



A Well Traveled Reporter In the Caymans

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Highlights of the Spring Parade

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LAKE PLEASANT MILLERS FALLS MONTAGUE CENTER MONTAGUE CITY TURNERS FALLS

The Montague Reporter

YEAR 10 – NO. 29

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

APRIL 19, 2012

Leverett School Committee Chair Steps Down, but Leaves Much to Think About



Farshid Hajir

BY PATRICIA PRUITT – Farshid Hajir, completing his fifth year, will step down from the Leverett School Committee on April 28th. He cited increasing responsibilities at his work as a professor in the math department at UMass Amherst.

Recalling his first days on the school committee, Hajir used the phrase “guardian of the schools” to describe what he believed he would be doing when he was first elected in 2007. Hajir described himself in those years as a “novice to town government, including the role and duties of the school committee. That first year there was a lot of talk about budget cutting, but there were no real budget issues.”

In his second year, having been made chair, he focused on learning what the school com-

mittee was supposed to do. He became central to budget discussions. He felt at that time the governance structure of local schools was threatened by initiatives at the state level, namely the from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the Executive Office of Education, which were looking to regionalize local districts into larger entities so that, for example, if Chicopee could educate 10,000 students in one district, Franklin County, with a similarly sized student population, could do the same.

It soon became clear that Franklin County towns were not conveniently laid out close together and were also eager to keep their local schools going.

Hajir feels it is important for towns to maintain control over their own school districts.

He next immersed himself as school committee chair in the Amherst Regional School District. The Amherst district was having a terrible year: a new superintendent left after only ten months, and the district had a two million dollar shortfall. Hajir called that a very difficult and

see **SCHOOL** page 11

Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders: “VERMONT HAS THE LEGAL RIGHT” TO SHUT VY

– April 14th, 2012



DETMOULD PHOTO

Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders spoke to a crowd numbering in the thousands on the Brattleboro town common, on April 14th.

BY BERNIE SANDERS – “What we are talking about is one of the great struggles of our times, all over the world:

“That is, to create an energy future for our kids and our grandkids. That’s what we are talking about.

“In Vermont, what we are talking about is justice. We are demanding justice from an agreement that was signed 40 years ago. When a major corporation says at the end of 40 years it is going to shut [Vermont Yankee] down, Entergy has to honor that agreement and shut it down.

“What we are talking about is the need to transform our energy

system away from nuclear power and fossil fuels to energy efficiency and sustainable energy.

“The struggle in which Vermont is engaged can lead the nation, and America can lead the world – that’s what we are doing here today.

“There are a number of issues at stake. Clearly, safety is a major issue. I don’t have to remind you, little more than a year ago in Fukushima, Japan, an earthquake and tsunami knocked out offsite power leading to meltdowns at three of six operating reactors. One hundred thousand people were forced to evacuate, many of whom will never return to their

homes. It impacted their entire economy in Japan, and to some degree the world’s economy.

“The lesson of Fukushima is: when you are dealing with nuclear power, 99.9% is not good enough.

“When you’re dealing with nuclear power, you’ve got to remember, every disaster is unthinkable until it happens.

“Our job is to make sure those disasters never happen – by phasing out nuclear power in America.

“I serve on the energy committee in the U.S. Senate, and there have been 71 instances when corporations came to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission asking to extend the operating licenses of their nuclear reactors. And on 71 occasions, the NRC said, ‘Yes.’ There is something wrong with that picture.

“This is the same NRC the Associated Press said last year, after an exhaustive survey, ‘has been working closely with the nuclear power industry to keep the nation’s aging reactors operating within safety standards by repeatedly weakening those standards, or simply failing to enforce them’.”

“This is the same NRC that by a secret 3-2 vote recommended

see **SANDERS** page 10

Mysterious Stone Circles Uncovered in Unity Park



JOSEPH A. PARZYCH PHOTO

Construction Work is in Progress at Unity Park

BY JOSEPH A. PARZYCH **TURNERS FALLS** – Employees from the Mass West Construction Company of Granby, MA, working on the first phase of reconstruction at Unity Park, have uncovered mysterious mortared stone cir-

cles as they prepare for repaving the parking lot. The stone circles are not the remains of Native American habitation or the ancient ruins of Druids. They are the coal silo foundations of the former Turners Falls Coal Company, later purchased

by Shanahans.

The New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad ran railroad tracks along the east side of the canal and the along the Connecticut River to deliver coal to several wooden silos, built by Dan see **CIRCLES** page 11

The Falltown String Band KEEPING THAT OLD TIME MUSIC ALIVE AND KICKING



ANNE HARDING PHOTO

The Falltown String Band, (l-r) Jack Nelson, Marcia Day, Jason Burbank, Danny Shedd, Steve Alves, Sue Shedd, and Marvin Shedd

BY ANNE HARDING **BERNARDSTON** – The Falltown String Band is celebrating their silver anniversary: 25 years of playing together in various incarnations – quite a record in the world of music. Falltown plays a wide variety of venues in the area. Between regular gigs at the Rendezvous in

Turners Falls and Rooster’s Bistro in Northfield, not to mention church meetings, coffee houses, weddings, class reunions and such, the band plays an average of four or five performances a month.

They routinely print their tongue-in-cheek “world tour” t-shirts with an extensive list of humble

arenas ranging from Goshen to Orange to obscure watering holes in southeastern Vermont. Band members share a love of traditional roots music and attribute their longevity to their low-key, non-competitive style and fluid band lineup. Most members play at least two

see **BAND** page 7

PET OF THE WEEK

The Fuzz Ball Fur You



Fuzz

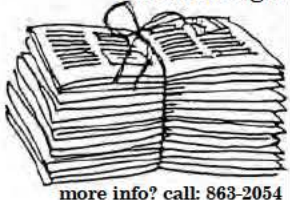
Hi, I guess they call me Fuzz cuz I'm fuzzy. I'm a 4 year old male longhair cat in need of a home. I like fuzzy friends too. In my last home, I peacefully coexisted with a hound mix. I also like other cats. We will play and groom each other. My favorite toy is an empty box. I have indoor/outdoor experience, but when indoors I did not try to escape, so if you'd like to keep me safely inside I might be agreeable to that. I am a friendly and affectionate lap cat so if you'd like to meet me, please ask a staff member!

For more information on adopting me, contact the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society at (413) 548-9898 or info@dpvhs.org.

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MONTAGUE AND THE UNDERGROUND RAILWAY AND CIVIL WAR EFFORT

The Montague Historical Society is meeting Sunday, April 22nd, at 2:00 p.m. at the Security Complex community room on Turners Falls Road as part of the sesquicentennial anniversary of the Civil War, and in remembrance of the Montague men who left farms and families to enlist in the Union army. Ed Gregory, local historian and author, will tell about a Montague resident's Civil War experiences as revealed in his diary. In addition the society will display photos, articles, G.A.R. records. If you have medals, letters, or photos to share, please feel free to bring them. Refreshments will be served. For more information, call (413) 367-2280.

By the start of the war, Montague had been involved in

the anti-slavery movement for over a decade. Avery Clapp, whose home faced the common, posted a picture he had drawn on his fence of negro slaves being lashed by their master. Printed in bold letters beneath was the word "Protection." Montague was part of the Underground Railroad. At least two houses have small hidden rooms where run-away slaves were sheltered on their way north. The Taft home in Turners Falls was also part of the system.

In the 1860 presidential election, Montague gave 211 of its 234 votes to Abraham Lincoln. 120 men, some of whom had never ventured out of Franklin County, were shipped south by boxcar all over the country. 24 lost their lives.

WENDELL LIBRARY NEWS

Local Political Communes of the 1960s

A multimedia talk will be given on Friday, April 20th, at 7:00 p.m. at the Wendell Free Library.

The Sixties, remembered as a decade of social change and turmoil also saw widespread experiments in "back to the land" communal living. Many such communes or "intentional communities" existed in our local area.

