



# The Montague Reporter

YEAR 12 – NO. 43

also serving Irving, Gill, Everett and Wendell

\$1

EDITOR@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

SEPTEMBER 11, 2014

## MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

### Millers Falls Development Project Recommended; Police Propose Fines For Building Owners, Youth With Spraypaint

By JEFF SINGLETON

The future of the Powers Block, and for the village of Millers Falls in which it is located, is looking a good deal brighter today. The town of Montague has accepted a proposal to renovate a cluster of very dilapidated buildings on the corner of Bridge and East Main streets.

The location, at the very heart of the village, has been an eyesore for at least a decade, as the town struggled to evict an absentee landlord, resolve legal issues involving ownership of the property, and find a developer.

Now, town administrator Frank

Abbondanzio told the Montague selectboard on September 1, there is a developer with an ambitious proposal to create a complex including a restaurant, offices and living spaces.

The area will be developed under the state "Urban Homesteading" program, whereby the town sells the property for a nominal sum (\$1) after issuing a request for proposals (RFP). This gives the town more input and oversight over the final project, including the financial capacity of the developer, design, and the economic impact on the area.

Abbondanzio also stated the

see MONTAGUE page A5



MIKE JACKSON PHOTO

Marijuana advocates LLR and RGR painted on this Avenue A building in 2011.

## ERVING SELECTBOARD

### Firefighter Positions Under Examination

By KATIE NOLAN

On September 8, selectboard chair William Bembury reported that fire chief Philip Wonkka was working on a firefighter job description and was developing interview questions for firefighter applicants.

On August 25, former fire chief Almon "Bud" Meatty and five former firefighters who had resigned in September 2013 applied to re-join the department.

Bembury said he had asked Wonkka and police chief Christopher Blair to provide data on the last three years of emergency calls and response times in Erving.

At the previous selectboard meeting, former firefighter William Pease stated that, since the experienced firefighters had left the department, 911 response time from fire station #1 had increased.

Bembury and selectboard member Margaret Sullivan considered a bulky printout from Tri-State Fire Mutual Aid Association documenting emergency calls and response times for its member towns.

Sullivan said she would try to get the Tri-State data in another format and filter it for Erving-specific information.

"We need to get a bet-



SAWYER-LAUCANNO PHOTO

Fire Station No. 1 in Erving Center has been slower in responding to calls since firefighters resigned last fall.

ter handle on the issue," Bembury commented, "so we know how to move forward."

#### Bridge Safety

Bembury reported on a September 2 meeting with emergency personnel from Erving, Gill and Montague, state police, and Massachusetts Department of Transportation regarding safety at the French King Bridge.

Bembury called suicides from the bridge "a major public safety issue." He said that the group had agreed, as a first step, to install cameras at the bridge.

The meeting was facilitated by state representative Denise Andrews, who agreed to look for funding for safety upgrades for the bridge.

#### Volunteers Needed

Bembury wrote a letter seeking volunteers for a new committee to supervise televising selectboard meetings.

Sullivan agreed that the letter (see following article) should be published in the Around Town newsletter.

#### Old Mill Fenced Up

Highway foreman Glenn McCory reported that he met with the town's insurance agent at the former International Paper property, now owned by the town.

McCory said the agent was happy to see the recently-installed fencing, but asked that all first and second floor entry points also be secured.

The insurance company will send a letter with official

see ERVING page A5

## Art... On the Inside

By SHIRA HILLEL

**GREENFIELD** — The terms institutions commonly use for the millions of people incarcerated in this country, such as "prisoner," "convict," "offender" or "inmate," can take away their humanity, Revan Schendler explained when asked a question about artwork created by "inmates."

Showcasing their humanity is the goal of the Franklin County Inside Art exhibit opening this upcoming Friday, Sept. 12, at ArtSpace in Greenfield. The visual art and poetry exhibited is all created by residents of the Franklin County Sheriff's Office (FCSO) jail located on Elm Street in Greenfield, and prints will be on display through Oct. 3.

Schendler, a sociology professor at Greenfield Community College who has been working in the FCSO, prefers to refer to her collaborators as "incarcerated men."

Their outsider artwork, made on the inside of prison bars, is coming out for the public to see. The show is the first public event sponsored by the Elm Street Think Tank, a group of residents of the FCSO, community members, and GCC professors who meet weekly at the jail to work on collaborative projects.

It is intended not only to show the talent and depth of work being created at FCSO, but also to draw attention to our country's use of in-



JOAN O'BEIRNE PHOTO

Poet Clay Perri, visual artist Nick Tuttle, poet Kevin King and visual artist Dung Nguyen are among the men whose work will be on display at the Inside Art exhibit at ArtSpace.

carceration and its effects.

Clay Perri, a poet whose work will be on display, said that the exhibit is "calling attention to the many creative individuals who have made mistakes. There are better alternatives than just locking us up and forgetting about us."

Recidivism, the habitual relapse into crime, is a problem. Education of all kinds, including art education, has been shown to increase the likelihood that someone will not reoffend and return to jail or prison.

The FCSO is a medium security prison, with parts of the jail being minimum security. The men there are generally serving sentences of two years or less. Some residents even have jobs in the area, and are allowed to leave the jail during the day.

see EXHIBIT page A3

## GILL SELECTBOARD

### Soccer May Revive Gill Rec Commission; Cost Reduced For Front-End Loader

By DAVID DETMOLD

Instead of an active recreation commission reviving a dormant soccer program, an active soccer program may help to revive the dormant Gill recreation commission, thanks to the initiative of 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade parents organized by a local resident, Steve Striebel.

Striebel won the backing of the Gill selectboard on Monday for his effort to get the soccer program going again, and the board encouraged Striebel to reach out to interested parents to try to recruit new members for the rec commission, which has been sidelined for more than a year due to a lack of volunteers following a period of problematic accounting of the commission's revolving fund.

Though Striebel said he had never been a member of the recreation commission, he told the selectboard he had helped to organize and direct the town's soccer program for 24 years, as part of an informal soccer league with nearly a dozen neighboring towns.

see GILL page A4

## GILL-MONTAGUE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

### The Way Onward and Upward: The School District's New Strategic Plan

By PATRICIA PRUITT

In the MR's September 4 issue we outlined the values and beliefs underpinning education for our students in the Gill-Montague Regional School District.

Chief among these was the value of persistence. It is the quality and strength districts need to possess in order to overcome the challenges inherent in building a successful public school.

Over the summer teachers, administrators, and superintendent Michael Sullivan came up with a list of seven formidable challenges, among them the loss of students to charter schools and the school choice option.

School choice has contributed to the ongoing squeeze on funding for education since the loss of students results in a loss of funds. The net cost of school choice to the district has increased 74% since FY'12.

The district has seen a 12.1% increase in utilities, transportation, wages and benefits while the operating budget has increased only 6.6% in the same 4 year period.

In FY'12 funds remaining for books, technology, new initiatives, and professional

development was approximately 1 million dollars more than it is for the 2015 school year, a decrease of 38.3%.

According to Sullivan, "While the towns are doing what they can to support the school, and the school is working hard to be as cost effective as possible, clearly, this trajectory is not sustainable for the District. So this context plays a major role in informing our strategic plan."

**Sullivan noted that the school must work diligently with students and their parents to bring the pupils into the learning process.**

The next two challenges facing the district have to do with the economic well-being of the population the district serves. Demographics show that the GMRSD is composed of 56% low income students, whereas the state average is 37%.

According to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), this often means that students

begin their student lives with an "un-readiness" to learn.

Sullivan noted that the school must work diligently with students and their parents to bring each pupil into the learning process so that he or she becomes an "active learner".

Statistics show that students who do not become active learners often lag behind their grade level.

Challenges to the district also arrive from the world beyond the school's halls as well. These include the demand for 21st century skills, not only in the use of technology, but also the requirement for the development of critical thinking skills for students.

The seventh challenge concerns the faculty themselves. The recent history of DESE receivership of the District plus the frequency of administrative turnover did result in alienation among the faculty.

This is not to say that the dedication of faculty to their students lagged. The Tell Mass Survey found that 64% of GMRSD teachers spend more than 10 hours a school week on school-related activities.

The problem appears to come from a lower level of

see GMRSD page A6

# The Montague Reporter

"The Voice of the Villages"

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## Super PACS : The Newest Obstacle To Democracy

Martha Coakley's victory in this week's state primary has got to be something of a blow to political strategists who believe that central committees and Super PACs are instrumental in getting candidates elected.

One of her opponents, Steve Grossman, had not only been anointed by the Democratic Party as their designated democratic nominee, he also had the backing of the Super PAC Mass Forward Independent Expenditure Political Action Committee.

Mass Forward, in the days leading up to the primary, heated up the airwaves with ads, many of which attacked Coakley.

Both Coakley and Dan Berwick raised their own cash. In the case of Berwick, the most progressive candidate in the race, almost all of his money came from small donations from individual donors.

That Berwick did as well as he did is a tribute not to a steady flow of dollars but to his tireless campaigning and his consistent position on issues that obviously registered with voters: healthcare for all, jobs not casinos, and, in our neck of the woods, his opposition to the proposed Kinder-Morgan pipeline.

But then Massachusetts voters have always prided themselves on making up their own minds. And again, they did.

But Super PACs are cancers on the electorate. And both major parties have them, and have them to spare.

Made possible by the Citizens United decision, these Super PACs can't legally coordinate with candidates or their campaigns, but can raise unlimited amounts of money from people, corporations and labor unions to support candidates and causes.

Charlie Baker, Coakley's opponent in the November election, has already taken advantage of the Super PAC Commonwealth Future, to blast Coakley. This group has already spent \$1.4 million on ads to support Baker.

