park in Turners Falls, and involves afternoon and evening hours (20 hrs./week).

For a complete job description and application, please contact the Montague Parks & Recreation Department at (413) 863-3216 or e-mail us at [recclerk@montague-ma.gov](mailto:recclerk@montague-ma.gov). Position open until filled. The Town of Montague is an EOE.

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GMRSD from page A1

scale:  
*Instructional leadership:* 7 proficient; 1 exemplary  
*Management and operations:* 6 proficient; 2 exemplary;  
*Family and Community Engagement:* 6 proficient; 2 exemplary;  
*Professional Culture:* 5 proficient; 3 exemplary.  
*Superintendent Goals and Standards:* 3 proficient; 2 highly proficient; 3 exemplary.  
Misty Lyons moved, and Sandy Brown seconded, the motion to approve and accept the Superintendent’s Evaluation. All voted in favor.  
Sullivan thanked the committee for the positive evaluation and said he would like to continue at GMRSD for a long time.  
The school nurse, Barbara Fish, announced the adoption of a standing Narcan order in the school to be used in cases of drug overdose.  
The school committee voted unanimously to approve the Narcan order.

Elections and Future Decisions

The May 20 meeting came on the heels of Monday’s town elections, including two school committee openings. Mike Langknecht, veteran school committee member, and newcomer April Reipold were elected. Unfortunately Reipold was not able to take her seat due to illness, but has accepted the position, and will be present at subsequent meetings.  
Therefore, the first act of Tuesday’s meeting was to elect officers of the school committee.  
Current chair Joyce Philips was nominated for reelection, and Mike Langknecht, the only other member of the board to have served as chair, was also nominated. Philips won, 4 votes to 3.  
The Vice Chair seat has been held by Jane Oakes of Gill, who was not present but had indicated her interest in running to Philips, who nominated her. Mike Langknecht was nominated again for this position by Marje Levenson.

Jane Oakes retained the vice chair position by the same 4 to 3 vote.  
Neither the secretary’s position, nor the treasurer’s and assistant treasurer’s positions were challenged. Sandy Brown of Gill was reappointed secretary, as were Rupert Roy Clark, financial liaison to the committee from the GMRSD, as treasurer, and member Misty Lyons of Montague as assistant treasurer.

Having several involved issues on the evening’s agenda, both the Chair and the Superintendent opted to move the Strategic planning discussion to the meeting on June 3.

Background check regulations, and the choice of which standardized testing to adopt in the GMRSD District also await the school committee’s input.

The superintendent led the discussion into the testing arena characterizing it as ”a look under the hood,” with an update on the MAP (Measurement of Academic Progress) test given to students in grades 1-3, and grade 9.

These grades do not take the MCAS. Although he allowed that the MAP Test has only 65% accuracy, he said there is a value to continue it, if only twice a year rather than three times as is now the case, during this period of transition from MCAS to PARCC, because it does provide a measure of student progress.

Several members of the school committee had substantive observations to offer about the MAP test. Kelly Loynd, the Erving rep, suggested it should be kept in the 9th grade so that those students wouldn’t go a year without any standardized report on their progress.

As far as grades 1-3, three members felt confident that the development of those in the early grades was well-monitored by their teachers and the materials developed to instruct those students. They asked why keep MAP if it is only 65% accurate?

The District is facing phasing out of the MCAS testing system and into the PARCC by the end of 2015.

# Community-School Partnership Meeting Focuses On Substance Abuse

By CHRISTOPHER SAWYER-LAUCANNO

**TURNERS FALLS** – On Thursday, May 15, the Gill-Montague Community School Partnership (GMCSP) met for the last time this school year at Turners Falls High School. The main focus of discussion was substance abuse among teens.  
Jeanette Voas from the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) Partnership for Youth Program, shared survey findings of heroin use among GMRSD students in eighth, tenth and twelfth grades.  
These surveys, she noted, are not necessarily completely accurate because not all users are willing to report using heroin, even when protected by anonymity. Nonetheless, she said, the trend was positive.

According to the survey, in 2013 no eighth graders reported ever using heroin; of the tenth graders, 1.8 percent – one student – reported using heroin. No twelfth graders said they had ever used the narcotic. In 2009, two tenth graders and one twelfth grader said they had used heroin.



Members of the Community-School Partnership discuss substance abuse in the Turners Falls High School library.

While all agreed that very, very few GMRSD students were likely using heroin, they also agreed even one user is too many. Many remembered during the discussion 23-year-old Tyler Haskell, a recent graduate of the high school, who died of a heroin overdose earlier this month.  
Voas noted that, while the heroin use numbers were certainly reassuring, abuse of prescription drugs is on the rise. New surveys will attempt to measure to what extent prescription drugs are abused by teens.  
Kat Allen, also from FRCOG’s Partnership for Youth, echoed Voas’s remarks, saying that there was definitive evidence that prescription drug abuse was becoming more common. She said that the best approach was to educate pre-teens and teens about the risks of using these drugs.  
In her presentation, Allen said that there is very strong research-based evidence that preventive education is effective. She said that new life skills curricula used in middle school programs was making a significant difference in combating a number of negative trends including bullying and violence, dropping out and drug and alcohol use.

She advocated several measures that have proven effective in either helping young people from using drugs, or helping them once they did.  
In addition to educational curricula, such as the All Stars series, she said that a key element came from creating a climate in which positive social norms prevail. Healthy school and family ties really matter in helping teens resist drugs and alcohol .  
Allen also strongly endorsed the SBIRT program (Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment) for teens already abusing drugs. She cited statistics showing that SBIRT can be very helpful in getting kids help early on.

Kara McLaughlin, executive director of GMCSP, said that the more students were connected to school and family, the better. She noted that when kids have positive models among their peers and in their family, they tend to emulate those behaviors.

Rebecca Wright, ELL coordinator for GMRSD, quite agreed. She said that poverty was not an issue in drug use.

She noted that among her students, many who came from less than privileged families, there was little or no use of drugs. She cited parental involvement in the lives of their children as making a huge difference in the way her students practiced healthy habits.  
Montague Police chief Charles Dodge confirmed all that had been said by the social service professionals. In his remarks he emphasized the importance of prevention, and said as a parent, he felt it was key to pay attention to what his own children were doing and offer them alternatives to just “hanging out.”

He allowed how there was “no miracle fix” to the problem. He said by the time his department was dealing with young people on hard drugs, they had already crossed a line they

Great Falls  
Middle School  
Students of the  
Week  
*week ending 5/16/14*

Grade 6  
Connor Waitkus

Grade 7  
Deven Goshea  
Jenna Jacobsen

Grade 8  
Maya Hancock Pezzati

never should have crossed.  
Dodge said he did not feel that simply locking up drug abusers was particularly effective. “Stopping abuse before it starts is a far better alternative to doing time,” he noted.  
Jared Libby, director of the Brick House Community Resource Center, agreed with Dodge. He commented that many addicts end up overdosing once they are released from jail.  
“After some time of being clean,” Libby said, “they return to using drugs, but their bodies are no longer accustomed to the previous doses.” The result, often tragically, is an overdose.  
McLaughlin, whose organization has for years paired with many local groups to foster stronger and healthier communities, said that if funding did not come through for next year, a meeting such as this one may not be possible again.  
Last year, funding for the partnership was drastically reduced, and while the GMCSP has regrouped, unless more money is available for programs, the future is not predictable.

## Narcan: Harm Reduction Tool Becomes More Widely Available In Franklin County

By ELLEN BLANCHETTE

**GREENFIELD** – At public discussions over the last several months on heroin addiction in Franklin County, and the sudden increase of deaths due to overdose, the idea of making naloxone, best known by its brand name Narcan, more widely available has been suggested by many experts.

At the panel discussion with the Franklin County Drug Task Force held in Greenfield in January, 2014, local doctor Ruth Potee, M.D. recommended that all first responders carry Narcan, and that in addition to emergency workers, friends and family of addicts and even addicts themselves be allowed to have the Narcan packets to use in case they are present when someone is having an overdose.