Dan and Nina Keller will discuss the history and influence of such local communities with a focus on two where they were members: the Montague Farm, from which the alternative media Liberation News Service operat-

ed, and Jimmy's Popcorn, which Dan founded in Wendell. Using a selection of books and documentary footage they will reflect upon this utopian tradition in Massachusetts and compare this history to current local agricultural and protest movements.

Dan Keller is a documentary film-maker, organic farmer, and a member of the Wendell Selectboard. Nina Keller is an educator, organic farmer, writer, political activist, and has been farming in Montague and Wendell for 43 years.

The talk will be followed by a Q&A with refreshments served.



Dan and Nina Keller will speak on the history of local communes at the Wendell Free Library on Friday, April 20th, at 7 p.m.

SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES – April 23rd - 29th

GILL-MONTAGUE – Senior Center, 62 Fifth Street, Turners Falls, is open Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Congregate meals are served Tuesday through Thursday at noon. Meal reservations must be made one day in advance by 11:00 a.m. Kerry Togneri is the meal site manager. Council on Aging director is Roberta Potter. All fitness classes are supported by a grant from the Executive Office of Elder Affairs. Voluntary donations are accepted. For information, meal reservations, or to sign up for programs, call (413) 863-9357. Messages can be left on our machine if the center is not open.

Monday, April 23rd

10:00 a.m. Aerobics
10:45 a.m. Chair Exercise
1:00 p.m. Knitting Circle

Tuesday, April 24th

10:30 a.m. Seated Health Program
1:00 p.m. RAD Class

Wednesday, April 25th

10:00 a.m. Aerobics
10:30 a.m. Monthly Health Screening
12:45 p.m. Bingo

Thursday, April 26th

9:00 a.m. Tai Chi

1:00 p.m. Pitch
Friday, April 27th
10:00 a.m. Aerobics
10:45 a.m. Chair Exercise
1:00 p.m. Writing Group
Saturday, April 28th
10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Discard your expired and unnecessary drugs at the annual Drug Collection Day at the Montague Public Safety Complex.
Sunday, April 29th
1:00 p.m. "As You Write It" reading and reception at the Senior Center. Free admission.

ERVING Senior Center, 1 Care Drive, Ervingside, is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. for activities and congregate meals. For Center and program information, call Polly Kiely, Senior Center Director, at (413) 423-3649. Lunch is daily 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. Transportation can be provided for meals, shopping, or medical necessity. Please call the Senior Center to confirm activities, schedule a ride and to find out when the next blood



Long time town accountant Terry Allen was surrounded by friends and admirers at her retirement party at the Leverett Town Hall on April 3rd.

Hoophouse Workshop

WENDELL – The Wendell energy committee will sponsor a workshop on building backyard hoopouses with Laughing Dog Farmer Daniel Botkin, on Earth Day, Sunday, April 22nd, from 9 a.m. to noon, at 8 Bullard Pasture Road.

The purpose for this workshop is to empower people to be more self-reliant in growing their own food. In the Northeast, the climate presents challenges for year round growing, but a hoop house is an efficient and inexpensive way to extend your ability to grow food in all four seasons. Once workshop participants learn how to build a simple hoophouse, they can spread the concept to others, building community food self-reliance.

Cost for the workshop is sliding scale, \$5-15, or \$50 if participants would like to leave with their own poles. Botkin will bring his newly developed pole bender.

The fees for the workshop have been reduced due to the support of the Wendell energy committee.

Please contact Shelley Hines at 978-544-3082 to confirm your attendance; the class is limited to 15.

pressure clinic will be held.

Monday, April 23rd

9:00 a.m. Tai Chi
10:00 a.m. Osteo Exercise
12:00 Pitch

Tuesday, April 24th

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

Wednesday, April 25th

8:45 a.m. Line Dancing/Zumba
12:00 p.m. Bingo

Thursday, April 26th

8:45 a.m. Aerobics
10:00 a.m. Posture Perfect
12:30 p.m. Open Studio

Friday, April 27th

9:00 a.m. Bowling

LEVERETT Senior Activities

• Take-It-Easy Chair Yoga – Wednesdays, 10:00 a.m. at the Town Hall. Drop-in \$4.00 (first class free).

• Senior Lunch – Fridays, 12:00 p.m. Call (413) 367-2694 by Wednesday for a reservation.

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

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.

A Night of Comedy
to benefit
the Nex Relay for Life Team
for the American Cancer Society

Saturday, April 21st
8:00 p.m.
at the Montague Elks Club

1 Elk Ave, Turners Falls
\$15 in advance
\$20 at the door
To purchase advance tickets, call
Karen Cooke: 413-221-8164

Great Falls Middle School Students of the Week

Grade 6
Kayli Messinger
Chloe Ellis
Grade 7
Mark Waite
Grade 8
Jessica Loynd

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JESSICA LARKIN ILLUSTRATION

COMPILED BY DON CLEGG – Starting Tuesday, April 24th, a crew will be putting up **house number signs** for homes in Wendell that are not yet numbered. In most cases, the signs will be installed on metal posts near the road.

The sign crew will make an attempt to contact residents first, and may knock on the door of residences that could not be reached by phone.

Signs and numbers are available for free from the town for any residents who want to install their own. Contact Nancy Aldrich, town coordinator, at (978) 544-3395.

Meanwhile, a moose was seen not long ago crossing the road near Lake Wyola. Motorists be warned: it's spring, and **moose** can wander unexpectedly across rural roadways. So heads up, and drive with care.

The pair of peregrine falcons which have successfully nested

on the roof of the W.E.B. Du Bois Library at UMass Amherst for the past ten years now have a live webcam, thanks to the UMass Amherst Facilities Planning Division and MassWildlife. **Live images of the falcons** brooding their eggs and caring for their hatchlings can be viewed at www.library.umass.edu/falcons.

"We are very happy this project is coming to fruition after lots of hard work and goodwill," said Richard Nathhorst, capital project manager at UMass Amherst.

Each spring, Nathhorst and personnel from MassWildlife band the chicks after they hatch. Since the nest box was installed in 2003, the federally endangered peregrine falcons have been successfully reintroduced into Western Massachusetts, after dying out east of the Mississippi due to the ravages of DDT in the later

decades of last century.

The 21th Annual **Poet Seat's Poetry Awards** ceremony will take place on Thursday, April 26th at 7:00 p.m. in the Capen Room at the Stoneleigh-Burnham School on Bernardston Road in Greenfield. All finalists will read their poems at the ceremony, and awards will be given in three categories: first, second and third place in the adult division, and the two top poems of each youth division – ages 12-14 and 15-18. The Friends of the Greenfield Public Library have sponsored this event since 1990.

Stop by Greenfield Savings Bank (GSB) for **spring gardening tips** from Marguerite Sgadaro, master gardener, in the community room, 282 Avenue A, in Turners Falls on Saturday, April 21st from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Also, bring your thoughts about continuing the monthly plant swap started last spring.

GSB in Turners Falls is also hosting a **"Making Memories"** bridal and event sampler on Saturday, April 28th, from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. Sixteen local businesses will display their products and offer advice to help plan wedding showers, graduations, birthdays or other special events.

Wendell Good Neighbors is the beneficiary of a ham and homemade **macaroni and cheese dinner** on Sunday, April 22nd, starting at 5:30 p.m. in the town hall, as part of the April food pantry drive. Bring your own plate and utensils, bring your family, your appetite and a \$6 to \$10 donation!

How can a person recover from the strain of coping with a dysfunctional family, and create a more authentic life? Award-winning author **Katherine Mayfield** will answer this question and talk about her new memoir, *The Box of Daughter*, at World Eye Bookshop on Main Street in Greenfield on Wednesday, April 25th from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m.

Longtime readers of this newspaper will remember Mayfield as the author of the much appreciated "View from Lake Pleasant" column, way back in the day.