And Baker's campaign coffers are swelling. Baker reported at the end of August that he had nearly \$1.2 million left in his campaign account. Coakley only had \$197,000.

And Baker's hand-picked choice for lieutenant governor, former Shrewsbury State Rep-

resentative Karen Polito, had \$594,000 in her campaign chest, as compared with Stephen Kerigan, the Democratic victor in the primary, who reported that his coffer contained only \$22,000.

Coakley's campaign clearly wants a cash infusion – and it's arriving. While Coakley did not benefit from Super PAC money during the primary, now that she is the official nominee, she, too, can expect some.

The Mass Independent Expenditure Political Action Committee has already launched one ad for her, calling out Baker.

Coakley will also benefit from a number of small donors, just as she did during the primary.

In her victory speech on Tuesday night, Coakley stressed the importance of working and campaigning hard to win the governorship in November: "The insiders ... the big money, the Super PACs ... they are not going to decide this election. This election will be decided by hardworking men and women and their families who just want a fair shot...who want to build an economy on our terms."

We applaud her comments, but have to say that we are skeptical. Big money does talk. Super PACs do wield a tremendous amount of influence over candidates and campaigns.

And spending by these organizations is astronomical. According to The Center for Public Integrity, the secretive political network of Charles and David Koch has already aired more than 43,900 television ads on behalf of Republican Senate candidates in this election cycle in hopes that the party can take control of that chamber in November.

This translates into the Koch brothers so far funding one out of every 10 TV ads in the 2014 Senate races.

The ad total includes the six most active Super PACs in the Koch brothers' secretive network: Americans for Prosperity, the American Energy Alliance, Concerned Veterans for America, the Freedom Partners Chamber of Commerce, Generation Opportunity, and the 60 Plus Association.

Last Monday evening, the Senate did move to advance a constitutional amendment to repeal Citizens United and restore the right of Congress to regulate campaign



## Letters to the Editors

### Cultural Council Grants Now Available

As a newly appointed member of the Montague Cultural Council, I was thrilled to see the Traveling Rhubarb Circus and their upcoming performances in Montague Center featured so prominently in last week's issue!

The Traveling Rhubarb Circus is one of twenty-two groups, organizations, and individuals whose projects received funding from the Montague Cultural Council last year.

The current council includes nine Montague residents who volunteer the time it takes to review proposals and decide how to distribute the money our town is allocated (about \$4500 in recent years) by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, which is a state agency.

The grants we give are modest – usually between \$50 and \$300 – but the impact is significant! I didn't realize how much our community is enriched by local cultural council funds until recently, when I looked

over the list of projects funded for 2014. So many great events happen because of this statewide program!

For instance, this year's grants by the Montague Cultural Council helped make it possible for Edite Cunha to offer mosaic workshops at the Women's Center, brought special science programs to the Great Falls Discovery Center and the Carnegie Library, helped Laura Rodley publish a new volume in the *As You Write It* series of memoirs by local elders, and brought "Conversations for Racial Justice" to the Brick House, to name just a few.

I am concerned that the article about the Traveling Rhubarb Circus may have given readers the impression that the deadline to apply for local cultural council grants has passed.

Now is the time to apply for 2015 programs!

The Montague Cultural Council is actively seeking proposals right now for arts, humanities, and sci-

ence programs that will take place in any of Montague's five villages next year.

Individuals, groups, and organizations who are interested should review the guidelines to determine if their idea is a good match and, if so, submit an application by October 15.

All the information you need is online at the Massachusetts Cultural Council website: [www.mass-culture.org/lcc\\_public.aspx](http://www.mass-culture.org/lcc_public.aspx). (Search for 'Montague' to learn about local funding priorities.)

You can also get a printed copy of the application at Montague Town Hall or any of the three Montague libraries.

If you have an idea for an event or a project that will benefit Montague, I hope you will take advantage of this opportunity!

Jen Audley  
Turners Falls

## Tim Lindop Remembered

It was shocking news to hear of the passing of our founding member of MCTV, Tim Lindop.

He was the first person you would see as you entered the select-board meeting on Monday evenings in Turners Falls. If you recall at the meeting on August 11, Angela and Julian were both at his side as co-operative partners. At the GCC forum for the gas pipeline, he again was seen filming this important issue. On more than one occasion I thanked him for his support, and the cooperation of MCTV.

He made all of us in the community, from all walks of life, feel welcome. His smile, kindness, sincere support and dedication will leave a lasting mark for all of us who have had the honor to be a part of his life.

Betty Tegel  
Turners Falls

contributions and spending. But while it may even pass in the Senate, it will likely be blocked from even being debated in the House.

Two of the bill's sponsors, Senators Tom Udall and Bernie Sanders, explained why repeal was necessary in a *Politico Magazine* op-ed:

"In 2010, the Supreme Court issued a disastrous 5-4 opinion striking down major parts of a 2002 campaign-finance reform law in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*. This case and subsequent rulings, including *McCutcheon v. FEC*, have led to the explosion of outside money in elections through so-called super PACs.

"In the 2012 election, we quickly saw the results – 32 major super PAC donors combined to give more money than the millions of ordinary Americans who donated less than \$200 each to Barack Obama or Mitt Romney.

"More than 60 percent of all super PAC funds came from just 159 donors, each of whom gave more than \$1 million.

"Even more worrisome is the explosion of 'dark money' – dollars spent by groups that do not have to disclose their funding sources. The 2012 election saw almost \$300 million in dark money spending, and the 2014 election could potentially see as much as \$1 billion...."

We'd like to think that voters read and listen to what the candidates are saying and make up their own minds.

Unfortunately, this is less the case than we'd like to think. A continual barrage of TV ads does have an impact. Which is exactly what Super PACS are hoping for.

Elections should not be bought and sold like Wall Street junk bonds. Campaign finance reform is necessary now for democracy to have a chance.

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JESSICA LARKIN ILLUSTRATION

## LOCAL BRIEFS

Compiled by DON CLEGG

Montague Parks and Recreation director Jon Dobosz reports that the fencing has been removed, and the ball fields at **Unity Park** are now open to the public.

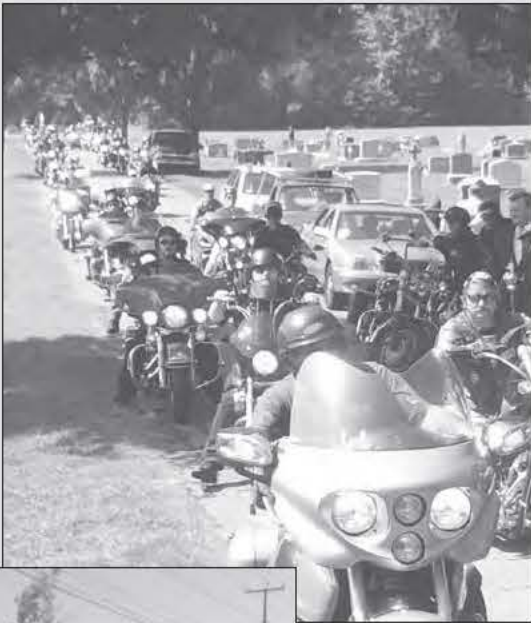
Turners Falls High School Football Team begins the defense of

their 2013 Western MA Division 6 championship at TFHS on Friday, September 12, at 7 p.m.

Saturday, September 13, is **Shredding Day**. Bring your old papers and hard drives for confidential destruction from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the Aubuchon parking lot on Avenue A in Turners Falls.

### A Final Ride Together

Members of the Mohawk Ramblers led the procession from Kostanski Funeral Home to St. Anne's Cemetery in Turners Falls last Friday to give a final send-off to member William "Pooh Bear" Haskell of Montague and Colrain.



The coffin was borne to the cemetery by motorcycle, and a very large number of family and friends gathered to show their respect for the departed.



MIKE JACKSON PHOTOS

### EXHIBIT from pg A1

"They are part of our community. This is a small jail, and these men will be coming out and living and working in our community," said Joan O'Beirne, a GCC photography professor who is a member of the Elm Street Think Tank and was instrumental in organizing the Inside Out exhibit.

Don Wright, a former resident of the FCSO who now volunteers for the Recover Project in Greenfield, said "there is a lot of talent inside those walls."

Wright explained that there used to be a large tattoo market inside jails, which has been replaced by an art market. Incarcerated residents will trade art in exchange for items they need such as soap or a phone card.

Some men are skilled illustrators, and portraits of children and other family members, based on a photograph and sketched on the back of an envelope, are in high demand.

At the last Think Tank meeting on Tuesday, September 9, the incarcerated men were bubbling with excitement about the upcoming exhibit.

Many expressed how lucky they felt to have an exhibit when so many artists struggle to have their

work shown.

Clay Perri, a Berklee graduate, has been writing poetry since he was 15. More recently he has taken up a daily spiritual practice of writing a poem a day. "I call it my daily dose of mediocrity," he quipped.

"I am an admitted alcoholic, and I have been going through a revolving door at this institution since 2007." Perri said that when he wrote "This Time Around," one of the poems that will be on display, he was thinking about "changing things that lead us to be recidivists."

He said that 85 percent of the men in his pod were serving time because of drug or alcohol related issues that either led to their committing a crime, or they committed the crime while under the influence.

"We don't need more jails. We need more community intervention. We need to take to heart *Be Thy Brother's Keeper*."

Nick Tuttle will have black and white pencil drawings on display. He said he loves working in black and white because it helps him "see the grays in life."