This last Sunday I happened to come across a Narcan training held at Greenfield Community College. Jill Shanahan from Tapestry Health offered a very comprehensive description of what an overdose looks like, how to evaluate the person’s condition, several ways to respond, including how to administer Narcan, plus an explanation of the Good Samaritan Law.

Tapestry Health approaches drug addiction with a goal of harm reduction. They meet the addict where they are and try to protect them from harm as best they can. This includes needle exchange and health screening for HIV and STD’s. Training in the use of Narcan fits this intention, seeking to save lives.

Naloxone, commonly known as Narcan, is a drug that can be administered to someone suffering an overdose due to opiates such as heroin or Oxycontin or Vicodin. Narcan is usually administered by EMS personnel or paramedics by

injection but can be administered through a nasal spray as well.  
The nasal spray packages have been developed to be used by non-medical individuals and come with two individual doses and a nasal spray device that needs assembly but is easy to use.  
What is not so easy is knowing when a person is having an overdose, and knowing what to do. That is what this training was about.  
Shanahan explained that an overdose does not usually happen quickly, but rather can develop over a period of one to three hours. During that time, the person will develop slower breathing and heart rate.  
Signs of a possible overdose include the person turning pale, clammy skin, shallow breathing, and not responding to stimulation.  
Testing with the use of stimulation such as external rubbing (on the breastbone, hard with your knuckles) or under the nose or pinching the ears should wake a person up.  
If this works, then the next thing to do is try to get the person up and walking. If this doesn’t work, they may be having an overdose.  
What exactly is an overdose? There are many reasons why a person may have an overdose. The drug they have taken may have been cut with another ingredient that is making it more toxic than expected. Or it is stronger than they are used to having. They may have taken several different drugs over a period of hours, which combine to cause an overdose.  
These symptoms are not only caused by opiates. Benzodiazepines such as Xanax or Valium mixed with alcohol can also cause an overdose, but Narcan would not be of any help in that case. Narcan only works on opiates, but is not harmful if used for an overdose caused

by something else.  
Narcan, or naloxone, works by blocking the receptors in the brain that respond to opiates and will clear the effects of the drug very quickly. But if other drugs are also present in the body, there can be a second effect that could cause the person to go back into an overdose. It is therefore important to still call 911 after administering Narcan.  
Also, the sudden blockage of the effect of the heroin or other opiates can cause the person to be dope-sick and make them want to use again to get over those sick feelings, so it is important that they go to the hospital and be in a safe place while recovering from an overdose.  
Because an opiate overdose starts by affecting the breathing, the first thing to do is help the person get oxygen by performing rescue breathing, as in CPR but without the chest compressions.  
This involves clearing the airway and breathing into the person’s mouth while pinching their nose, in regular counts.  
There is a regular progression of an overdose, which starts with the breathing shutting down which de-

prives the brain of oxygen which causes the heart to slow which cuts the circulation to the organs and causes the liver and kidneys to fail.  
If the person turns blue you know they are oxygen deprived and in danger of major organ failure and time is of the essence. Administering the Narcan will stop this process and may be the only thing that will save them.

Since she was emphasizing the importance of calling 911 to get help and keep the person having an overdose safe, Shanahan also spoke of the state’s Good Samaritan Law, which was designed to encourage people to call the police or emergency services for help.

The Good Samaritan Law protects people from arrest and prosecution for drug possession when they call 911 to report an overdose, and protects an individual from liability when responding to an overdose.

For more information you can visit the Tapestry Health website at [www.tapestryhealth.org](http://www.tapestryhealth.org) or contact them at 80 Sanderson Street in Greenfield at (413) 773-8888.

### HOW TO GIVE NASAL SPRAY NALOXONE



1. Pull or pry yellow caps off syringe.
2. Pry red cap off naloxone.
3. Grip clear plastic wings.
4. Screw capsule of naloxone into barrel of syringe.
5. Insert white cone into nostril; give a short, vigorous push on end of capsule to spray naloxone into nose. Spray one half of the capsule into each nostril.
6. If no reaction in 2-5 minutes, give the second dose.

# Great Falls Massacre Commemorated

By CHRISTOPHER SAWYER-LAUCANNO

TURNERS FALLS – “This is a journey of healing,” said Joe Graveline, president of the Nolumbeka project, as he opened the ceremony on May 18 of the Annual Day of Remembrance of the Great Falls Massacre that occurred 338 years ago on May 19.

Held at the Great Falls Discovery Center, the event this year also marked the tenth anniversary of the Reconciliation ceremony in which the town of Montague, represented by the selectboard members Al Ross, Patricia Pruitt and Patricia Allen signed a Reconciliation agreement with the Native Americans.

The Native Peoples were represented by Howard Clark and Monique Fordham of the Friends of the Wissatinnewag and Lloyd “Running Wolf” Wilcox and Mathew “7th Hawk” Thomas of the Narragansetts.

The agreement began “In the spirit of peace, healing and understanding we come together on this date May 19, 2004 to acknowledge the tragic events that took place on the shores of this river on May 19, 1676, and hereby begin to put the tragic echoes of the past to rest.”

This past Sunday, in commemoration of both this event and the battle of 1676, three speakers addressed a good-sized crowd. After Graveline’s opening remarks, Strong Oak took the stage to evoke the power of water, including the nearby Connecticut, and intone a prayer for healing and remembrance.

In her remarks she noted the continuity of life: “Every woman here is connected to the first woman; every man here must work to keep the peace. We must love each other as fiercely as we can.”

Strong Oak was followed by Pat Allen, former Montague selectboard member, who recalled the importance of the 2004 Reconciliation Ceremony and how it happened at the right place and time.



“We had a board of selectmen and administrator in Montague as well as a Native American community who shared a desire to put the ‘tragic echoes of the past to rest,’ and who were receptive and willing to embrace a broader sense of inclusion for all of us, in the hopes that this day would lead to the healing that was so desperately needed by the folks in Turners Falls.”

Graveline rocked the hall with a spirited rendition of John Prine’s “Paradise” with its chorus that evokes an idyllic childhood in Muhlenberg County, Kentucky, ruined by coal mining:

*And daddy won't you take me back to Muhlenberg County*

*Down by the Green River where Paradise lay*

*Well, I'm sorry my son, but you're too late in asking*

*Mister Peabody's coal train has hauled it away*

Graveline commented that Prine clearly had a sense of loss and change.

Following the speakers were two short films: *Quinnnetuckut: Life in the Woodlands* and Steve Alves’ *Journey to Wissatinnewag*. The attendees then were treated to a feast of soup, cornbread and various other homemade items.

Strong Oak also conducted a prayer tying workshop in which tobacco, cloth and colored strings were made into a small bundle as a way of offering blessings to the natural world.

“What a place of joy and pain this was. Let our pain and joy flow through this day as we sit by the river and watch our pain wash through.”

*Top: Strong Oak, Circle Keeper of the Visioning B.E.A.R. Circle, says a healing prayer for the earth.*

*Middle: Former Montague selectboard members Patricia Pruitt and Pat Allen.*

*Bottom: Joe Graveline, president of the Nolumbeka Project, sings a John Prine song.*



SAWYER-LAUCANNO PHOTOS

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## FACES



SUZETTE SNOW-COBB PHOTO

Great Falls Community Garden gardeners and volunteers constructed a natural willow fence last Sunday at the corner of Third Street and L Street in Turners Falls.



SAWYER-LAUCANNO PHOTO

## & PLACES

Central Street resident Neil Young Cloaca, aka Brompt Treb, treats the crowd at Third Street Studios to a “spring speaker cleanse” during last week’s downtown Third Thursday event.

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## THE HEALTHY GEEZER

Intolerance...  
and AcceptanceBy FRED  
CICETTI

*Q. A friend of mine is lactose intolerant. What exactly does that mean?*



JESSICA LARKIN ILLUSTRATION

People who are lactose intolerant have trouble digesting dairy products. Lactose intolerance usually is not dangerous.

Lactase is an enzyme made in the small intestine. You need lactase to digest lactose, the sugar in milk. People who are lactose intolerant don't make enough lactase; after consuming lactose, they suffer from bloating, nausea, stomach cramps and diarrhea. These symptoms usually begin a half-hour to two hours after ingesting lactose.