There will be a debut reading of **"As You Write It: a Franklin County Anthology"**, featuring local writers Rosalie Bolton, Estelle Cade, Patricia Carlisle, Lillian Fiske, Fran Hemond, Robin Panagakos, and Joseph Parzych on Sunday, April 29th at 1:00 p.m. at the Gill Montague Senior Center,

on 5th Street in Turners Falls. The writing classes and readings were sponsored in part by the local cultural councils of Gill, Leverett, Shelburne, and Wendell. Refreshments will be served.

Send local briefs to: reporter-local@montaguema.net.

MCTV Viewer Opinion Survey

BY CINDY TARAIL

MONTAGUE – MCTV's viewer opinion survey has bent sent to Montague postal patrons and Montague readers of the *Reporter*.

The survey asks respondents to inform MCTV about their Channel 17 viewing habits and program interests. Respondents can enter a drawing for a \$100 gift certificate to Ristorante DiPaolo.

MCTV has been reaching out to the community over the past few months to create new partnerships. The station has been receiving positive feedback about its "Quick Shot" public service announcements and online streaming. According to Kara McLaughlin of the Gill Montague Community School Partnership, "for those of us who work in Gill-Montague but live out of town, being able to watch the school committee meetings will be really valuable. I think few people are aware you can watch the meetings online now. I'm going to spread the word."

Recent uploads include coverage of the Montague special town meeting, professor Robert Haddad's talk on Syria, the Sawmill River Restoration Project, and notice of preschool registration.

Visit vimeo.com/mctvchannel17 to view videos on demand and check out the program schedule at montaguetv.org.

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A well traveled Reporter
The Reporter arrived at the St. Louis, MO home of Montague Center native Jerry Sears and his wife Sally as they were packing for a trip to Grand Cayman Island. The Reporter went along and provided (its usual) great reading! (Thanks for the gift subscription, Sis!)

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Protect Children from Gun Violence

BY MARION WRIGHT EDELMAN

WASHINGTON, DC – The Children's Defense Fund dedicated our report *Protect Children, Not Guns 2012* to the memory of Trayvon Martin and the thousands of other children and teenagers killed by guns in America. Guns killed a total of 5,740 kids in 2008 and 2009, according to the latest data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

In the fight to uncover what happened that night in Sanford, Florida, a few facts are clear. It involved two people: A teen carrying iced tea and candy, and an adult carrying a gun and patrolling a gated community, despite having previously been under a restraining order for domestic violence and charged with resisting arrest with violence and battery of a police officer.

We must protect children from guns and pass stronger laws that would save lives. Closing the gun-show loophole would make a great start.

The Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act, which requires federally licensed gun dealers to conduct background checks on every gun sale, has a loophole that allows private dealers to sell guns without a license and avoid requisite background checks. More than 40 percent of all guns are sold by unlicensed private sellers to buyers who didn't have to pass a background check. Congress must require criminal background checks on anyone who attempts to purchase a gun.

Congress should also restore the ban on assault weapons. It banned them in 1994, prohibiting the manufacture and sale of 19

types of semi-automatic, military-style assault weapons and high-capacity ammunition magazines. That law, however, expired in 2004. Legislation now pending in Congress would again ban the high-capacity ammunition magazines that gunmen used in the mass shootings in Tucson, Arizona and at Virginia Tech.

We must also require consumer safety standards and child-proof safety features for all guns. Every gun in this country should be childproof. One-third of all U.S. households with children have at least one gun in the home, and it's estimated that nearly two million children live in homes with an unlocked loaded gun. It makes no sense that the Consumer Product Safety Commission regulates toy guns and teddy bears, but not a product that killed 62,269 human beings in 2008 and 2009. No external enemy has ever come close to killing this number of civilians of all ages in the United States.

Federal law is silent on gun-related consumer safety standards and child access prevention. In fact, the production and manufacture of guns is exempt from oversight by the Consumer Product Safety Commission. As a result, many handguns lack easily installed life-saving safety features. Only 27 states have even attempted to keep children from accessing guns.

We must urge our leaders to make these essential and sensible changes at the national level while simultaneously pushing state and local governments to protect children and all Americans from deadly guns.

Let's demand the repeal of the "Stand Your Ground" laws now in effect in 21 states and made notorious in Trayvon Martin's killing. These kill-at-will statutes trigger a "shoot first and ask questions later" approach to con-

frontations.

Let's also demand the repeal of laws allowing concealed weapons on school grounds, in child care centers, and at other public venues where children and teens gather. Urge your state legislators and local officials to support laws to prevent child access to guns such as requirements for locking devices and imposing criminal liability when guns are left unsecured or stored negligently.

It's shameful that when child and teen gun deaths are compared in 23 high-income countries, 87 percent of all children under 15 killed by guns were in the United States. Our gun homicide rate for teens and young adults 15-24 years old was 42.7 times higher than the rate for the other countries combined. There are an estimated 283 million guns in civilian hands in America – almost one per person.

Why is the United States alone

in allowing this unbridled gun epidemic and public health hazard to continue? As parents, grandparents, and voters, it's up to us to tell our leaders that we won't tolerate it any more.

Marian Wright Edelman is the president of the Children's Defense Fund. This article first appeared in OtherWords.org

Editor's Note: It is not just children who are at risk from the epidemic of gun violence in America. We are all at risk – from the flood tide of firearms, abetted by a craven Congress in thrall to the NRA, and by the conservative majority of the Supreme Court, whose radical revision of 2nd Amendment jurisprudence in 2008, in *District of Columbia vs. Heller*, opened up an endless Wild West of not very well regulated citizen militias. Armed with automatic weapons. Without the part about militias.