Tuttle has been drawing since he was four years old and worked as a tattoo artist on the outside. He said he trades his artwork, including tat-

Just \$5 per bag/hard drive, with proceeds to benefit the Montague Skate Park and the Montague Business Association. Old, worn U.S. flags will also be accepted for respectful retirement. Appreciation is given to Valley Green Shredding for donating the shredding service.

Also this Saturday, from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., UMass students will work with a crew of students, parents and staff at Sheffield Elementary School, to **beautify the school grounds**.

The UMass students are donating their time and energies for the second year as part the MASS Impact Day of Service effort. It all goes to Building Sheffield School Pride!

Come and experience the compassion and consciousness of Kripalu Yoga, also known as **Gentle Yoga**, with Jennifer Tufts at the Turners Falls Branch of Greenfield Savings Bank on Saturday, September 13, from 10 to 11 p.m.

Tufts is certified as a teacher from the Kripalu Center for Yoga and Health. Move slowly and gently through the different techniques and exercises. Dress comfortably and bring a mat if you have one.

**Charles Neville brings the swing to the Wendell Full Moon Coffeehouse** on Saturday, September 13. Something funky, something sweet, something sublime, and always something new to hear when Mr. Neville comes to town.

Bring a friend up to Wendell for an evening of world class jazz in the heart of small town New England. He'll bring along a few of the regions finest players, and the Charles Neville Jazz Quartet will move you. We'll dance in a fresh Coffeehouse season in the finest style.

The Full Moon Coffeehouse Se-

ries is located in Old Town Hall in the center of Wendell, offering a unique opportunity for music, fun and dance; always in support of a good cause.

Come experience the Valley's only Dessert-O-Rama in an affordable family-friendly venue. Open Mic begins the evening at 7:30, with concert following at 8 p.m.

The 70-voice **Greenfield Harmony inter-generational community choir** led by Mary Cay Brass will begin their fall session on Monday, September 22, 6:45 to 8:15 pm at St. James Episcopal Church parish hall in Greenfield

The choir has built a reputation for its strong presentation of soulful, lively music from many world cultures. This fall will feature songs from Eastern Europe, the Republic of Georgia, South Africa, France, Italy, the British Isles, American folk, bluegrass, gospel and more.

Each season, the choir hosts visiting performer/teachers to give the choir an in depth look at a specific tradition. This session will feature the dynamic John Harrison of the Montpelier Gospel Choir leading songs from the African-American gospel tradition.

Greenfield Harmony is a non-audition community choir dedicated to musical diplomacy, using music as a bridge for learning about and enjoying other cultures in an opportunity to sing, learn, build friendships and have fun! Come try it out!

There are currently openings in the tenor, bass and soprano sections. For information about joining email: [mcbass@vermontel.net](mailto:mcbass@vermontel.net) and see [www.marycaybrass.com](http://www.marycaybrass.com) for more details

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

record is a standard hiring practice, and is a form of legalized discrimination that people face, Schendler pointed out.

"You don't have to have a lifestyle of criminality to end up in prison." Wright noted that many believe wrongly that "only certain people can find themselves in a situation that may send them to prison."

"One of the reasons people end up in jail, is because they lack the education needed to get good jobs," said Schendler. The idea that a jail acts only as a human warehouse is problematic.

The FCSO and GCC have been expanding educational offerings at the jail, including GED preparation, classes in poetry and painting, and college courses. "Sheriff Christopher Donelan also serves on the board of GCC, and is very supportive of educational programs," said Schendler.

The Inside Out teaching model, which began at Temple University, has been spreading across the country. Its programs bring college students inside prison walls where together they study in a college class with incarcerated residents on the inside.

see EXHIBIT page A4

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### GILL from page A1

"It's been very popular over the years," said Striebel. "Gill used to have monster teams." But, "Interest waned over the years," and there was no organized Gill soccer program last year.

Parents began asking him to get back involved, and according to Striebel they provided most of the initiative to mow and line the field and coach the team, which now consists of two dozen 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders, meeting Saturdays at 9 a.m. behind the Gill Elementary School.

Striebel said he would like to reach out to the athletic director at Northfield Mount Hermon, which used to provide students to work with Gill youngsters on soccer technique and as referees as part of the private school's community service program.

"The people who were running the rec commission weren't really on top of things," opined Striebel, and the partnership lapsed.

Striebel said next he would like to see the boys and girls basketball program jump started, and the baseball program resumed.

"There's tons of equipment over there," he said, referring to sports equipment purchased by the recreation commission and now left in storage at the Gill Elementary School.

The selectboard thanked Striebel for his efforts, and, for liability purposes, endorsed the revived soccer program as a recreation program of the town of Gill.

### Gold Cane Returned; Highway Issues

At the beginning of Monday's meeting, long time town highway boss Ernie Hastings, now retired, returned the Boston Post Gold Cane the town had presented to his mother years ago as the oldest citizen in Gill.

Hastings took the opportunity to advise the board to present the cane to future recipients in person, rather than through a family member. Then he invited them to take a tour of town roads with him, in his truck and at his expense, in order for him

to "point out some things that disturb me greatly."

Although he did not elaborate, the implication was that Hastings still has views about how the highway department should be managing resources in an era of personnel cutbacks and skyrocketing cost of materials.

Board chair Randy Crochier said if more than one selectboard member took Hastings up on his offer of a tour of town roads at the same time, it would require posting as an open meeting, but he said individual board members were free to ride around town with Hastings if they wish to at any time.

### LaClaire Details Repair Costs

After Hastings left the room, current highway boss Mick LaClaire entered to report to the board about the recent loss of a 30-year-old brush hog mower, and to detail the large repair bill for the town's four-year-old Komatsu front-end loader.

LaClaire said the three-point-hitch brush hog has seen constant use for decades, driven behind a tractor to reduce mowing time on roadsides around town. On a recent outing, "It decided to blow up," said LaClaire. "It exploded."

He proposed spending about \$3,200 to replace it with a medium duty brush hog; the board asked him to present that estimate to them formally in two weeks, and to outline how he planned to find the money to pay for it, whether from state Chapter 90 aid or from his own department line item for repairs.

But that line item may be drawn down severely if the town finally signs off on a nearly \$10,000 repair bill for the front-end loader, which began to overheat this spring and required numerous trips to the dealer for repairs.

The source of the problem, a faulty power distribution valve, was not immediately located by the repair shop, and the front-end loader had to be transported back and forth to the Whately service center for repeat diagnostics.

LaClaire presented the board with an itemized bill, tallying ser-

vice and repairs over some three dozen pages, and said he had persuaded the service representative to knock about \$1,200 off the final bill, reducing the cost of repair to about \$9,300.

The board requested an updated copy of the bill, before deciding how to go about paying for it. A 9/10ths-majority vote at a special town meeting may be required to pay a bill for a prior year, a category which this invoice, for repairs that took place in FY14, may fall into.

Individual board members were expressing satisfaction with the detailed itemization of the repair bill, which clarified the stunning size of the bottom line figure, when LaClaire sought to reinforce the message that the town was being treated fairly by the manufacturer, Kubota, and its service representatives.

"They aren't trying to Jew you," LaClaire said.

Selectboard member John Ward delivered a stern lecture about the offensive nature of LaClaire's remark, regarding the long history of intolerance and persecution of an entire people summed up in that single phrase.

LaClaire immediately made it clear he regretted his choice of words.

### Other Business

In other news, town administrator Ray Purington presented an updated chart of sewer and water use in the Riverside district.

The lines representing the small, 114 member district's water and sewer use continues to diverge: as water users conserve, the amount of sewage flowing under Barton Cove to be treated in Montague continues to increase, along with the costs to water users for that treatment.

Since the beginning of 2013, the district as a whole has never used more than 15,000 gallons a day of water. Yet over the same time period, according to Purington's chart, the district has never paid for less than 25,000 gallons a day of treated sewage.

Despite the protests of residents

of the water district, the selectboard, as water commissioners, have tried and failed to come up with an explanation for the growing, and costly, discrepancy.

The board signed off on another quarterly sewer bill, for \$23,620, from the fund paid into by sewer users.

As the board works with the water operator at the Gill Elementary School to respond to a recent directive by the Mass Department of Environmental Protection to notify parents of school children of elevated levels of manganese in the school's public water supply, the town administrator said the water is safe to drink.

But board member Greg Snedeker said children attending school there are by choice bringing bottled water with them to drink at lunch.

The board is seeking cost estimates and possible grant support to install a treatment or filtration system at the school's well, in hopes of reducing the level of manganese in the public water supply.

Although the federal government has not moved to regulate manganese in drinking water, the Mass DEP cautions elevated levels may be associated with neurological disorders.

Board member Greg Snedeker accepted an appointment to the Gill cable access committee. Snedeker is among the minority of Gill residents (some say 5%, some say 25%) who do not have access to high speed internet cable in town, and said he has lost business contracts due to his inability to rapidly download files.

"I'm interested in seeing the entire town covered," said Snedeker.

Meanwhile, the proceedings of Monday's meeting were not videotaped for broadcast by MCTV this week, due to the fact that longtime volunteer camera operator Janet Masucci was on vacation.

Masucci has repeatedly called for more volunteers to help videotape the proceedings of town government and events in town. Call 863-9347 if you can help.



### EXHIBIT from pg A3

Prisoners can earn college credit for their work, and the courses act as a jail to college pipeline. The goal is to break down the social barriers that isolate incarcerated people.

Four GCC teachers, including Schendler and O'Beirne, have received Inside Out training at a maximum security prison in Pennsylvania.

Schendler teaches a sociology class, "Crime and Punishment in the United States," at the FCSO. All students in the class, including the incarcerated men, are enrolled in GCC and receive course credit.