Most people with lactose intolerance can take some milk products. They may be able to increase their tolerance to dairy products by gradually introducing them into their diets.

However, most supermarkets carry lactose-reduced or lactose-free products.

You can manage lactose intolerance with lactase enzyme tablets; you can take them just before you eat. These tablets help many people.

*Q. How can you tell when you are too old to drive?*

Here are some questions driving experts recommend asking older motorists to determine if they are

see GEEZER page B2

Mosaic Laboratory  
Destroys to Build

By JOHN FURBISH

**TURNERS FALLS** – Eight women from Turners Falls and the local area attended the “Introduction to Mosaics” Workshop conducted by Edite Cunha at the Women’s Resource Center in downtown Turners in April.

bad result of natural disasters or human warfare and conquest.

Mosaic techniques changed in 1900 when an architect in Catalonia began constructing fantastical structures using tile and pottery fragments. This approach of building from destruction has continued in contemporary art with the



FURBISH PHOTO

*Mosaics from the workshop were exhibited at the Great Falls Harvest Restaurant on May 7.*

On May 7, they displayed the 8x8” mosaics they had created from demolished china and other interesting objects at a reception in the Great Falls Harvest Restaurant.

The mosaics will be on display in the storefront windows from 106 to 112 Avenue A, from May 16 to June 16.

Mosaics go back at least 3,000 years to the Sumerian city-state of Ur. In ancient Greek and Roman times, broken mosaics could be the

“Pique Assiete” (French, “one who eats from others’ plates”) branch that makes art from broken “found objects”.

Turners Falls artist/writer Edite Cunha, a Pique Assiete practitioner, approached the Women’s Resource Center to suggest a mosaic workshop to expand their ongoing offerings of arts-and-crafts training and they agreed to co-produce it.

The WRC secured funding with a 2014 grant of \$300 from the

see MOSAIC page B2

Guess I’ll Get Along Alright:  
A Father’s Letters from WWII

By MARVIN SHEDD

Seventy years ago, my father was stationed in Italy with the 88<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. At precisely 11:00 on the evening of May 11, 1944, the peaceful Italian night was shattered by the sound of American artillery pounding the German Army positioned firmly in the surrounding hills. The push to liberate Rome had begun.

The ground shook with thunderous blasts, the sky was emblazoned with the violent display of American fire power; the noise so deafening that you could yell to the man standing beside you and not be heard.

As the first shells rained death on the invisible enemy, the men of Company F crossed into occupied territory.

One can only wonder at the thoughts of these men as they made their way over hilly, unfamiliar territory, their only light the flashing of the artillery overhead. Most were young men; some, despite their youthfulness, had wives and young children.

For many it was their first time away from home, almost certainly their first time in combat. The effort of staying together, avoiding land mines, and watching for the enemy may have precluded most thoughts of home. Yet, assuredly, it was never far from their thoughts.

Their mission was to liberate the town of Santa Maria Infante, thereby opening the way for the Allied advance into Rome.

The mission did not go as planned. Company F was separated from the rest of the advancing troops and surrounded by the Ger-



COURTESY MARVIN SHEDD

*Allan Shedd, in uniform, and his father, Richard Shedd. The photo was taken just prior to his being sent overseas.*

man army, no longer invisible. For most of the day of May 12, they faced blistering mortar, sniper, and machine gun fire.

At one point, enemy tanks approached the beleaguered, dug-in Americans and harassed them with point blank fire. Faced with mounting casualties and no chance of escape, their commander, Captain Carl Nelson, stepped forward with a white flag, declaring, “there is no need for these men to die.”

For the men of Company F, the battle was over. A German POW camp would be their home for the remainder of the war.

The Germans, for the most part, were reasonable and fair to their prisoners, and the prison camp experience, while not pleasant, may have even saved their lives, as they were spared much of the

see LETTERS page B4

Turners Falls High School  
Responds to Sheila Raye  
Charles and Tony Steptoe

*Because of the great enthusiasm and interest apparent at the Sheila Raye Charles and Tony Steptoe talks at the high school on May 7, we asked students to respond to what they saw and heard. We present here their thoughtful comments. We were also delighted that Kimberley Alderman, the teacher who helped organize the event, also decided to weigh in on Sheila Raye and Tony.*

Sheila Raye Charles  
And Tony SteptoeBy COURTNEY EUGIN  
12<sup>TH</sup> GRADE

On Wednesday May 7, 2014 Turners Falls High School was fortunate to have a celebrity in the house. This special guest was Sheila Raye Charles accompanied by her husband, Michael “Tony” Steptoe. Many did not know that Charles was the daughter of Ray Charles, a former singer/song writer.

The program began with Charles’ husband, Michael sharing his life story. Steptoe grew up in Springfield, Ohio. He was a star athlete with scholarships flying at him. One day in his senior year a friend asked him for a ride across town, but little did he know that that friend had a firearm on him. He was going to rob someone.

Though Steptoe had nothing to do with this crime four days before the felony happened he was signing with Ohio State and four days later he was seeing ten-twenty years in jail. All he ever dreamed was gone in a blink of an eye.

After finishing time in prison he stated “Everything he’d aspired to be was taken away.” He had nowhere to go, no support so he turned to drugs.

The process started with Marijuana, and then he began shooting drugs. All this was doing was getting him into deeper trouble than he was ever in from the beginning, now seeing eleven and a half years in prison. Steptoe mentioned this was “insanity”.

He turned his life around and was the first black man to graduate Ohio State with an Esthetics Degree. He has worked with Beyonce, Alicia Keys, and John Legend to name a few.

Charles also had a life story she shared, starting at the age of just four years old being abused, which she mentioned turned her into a very “Angry, confused, and resentful young girl.” At the age of just twelve years old she’d started smoking marijuana.

see CHARLES page B4

## A Valuable Message

By KIMBERLEY ALDERMAN  
TEACHER

I had been anxiously waiting for the day of May 7, 2014 since the beginning of the school year.

No, it was not because the school year would soon be over. It was because I had scheduled two very inspirational guest speakers for Turners Falls High School.

The speakers were Sheila Raye Charles and Michael “Tony” Steptoe. I had seen these two speak at my last school in Springfield. After hearing them speak in Springfield, I myself was moved by their stories,



COURTESY KIMBERLEY ALDERMAN

*The stage got filled at Sheila Raye Charles’ talk. From left to right: Marie Polletti, Bob Pearlman, Beth Fortin, Sheila Raye Charles, Kimberly Alderman, Michael “Tony” Steptoe (Sheila’s husband), Lee Kanash, Kat Lafleur, Thomas Osborn and Briteny Nailos.*

and felt that their messages need to be spread.

At 1:00, students filed into the auditorium in preparation for the guest speakers. I could see the looks on many students’ faces, the look of “here we go again another

speaker.”

This feeling was soon replaced by interest and polite attentiveness. Many times I have seen students disengaged in topics that are discussed. However, today’s assembly was very different. The students were so engaged, and interested in the topics discussed that you could hear a pin drop.

The presentation started out with Tony talking about his story. His story consisted of being in the wrong place at the wrong time, as well as associating with the wrong people.

Tony mentioned that in one moment he was signing a full sports scholarship to Ohio State and a week later he was facing jail time. He

had given a friend a ride home when the friend decided to rob someone at gun point. Everything he had worked for was gone.

Lost after losing everything, Tony did not know where to turn, so he turned to drugs. This decision thus landed him an eleven year stint in prison. It was in prison with bad memories behind him and what appeared to be no future ahead of him that he decided to turn his life around.

After prison, Tony went to college and became the first black male to get a degree in Esthetics. He went on to work with famous rappers/singers such as John Legend. He stated that he could have continued down this road, this

see MESSAGE page B6

My Thoughts on  
the Guest SpeakersBy AVERY RIDDLE, 10<sup>TH</sup> GRADE

I felt that the guest speakers Sheila Raye Charles and her husband Michael “Tony” Steptoe were really motivational. The stories they told made me think really hard about so many topics, from child abuse to drug addiction.