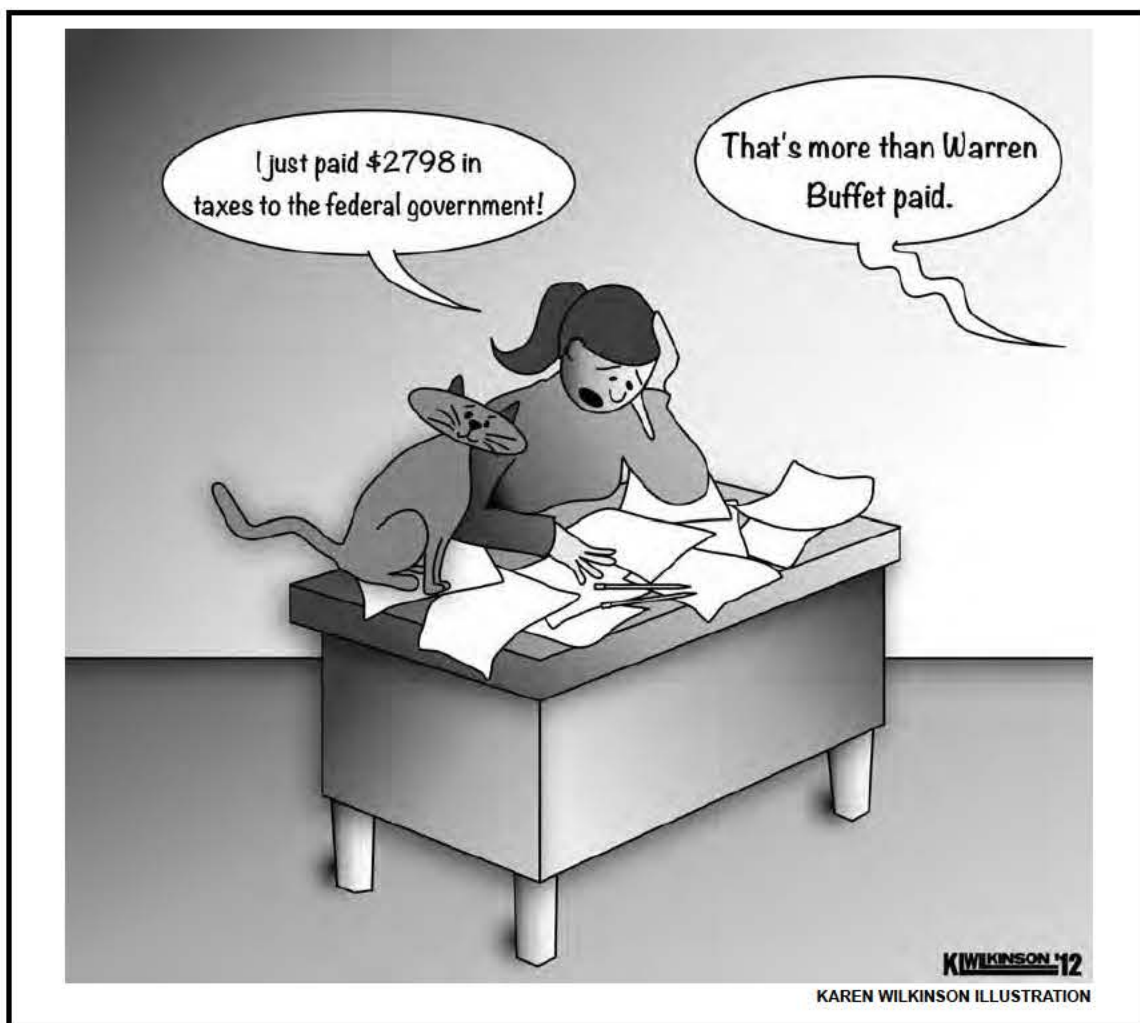
Last week, the *New York*

Times cited statistics compiled by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, showing that even as violent crime has fallen nationwide, more police officers are getting gunned down.

In 2011, 72 police officers were killed by perpetrators, a 25 percent increase from the previous year, and a 75 percent increase from 2008.

Since that article ran on April 9th, deputy sheriff Robert Paris was shot and killed in Modesto, CA, as he was serving eviction papers alongside locksmith Glendon Engert, also shot and killed. That same day, April 12th, veteran police chief Michael Maloney was shot and killed while executing a search warrant in the small town of Greenland, NH, eight days before he was to retire from the force he served as chief for the last 12 years.

Gun control is a matter of life and death, not just for our children, but for our police officers too.



U.S. Casualties in Afghanistan as of 4/18/12

Wounded:

15,332

Deaths:

1,938



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EGGstravagant Thanks to Peter Cottontail and His Friends

Approximately 500 children and parents from throughout Franklin County attended Montague Parks and Recreation's annual Peter Cottontail's EGGstravaganza, held on Saturday, April 7th at Unity Park in Turners Falls. Children aged four to twelve were given the enviable task of finding well over 5,000 toy- and candy-filled eggs placed throughout the park.

Participants also enjoyed face painting, cotton candy and pictures with Peter Cottontail on an absolutely beautiful spring day.

The EGGstravaganza would not have been possible without generous support from Hillside Plastics, the Montague Elks, Greenfield Savings Bank, Sirum's Equipment Company, Equi's Candy Store, Boy Scout Troop #6, Cub Scout Troop #17,

our many facepainters, and Corbin Mailloux.

We would also like to make special thanks to Peter Cottontail for setting aside time from his busy schedule to be present during the festivities. See you all next year!

— Jon Dobosz, director
 Montague Parks and Recreation

GUEST EDITORIAL

Questioning the Seaboard Solar Contract

We are writing about the contract the Wendell selectboard recently signed with Seaboard Solar of Connecticut, a Delaware corporation.

The Wendell selectboard, especially Dan Keller, and the energy committee spent a great deal of time and effort working to get the best contract possible for the town. Two items recommended by the energy committee, a performance date, and tying the payments from Seaboard for excess electricity to the price of electricity as opposed to a flat fee were both added to the contract. We wonder why, after having been included, we were left out of the email loop during the last week, seeing the final contract only at the meeting called for signing.

A recent article in the Montague Reporter said the town will now receive an annual income for "no visible invest-

ment" in the solar project. While this statement is technically correct, because the credits themselves are not visible, the implication of this statement is misleading because the town is actually making a substantial investment. Wendell is investing its 10 megawatts of municipal net metering credits, which is what Seaboard Solar wants. (The municipal cap of 10 MW will not be increased by the energy bill (S. 2200) currently being considered by the legislature.)

The reason municipal net metering credits are valuable is that all Massachusetts residential and commercial credits have been totally committed, when actual hookups and applications are counted. The total available for municipal credits is 102,620 kW, with 11,045 used and 9,732 applications received as of March 27th. This leaves 81,843 remaining.

The energy committee believes the contract with Seaboard Solar should have been limited to 7 MW. The remaining credits would then have been available for other projects hosted by Wendell under contracts negotiated at different, and perhaps better, terms than the current contract. Three MW happens to also be the maximum amount of power that can be produced in Wendell and physically put into the grid. This arrangement would have allowed the town to host in-town installations, request competitive bids, and negotiate for installations that could have reverted to town ownership in the future.

Instead, Christine Heard and Dan Keller, with Jeffrey Pooser voting no, chose to give control over the full 10 MW to Seaboard, with the provision that the town could notify Seaboard by October 15th, 2012 that it wishes

to use up to 2 MW. Seaboard would then have until January 4th, 2013 to find another municipal host for the 2 MW.

Why choose 2 MW, and not the 3 MW that the town could add to the grid? Why leave in a clause that gives control to Seaboard and effectively makes it so the town needs to get a vendor to commit in October to a project to which the town could not commit until January? If time were such a motivating factor, and this contract had to be signed in a hurry, why would the town then make it impossible for us to do business with another vendor until next January?

The CEO of Seaboard, Dave Thomas, was asked if he would sign the contract at 7 MW and he said he would. He was asked if he would sign the contract without the January date and he said he would. Why then did two members of the Selectboard decide to

give control over all the town's municipal net metering credits to the first vendor they spoke to?

It is true that we can have other solar projects in town with this contract in place. Those installations would have to have another town as a municipal host, or be residential, which will only be possible if S2200 passes the legislature. Neither of these options will give the town the negotiating position it would have had using its own net metering credits.

— The Wendell Energy Committee, Nan Riebschlaeger, Laurie DiDonato, Betsy Ames, Gloria Kegeles

In the interests of full disclosure, one committee member, Nan Riebschlaeger, has discussed possible employment with a company that has expressed an interest in using some of the town's net metering credits for a solar installation.

Teens Learn Respect at Greenfield Conference

BY ELLEN BLANCHETTE — Early Friday morning, April 13th, 150 students from all over the county gathered at Greenfield High School for the 21st Annual Youth Conference, sponsored by the Franklin County Community Coalition for Teens (CCT), a project of the Franklin Regional Council of Governments.

According to the tradition of the annual conference, students from the host school selected the theme and decided which workshops to offer. This year's theme was "Respect: Find out What it Means to You," and 150 students attended from five schools:

Greenfield High School and Middle School, Turners Falls High School and Middle School, Franklin County Tech, Pioneer, and Mohawk.

The event featured a student written play, performed by the Sudden Scenes Theater Group from the Franklin County Technical School. The theme — Respect — was reflected in a series of short scenes with many of the student actors playing "against type," so a female student played a young man, a white male played a black male, and a very shy girl played a boisterous extrovert. In one scene, a boy

apologized to a girl who was treated badly by a group of students while he looked on and said nothing.

The theater troupe focused on respect for young women, not just from males, but also from their female peers. After the performance there was a lengthy question and answer session with the cast about how they shaped their roles, and vice versa. Several student actors said they would definitely not be so quick to judge others by first impressions.

"To get respect, you have to give respect," said one. The cast

agreed they had grown in their insight into others, and also grown together "as a family." One student talked of seeing "change in myself." Another said the group helped "bring out the best in me."

Tech school student Danny Rivera said he had "stepped way out of my comfort zone," in his performance. He said he wasn't always the most confident person in the room, but added, "Obviously, now I am; I did a rap in front of an audience."