Charles Laurel teaches an environmental studies class entitled "Issues in Sustainability," and a new class called "Creating Farm & Food Cooperatives" which will discuss ways to create cooperatively-owned business that employ incarcerated people.

Other programs that are offered at FCSO include an art class taught by Judith Harper and a poetry class taught by Jim Bell that includes regular poetry slams.

The Elm Street Think Tank made a decision to only credit the artists in the exhibit by using their initials, rather than full names. Some artists are unknown, and others didn't want credit because they were uncomfortable announcing to the public that they were on the inside.

In order to standardize the display, the artwork will be labeled with initials or marked "anon."

While the incarcerated men who created the art will not be in attendance at the Inside Art opening, the public is welcome and encouraged to come. The Strings for Kids violin and cello students and ArtSpace students will perform at the opening as well.

The refreshments served at the

opening will be donated by all local businesses, including the People's Pint, Real Pickles, Greenfield Coffee, Clarksdale Farm, Big Y Supermarket, and El Jardin Bakery. The incarcerated men who work in the FCSO kitchen will prepare baked goods as well.

Prints of the art will be for sale, and because incarcerated people are not legally allowed to earn money while in jail, the proceeds will go to a charity of the Elm Street Think Tank's choice. There will also be a donation box at the exhibit, the proceeds of which will be split between the non-profit ArtSpace and the Think Tank.

The Franklin County Inside Art exhibit opening reception will be held on Friday, Sept. 12 from 5 to 7 p.m. at ArtSpace, 15 Mill Street in Greenfield.

The exhibit will be on display

through Oct. 3. Gallery hours are 1 to 6 p.m. For a preview of the work and more information, visit: [www.franklincountyinsideart.weebly.com](http://www.franklincountyinsideart.weebly.com).



*This pencil and paper drawing will appear in the Inside Art exhibit.*

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# ERVING from page A1

recommendations and the town will have 30 days to comply.

McCory said if the town needs more time, an extension must be requested immediately after receiving the insurance company's letter.

## Treasurer

At the August 25 meeting, the board voted to start the process of changing the position of town treasurer from an elected position to an appointed one when the term of the current treasurer – selectboard member Margaret Sullivan – ends in 2017.

Administrative coordinator Tom Sharp's research indicated that the matter needs to come before town meeting at least 60 days before the next town election – by March 15, 2015 for the May 2015 election.

Bembury asked for a special town meeting to be considered for

February or early March 2015.

## Superhighway Skips Highway

McCory said that internet service at the highway garage was poor.

Assistant assessor Jacqueline Boyden said that the highway garage was not included when town buildings were wired for internet access.

The board asked McCory to contact internet service provider Verizon to complain and to contact Comcast to find out the cost for extending the town's wired service to the highway garage.

## Personnel

The board reviewed the town's personnel policy and considered revisions. It decided to keep the full-time employee probationary period at 3 months, and create a 6-month probationary period for part-time employees.

The board did not change the definition of "essential personnel" required to report to work during an emergency (fire, police, water, wastewater, and highway employees) to include the administrative coordinator.

Boyden said that some form of administrative support from town hall was needed during an extended emergency.

Michael Shaffer was appointed as Erving representative to the Franklin Regional Council of Governments planning board.

Phyllis Stone was appointed to the cultural council.

Brenda Silva and Wilhelmina Ryan were appointed to the personnel relations review board.

The board appointed Kelly Burgh of Bernardston as the part time (19.5 hours per week) custodian for the town hall, senior center, and library.



# New Committee Seeks Members For Televising Erving Selectboard Meetings

The Erving selectboard at its September 8 meeting issued the following call for members to join a new Televised Selectboard Meetings committee:

"The Erving Selectboard has voted and agreed that the time has come for Selectboard meetings to be televised live through Comcast, and/or through internet programming.

"The committee will be tasked with developing the service for the Town of Erving from the ground up. This would include selecting and purchasing of equipment, training of camera operators and developing policy and procedures for the program.

"The Town of Erving currently has approximately \$47,000 for this project. The amount has grown over

the years through fees generated from Erving Comcast subscribers.

If you have a desire to participate in town government and to bring transparency to our citizens as well as to film then we are looking for you!"

Please submit your name and contact information to the Erving Selectboard/Televised Selectboard Meetings.

No prior experience or training is required to be on this committee, but if you have experience in communication, television, etc. it would be a plus.

**Bill Bembury, Chair**  
**Erving Board of Selectmen**

**Margaret Sullivan**  
**Erving Board of Selectmen**

# MONTAGUE from page A1

developer will also pay standard property taxes rather than at a reduced rate under a Tax Increment Financing agreement.

Abbondanzio announced that the developer is Obear Construction, whose president, Robert Obear, has also just been appointed by the selectboard to the Franklin County Regional Planning Board.

The selectboard seemed optimistic but not overly confident, since the project will need to surmount a number of hurdles. The town must now negotiate an agreement with Obear, who will need to solidify development details and obtain financing.

A recent proposal to develop the Montague Center School Building, which appeared to be a "done deal" last fall, has been delayed repeatedly, and has recently become the subject of numerous non-public meetings between the selectboard and the developer.

In addition, Millers Falls property owner Jean Golrick raised a number of objections to the project, including whether the town has legal ownership of the property and whether Abbondanzio properly opened the sealed bids in response to the RFP.

Abbondanzio sharply defended the bidding process, and selectboard members expressed the view that the ownership issue had been settled. However, Golrick submitted two written "grievances" to the board at Monday's meeting.

## Graffiti Bylaw

In other news, police chief Chip Dodge came before the board with a new draft "graffiti bylaw," a response to increasing complaints about spraypaint on buildings in downtown Turners Falls.

The chief has consulted with community policing officer Mike Sevene on the issue and produced a bylaw based on that of the town of Wilmington, MA.

According to a memo by Dodge, the proposed bylaw is "geared more towards having the existing graffiti removed in a timely manner... It is

not about hammering someone for doing the actual graffiti."

Dodge notes that state laws deal with the graffiti artists: "the penalties are very stiff, including it being a felony, and a year-long loss of your drivers license."

Thus, the bylaw begins with the process to be followed in abating graffiti. The department will issue an order to a property owner to "abate the graffiti in a timely manner as determined by the Police Department. Failure to comply could produce a fine of \$20 per day."

The bylaw also proposes that "no person shall knowingly sell to any child under seventeen (17) years of age any aerosol container of paint capable of defacing property."

Finally, the law provides that "it shall be illegal for any person under seventeen (17) years of age to possess and/or manufacture any aerosol container of paint capable of defacing property..."

The fine for each infraction is set at \$200.

In his memo, Dodge stated that these provisions "give us an opportunity to hit them in the wallet instead of charging them with a felony."

**The bylaw would make it illegal for any person under 17 years of age to possess any aerosol container of paint.**

The selectboard agreed to put the draft bylaw on the agenda for the next special town meeting.

## Nelson: No On Diapers

Judith Weinthal, co-chair of the Franklin County Diaper Coalition, made an unusual request that the board issue a special proclamation endorsing National Diaper Need Awareness Week.

Weinthal presented information on the importance of diapers and on their recent drive, which collected enough for 17,000 diapers.

Weinthal stressed that the target is low-income families who struggle with the high cost of diapers, which can total as much as \$100 a month.

She claimed this produced a "diaper gap" in the United States.

**"At some point, these low-income families need to take care of themselves."**  
**Mike Nelson,**  
**Montague selectboard**

The selectboard voted to endorse the proclamation, yet the normally sunny Michael Nelson shocked the small crowd in attendance by voting "no." He applauded the work of the diaper advocates, but stated that "at some point, these low income families need to take care of themselves."

To this, his colleague Mark Fairbrother responded, "You said what I wanted to say, but I'm sick of being a lightning rod."

## Ramsey: Road Old

Another hot topic on the September 8 agenda was the renaming of Greenfield Road, or more precisely that section of the current road that runs south from the railroad to the footbridge. The proposal would change the name to "Old Greenfield Road."

As most local residents are painfully aware, the bridge over the railroad tracks collapsed about fifteen years ago and will not be replaced, creating a break in the road.

Town planner Walter Ramsey stated that it was "best practice" to rename one part of such a road. He also noted the problems caused using GPS to navigate a segmented road, particularly in emergency situations. Ramsey described a process involving input from local residents, who seemed to settle on the adjective "old" to the current name.

Audience member John Burek made an impassioned plea for fixing

the existing bridge and maintaining the current road. The selectboard seemed sympathetic but, as member Mike Nelson noted, "we have been discussing this forever."

Lisa Adams asked if the regional council of governments (COG) had been consulted, since it is a county road. The answer was "no," so the board put the final vote on hold for two weeks.

## Other Business

The director of RiverCulture Suzanne LoManto made a number of requests to the board regarding the September 18 "Third Thursday" arts event in Turners Falls. These included hanging colored lights in front of the Shea Theater, setting up two tents on the sidewalk, and an art installation in Spinner Park.

The latter will hang 300 to 400 cotton "utensils" on a cord between a light post and telephone pole, in order to examine "the role of women and factory work in the industrial age."

The board agreed to the requests, but directed that the utensil installation be hung from two light posts which, unlike the telephone pole, are under the control of the town.

The board approved \$26,500 for engineering services for Drainage and Soil Stabilization project on Millers Falls Road.

It awarded \$60,000 to Catlin + Petrovick Architects, PC from Keene, New Hampshire, for a Senior Center Planning Study, and established a Senior Center Planning Committee.

The board also voted to authorize two payments to Baltazar Contractors for work on the Millers Falls Sewer project. One was reduced by a nominal 1% below the required amount, due to pending litigation.