Both Sheila Raye Charles and “Tony” made me aware of the struggles that come with drug addiction. Hearing how Tony lost his scholarship to college. Hearing how Sheila lost record deals, lost all 5 of her kids, and later went to prison 3 times.

I was also made aware of how life choices can change your life. In a blink of an eye Tony lost everything, while Sheila’s choices led her down a spiraling path. Sheila Raye Charles made us aware that we need to evaluate the choices we make now as teenagers, as students.

After listening to Sheila and Tony speak I felt uplifted. Not only did they talk about the negative consequences of the choices they made; they spoke about how they were able to change the paths that their lives were on.

I left the assembly feeling like I am more informed about the consequences of decisions we make in life.

I also left the assembly with a clearer picture of the path that drug addiction takes you down. I also feel like I, as a student and a teenager, can take responsibility for my path in life. I am more empowered to choose to go down the right path and make healthy and successful choices.

# Pet of the Week



## “BLACK DIAMOND”

I am a sweet girl who loves to have her neck and head petted. I have lived with people of a variety of ages and have loved them all.

however I do prefer children with mellow personalities. I have experience living in a home where I got to enjoy the warmth of the home when I wanted it, and went outside to play when I wanted to stretch my legs. I have lived with other cats but have never lived with dogs, but I should be ok with either if given a slow introduction.

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

**GEEZER** from B1 still road-worthy:

- Do other drivers often honk at me?
- Have I had some accidents?
- Do I get lost, even on roads I know?
- Do cars or pedestrians seem to appear out of nowhere?
- Have passengers in my car told me they are worried about my driving?
- Am I driving less because I am unsure about my driving skills?

Many seniors continue to be capable drivers. However, there are changes that affect our skills. To deal with the effects of aging on our driving, here are some tips:

- Plan to drive on streets you know.
- Take routes that avoid tricky ramps and left turns.
- Add extra time for travel so you don't feel pressed.
- Don't drive when you are tired.
- Avoid listening to the radio or talking with passengers.
- Leave more space than you think you need between you and the car in front of you.
- Use your rear window defogger to keep the window clear at all times.
- Always turn your headlights on when driving.
- If you don't have them, get large mirrors for your car.
- Replace your windshield wiper blades often.
- Take a driving refresher class. Some car insurance companies lower your bill when you pass this type of class.

*Q. How effective are knee replacements? I'm considering one.*

More than 9 out of 10 patients who have a total knee replacement have positive results; they experience reduced pain and improved ability to perform common activities.

You'll be given physical therapy exercises for at least two months. These are designed to help you bend and extend your leg.

In addition to your prescribed exercises, you can walk as much as you like. Stationary bicycles are recommended for muscle tone and flexibility.

Other acceptable activities after knee surgery include dancing, golf with spikeless shoes and a cart, and bicycling on flat ground. After the wound is healed, you can swim.

Don't do anything that puts stress on the knee such as racquet sports, football, baseball, basketball, and skiing. And don't lift anything heavier than 40 pounds.

Depending on the type of work – or play – you do, it could take 6 to 8 weeks before you are back in action.

*Questions?*

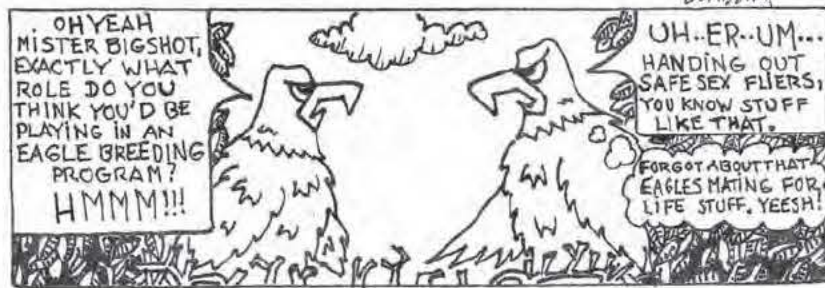
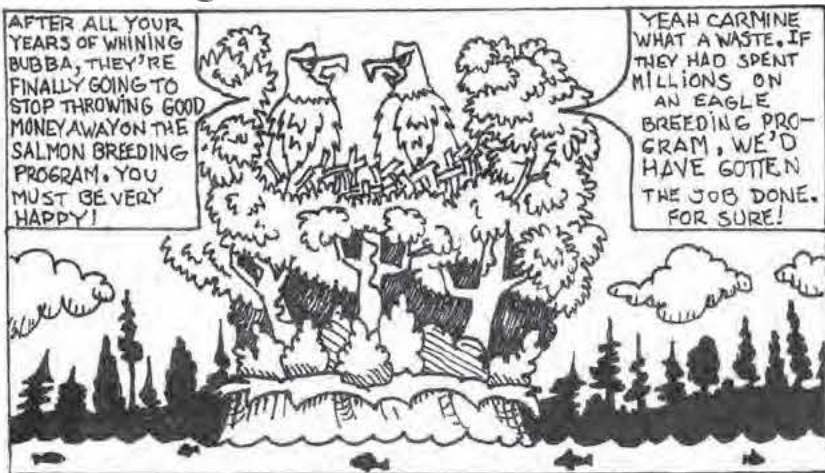
Send them to [fred@healthygeezer.org](mailto:fred@healthygeezer.org).



## BUBBA & CARMINE:

Sages of Barton Cove

by denis bordeaux



**MOSAIC** from page B1

Montague Cultural Council. In addition, Cunha scouted out supporting donations and volunteers, and the WRC publicized this opportunity in their newsletter, announcements at all programs.

On April 25, eight women from Turners Falls and five local towns attended Cunha's mosaic history and techniques workshop at a space provided by the Montague Catholic Social Ministries. The women had zero experience with mosaics.

Using 8" by 8" tiles donated by Greenfield's BK Tile and Stone, the women created mosaics that day. Cunha and a volunteer, Williamsburg artist Gina Vernava, were on hand to answer questions and offer advice all through creation and construction.

The assembled tiles were left to dry overnight, and the women returned on April 26 to finish the pieces and apply grout.

The mosaics were thoughtfully composed from an assortment of objects including glass, gems, jewelry, and broken china. The women were advised in advance to provide broken things from their own households.

Bringing the remnants of a treasured bowl she had dropped years ago but just couldn't part with, Jane M. Howard used it to make a 3D tile in her mosaic. Her piece was the only three-dimensional one in the show.

Cunha brought in 12 containers of mostly-broken items from her

studio, and three milk cartons of broken and new china for breaking.

In the lab part of the workshop, the women laid out china pieces on wood boards, covered them with heavy canvas, and smashed them with a household hammer.

Katherine A. Truesdell smashed one saucer to find the shards for her central images, and carefully demolished another for the beautiful border.

Seven mosaics from the workshop and others by Cunha were presented at a public reception on Wednesday, May 7 at the Great Falls Harvest Restaurant.

There was a seabed of art-ready objects from Cunha's studio, and the 10 mosaics swam around in a ring.

In addition to this feast for the eyes, delicious food and non-alcoholic drink were provided by Green Fields Market, the restaurant, and generous individuals. All eight of the mosaics were made during the workshop on April 25 and 26.

There's a waiting-list of 7 for another mosaic workshop at the Women's Resource Center, and an ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) class that meets at the women's center is interested in getting a mosaic workshop for its members.

After you look in the windows at the results of the first workshop, you might want to make a donation, earmarked "mosaic workshop," to the Montague Catholic Social Ministries (43 3<sup>rd</sup> St., Turners Falls, MA 01376).



## LEVERETT LIBRARY NEWS

### Tick Talk, Reviewer, and Spanish

**Thursday May 29 at 7pm,** Craig Hollingsworth, UMass Extension Entomologist, will speak on *Ticks and Tick-borne Diseases*. The talk will cover tick i.d. and biology, with an emphasis on Lyme disease.

**Thursday June 5 at 7pm,** Come talk food, cookbooks and recipes with cookbook reviewer Susie Chang. Susie will talk about her adventures reviewing for NPR and the Boston Globe and share some kitchen wisdom, including: what makes a good cookbook, how to get the most out of yours, how to failure-proof a new recipe, and how to raise (mostly) omnivores. Bring a favorite recipe to be shared by email.