The students broke up into groups after the opening introductions and performance, with a diverse choice of workshops on the day's agenda. The topics ranged from young men's health, on being different, resources for mental health, going to college, getting a job or starting a business. One workshop covered how to prepare a healthy meal on a budget. There were videos on social change, transgender issues, drumming, theater games and empowering young people to prevent risky behavior.

Workshops were provided by a respectable range of local organizations, including Community Action Youth Programs, Young Entrepreneurs

Society, the Career Center, Quabbin Meditation, along with school districts, agencies and businesses. This year's conference was funded entirely by conference fees and private donations, including a generous donation from the Pioneer Valley Coalition for Suicide Prevention.



Youth Conference workshop participants learn to make a healthy meal on a budget.

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NOTES FROM THE MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

The Cumby Building Gets a Hearing

BY JANEL NOCKLEBY – The selectboard approved placing three articles on the special town meeting warrant on Saturday, May 5th, prior to annual town meeting. (Town meeting members, please arrive at 8:30 a.m. at the Turners Falls High School Auditorium for the special town meeting.) The first article would provide an option for the town to spend up to \$30,000 on required mold remediation or demolition for 38 Avenue A (the old Cumberland Farms building), now that the property is in the process of being transferred from the Department of Conservation and Recreation to the Montague Economic Development and Industrial Corporation (EDIC).

However, the EDIC told the selectboard on Tuesday their preferred direction is to have a potential new tenant remediate the mold problem in the building before they begin occupying it, according to EDIC chair Andrew Killeen.

That potential new tenant is called the Grand Trunk Media and Cultural Center, a collaboration between MCTV, the Montague Business Association, and Turners Falls RiverCulture.

The selectboard approved a motion 2 to 1 on Tuesday, as a gesture of support for the potential reuse of the building, but decision-making authority for the former Cumberland Farms will ultimately rest with the EDIC.

If the Grand Trunk Media and Cultural Center becomes the new tenant, it is their intent to have a "town of Montague pays for nothing" policy for repair and maintenance of the building, in exchange for reduced rent, explained board member Mik Muller of MCTV.

Selectboard chair Mark Fairbrother, alone in opposing the proposal, said he

would prefer the Cumberland Farms property used for commercial purposes, especially "tax paying, job creating opportunities." He said to Muller, "You already have the employees," referring to MCTV.

Muller said that since the building is already owned by the EDIC, tenants of that building would not be paying property taxes to the town anyway.

Fairbrother expressed concern about MCTV using funds from the town's contract with Comcast for the purpose of capital improvements rather than studio equipment.

Pat Allen noted that prior to MCTV holding the cable access contract, Greenfield Cable TV had used funds for major capital improvements at the 2nd Street studio, where MCTV is located now.

Fairbrother requested a legal opinion on how the Comcast money can be spent.

RiverCulture director Lisa Davol said "the mission [of MCTV, RiverCulture, and the MBA] is economic development."

Capital improvements committee member Greg Garrison noted many communities find, "you get the biggest bang for your buck by investing in the arts."

Ultimately, Fairbrother acknowledged, "You folks can do whatever you want anyway," referring to the EDIC.

Montague town staff and property owners, and mortgage companies for Ste. Anne's Rectory at 25 6th Street in Turners have been discussing whether or not the property might be donated to the town. Should those discussions move further, the selectboard approved the placement of an article on the special town meeting warrant to allow the donation to be made, if approved by town meeting.

Also, an article to spend

\$1,910 on new flags and accessories was approved for placement on the town meeting warrant, since the town presently has several flags that need to be replaced.

In other news, selectboard members signed an updated agreement, presented by Robin Sherman, executive director of the Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority, regarding the housing rehabilitation revolving loan fund program. The new agreement, which is part of the Community Development Block Grant process, provides updated fee structures and guidelines on when the town receives proceeds from the revolving loan program.

Pat Allen remarked, "The housing authority has done a great job over the years," in administering the program that gives local homeowners the opportunity correct code violations with zero-interest loans, repayable at the time of the sale of the property.

Coming events, approved by the selectboard at Tuesday night's meeting, include an opportunity to shred all your unwanted paper, at the "Get Ready to Shred" event presented by the Montague Business Association and MCTV on April 26th from 3 to 7 p.m. on Avenue A, on the lawn in front of the old Cumberland Farms building. Get rid of your clutter and help protect yourself from identity theft by properly disposing of documents that have personal information on them.

As part of the Turners Falls Crabapple Blossom Festival (oops, they've already blossomed!) on Saturday, May 15th, Montague Public Libraries will present the play, "To Bee or Not to Bee" for families and young children, at the bandshell area of Peskeompskut Park at 10 a.m.

Information Session on Leverett's Proposed \$3.6 Million Municipal Broadband Network

BY TANYA CUSHMAN It was standing room only at the third question and answer session on the proposed \$3.6 million municipal broadband initiative at Leverett town hall on Sunday, April 15th.

Peter d'Errico, member of the Leverett selectboard and of the broadband committee, gave a PowerPoint presentation about the proposed "final mile" municipally owned fiber optic network the broadband committee plans to bring to town meeting for a vote on April 28th.

The plan is to get the town moving forward on installing last-mile fiber for high-speed broadband at the same time as the state's Mass Broadband Initiative is hooking up the middle-mile fiber. When the middle mile is turned on, Leverett will be ready to hook into it with last-mile connectivity to individual homes and business. All this could happen within a time frame of just one to two years.

"Internet-wise, Leverett is in the Stone Age," said d'Errico.

Comparing the network

to electricity access at the turn of the last century, d'Errico listed the benefits of high speed internet, from real estate values rising – "For real estate agents, Leverett is at the bottom of the list for professionals, entrepreneurs and those in academia" – and home businesses, to allowing students the same access to high speed internet as students around the world now enjoy.

The proposed fiber optic network would be "state of the art," and "won't be obsolete technology for decades," promised Richard Nathhorst, another member of the broadband committee.

In town now, the fastest internet connections are DSL, which 20% of residents use. But its 3MB speed is not even considered to be high speed anymore – 4MB is.

Because Leverett has such a small population spread out over a lot of land, it is not profitable for a business like Verizon to install high speed fiber, so the broadband committee has been looking for alter-

natives. If town meeting finds a two-thirds majority to approve borrowing \$3.6 million over 20 years to pay for a municipal broadband system, Leverett will also have to vote to authorize a debt exclusion in that amount by townwide ballot on May 12th.

D'Errico said the town is looking into grants and low-interest loans to offset the final cost of the project, which would otherwise cost about \$300 on the average property tax bill. Looking at the average yearly costs for the way residents now access internet, d'Errico estimated net savings for most Leverett homeowners, other than the small percentage who do not currently use the internet from home.

Yearly household median savings for those currently using satellite would be about \$588, for those using wireless, \$468 and those with DSL, \$126, according to the chart d'Errico provided. "Public interest, and not maximizing profit," is the town's goal, he said.

MEDIC Backs MCTV's Proposal to Rehab Former Cumberland Farms Building

BY PATRICIA PRUITT & DAVID DETMOLD

TURNERS FALLS – "You have no idea how important it is to MCTV to get that space," MCTV board member Michael (Mik) Muller told the board of the Montague Economic Development and Industrial Corporation (EDIC) on Tuesday, April 17th, as he advocated for a proposal to reuse the former Cumberland Farms building at 38 Avenue A as the new studio for the town's cable-access TV station.

Muller would like to see that vacant building rehabbed and turned into a joint use facility for MCTV,

RiverCulture, and the Montague Business Association, and he said MCTV is willing to secure the financing to accomplish that task.

An amended agreement with the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation would allow the EDIC to dispose of the Cumby building under certain conditions – namely, that any subsequent owner's activity be compatible with the overall purpose of the Discovery Center park, and with its historical dimension. EDIC members voted to sign the agreement with DCR on Tuesday, and to recommend the Montague select-

board sign it at their meeting later that evening as well.