*Note: Montague Reporter editor-in-chief Chris Sawyer-Laucanno has declared a conflict of interest on matters concerning Obear's Powers Block bid. Managing editor Mike Jackson will serve as editor for all reporting on the proposed project.*

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GMRSD from page A1

reliance on faculty in making educational decisions at GMRSD (48.6%) vs. statewide (74.1%).

When asked if the faculty has an effective process for making group decisions to solve problems, only 39.4% of GMRSD faculty agreed it did. When asked if teachers at GMRSD have an appropriate level of influence on decision making in their school, only 31.3% agreed.

These are the challenges. So what are the strengths of this district? According to the superintendent's report, there are five critical strengths: the first is a dedicated staff; the second a student-centered staff. A third strength is small class sizes, the average being 14.3 students.

Fourth on the list is the district's high quality facilities and technology.

And for fifth, the report cites that the elected school committee is supportive of education of the whole child, of performance-based tasks

and critical thinking, of finding ways to help all students succeed.

The school committee has also supported performance-based, district-developed measures and local assessments of students' work.

According to the strategic plan, while the challenges are real, so are the considerable talents and strengths within the District. Teachers and administration have expressed their commitment in these terms:

"We need to do it ourselves, with limited resources. We can't spend time on unproductive things. We need to keep focused on our core: relationships with our kids, increasing our craft expertise, clarity and consensus about our goals, and communication with the community..."

The third and final segment of this review of the GMRSD Strategic Plan will present the steps now ongoing to strengthen the district and continue to turn things around.



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SEPTEMBER 11, 2014

B1

## WEST ALONG THE RIVER: LATE SUMMER SAMPLER

By DAVID BRULE

**ERVINGSIDE** – August 1. Yesterday, a day of torrential rain spent itself beating against the cedar shakes of this old house, driving at it from all sides.

The house sparrow clan, close to thirty strong, sat on the front porch railings to stay out of it, chattering and gabbing like excited children in a hail storm. Now the calm after the storm, bright sunlight floods the yard, and the river pushes its high water past the dripping maples in the distance.



*American Redstart – Setophaga ruticilla with Black & White Warbler – Mniotilta varia*

August 2. Today there are drums along the river at Peskeompskut. We have brought them back after 338 years. The steady, insistent beat carries across the river, it reaches up to the streets of the village, up to the Victorian houses high on the hill overlooking the river bank.

What emotion, what swelling pride from somewhere deep in our

past is brought on by the irresistible beat of the drumming.

Then the voices of the drummers rise up over the deep beat, women's voices, men's voices of mourning, triumph, challenge, and victory send chills through those who hear, and those who listen.

Three hundred and thirty-eight years have passed since the doomed refugees driven here by King Philip's War came to seek sanctuary beside the now placid waters. Few of those 400 people left here alive, but we have brought back their music to give voice to their spirits still present at the falls.

Later, woodland flute music brings on a meditative silence to the visitors along the river. Gentle story telling, plaintive yet persistent pure notes rise from the flute of the Mi'kmaw.

Great heron wings by, calling his dissonant *quaawk*, then a brilliant Barton Cove bald eagle sails downriver through the air, and over the falls. Geese float back and forth behind the flutist. Children toddle to the edge of the grass to touch the bank of orange-tinted jewelweed blossoms and other mixed wildflowers.

August 16. The yard is again flooding with all manner of warblers, even a family of blue-gray gnatcatchers, to add to the mix. (Do they really just catch gnats?) The black and white warblers, like the redstarts, have been summering here for weeks now with their families, moving back and forth through the late lush foliage at the edge of the lawn and garden. Just the same, autumn is waiting in the wings.

Too much a whiff of autumn yesterday: cool, foggy and damp,

see WEST page B6

## This Third Thursday:

By REPORTER STAFF

On September 18, from 5:30 to 10 p.m., downtown Turners will be the venue for all those wanting to encounter, participate and relive the fascinating and often tumultuous history of Turners Falls.

RiverCulture's Third Thursday events this month feature a wide range of activities: exhibitions, talks, performances, installations, film and workshops.

The evening kicks off at 5:30 with an Avenue A Walking History Tour led by former Montague Libraries director and Turners Falls historian Sue Sansoucie. The tour will assemble at the corner of Third and Avenue A.

At 6, the Great Falls Discovery Center will be showing a continuous film loop of *White Coal*, a documentary about water power on the Connecticut River.

In conjunction with this documentary, local historian Ed Gregory will be presenting "Dams," an audiovisual presentation on the evolu-

## History Comes To Life In Turners Falls



DAN BROWN PHOTO

*Members of the Renaissance Community in front of their Rainbow Bus, circa 1975. The "Free Spirits" used the bus for touring the countryside.*

tion of the dams and water power in Turners Falls.

Through historic images and his highly informative commentary, Gregory captures the pulse of a thriving industrial town built along the powerful Connecticut River.

Also at the Great Hall at the Dis-

covery Center is the ongoing exhibition Welcome to Railroad Salvage.

The show features paintings and drawings by Nina Rossi and Barbara Milot of the historic Griswold Cotton Mill, which also had a life as the Rockdale's Department Store and the Railroad Salvage Store.

A historical timeline by Anne Harding reminds us all of the past and present of this building.

Beth Reynolds of Base Camp Photo will be holding a free photography workshop at Our Lady of Czestochowa Parish, 84 K Street, from 6:15 to 7:45 p.m.

Participants will be able to tour this magnificent church and learn the secrets of great architectural photography.

Reynolds will also be offering tips on how best to work with natural light. Bring your camera and a tripod. Pre-registration is required: contact [riverculture@gmail.com](mailto:riverculture@gmail.com).

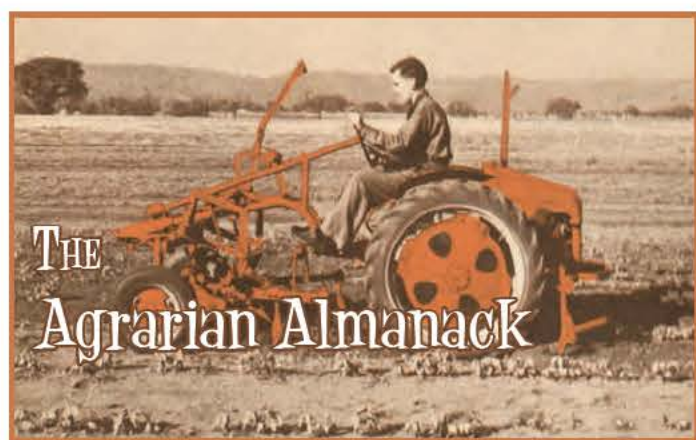
At 7 p.m., the Renaissance Community returns to the Shea Theater

see HISTORY page B4



PHOTO COURTESY RIVERCULTURE

*The First National Supermarket in Turners in the 1960s*



## A Sense Of This Place



By PETE WACKERNAGEL

**FRANKLIN COUNTY** – A long time ago, in 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade, my class was given an assignment titled "A Sense of Place." We were tasked with choosing a singular outdoor location convenient to where we lived, and to sit there for thirty minutes a day, for two spring months.

We were to keep a journal of our observations, realizations, and the moments of clarity and understanding that were supposed to come to us in insightful flashes, as if our intimacy with the place would result in some type of telepathic post-verbal communication. I chose a spot just a short walk from my front door.

My family had no real neighbors, and other than a good-sized garden, yard, septic mound covered in over-excited grass, and a steep hill behind the house my parents kept mowed, we were surrounded by woods. I chose a place below the septic mound, a thin passageway in between our yard and an old logging road that went way far up Richmond Hill.

In this place there were blackberries, a cool mossy boulder that made a good place to sit, and perhaps twenty balsam firs my parents had planted that would have been used for two decades worth of Christmas trees in an alternate future where they didn't get divorced.

I did not note *anything* particularly worthwhile throughout the exercise. I didn't see

any wildlife that I would have thought exciting. I didn't notice the probably fascinating diversity of plants that would inhabit this ecotone between field and forest.

I don't even really remember witnessing the profound changes in the trees that must have occurred during this transitional time of year. Generally, I was bored, and did not even have a good working definition of the idea of "sense of place." Despite the inherently grounding nature of the idea, it seemed pretty ephemeral and abstract to my 13-year old mind. Probably most days I quit after fifteen minutes.

I have a theory that states that anything that you are made to do as a child and hate, you will later love as an adult. It certainly holds true in this situation, as developing and nurturing a strong sense of place is one of the processes I enjoy most in farming.

It's difficult to quantify what exactly makes up one's sense of place. There are too many elements, factors, and motes of conscious and unconscious sensorial information to keep track of.

It's a very personal process as any two people will fixate on different details, notice different things, have completely independent thoughts and emotions based on the wealth of information that a place holds. My sense of place where I farm includes private aviation. There are almost always tiny single-engine planes overhead.

see AGRARIAN page B4

## OLD BOOKS AS NEW ART: RECENT WORKS BY AL SOUZA

By RICHARD BALDWIN

**WENDELL** – The Wendell Free Library Display Case exhibition is a selection of new work by town resident Al Souza.

These three-dimensional pieces are based on printed materials, books and newspapers, mostly placed in antique containers.

Two works composed of book covers are meant to be hung on vertical surface. All of these challenge the viewer to rethink what reading and books can be about.

the contemporary world, but not in mine. In my bookworks, I combine the edges – the gilding, marbling, or spines – of the pages from different books. I re-use those parts of the books that hint at what's contained within.

"Initially, I presented these page edges in unfinished, raw wood frames. Recently, I have taken to using worn, wooden boxes as the receptacle for these cuttings. It's been commented that these boxes act like coffins for the remnants of the books,

but that would only hold true if I thought the books were dead.