**Tuesdays 4-5pm,** Spanish Conversation Group.

Improve your Spanish in a friendly environment. Join the Spanish Conversation group for weekly practice sessions every Tuesday.

## Senior Center Activities May 26 through 30

### 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 5/26

Closed for Holiday

### Tuesday 5/27

10:30 a.m. Chair Yoga  
Noon Lunch

1 p.m. Knitting Circle

### Wednesday 5/28

10:10 a.m. Aerobics  
10:30 a.m. Monthly Health Screening  
10:55 a.m. Chair Exercise  
Noon Lunch  
12:45 p.m. Bingo

### Thursday 5/29

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

### Friday 5/30

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

### WENDELL

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

### ERVING

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

Lunch is at 11:30 a.m., with reservations required 24 hours in advance. Call Mealsite Manager Rebecca Meuse at (413) 423-3308, for meal information and reservations.

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

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

### Monday 5/26

Closed Memorial Day

### Tuesday 5/27

8:45 a.m. Chair Aerobics  
10 a.m. GSB Craft Project

### Wednesday 5/28

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

### Thursday 5/29

8:45 a.m. Aerobics  
10 a.m. Healthy Bones & Muscles

### Friday 5/30

9 a.m. Bowling

### LEVERETT

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

Take-It-Easy Chair Yoga – Wednesdays at 10 a.m. at the Town Hall. Drop-in \$5 (first class free).

Senior Lunch – Fridays at noon. Call (413) 367-2694 by Wednesday for a reservation.

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*Disorientation, the dreams of the hunter, confused by the unreliability of the senses.*

By DAVID  
DETMOLD

Every winter I found a few cedar waxwings dead on the sidewalks, victims of their own joy

of flight, in conjunction with the deceptive glass of storefront windows.

These misguided wayfarers, perfect in every detail from the crest of their jaunty hoods down to the waxy red splashes on their skyblue wing-tips, would drop to the pavement, where the departing warmth of their ardent little bodies would freeze them *in situ*.

I suspected Sixto, the Golden Mean's mascot, of freeing one of these storefront kamikazes from a frozen sidewalk and carrying it proudly back to the bar as a sign of his prowess, rather than actually stalking, catching and killing a bird on the wing at dawn.

But you could never be sure with Sixto.

As he dreamed, he flexed the claws of his huge front paws, and shifted his hind legs in longing.

Iona scanned the customers lined up along the bar stools to see which one might need encouragement to finish his drink and order another. Some of the patrons stared gloomily ahead into the mirror or down at the polished bar; others talked among themselves, or to no one in particular.

"I asked a redwing blackbird for directions once," I suddenly confided to Iona, and immediately regretted my attempt to make conversation. In the babble of competing voices I had a hard time hearing clearly.

"What?" said Iona, coming back to me. "You want another?" Maybe she was troubled by the same distorting tendencies of the old tin ceiling, the mirrored walls, the aimless voices.

"Sure," I nodded. And when she brought back the absinthe, the sugar cube and ice water, I recalled she had a better way of threading the aural labyrinth in the bar, and tried thanking her for the drink in sign language.

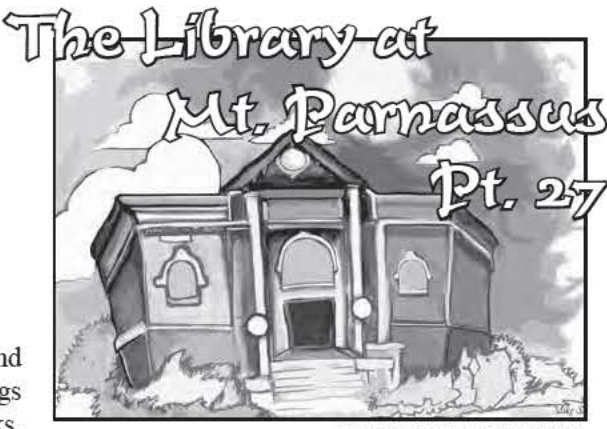
Iona's brother was deaf. I had watched her carrying on rapid conversations with him on the few occasions I'd seen him in here for a meal or a drink.

They inspired me with their ability to communicate across the length of the bar, despite whatever bowl games or gladiatorial contests were blaring on TV.

Not long ago, I had borrowed a book on international sign language from the library. I had been trying to learn the basic signs, practicing in front of my bedroom mirror.

But I'd never tried using any of them with Iona before. When she finished mixing my Green Siren, I offered my best attempt at "Thank you."

"What's this about a redwing



blackbird?" she asked, ignoring my fumbling sign. I might as well have tried stifling a yawn and handing it to her.

"I shouldn't even tell you this story," I admitted, ruefully.

"Mmmm," she said, and smiled.

I told her a story about a time when I was young and crossing the country by bicycle, and got lost in the endless cornfields of Megara. There was a bridge out along the main way, and a badly marked detour.

After a while, I found myself completely lost in a towering maze of corn, cycling down narrow black-top lanes with the sun blazing overhead.

"I could have been swallowed by the Earth," I said, "and no one would have been the wiser."

I had her attention at last.

"There were redwing blackbirds hanging on the telephone wires, and flying overhead. I asked them to show me the way out."

"Oh?" She held the bottle above my glass, and I signaled, successfully, for another.

"I found, I realized, if you approached them with the proper respect, they would tell you, with a flick of the tail or a turn of their flight, this is very good, but bitter..." I made a face. "They would show you," I said slowly, "the right way to go. And soon... I was back on the main highway heading west."

Iona looked me over carefully. Not skeptical, exactly. But like someone used to men who would stoop at nothing to pull her leg. Stop at nothing?

"I suppose... any road would have led me out of there in time. But, ever since, they've been my favorite birds."

She was still standing there. She hadn't mentioned her boyfriend Niko yet.

All in a rush I said, "After another day or two I reached Corinth. I found my way, parched and sunburned, down to some little breakfast joint on the main drag. They had *Tainted Love* on the jukebox. That's when I knew I had made it back to civilization."

Was this making any sense at all?

She just smiled and put the bottle back on the shelf. Then she walked away.

I called after her, in a thickened voice, pitched well below the auditory level of the average human ear, far below the ambient chaos of the bar, "I'm sorry. I know nothing of your language. Women are a complete mystery to me."

*Continued next week.*

#### HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

### Area Residents Fail To Maybe Just Chill Out For Once

Monday, 5/12

12:50 p.m. License plate stolen from motorcycle on J Street. Report taken; plate entered into national database.

2:07 p.m. Report of two subjects on the island below the dam who could not get back to land due to rising water from the opened dam. TFFD, Northfield Control Room, and officers advised. Control Room closed dam. Northfield Dive Team, Greenfield FD, etc. on scene. Subjects, who stated they were not from area and did not hear announcement on the loudspeaker, assisted to shore and advised.

3:43 p.m. Caretaker for property on I Street requested an officer to keep the peace in case a resident goes "ballistic." Caller advised of options and referred to landlord.

6:07 p.m. Vehicle stopped on Fourth Street for loud muffler. Parties advised not to operate vehicle as is. Female party began to create a minor disturbance but was advised against such behavior.

7:44 p.m. Lock box broken into and medication stolen on Avenue A. Resident uncooperative. Investigated.

8:44 p.m. Caller who was hanging out in alley between Third and Fourth streets reported being harassed by adults in adjacent residences. Advised of options.

10:07 p.m. Report of possible drug activity outside a Second Street residence. Investigated.

Tuesday, 5/13

3:48 a.m. Caller from Powertown Apartments reported that someone was banging on his door and would not identify themselves. Unable to locate; caller advised to call back if this happens again.

6:00 a.m. Report of a very large dead coyote in the northbound lane of Route 63 in the area of Mark's Auto. Unable to locate.

10:40 a.m. Slow-moving raccoon spotted in yard on Bulkley Street. Services rendered; animal brought to transfer station.

1:29 p.m. Concerns expressed regarding wires being run out window and doors being removed from hinges by tenants at a Central Street apartment. Referred to an officer.