MCTV's proposed plan included figures for rehab costs at the Cumby building of about \$80,000 for needed repairs to the roof and interior, in exchange for a nominal rental fee of \$60 a year (allowing the cable access station to save about \$10,000 a year on its current rental costs in their ground floor studio at the Crocker Building on 2nd Street).

Muller proposed an initial rental period of two years, at which point the town's long-term contract with Comcast is up for see **REHAB** page 13

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BAND from page 1

instruments, so if one member can't make a performance there's a good chance another musician can fill in.

Founder Ed Phelps had a goal back in 1988 to bring square dances into the next century. That goal was realized as the band continued to play their monthly square dance at the Goshen Town Hall until August, 2011, when the severe flooding in the wake of Tropical Storm Irene damaged that building.

Over the years, Falltown also played regular dances at the Bernardston Elementary School and Guiding Star Grange. Recently the band has started square dances at the United Church of Bernardston, but as the saying goes, 'That's a long way from Goshen.' Many of the band's biggest

fans live even further south.

Phelps calls the square dance "the poor man's cotillion." He notes the dance tradition travelled to the United States from England, but took a while to take root in the Colonies because of Puritan strictures against dancing. He fondly remembers learning "Play Party Songs" sung by his grandmother Dora Burrows. During her youth, dances were forbidden and play parties became the acceptable alternative – at these events they sang dance-style music and played suspiciously dance-like games such as "In and Out the Window" and "Big Ship Sailing Down the Alley." My, oh my.

Phelps, in his mid-70s and recovering from some health setbacks, has not been performing in recent years, but

that hasn't stopped him from turning up at performances and enjoying the music whenever he can.

One band member told me when the band played for Ed and his wife Bev over the 2011 Christmas holidays, Ed was still the only one who could pull forgotten lyrics out of his prodigious memory.

According to Phelps, the origin of the band was another group called the Happiness Sharers that played at nursing homes, senior centers and other similar venues. The heart and soul of that group was Ruth Brasseur, who worked at the Vernon Green retirement community and coerced her brother Jim Spaulding and several others into playing for the senior circuit. At the time, Phelps was the head of the English department for Greenfield Middle School. He had to be coaxed into joining the band because he didn't want to play with the "old guys." Once his co-workers got wind of Ed's work with the Happiness Sharers they dubbed them "Eddie and the Bedpans." Not an easy moniker to live down, but he managed.

It was through the Happiness Sharers that Phelps met Jack Arensmeyer – one of the founding members of the Falltown String Band. A guitarist and strong vocalist, Arensmeyer hails from Montana. According to Phelps, he can sing all the heart-breaking ballads of the West that audiences so love to hear.

The Falltown String Band started as a few friends playing music together in each other's kitchens. But it wasn't long before they held regular practices and started playing out around the Valley. Before long Phelps was the one coaxing others to rekindle their interest in music.

Phelps ran into his second cousin, Marvin Shedd, in 1992 at an event in Vernon. While they chatted in the food line, Phelps recalled that Shedd played guitar in high school and urged him to start coming to their Tuesday practices.

Shedd took a little good-natured ribbing about his '60s-era guitar with the pink flower decals – the last vestige of his

year playing rock and roll with "The Momma's Pride" – but he's been with the band ever since. He eventually invested in a new guitar.

Shedd's wife Sue used to come along to rehearsals, and it didn't take long for Phelps to learn she had played flute and piccolo in the school band years earlier. Shortly after he found her a loaner flute, Sue Shedd joined the band. Sue fondly remembers Phelps tying a string onto the end of her flute so she would "qualify" for the band.

Now her flute adds a strong melody line instantly recognizable to audiences – a valuable trait as many band members say they rarely play a song the same way twice. The stringed instruments often meander from the main melody. Isn't that the point?

Phelps laid down two band rules early on: "family comes first" and "don't quit your day job." These provisos have allowed Falltown members the flexibility to opt of out of performances when need be.

Since the early days, Phelps reached out to fiddler and keyboard player Jason Burbank – another connection from the Happiness Sharers – to join the group. Burbank has kept his day job as an engineer at UMass-Amherst, and brings an astute professionalism to every melody he plays.

After meeting Jack Nelson at a party and learning he played the washtub bass, Phelps said he did not rest until he persuaded Nelson to play with Falltown. Nelson has switched to stand-up bass in recent years, but has lost nothing of his freewheeling, exuberant style.

Steve Alves met Phelps at Greenfield's annual fiddle festival honoring the legendary John Putnam – fiddler extraordinaire, and Underground Railroad conductor. Alves, who made a documentary film, "Together in Time," which looks at the social history of New England contra dance, is credited by some members as encouraging more "modern" tunes to creep into the Falltown repertoire.

Alves introduced Marcia Day, the most recent member

of the band, about a year ago, and she has been playing mandolin with them for about a year now, and switching off on guitar and keyboard. Day had spent many years singing with the Holyoke-based "Highland Valley Chorus," part of the national Sweet Adelines; her deft harmonizing brings a flair to the band's vocals.

Last week, Marvin Shedd spoke eloquently of the band moving forward in different directions while maintaining a deep connection to Phelps.

"We miss him tremendously; he is our founder and leader. We never got tired of his corny jokes and the historical song intros, though we heard them over and over again. Somehow they're just not the same when we do them. We've tried to keep the essence of the original band going, and still play many of the old tunes from the 18th century."

Phelps has been in the audience several times while the band plays without him and agrees they're playing a lot more "modern" tunes.

Shedd is quick to point out these modern tunes are generally at least 40 years old, and feature the work of such artists as Buddy Holly, The Everly Brothers, and Bob Dylan.

It was a distinct pleasure for me to visit with Ed and Beverly Phelps at their home to go over the band's history. We were neighbors for a number of years in North Bernardston and we share many harrowing memories of my son and his friends careening down the stellar sledding hill in front of their home.

I also have many fond memories of listening to the Falltown String Band playing at Cushman Park in the center of town, so it was a great pleasure when they started playing at venues in my new home town of Turners Falls. Join them for a good old-fashioned hoedown on the first Thursday of every month at the Rendezvous on Third Street.

The band has released two CDs to date, *Stay on the Farm* and *Southern Exposure*, which can be purchased at the Great Falls Discovery Center.



GREAT FALLS MIDDLE SCHOOL 3rd QUARTER HONOR ROLLS

GRADE 6

First Honors

Malik Baker-Gore
Sienna Dillensneider
Chloe Ellis
Maya Hancock-Pezzati
Snejana Lashtur
Aliyah Sanders
Kaeden Socquet
Madison St. Marie

Second Honors

Tanner Ames
Hannah Bogusz
Madison Chmyzinski
Amanda Cooke
Kasia Dobosz
Carlie Kretchmar
Jeremy Towle
Samantha Wegiel
Kyleigh Williams

Third Honors

Adrianna DiMaio
Sahaley DuPree
Zachary Lastowski
Avery Palmer
Henry Worden

GRADE 7

First Honors

Gabrielle Arzuaga
Tionne Brown
Tahner Castine
Nicholas Croteau
Savannah Donahue
William Doyle
Jordyn Fiske
Madelyn Johnson
Ian Moriarty
Patrick Salls
Amanda Savinski

Kate Sprankle
Nicole Thibeault
Mark Waite
Riley Wood

Second Honors

Nolan Courtemanche
Francis Fuhrmann
Jillian Harris
Melissa Hersey
Regina Hope
Bryn Kruzlic
Michelle Leh
Kaili Lynch
Nicholas Morin
Owen Ortiz
Will Roberge
Frederick Smith
Kortney Thurber
Jordan Wyman