"Actually, it's more of a mating of two different containers of information -- the book and the box. Although the frames also contain the visual information that I put into them, they seem of ancillary importance. My choice of the particular box that I use for certain edges gives the two equal weight in the decision making process and the dialogue that they create."

In this work the experience of reading is radically transformed. The act of looking at a page is converted into visually experiencing an entirely



BALDWIN PHOTO

*Al Souza object in the Wendell Free Library "Display Case" show.*

Mr. Souza writes: "I am ... particularly interested in old books, usually from the 19th century. With the advent of digitizing, many have been de-accessioned from libraries.

"They have become irrelevant, useless in

new object.

The page is changed into balls or into rolls; edges are changed to a subtly variegated and gilded surface; covers transformed

see SOUZA page B4

# Pet of the Week

Do you need a little Pepper to spice up your life?

I am a very social kitty who gets along well with other cats and children here at Dakin.

I came in as a stray so not too much is known about my past, but I have quickly become a staff favorite!

I may look a little scruffy, but I am super soft and very sweet.

I am really not like pepper at all, and I promise I will not try to make you sneeze!

So come by and say hello. Please give me a pat or play with me.

I love all the attention I can get! I would make a wonderful companion for most any home.



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

PEPPER!

## Senior Center Activities September 15 through 19

**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 9/15**  
10:10 a.m. Aerobics  
10:50 a.m. Chair Exercise  
1 p.m. Knitting Circle  
**Tuesday 9/16**  
10:30 a.m. Chair Yoga  
Noon Lunch  
**Wednesday 9/17**  
10:10 a.m. Aerobics  
10:55 a.m. Chair Exercise  
Noon Lunch  
12:45 p.m. Bingo  
**Thursday 9/18**  
9 a.m. Tai Chi  
Noon Lunch  
1:00 p.m. Pitch & Five Crowns  
**Friday 9/19**  
10:10 a.m. Aerobics  
10:50 a.m. Chair Aerobics

**ERVING**  
Erving Senior Center, 1 Care Drive, Erving, is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. for activities and congregate meals.  
Lunch is at 11:30 a.m., with reservations required 24 hours in advance. Call Mealsite Manager Rebecca Meuse at (413) 423-3308, for meal information and reservations.  
For information, call Polly Kiely, Senior Center Director, at (413) 423-3649. Transportation can be provided for meals, shopping, or medical necessity.  
Call the Center to confirm activities, schedule a ride, or find out when is the next blood pressure clinic.  
**Monday 9/15**  
9 a.m. Tai Chi  
10 a.m. Osteo Exercise  
12:30 p.m. Movie  
**Tuesday 9/16**  
8:45 a.m. Chair Aerobics  
10 a.m. Dance Fitness  
12:30 p.m. Painting  
**Wednesday 9/17**  
8:45 a.m. Aerobics  
10 a.m. Chair Yoga  
Noon Bingo  
**Thursday 9/18**  
8:45 a.m. Aerobics  
Noon Cards  
**Friday 9/19**  
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.

**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.

## Wendell Meetinghouse Seeks Donations



The Friends of the Wendell Meetinghouse are raising money to cover the costs of an energy assessment to supplement the Historic Structures Report that is currently being drafted for the building.

The energy report will cost \$2000 and an anonymous donor from New Salem has promised to match up to \$1000 for all donations received for this project by September 30.

This historic structures report will provide documentation for historic preservation grants and detailed plans for repairs and improvements to the building. The energy assessment, which

is not required for state historic preservation grants, will recommend energy upgrades for compliance with energy codes and thermal performance of the structure.

The reports are being drafted by Architect Margo Jones from Jones Whitsett Architects of Greenfield, who also designed the town's new library and town office building.

Please send donations to Friends of the Wendell Meetinghouse, PO Box 171, Wendell, MA 01379. For more information please visit our website [www.wendell-meetinghouse.org](http://www.wendell-meetinghouse.org) or call Nan Riebschlaeger at (978) 544-2741.

JESSICA LARKIN ILLUSTRATION

### THE HEALTHY GEEZER

## Where Can I Get a Second Opinion?

By FRED CICETTI

*Q. Is it dangerous to take a beta-blocker for high blood pressure?*

There was one study that found that beta-blockers may increase the risk of having a heart attack or stroke if you are using them to treat high blood pressure *alone*. If you are taking a beta blocker, discuss it with your doctor. Warning: Don't stop taking the drug on your own.

Beta blockers, also known as beta-adrenergic blocking agents, are medications that reduce your blood pressure by blocking the effects of the hormone epinephrine, also known as adrenaline.

When you take beta blockers, the heart beats more slowly and with less force; this reduces blood pressure. Beta blockers also help blood vessels open up to improve blood flow.

Doctors prescribe beta blockers to prevent, treat or improve symptoms in a variety of other conditions, such as irregular heart rhythm (arrhythmia), heart failure, chest pain (angina), heart attacks, glaucoma, migraines, generalized anxiety disorder, hyperthyroidism and tremors.

The following are the brand names for common beta-blockers: Sectral, Tenormin, Kerlone, Zebeta, Cartrol, Tandate, Lopressor, Toprol XL, Corgard, Levatol, Viskin, Inderal, Betapace, and Blocadren.

*Q. How should I go about choosing a surgeon?*

The American College of Surgeons (ACS) recommends that you look for a surgeon who is board certified and a fellow of the college.

Specialty boards certify physicians who meet published standards. For physicians to become board certified in a surgical specialty, they must complete the required years of residency training in that specialty, and then pass a comprehensive examination.

The specialty boards issue certificates that are valid for six to ten years. To retain certification, physicians must become recertified and must show continuing education in their specialty.

Fellows of the ACS are board-certified surgeons whose education, training, professional qualifications, surgical competence, and ethical conduct have been found to be consistent with the college's standards. The letters "FACS" after a surgeon's name stands for Fellow of the American College of Surgeons.

If you want to know about a surgeon, you can phone your state or county medical association for help. Or you can just ask a prospective surgeon to provide credentials. Often, you can find the information you need hanging in frames on a surgeon's office walls.

*Q. What questions should I ask before undergoing an operation?*

Here is a list of significant questions you can ask your doctor before the surgery:

- Why do I need the operation?
- Do I need it now, or can it wait?
- What happens if I *don't* have the operation?
- What are the benefits of having the operation?
- How long will the benefits last?
- What are the risks of having the operation?
- Are there alternatives to surgery?
- How will the surgery affect my quality of life?
- Where can I get a second opinion?
- What experience do you have performing this surgery?
- Where will the operation be done?
- Will I have to stay overnight in the hospital?
- Is it possible to have same-day surgery as an out-patient?
- What kind of anesthesia will I need?
- What are the side effects and risks of having anesthesia?
- How long will it take me to recover?
- Will I be in pain? How long will the pain last?
- When will I be able to go home after the surgery?
- What will the recovery be like?
- Can you draw a diagram and explain how you do the surgery?
- Can you please mark the part of my body you will operate on?
- Is there anything else I should know about this surgery?

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

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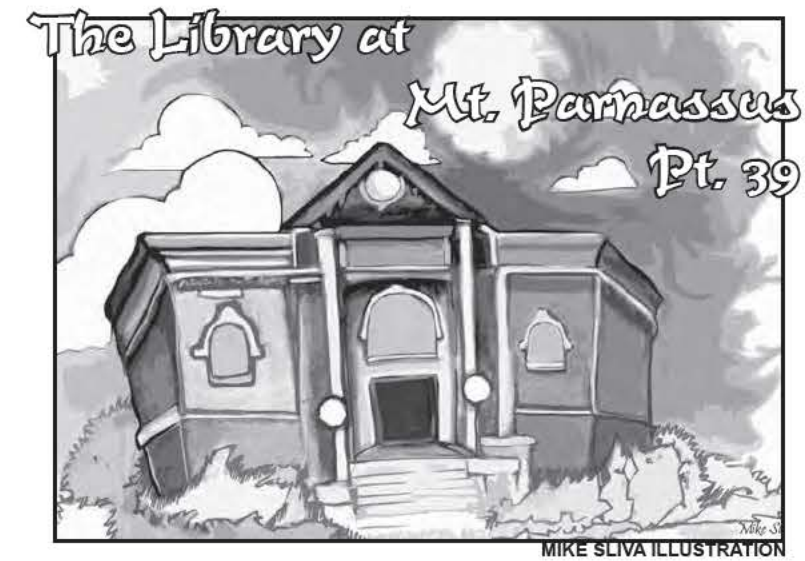
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Melantha relies on a tried and true method of seeking the hidden treasures of the library's collection.



By DAVID DETMOLD

“Ah,” I said. “The old card catalogue. There’s a fail safe method. But some patrons might appreciate being able to hook up to the internet in this day and age, you know?”

“They do,” said Melantha, turning over another card. It was the King of Swords. She placed it upside down at the end of the tarot spread.

Without warning, the town building inspector, Hector Jarvis, walked in through the double doors. He shook the snow off the collar of his beat up old pea jacket, and a pack of Balkan Sobranies fell out of his pocket and scattered on the floor.

Jarvis bent down to pick up the cigarettes, butt his glasses were so fogged in the steam of his arrival it seemed he was locating them mainly by touch. He missed a few.

“Hector,” said Melantha. “I thought you were in Tahiti.”

“I just got back,” he said, taking off his gloves and his glasses and depositing them on the desktop, where they began forming a small water seep. Melantha swept the cards up in an untidy mess and dropped them in a desk drawer.

“Where’s Clare?” said Jarvis.

“Weren’t the South Seas to your liking?” she responded. “No thatched pole huts for you to inspect? No native girls in hibiscus skirts?”