3:49 p.m. Gold Cadillac with shiny rims seen speeding on Third Street heading toward Avenue A. Caller concerned about safety of children playing

at Brick House and stated that this vehicle and others have been speeding in this area since the weather turned warmer. Extra patrols requested.

8:44 p.m. Caller complained that a neighbor has been harassing him via Facebook regarding a dog issue. Advised of options.

8:56 p.m. Pizza delivery driver issued verbal warning for defective equipment and suspicious behavior. Operator was pulled over texting; all OK.

Wednesday, 5/14

12:04 a.m. Female on Third Street reported receiving threatening phone calls from an unknown male who stated that he was going to come to Massachusetts and kill her. Referred to an officer.

1:52 a.m. Unwanted person forced entry into an apartment on Second Street. Officers on scene; unwanted party left scene; caller advised of options.

8:40 a.m. Detail officer near Franklin County Technical School received a report of a potentially sick fox behind the school near the compost pile. Witness reported the animal did not appear sick, but was frequenting the area now that he has found a food source. Area search negative.

1:37 p.m. Caller witnessed a small bear, possibly a cub, struck by a vehicle and thrown over a guardrail on Millers Falls Road, past the airport. Environmental Police Dispatch advised.

2:07 p.m. An arrest summons was issued for a Turners Falls man on charges of domestic assault and battery; attempted murder; and intimidating a witness.

2:17 p.m. Dead black and white cat found in swimming pool on Coolidge Avenue. Caller inquired whether any cats matching that description had been reported missing; one found, but does not appear to be a match. Caller will wait for rest of day before burying the cat.

6:19 p.m. Complaint regarding constantly barking dog near Vladish Avenue residence. Owner advised of complaint.

6:30 p.m. Party in to station to reiterate concerns about a relative with a drug addiction problem who could pose a hazard to the public.

8:15 p.m. Complaint regarding dog allowed to run loose and defecate in yard on Fourth Street. Referred to an officer.

8:20 p.m. Complaint re-

garding dog allowed to defecate on the bike path daily. Referred to animal control officer.

10:14 p.m. Coin-operated dryer broken into on Fifth Street; \$30-40 worth of coins reported stolen. Investigated.

Thursday, 5/15

7:24 a.m. Caller reported that her vehicle was broken into and "ransacked" on Third Street overnight, but that nothing appeared to be missing. Referred to an officer.

7:52 a.m. Suspicious person observed possibly watching house on Federal Street. Unable to locate.

10:36 a.m. Complaint regarding dog barking for past three hours on Randall Wood Drive. Barking could be heard in background of call. Area checked; several dogs found to be barking. Message left for animal control officer.

1:05 p.m. DPW notified of a dead animal on Unity Street.

3:19 p.m. Call from tenant on Chestnut Street who returned home to find that she had been locked out of her house, possibly evicted. Responding officer investigated; found to be a civil matter. Referred to Sheriff's Department.

3:24 p.m. Request to assist motorist who had locked his keys in the trunk at the vacuum area of the car wash. Services rendered.

4:08 p.m. Complaint of juveniles playing ball close to a residence on Fifth Street; landlord concerned that a new window might get broken. Unable to locate.

4:15 p.m. Complaint regarding loud group of juveniles riding bikes on Third Street; when asked to quiet down, they reportedly began swearing and yelling at caller's son. Gathering dispersed.

5:04 p.m. Verbal altercation between parties on Fourth Street, one of whom was leaning on the other's porch. Advised of options.

5:40 p.m. Off-duty Erving firefighter reported observing a male party fall on his face at Element Brewing. Unable to locate.

6:03 p.m. Report of neighbors threatening caller and her dog on Third Street. Report taken.

8:28 p.m. Sibling dispute on South Prospect Street; caller reported that this bickering has been going on for years. Report taken.

Friday, 5/16

8:09 a.m. Graffiti on electrical box at Pesky Park. Cleaned up as well as pos-

sible.

10:07 a.m. Report of men outside Central Street apartment building yelling for "Bill," a 3rd floor tenant, since approximately 7:45 a.m. Unable to locate.

10:36 a.m. Request for officer to assist with a disorderly employee at Lightlife Foods. Peace restored.

10:44 a.m. Sibling dispute/domestic disturbance on South Prospect Street. Advised of options.

12:42 p.m. First of three calls regarding a family dispute on Chestnut Street. Advised of options.

6:40 p.m. Traffic stop on Unity Street; operator confused as to what stop signs to obey. Verbal warning issued.

7:23 p.m. Report of assault and battery on a child on Dell Street. Investigated.

Saturday, 5/17

4:22 a.m. Caller reported hearing noise on second floor of home; no one should be up there; cats are outdoors. Officers checked entire apartment; nothing found out of place.

1:14 p.m. Tenants evicted from Turners Falls Road apartment sitting on lawn chairs in driveway of property, refusing to leave, stating they have nowhere to go. Services rendered.

2:21 p.m. Report of barking dog on Central Street. Dogs barking upon arrival. Owner stated that smaller dog is hyperactive; will work on issue.

3:37 p.m. Child on bicycle struck by vehicle at Seventh Street and Avenue A. TFFD and BHA on scene. Child life-flighted to hospital, sustained non-life-threatening injuries, released from hospital.

7:23 p.m. Complaint regarding loud music and voices from a loudspeaker at Second Pentecostal Church on Eleventh Street. Verbal warning issued.

9:18 p.m. Report of possibly intoxicated male in plaid shirt and jeans banging on windows of Food City. Unable to locate.

Sunday, 5/18

3:40 a.m. Caller from Erving looking for a ride to Athol; states her friends left her at the bowling alley after a fight. Referred to other police department.

5:39 p.m.

was arrested on a straight warrant and charged with operating a motor vehicle with a suspended license.

9:36 p.m. Two parties stopped and spoken to about trespassing in Unity Park after dark.

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**LETTERS** from B1

brutality that characterized the Italian Campaign.

In May of 2000, my Aunt provided me with copies of letters my father sent home during the war. Originating from Oklahoma, North Africa, Italy and Germany, they all had one clear theme: that he was lonely, scared and hoped the war would end soon.

Many of them revealed a humorous view of his situation.

From January 1944:

“I know you are all very worried about my health and safety. Don’t worry; the government will let you know when I die, if I do. Anyway, God protects fools and little children, so I’m safe.”

From Italy, 1944:

“If anybody tells you to go to beautiful Italy, tell them to go to hell! It is getting warmer though. I hope I’m far from here by the time it gets cold again.

“Not much to say except that I’m still alive and kicking and hope to

stay that way.”

Writing about a Christmas gift from his Aunt Doris, he remarked:

“She sent me a box of chocolates, razor blades, gum, shaving cream and two pairs of nice woolen socks. You can see why she had to cut down on the rest of the family!”

And then, on Dec. 25, 1944, he sent this from captivity:

“We’re not having a white Christmas, but we have got a tree. Not many presents, but I guess I’ll get along alright.”



## LOOKING BACK

### 10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

*Here’s the way it was on May 20, 2004: News from the Montague Reporter’s archive.*

#### Hatchet Buried

“In the spirit of peace, healing, and understanding we come together...” starts the Document of Cooperation and Peace, signed at a ceremony of reconciliation between the town of Montague and the Narragansett tribe on Wednesday.

The ceremony, presided over by Narragansett Medicine Man Lloyd Running Wolf Wilcox, was an attempt to help heal from Captain William Turner’s ambush on a Native American refugee camp that killed hundreds of men, women, and children.

In addition to a ceremony involving fire, drums, and tobacco, the Montague selectboard exchanged gifts and read statements pledging greater cooperation and support in the future.

#### Pruitt Prevails

Patricia Pruitt won the Montague town selectboard seat on Monday, marking the first time in town history that the selectboard had a female majority.

With 605 votes Pruitt was

ahead of Chris Boutwell’s 281 votes and Ryan Kelsey’s 227, although only 1 in 4 registered voters turned out for the election.

Asked to comment on her victory, Pruitt said, “I think people want a more cooperative attitude on the board, one less driven by a single agenda. They want the selectboard to do its job. Maybe that’s why I was elected.”