Third Honors

Timothy Black
Sabryna Crafts
Richard Craver
Madison Currier
Jack Darling
Keara Deery
Jemma Rose Dickson
Stone Dresser
Cassandra Harris
Hattie Harvey
Ryan Howard
Tess Hunter
Alyson Kilanski
Dylan Mailloux
Jacob Wright
Dimitrios Zantouladis

GRADE 8

First Honors
Raleigh Carlisle
Allison Cooke

Ivy Cross
Tarah Dempsey
James Fritz
Kamryn Frost
Courtney Gochinski
Catherine Landers
Ryan Lenois
Jessica Loynd
Lindsey Mailloux
Mitchell Mailloux
Timothy Momaney
Riley Palmer
Sadie Pelletier
Mackenzie Phillips
Jenna Putala
Seth Rider
Nevan Shattuck
Margaret Sroka
Sydney Upham
Alexandra Vieira
Hailey Whipple
Cullen Wozniak
Alexxis Young

Second Honors

Fallyn Adams
Courtney Crafts
Colby Dobias
Akeeva Forcier
Zackary Hillman
Sabrina Petrowicz
Allyson Renaud

Third Honors

Jacob Barboza
Krystal Cloutier
Nadia Hasan
Jordan Meattey
Caitlyn Poirier
Tanner Richardson
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Are Cougars Breeding in Your Back Yard?



PHOTO: CREATIVE COMMONS, COURTESY: HISGETT AND ANIMAL PHOTOS

Despite hundreds of purported sightings a year in New England, state wildlife biologists consider the cougar to be extinct in the Northeast.

BY DAVID DETMOLD

ATHOL – Are cougars breeding in your back yard? Robert Tougas says – ‘Maybe’.

Tougas, the author of *Quest for the Eastern Cougar*, has studied reported sightings of the officially extinct ‘Eastern

Cougar.’ Those sightings come in by the hundreds, every year, from every state in New England, and throughout the East.

But the official stance of Eastern state naturalists is that cougars, whether or not there ever was truly a distinct subspecies called the Eastern Cougar, were hunted to extinction east of the Mississippi long ago (the last known cougar kill in Massachusetts took place on top of Mount Tom in 1878).

Tougas said the vast majority of the ‘cougar’ sightings natural-

population, wary of mankind, and unlikely due to their speed and stealth to be killed crossing roads (hence the total lack of road killed cougar in the East, north of Florida, until last year)? Or are they wanderers from afar, or perhaps the overgrown ‘pets’ of irresponsible owners who have released cougars back into the wild?

Tougas told an audience of more than 50 who gathered to see his slides and hear his talk at the Athol town hall on April 12th, a talk organized by the Athol Bird and Nature Club, he

ists investigate turn out to be dogs, coyotes, bobcat, or other common species.

And yet scat, DNA testing of fur, photographs of prints, and, as of last year, one actual road kill in Wilton, CT do prove that individual cougars have indeed been stalking their old habitat in the East in recent years.

The question is, are they representatives of a native breeding

is keeping an open mind on this subject.

“State biologists are skeptical. The sightings almost always turn out to be something else [other than cougars]. They get jaded. On the other hand, people like us who know what they see are trying to convince them and finding closed minds.”

Cougars have established outlying breeding populations in the Black Hills, and in Nebraska, Tougas said, in addition to their species’ stronghold west of the Rockies. As well, about 150 individual cougars, called panthers, live in a bottleneck around the Everglades in Florida, where they do get killed, with alarming frequency, by cars and hunters, and where they are packed in such close proximity without natural corridors to escape that the males are known to kill each other.

Tougas said if a breeding population other than in these acknowledged areas exists in the East, as a holdover of the cougars who once roamed this part of the continent freely, that population would most likely be based in Quebec and New Brunswick, rather than New England.

But cougars range widely, as has been recently proven by the road killed cougar in Connecticut, which was traced by DNA and scat back to the Black Hills. Tougas said this cat

had roamed thousands of miles, avoiding traffic as it crossed countless roads and highways, before coming to grief in urban Connecticut. Most likely, that male cougar was looking for a mate, and not finding any likely candidates in the East.

If a breeding population of cougars does not exist on the East Coast, Tougas thinks it would be a good idea to introduce one.

There is a yawning absence at the top of the food chain where top predators like the wolf and the cougar once reigned. In their absence, the East has seen the proliferation of ruminants like deer and moose, which, lacking the stimulus of fear the top predator would provide, have changed their habits and now sedately overgraze the understorey of Eastern woodlands, creating problems for other species.

“Cougars require adequate prey and shelter for their young, but they do not require absolute wilderness to thrive,” said Tougas, who noted cougars are able to co-exist with humans with few adverse incidents throughout most of their established range.

He concluded by stating, “It is not as important to decide whether they are here already. What’s important is to reintroduce them to fill that niche that is available for a top predator.”



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Jammin at the Roadhouse

BY J.C. PRODUCT

MILLERS FALLS – Ever been to the Route 63 Roadhouse on open mic Thursdays?

I almost feel guilty writing about it, as if I’m exposing an upper Valley secret. The several Thursdays I’ve gone, I felt I was being given exclusive access to a private party: professional musicians on a night off hanging out to jam with their professional musician friends. It has truly been a special night of music every single visit, and I’ve gone seven times, too many to call it

dumb luck.

Different than your college town open mic drivin’ and gem grab bag, this is an amorphous group of well-heeled players who spend much of their lives scratching out a living as musicians. No small feat, that. It takes big hustle and often comes after juggling a full time job and family. But these folks are driven to perform.

The musicians are their own roadies, unloading an eight piece drum kit, or endless mikes, amps, and wires. There’s always excitement at what the night will bring. They play with guts and heart, no matter how feeble the pay or how

skimpy the crowd. Then they pack it up again.

These are the modern descendants of the great players who gigged up and down the Mississippi then back up the Atlantic coast. Think Mavis Staples with her father at the

wheel of the bus; a young Muddy Waters playing country dances and picnics before the Lomax recordings; Tracey Chapman strumming “Fast Car” at a Cambridge coffee shop, pocketing her meager tips, steadfastly

see **HIDDEN** page 14



J.C. PRODUCT PHOTO

At the Roadhouse, on guitar - Dan Margolis; bass - Dan Goitein; drums - Coco.

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KAREN WILKINSON ILLUSTRATION

BY SALLY PICK – Last Thursday, April 12th, the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (Mass CEC) announced the 17 cities and towns picked for this year's winners of the Solarize Massachusetts program, from the 31 Green Communities that applied.

We are thrilled to hear the town of Montague was one of two chosen from the valley for this program, which will offer reduced-cost solar electric systems (also called photovoltaics or PV) to Montague residents and businesses. The outpouring of community support for the Solarize application undoubtedly helped tip the scales for our town.

At the Spring Parade, people literally jumped up from their lawn chairs last Saturday to get informational postcards about the Solarize Montague program from energy committee members marching past. Some onlookers were already familiar with the program, having taken the online survey to gauge the level of interest in town for purchasing more affordable solar power for private homes.

The price for PV purchased under the Solarize program will be reduced because the town will

MONTAGUE ENERGY CORNER

Get Ready to Solarize, Montague



SALLY PICK PHOTO

This model house, built by Montague Energy Committee chair, Chris Mason, showcases working solar electric panels, lighting a light on the model.

be working with one solar installer, who will get a group rate on the solar equipment each participant buys. Volunteers in town have a marketing plan already in place to defray costs to the installer. And as Montague reaches certain total amounts of contracted PV in town, the price will continue to drop, giving participants an incentive to help get

the word out and sign up more people in the program.

Around late May, when the town and MassCEC decide on the solar installer for Solarize Montague, townspeople will be able to look into signing a contract with the installer. Residents will have until September 30th to decide if buying PV through the Solarize program is a good clean

energy fit for them.

The specifics of the pricing, financing, and possible lease-to-own options will get ironed out once the solar installer is chosen. If you can afford to own the PV, your costs will go down beyond the reduced-cost price, because of federal and state tax credits and the option to sell the Solar Renewable Energy Credits.