“I had to get back to work,” said Jarvis humorlessly. “I hear town meeting has decided to spend more money repairing this old dump.”

“Perhaps they will change their minds and leave well enough alone,” said Melantha, adding mildly, “now that you are here.”

“That crack in the front landing is dangerous,” said Jarvis.

“Not if you approach it carefully.”

“The uniform code is designed to eliminate guesswork, especially in municipal buildings.” He blinked myopically at the python on Melantha’s shoulders.

“Guesswork. That is a term I am unfamiliar with.”

“People have to make their way in safely, don’t they?” demanded Jarvis. “That landing isn’t up to code.”

“Code?” said Melantha, flaring her nostrils. “Where is the code for the Hermetic knowledge laid down years ago by the founders? Architecture is the blueprint of revelation. Best not to tamper with the design of the original masons.”

“I believe town meeting was mistaken in one respect,” said Jarvis, wiping his glasses on his shirt-tails. “They can’t rebuild the outside stairs.”

“On this we agree,” said Melantha.

“No,” the building inspector continued. “They’ll have to make the front entrance handicapped accessible. With a rise as steep as that, that should prove cost prohibitive.” Jarvis delivered this verdict as he bent down to retrieve a damp cigarette from the mud puddle at his feet. “We want everyone to have equal access to the library.”

Lucius appeared beside him from out of nowhere, his arms akimbo, his pudgy hands balled into fists. He stared up at Jarvis, who took no notice.

“I’ve already asked the select-board to look into alternative plans, and to see about rescinding that vote,” said Jarvis.

“Do tell.”

“The idea is to put up a new building, out by the sanitary landfill, to house the senior center, the highway garage, and the library all in one.”

A thin stream of steam started to whistle from the tea kettle. Jarvis took his glasses off again to wipe them on his shirt.

“It will just be a simple big box concrete block construction. Nobody can afford to build anything as ornate as this building anymore. But it should allow us to kill two or three birds with one stone,” said Jarvis, in his flat, nasal cadence.

I looked over to see how Ulysses was taking this.

“And how, pray,” said Melantha, drawing herself up to her full height, with the python’s head arcing sightlessly up from one shoulder, “do you imagine a town as poor as ours will find the money to pay for such a construction?”

“By selling this one.”

“Hector!”

Old Clare came careening around the corner of the card catalogue. “Do I have to chase you all around the building? I thought our appointment was for ten of three.”

“Sorry. I got delayed. My secretary double-booked me.”

“I’ll double book you,” said Clare, knocking his pipe out in a shower of sparks on a hard cover edition of Kenneth Clarke’s *On Bureaucracy*.

Continued next week .

#### HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

### Officer Advises That This Will Likely Recur

Monday, 9/1

12:51 a.m. Multiple reports of a power outage on Fairway Avenue. WMECO notified.

11:54 a.m. Report of several subjects standing on the island below the General Pierce Bridge. Officer found that subjects were fishing and that water was not at a dangerous level.

12 noon. Party into lobby to report that tall flowers/plants near the stop sign at South Lyman Street and Millers Falls Road were creating a hazard, and that she nearly struck a pedestrian today because she could not see through them. Responding officer advises that there is plenty of sight distance; no need for further action.

5:02 p.m. Caller reports she arrived home to her Avenue A apartment 10 minutes ago, observed a male coming from the direction of her apartment, and noticed her door was kicked in. Unknown whether anything is missing. Report taken.

6:33 p.m. Large limb on power lines at Greenfield Road and Meadow Road causing power outage. Road closed briefly.

6:54 p.m. Caller reports that earlier he passed a small black vehicle pulled over near Turners Falls and Millers Falls Roads; the vehicle then came up behind him and bumped his vehicle. No damage to his vehicle, but he smelled alcohol on the other operator. Referred to an officer.

9:52 p.m. Multiple calls reporting loud yelling and screaming coming from the alley between Third and Fourth Streets. Investigated; officer will be filing a child abuse/neglect report.

10:15 p.m. 911 caller from Turners Falls Road reports that he was awoken by his grandparents, who told him that there was a female in their kitchen calling the grandfather’s name. Officers spoke to parties and checked area; unable to locate.

Tuesday, 9/2

2:38 a.m. Caller from Rastallis Street reports a suspicious vehicle parked near their apartment; caller’s boyfriend observed the vehicle occupants attempting to get their cat to come to the car. Subjects left and drove to the town garage, where they parked for several minutes with lights off, then head-

ed toward M Street. Area search negative.

6:45 a.m. Caller reports that her daughter’s bike was stolen from their basement on Newton Street, and that she saw a juvenile male known to her riding it in Erving. Suspect contacted and advised of situation and options.

9:51 a.m. Officer addressed graffiti issue on Avenue A.

12:56 p.m. Caller locked out of vehicle in the Family Dollar parking lot; caller’s grandson is inside the vehicle. Services rendered.

2 p.m. Cumberland Farms employee conveyed a report that a woman left a child in her unlocked, running vehicle while she went into the store. Vehicle last seen heading toward Avenue A. Area search negative; requested Greenfield PD to perform welfare check at owner’s last known address.

5:27 p.m. Passerby reports a bear that was in the area of Millers Falls Road and may now be hung up on a fence by the airport. Area search negative.

7:02 p.m. Model airplane crashed into a tree at airport, causing the tree to catch on fire. No buildings endangered, but more trees nearby. TFFD notified and en route. Fire extinguished.

Wednesday, 9/3

8:40 a.m. Report of a road rage incident that began on T Street and continued through Montague City across the General Pierce Bridge into Greenfield. Referred to Greenfield PD.

8:54 a.m. Request for extra patrols at North Leverett Road and Ripley Road, where a resident periodically hears vehicles revving their engines and can see tire marks in the road.

11:45 a.m. [REDACTED] was arrested on a straight warrant.

2:41 p.m. Caller observed a male holding what she believed to be a shotgun inside a trash bag on Avenue A. Caller did not see a shotgun, but suspected it based on the positioning of the subject’s hand, which appeared to be on a trigger. Officer checked area; unable to locate. Officer advised that there are people in the area cleaning up and that the subject may have been with that group.

5:53 p.m. Caller states that she may have left a “Martha Stewart” bag and inside that a “Vera Bradley” bag containing all of her medications in a neighbor’s apartment. Caller unable to contact neighbor. Report taken.

6:55 p.m. Following a vehicle stop on Third Street, a party was removed to the hospital.

Thursday, 9/4

11:13 a.m. Caller reports that his grandfather was driving through a work area in Montague Center and sideswiped a work truck. Confirmed no injuries. Officer found that caller’s grandfather’s vehicle may have broken a brake line. Report taken.

2:40 p.m. Motor vehicle accident with airbag deployment at Millers Falls Road and Turnpike Road. MedCare advised of injury to passenger. Summons issued; report taken.

7:10 p.m. Caller reports her child’s orange bike was stolen from her mother’s house on Greenfield Cross Road and that there have been other items stolen from the house recently. Report taken.

10:16 p.m. Call transferred from Northampton State Police; party requesting assistance in retrieving her belongings from her ex’s apartment on Fifth Street. Services rendered.

10:28 p.m. Caller from New Street reports that his girlfriend is drunk and out of control, hitting him and others. Montague and Erving officers en route. Caller called back and requested an ambulance; female had fallen over the porch railing and was unconscious but breathing. TFFD and MedCare advised. Female transported to hospital.

Friday, 9/5

8:33 a.m. Complaint regarding dog barking from midnight to 3 a.m. on Greenfield Road. Animal control will follow up.

10:20 a.m. Request for an officer in conjunction with an earlier call: previously hospitalized female left ER before staff could remove her IV, traveled to Turners Falls, and left with her 20 month old son accompanied by her aunt. Greenfield and State Police requested to be on lookout. Protective order involving female faxed to MPD by court. Subsequent call from New Street reported that mother, child,

and aunt had arrived and that the infant’s father was present; all appeared to be calm. Officers responded to scene and served female with paperwork.

10:51 a.m. Caller reported that last night a female kicked in his door and broke into his apartment on Fifth Street. Caller’s medication is now missing. Referred to an officer.

8:49 p.m. Caller reports that he came home to find a bicycle in a parking spot on Third Street that he pays for every month. Caller states that if something happens to his car, he is going to “hurt someone real bad.” Caller also states that he cut the tires on the bike, because they have no business parking in his spot. Officer en route; unable to locate bike.

Saturday, 9/6

12:06 a.m. 911 caller reports that a woman on the third floor level of the fire escape is trying to gain entry into a building on Canal Street. Officers en route. Female taken into protective custody.

8:44 a.m. Report of a male screaming offensive things from a house on G Street; ongoing issue. Peace restored. Officer advises that this will likely recur.

3:37 p.m. Caller advises that three youths are grabbing a snapping turtle by the tail and poking it with a stick near the car wash on Montague City Road. Area search negative.

8:12 p.m. Motor vehicle rollover with entrapment on Sunderland Road. Vehicle occupant conscious with unknown injuries. MCFD, TFFD, MedCare, and Amherst Ambulance advised. WMECO notified. Vehicle towed.

Sunday, 9/7

10:01 a.m. Dead turkey removed from Millers Falls Road.


10:01 a.m. Millers Falls Road residents warned regarding exceeding allowed number of tag sales per year.

4:59 p.m. Report of a highly intoxicated white male carrying a paper bag with a beer can in it; last seen walking down L Street toward Fourth Street. Unable to locate.

5:57 p.m. Caller from Rendezvous reports an intoxicated male bothering patrons; party was kicked out earlier but has returned. Party located and transported to the residence where he is staying.