#### More Good News For Cumby’s Building!

The Montague selectboard, along with state representatives and other town organizations, announced that funds had been received for the planning of the reuse of the old Cumberland Farms building.

The \$11,300 grant, awarded to Professor Annaliese Bischoff of the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, will support two design studios during the 2004-2005 academic year in the Department of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning Program.

A team of graduate students will work with the town and community to develop a redevelopment plan that aims at using the building to support the arts and cultural tourism in Turners Falls and the region.

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE LEVERETT POLICE LOG

### Several Animals Injured by Wheeled Vehicles

**Tuesday, 4/1**  
5:45 p.m. Report of a dog hit by a bicycle on Depot Road. Rider uninjured, dog sustained minor injuries. Owner notified and advised of leash law.

**Wednesday, 4/2**  
7:25 p.m. Report of a severely injured deer in the woods off North Leverett Road. Deer located and put down.

**Thursday, 4/3**  
8:10 p.m. 57-year-old resident of Shutesbury Road struck a cow with her Subaru. Both the operator and the cow were uninjured. The cow’s owner recovered the cow and repaired the fence. Vehicle towed from the scene.

**Saturday, 4/5**  
2:26 p.m. House alarm on Rattlesnake Gutter. House secure; no attempted entry apparent.

**Monday, 4/7**  
6:40 p.m. Took report from resident of theft from his bank account.

**Saturday, 4/12**  
2:56 p.m. Assisted Sunderland PD with traffic control on the Sunderland Bridge during recovery of body from the Connecticut River.

5:11 p.m. Report of a white pickup, ATV, and dirt bike traveling at a high speed on Coke Kiln Road. Officer checked the area; gone on arrival.

**Monday, 4/14**  
6:30 p.m. Report of a

suspicious male in a small green pickup in the Long Hill Road area, asking kids odd questions. Officer checked the area. Vehicle was gone on arrival.

**Tuesday, 4/15**  
5 p.m. Reported disturbance at a Cushman Road residence. Verbal dispute, no other issues.

6 p.m. Medical emergency at a Cushman Road residence. Male subject transported to Cooley Dickinson by Amherst FD ambulance.

**Friday, 4/18**  
3:04 p.m. One-car motor vehicle accident on Cushman Road. 50-year-old New Hampshire resident lost control of her Honda, skidded across

the road and collided with rocks. No injuries; vehicle towed.

5:38 p.m. Assisted Shutesbury PD with a disturbance at a South Laurel Road residence.

**Tuesday, 4/22**  
7 p.m. Served a 209A restraining order to a subject at a Cushman Road residence.

**Wednesday, 4/23**  
5:21 p.m. Medical emergency at an Amherst Road residence. Subject transported to Cooley Dickinson by Amherst FD ambulance.

7:10 p.m. Assisted Shutesbury PD with an operating-under-the-influence arrest on Pratt Corner Road.

#### CHARLES from pg B1

This drug still didn’t ease her pain with her constant questions, “Why did no one like me?” She had a rich family and was able to go on tour with her dad and other famous singers, but she was still in so much pain.

Her mother was an alcoholic and her dad was not always there for her, so her she had no one to turn to for help when she needed it the most. This led to her addiction with other drugs such as oxy pills, and crack cocaine.

When she first tried cocaine she thought it was, “The greatest thing she ever experienced.” And that she could be, “Anything she wanted to be.”

Being on this drug lead her to have five children with different men, and caused three of them to be crack addicted babies and one son who was born weighing just 14 oz. and had to fight for his life. Charles was sent to prison three times and everything good in her life was now destroyed.

Charles said that GOD had come to her and answered her and filled her up with all that good and took everything that was bad.

She now states that, “ God sent her around the world to tell her story” she has been such an inspiration to many adults and young boys and girls. She states that everyone and even she always, “Keeps going forward toward their dreams and never give up on the message of love and hope.”

This presentation was so inspiring that it really got others and me to think about our lives and how precious they are.

We only have one life and why mess it up with a onetime stupid decision of trying a drug or drugs that could get one addicted for life and then lead to being in prison. The BIG message from Charles was to stay on track with life, do good in school, and chase your dreams, and let nobody get in the way of that.

She also mentioned that if you know you’re headed down the wrong path, seek help. If one gets help their life will be spared and they will not end up in a position where it could ruin their life. It was such a pleasure to have Charles and Steptoe with us on Wednesday and a big thank you goes out to Ms. Alderman at Turners Falls High School for setting this all up.

## Think Before You Act

By KELLY ROHORKA,  
11<sup>th</sup> GRADE

“Think before you act.” Parents across the nation teach their children this important rule. But Sheila Raye Charles, had to teach herself. Sheila is the daughter of American icon, Ray Charles. Unfortunately that’s all most people know about her.

On Wednesday , May 7, Sheila

came to Turners Falls High School to raise awareness through her incredible story.

The students, including me, piled into the auditorium at TFHS. What many of us were expecting was far from what we were about to hear. Sheila’s husband, Tony, took the microphone first, introducing himself with a friendly greeting and a few jokes.

Shifting the topic, Tony described a startling decision that led him to 10-20 years in prison. The audience went silent as students listened to the abrupt change in mood. It made us realize that any second of one’s life something unexpected can happen.

Tony went on a downward spiral, experimenting with different drugs after being sentenced to prison. He explained how thankful he was to be standing in front of us that day. Tony said, “When you have a vision, it’s already a reality.”

To teens our age, some who are going to college in a year, those words opened our eyes. He taught us that no matter how extreme one’s dream may be, he or she can accomplish it.

Sitting in that prison cell, Tony dreamt of a better life. He couldn’t express how desperate he was for us to understand that it’s just not worth it.

He ended his speech by declaring us as “kings and queens.” He explained that only we have the power to change our lives. He then handed the microphone to *his* queen, Sheila.

What happened next was amazing. The entire auditorium was silent

and attentive as Sheila told us her story.

Sheila described how she didn’t have a father figure growing up, and her mother, an alcoholic, was hardly a mother at all. As a result, she turned to drugs, only pushing her family further away.

We students at TFHS have heard of stories similar to Sheila’s, but I can speak for everyone when I say that Sheila impacted us the most. Hearing everything she endured in her life, and seeing her standing before us that day was uplifting.

She was a true inspiration to all of us. She included in her speech her five children who have five different fathers. She lost custody of each child, but during her third time spent in prison, she had an epiphany.

Just like her husband, Sheila wanted to change. She missed her children, she wanted to be out of prison, but most importantly, she wanted a better life.

Today, four of her five children are back in her life. She refuses to give up on the fifth, and when she declared this the audience applauded. She wasn’t finished speaking, but everyone agreed that she deserved recognition. She turned her life around and we were extremely grateful for her presence in our school.

The applause diminished, and Sheila had one last thing to tell us.

“Not everyone will be as lucky as I was,” she said. She wanted us to know that just because she did, doesn’t mean everyone will make it.

Just like her husband, Sheila would give anything to go back and

make better decisions, and wants us to make them now. She wants us to recognize her for recovery, but not forget the extremities she went through.

Once her speech was over, she had people on their feet, singing and dancing. Everyone was participating.

Sheila and Tony definitely gave us something to remember them by, and are some of the most inspirational people Turners Falls High School students have been lucky to meet.

It wasn’t just another lecture; it was an eye-opening moment that had encouraged many students to make the right decisions in life.



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## WEDNESDAY TO SUNDAY

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## 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 TUESDAY

Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Kiddleidoscope Tuesday*. Hands-on environmental experience for young children. Story, interactive game and craft with rotating topics. Ages 3-6 with a parent or guardian. 10:30-11:30 a.m.

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

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

## EVERY WEDNESDAY

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

Great Falls Farmer's Market, Turners Falls, 2 to 6 p.m.

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

## EVERY THURSDAY

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

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

## EVERY FRIDAY

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

## ART SHOWS:

Nina's Nook, Turners Falls: *Transformagination: the Surreal Collage Art of Tiffany Heerema*. On display through June 7.

Green Fields Market, Greenfield: photography of *People's Movement to Shut Down VT Yankee* on display through May 31st.

Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Ed Gregory's* photo exhibit in the Great Hall, high-resolution images of typically mundane subjects on display through May 31st.

## CALL FOR ENTRIES

Photographs wanted for *Photography Exhibition* to be on display June 19 to July 12 in Avenue A, Turners Falls storefront galleries. Opening reception is June 19 in conjunction with the Third Thursday RiverCulture Event: "Knights, Camera, Action!" Subject is open. Submit work by June 1 to Rodney at Madison on the Avenue. Call Suzanne at (413) 835-1390 or email her at [riverculture@gmail.com](mailto:riverculture@gmail.com) if you have any questions.

## EVENTS:

## FRIDAY, MAY 23

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: *Shanta Paloma* with special guest *Brooke Annibale*, singer-

songwriters, 7:30 p.m.

Montague Bookmill, Montague Center: *June and the Bee, Woman Songwriter Collective*, \$, 8 p.m.

Arts Block, Greenfield: *Tony Curtis & Rowen*, classical rock, R&B, Soul & Pop, \$, 8 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *The Rambling King*, bluegrass, 9 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Russell Kaback*, soul/folk, 9:30 p.m.

## SATURDAY, MAY 24

Leverett Town Hall, Leverett Center: Leverett Historical Society Plant and Used Garden Book Sale fundraiser, 9 to noon. Rain or Shine, Master Gardener Dawn Marvin Ward will be on duty to help assist with plant choices



*Russell Kaback, soul-folk musician at the Rendezvous, Turners Falls on Friday, May 23rd, 9:30 p.m.*

and general garden questions.

Arts Block, Greenfield: *Joe Belmont Jazz Guitar Trio* with The NCMC Quartet, \$, 7:30 p.m.

Montague Bookmill, Montague Center: *DuPont Brothers*, folk-america, \$, 8 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Fancy Trash*, acoustic indie-rock, 9 p.m.

Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: *Lake Side Drive*, classic rock, \$, 9:30 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Street Change*, indie/folk, 9:30 p.m.

## SUNDAY, MAY 25

Brick House, Turners Falls: *Steve Gunn, Home Comfort, Jeremy Latch, and Banjo Assault Duo*. Rock, folk rock, heavy psych, improvisation. All ages, substance free space. \$, 7 p.m.

Arts Block, Greenfield: Pioneer Valley Jazz Shares presents a concert by the *Fay Victor Ensemble*, \$, 7:30 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Maris Otter*, original folk-rock by Alyssa Kelly and Jen Springla, 8 p.m.

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

## MONDAY, MAY 26

Flywheel, Easthampton: New Member Open House, 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Montague Retreat Center, Montague: *Community Singing Night. Song Passing Through*: release your voice, find your songs, and sing in community. Open song share, where participants offer beloved songs to the group, followed by a space for free vocal expression and improvisation. Any and all songs and voices are welcome! 7:30 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Burrie's Open Mic/Mike/Mic*, 8 p.m. sign-ups at 7:30 p.m.

## WEDNESDAY, MAY 28

Arts Block, Greenfield: Join the creative community for networking and refreshments. *Presentation by Dee Schneidman from New England Foundation for the Arts* on the new CreativeGround database. 6 p.m. Contact Lisa Davol, Franklin County Chamber of Commerce, 773-5463 or [www.fosteringartandculture.org](http://www.fosteringartandculture.org)

THURSDAY, MAY 29

Arts Block, Greenfield: *Ted Wirt & John Harrison* provide Dinner Jazz 5-7 p.m.

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

## FRIDAY, MAY 30

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

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Show of Cards*, folk/rock/hip-hop, 9:30 p.m.

## SATURDAY, MAY 31

Northfield Mountain Recreation, Northfield: *New England Orienteering Club* event. Come try the exciting sport of orienteering! Registration begins at 9:30 a.m. Open to all ages and experience levels, \$.

Gill Elementary School: *Annual School Carnival*, 10-1 p.m.

Wendell Free Library, Wendell: *The Giant Behemoth*, starring Gene Evans, Andr  Morell, a film showing as part of the Science Fiction/Fantasy and Horror/ Monster movie series, 7:30 p.m.

Montague Bookmill, Montague Center: *The Trinary System and Space Word* a trio of avant-garde jazz and improvisations opens, \$, 8 p.m.

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

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *VOO, (Kung) FU, and YOU*, 9:30 p.m. (kung fu movies on the big screen, set to your records on the turntable).

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Street Change - Mike Martin - and special guest opener Dana Osterling  
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**MESSAGE** from page B1  
new successful road.

However, he felt compelled to travel the country telling his story to anyone who would hear. A message that Tony left the students with before turning the stage over to Sheila was "As soon as you think of it, it is a reality."

Sheila then took the stage and began to tell her story. She started out by saying her path started out with the absence of her father (Ray Charles), an alcoholic mother, and a handful of people that abused her starting at an early age.

Due to these early experiences Sheila was hurt, angry, resentful, and confused.

She tried many things, mainly drugs to try to mask this pain. Her road started with smoking marijuana at the age of 12 years old. This led to using pills and then ultimately led to using crack cocaine.

Crack cocaine is where Ms. Charles found her mask, something that at the moment made all her problems disappear.

It wasn't long after using this drug that Sheila's life started spiraling out of control. She found herself crawling on crack house floors looking for her next fix.

She had all five of her kids taken away with several of her kids born addicted to crack, because even during pregnancy she could not stop using.

Ms. Charles also was in and out of federal prison. With all her father's money nothing could save her from losing her kids and nothing could keep her out of prison.

As with Tony her husband, Sheila in her prison cell at her lowest point turned to a higher power and asked for help. From then on Sheila turned her life around and now travels the country spreading her message, her story. The message that hit me the hardest was "your ride or die crew, the crew that are your home girls/boys..... you think they will be there for

you.....NO when you go to prison you go alone.....your friends are nowhere to be found."

Sheila and Tony then turned the floor over to the students and took questions. I was thoroughly impressed by how many students wanted to ask questions. Their participation was very touching.


Clearly the topics that were discussed hit home for many of the students. After questions Sheila then began to sing a few songs, again the entire audience teachers, staff, and students were all involved.

This is the most school spirit I have seen from the entirety of TFHS. Some students needed to be dismissed due to sports. These students begged their coach to let them stay so they could hear the guest speakers. Even after the bell rang for dismissal students did not want to leave.

I feel that this assembly went so well because it wasn't just a "do not do drugs" speech. It was a tale of two very personal stories. Unfortunately in this day and age drugs are easily accessible and prevalent. We have a growing epidemic in our area.

In our society even at the middle school/high school level drugs especially pills is a personal topic for the majority. Many students have tried pills, know someone who has, know someone who has died from drugs, have a family member affected by drugs, or know where to get drugs.

I also feel that what is so moving about Sheila and Tony's story is that it shows that you can hit rock bottom and still turn your life around.

I am happy that I was able to bring this message to the students at TFHS. If their stories only touch a handful of students, it was well worth it. However, I would predict that everyone who was in attendance was touched by the stories we all heard that day. 

## My Impression of Sheila Raye Charles and Tony Steptoe

By PATRICK GAMACHE,  
10TH GRADE


I went to the assembly expecting to be bored by another lecture. I was surprised that this woman (Sheila Raye Charles) turned out to be very inspiring, courageous, and told an extremely touching story.

It seemed to me that many students felt as I did. I got the impression that the majority of the student body thought that this assembly

would turn out to be another "Just say NO" speech. However, it was not and pleasantly so. Students were so intrigued that you could hear a pin drop as everyone in attendance listened intently to what Ms. Charles had to say.

We have in the past heard a doctor and a police officer talk to the entire school about drug and alcohol use and we listened politely. However, to hear Ms. Charles, a woman who had lived through drug

addiction it was so much more powerful. It was more influential to all that attended.

I especially enjoyed the singing at the end. Everyone from teachers, staff, and students were involved. We as a school were so involved that it is safe to say we all would have stayed even longer to listen to the message that she was delivering and to hear her sing some her father's songs. 

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