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## ONGOING:

## EVERY SUNDAY

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

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

## EVERY MONDAY

Montague Center Library: *Evening Story Time*. Young children and their families are invited to wind down at the end of the day with stories, with Angela. Children are invited to come in their pajamas. 6:30-7:00 p.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.

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

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

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

## EVERY WEDNESDAY

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

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

## EVERY THURSDAY

Carnegie Library, Turners Falls: *Music and Movement with Tom Carroll & Laurie Davidson*. Children and their caregivers invited. 10 a.m. Moves to Millers Falls Library in September.

## EVERY FRIDAY

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

## ART SHOWS:

Porter-Phelps-Huntington House Museum, Hadley: *Field Notes 4: Transect* an exhibition of drawings, paintings, collages and sculptures created by architects Sigrid Miller Pollin & Stephen Schreiber, landscape architect Jane Thurber. Through 10/15.

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: *Chalkboard Windows* by Nicole Holmes. A blending of usable art with an antique feel. On display through October 25th.

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Welcome to Railroad Salvage* on display in the Great Hall through Sept 30. Constructions, reliefs and large scale drawings by Turners Falls artists Nina Rossi and Barbara Milot, with historical timeline and commentary by Anne Harding. Reception on Saturday, September 13 from 1-4 p.m., with a presentation by Anne Harding of juicy details from the building's past, from its beginnings as the Griswold Mill to its present state of neglect, at approximately 2:30 pm during the reception.

## CALL FOR ART:

Call for art submissions for the Fourth Annual *Triple S: Sensual, Sexual, Smut* show. Looking for a wide spectrum of erotic art from regional artists, previous participants encouraged. Exhibit opens February 2015 at Nina's Nook, Turners Falls. Send submissions to naban@verizon.net before Jan 23. Info: [www.ninas-nook.com](http://www.ninas-nook.com)

## EVENTS:

## THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 11

Deja Brew, Wendell: *The Surly Temple*, Jim Henry, Guy DeVito & Doug Plavin, 8 p.m.

## FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 12

Artspace, Greenfield: Franklin County Inside Art opening reception. See page A1 for story. 5 to 7 p.m.

Montague Center: Traveling Rhubarb Circus presents: *Look* a production featuring constellations in the story of Queen Cassiopeia and her pet swan Cygnus, Princess Andromeda, Orion, Perseus and many other well known constellation characters, \$, 6:30 p.m. Limited tickets at [www.travelingrhubarb.com](http://www.travelingrhubarb.com)

Sunderland Public Library, Sunderland: *Zydeco Connection* as part of the River Summer Concert Series. A mix of zydeco, two-steps, waltzes, boogie woogie and a little swing. Outdoor



Ray Mason at the Great Falls Coffeehouse at the Discovery Center, Turners Falls on September 12, at 7 p.m. "Ray's tunes follow no trend while keeping an upward slide on the songwriting scale. It's rock with the roll! One man with his Silvertone!"

event with indoor facility in case of rain. Lil'Cyn on accordion, Eileen Almeida on vocals and rubboard, Mike Rose on drums, Dave Leblanc on bass and Larry Ochs on guitar. 6:30 p.m.

Jung Association of Western Mass. presents: *Psyche and Symbol*, a Joseph Campbell film, panel discussion with Jungian analysts to follow. Held in Seelye Hall 106, Smith College, Northampton, 7 p.m.

Great Falls Discovery Center Coffee House, Turners Falls: *Ray Mason*. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. Coffee and homemade baked goods, museum and museum store open during intermission. \$, performance at 7 p.m.

Montague Common Hall, Montague Center: *Scottish musician + Harp with Jim Malcolm* singer songwriter from Scotland with a

local harp Trio opening, 7 p.m.

First Congregational Church of Montague, Montague Center: *Heaven is For Real*. Movie about a small-town father who must find the courage and conviction to share his son's extraordinary, life-changing experience with the world. 7 p.m.

Parlor Room, Northampton: *Winterpills*, \$, 7 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Uncle Hal's Crab Grass Band*, Americana, 6:30 & 8:30 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Barrett Anderson*, renegade blues, 9 p.m.

## SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 13

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Welcome to Railroad Salvage* opening, 1 to 4 p.m., with presentation at 2:30 p.m.

Montague Center: Traveling Rhubarb Circus presents: *Look*. 3 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. See 9/12 listing.

Montague Bookmill, Montague Center: *Dennis Caraher & Dave Dersham*, award-winning songwriters, \$, 8 p.m.

Wendell Full Moon Coffeehouse, Town Hall Wendell: *Charles Neville*. *Open Mic* at 7:30 p.m. main act follows at 8 p.m. \$, sliding scale donation, cash only. Decadently Delicious Dessert-orama.

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

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *The Snaz* and guests, indie, 9:30 p.m.

Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: *Electric Carnival*, blues, \$, 9:30

p.m.

## SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 14

Leverett Library, Leverett: *Harvey Allen: Conservation Volunteer* a video interview and discussion with Harvey about his work in conservation. Sponsored by the Rattlesnake Gutter Trust, 2 p.m.

Montague Center: Traveling Rhubarb Circus presents: *Look*. 3 p.m. See 9/12 listing.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Crow's Rebellion*, 8 p.m.

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

## MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 15

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

## TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16

Greenfield Public Library: *Sit With Less Pain: Gentle Yoga For Meditators and Everyone*

Else, book signing with author Jean Earlbbaum. Short talk about the book, a half hour chair yoga class demonstration and Q & A with author, 6:30 p.m.

## THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 18

First Congregational Church of Montague, Montague Center: *Interfaith Council of Franklin County pot luck*, 5:30 p.m. with meeting at 6:30, all are welcome to join this multi-faith group that meets monthly throughout Franklin County.

Turners Falls: *Third Thursday* events. See page B1 for full schedule.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Half Shaved Jazz*, 7:30 p.m.

## FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 19

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Santina King* and guests, 9:30 p.m.



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## WEST from B1

too much like October for our mid-August. At least today the sun is back; warblers again patrol the bushes, late summer life swarms through the garden, and the pumpkins grow by themselves.

This night however, the skies are empty. The summer swifts have stolen away, slipped off, and although we were expecting this to happen, there is a tinge of melancholy to the empty sunset.

Each twilight full of chattering swifts overhead was counted as a real gift of summer, and good times. But somehow we knew, the other evening after a heavy rain when swifts and swallows filled the sky, that they were leaving.

And now they're gone for sure. Their last winging fly-by overhead seemed to send the message of departure: "So long! We're off to the sunny climes! We'll leave you to the changing season and the cold. That's not for us!"

To be sure, just beyond those last swifts, far and away, the first migrating night hawk knives through the air, down from the north to linger here awhile before angling off to the south, where he'll spend the winter with his kin and cousins.

2 September. All nature seems to be pausing. After a day when the woods were quiet, and no birds moved in the sky, summer once again showed the heavy, hot, humid side of its split personality. In spite of an overnight rain that cleansed the dust from every leaf and blade of grass, by noontime the yard was quiet under the weight of the heat.

Birds have retreated to the green vales of shade to pass the afternoon quietly. The cicadas drone their electric buzz from the pitch pines, complaining, or perhaps delighting in the piercing heat. Katydid take over with their racheting rasp as the sun goes down.

This evening, a hundred night-hawks knife and swirl in the evening sky heading south. Already! Their cousins the swifts are now long gone. The nighthawks, called bull-bats by some, are batting clean-up. They sweep the skies of high-flying insects, pushing all before them. They are the last of the winged host that depends on swarms of prey in the ocean of the sky.

A frost will not be long in coming, and these birds that dwell in the air rarely touching the earth, will want to be gone well ahead of the cold.

A triumph of bats burst from the tall oaks, swirling and diving just ten feet overhead in the dusk. Four, five, six or more angle and plunge,

mad as hatters in their hump-backed flight. The singing of tens of thousands of crickets is constant. At the edge of the woods, to our ears, these fall crickets out-sing their spring counterparts, the hyla peepers, with their chanting and ringing.

7 September. It is so hot and heavy. This could be the shore of some bayou along the Mississippi. The still air hangs heavy and damp. A drawl creeps into our conversations, even though we've never lived south of the Mason-Dixon Line! It's just that hot.

A summer mist floats and softens the edges of the yard, while the infernal cricket hordes ring and saw away on their ten thousand silver fiddles.

Yet, we can linger in the early morning yard, satisfied and full of summer as after a delectable, filling meal. The lion of contentment, satisfied and sleepy, has placed his huge paw lightly on our chest, as one poet described this feeling. We can be sure we have savored summer.

The grass is a deep emerald green, still growing. Some of the flowers have gone by, but others are ready and waiting, like the mauve asters, and the orange jewelweed now nuzzled by bumblebees and probed deep by hummingbirds.

The heavy, sweet purple scent of wild foxgrapes floats through the yard, and along the river. In our imagination, they await some laughing and sassy Mediterranean maiden to pick them and knead them, squishing the purple clusters between their toes in some far-off oaken vat.

That's not likely to happen in staid old New England! But it is the kind of thought evoked by this summer day, heavy-laden with its summer fruit and the weight of contentment.

The river is now slow and low, but still moving, passing by here night and day. Even the river has its summer moods. The Blue Heron dozes on the sun-bleached trunk of the massive oak tree fallen into the current years ago. The living is easy. No need to rush.

The crisp days are ahead, coming sooner than we think, when the cold that defines New England will arrive with the turn of the calendar or the phases of the moon. But for now, let's linger in the feeling of being caught in the laziness and drawl of the Deep South, and keep this summer feeling for just another day or two.



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