The Solarize Montague core volunteer team will make more detailed information available as soon as we have it. We will also prepare a Frequently Asked Questions sheet, to post on the Montague Energy Committee's town website:

www.montague.net/Pages/MontagueMA_Energy/index. If you're on our email list, we'll send you information and updates directly. You can contact us at MontagueEnergyCommittee@gmail.com to ask to be added to our contact list, to send us questions to include on the FAQ sheet, to request the solar installer to contact you directly to explore your solar power options, or to volunteer for the program. Please note, the Solarize Montague program does not include solar hot water systems.

The core volunteer team for Solarize Montague is: Sally Pick, Solarize Montague community solar coach and energy committee member; Pat Allen, select-board member; Chris Mason, Montague energy committee chair; and Pam Hanold, Montague energy committee member. Regarding the Solarize program, Pat Allen said, "I am thrilled that Montague was chosen – our folks are known for their concern for the environment and their enthusiasm for making changes that will benefit their homes and Montague as a whole." In all, 17 community members and 15 community organizations have offered to volunteer for the program, to help spread the word and broaden the reach of Solarize Montague.

The Mills of the Gods Grind Slowly

BY JOSEPH A. PARZYCH

TURNERS FALLS – The lease with the town of Montague for the use of the town's drain on the power canal, inherited by First Light, ran out on April 18th, 2011. That agreement stemmed from the widening of the canal in 1912 when the power company entered into a 99-year lease of indenture with the town of Montague for use of the drain, subject to a stipulation that the power company would maintain the footbridge leading to the Strathmore.

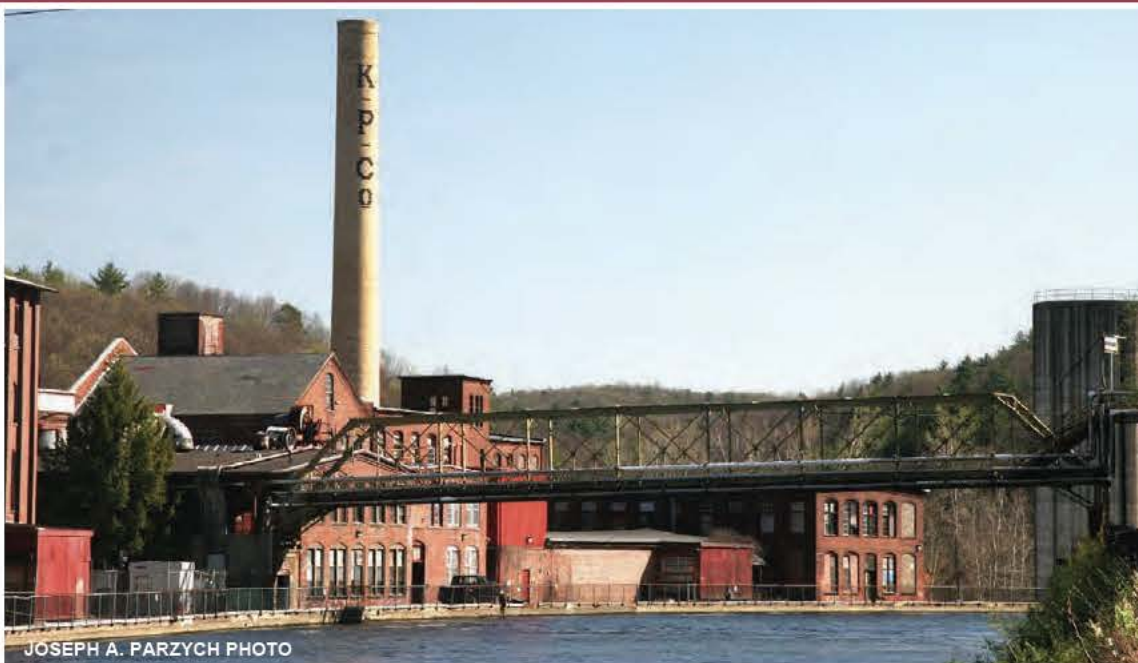
As is obvious from the gate across the footbridge and the fact that structure is condemned as unfit for foot traffic, the power company did not uphold their end

of the bargain.

Since the lease was signed between the town and Turners Falls Power Company, there have been a series of purchases and mergers so that Gaz (Gas) de France now owns a major portion of electric power and gas companies in the United States, including First Light. The government of France owns a controlling interest in Gaz de France. Merged with Suez, they became the world's largest utility company, owning gas and electric generating plants throughout the world.

A footbridge in Turners Falls is unlikely to be high on France's priority list.

see **THE MILLS** page 11



JOSEPH A. PARZYCH PHOTO

The condemned foot bridge over the power canal is the subject of ongoing discussion between the town and First Light.

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Downstreamers Plan Third Bridge Visibility Action to Build Awareness of VY

GREENFIELD – The “Downstreamers” affinity group of the SAGE Alliance, a grassroots organizing group opposing the continued operation of the Vermont Yankee nuclear reactor on the Connecticut River in Vernon, VT, will hold the third in a series of visibility actions this Saturday, April 21st, starting at 1:30 p.m., holding signs on the Greenfield town common.

Area residents who share a concern about the safety of living downstream from the 40-year old reactor are invited to attend, and to bring their own signs.

Last month, the group gathered on the Sunderland Bridge to raise awareness on the issue, and then again at the French King Bridge, three weeks later. About two dozen people participated in the Sunderland visibility action, and over 60 people joined the French King Bridge action.

Members of the Downstreamers group live in

Sunderland, Erving, Leverett, and other area towns. Their group is “gravely concerned” about radioactive tritium leaks into the Connecticut River from the aging nuclear facility, the obsolete containment system identical to the ones that failed catastrophically last year at the Fukushima reactors in Japan, and the fact that Vermont Yankee is being allowed by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to operate at 120% of its original design capacity, beyond its design life of 40 years. The state of Vermont is now fighting a federal court battle to close the reactor down.

After vigiling on the common, the Downstreamers will march down Routes 5 & 10 to the Cheapside Bridge, and stand in vigil above the Green River for half an hour. For more info, call Emily Krems at 422-1169 or go to the Sunderland Safe Energy Downstreamers Affinity Group facebook page.

Falls River Bridge Reconstruction Will Last Two Years

BY JOSEPH A. PARZYCH GILL – Northern Construction Company is the contractor for the reconstruction of the Falls River bridge on Route 2, on the Greenfield-Gill border. Work will begin in earnest in about two weeks, and continue for two and a half years. But contrary to a report from the Gill select-board in last week’s *Montague Reporter*, during most of the project, two-way traffic will be maintained, with occasional one-way traffic aided by police details when Jersey barriers are being installed, or when lane shifts occur.

Northern Construction is ready to go, but the holdup is lack of electricity. The other problem holding up construction is the need to build a pedestrian walkway, to be suspended on the south side of the bridge.

As it is now, the bridge has a peculiar foot path configuration. The sidewalk, now overgrown with grass, is on the north. The sidewalk on the bridge is on the

opposite side. When I used to clear snow off that bridge, it always puzzled me that the sidewalk along the highway from Factory Hollow to the bridge was on one side of Route 2, but the sidewalk crossing the bridge was on the opposite side. I cleared both sidewalks. There has never been a crosswalk painted on the road. But state highway engineers must have had some good reason when they built it that way.

Right?

Mass Department of Transportation engineers and an employee of Northern Construction confirmed this week that two-way traffic will be maintained along Route 2 except for brief periods when construction on the Falls River bridge will require one-way traffic.

Initially, two-way traffic will be routed on two-thirds of the bridge, on the south side of the highway, while work advances on the northern third. The northern side will be widened to

be equal to two-thirds of the existing bridge.

Two-way traffic will travel on that widened portion when construction switches over to the south side, but after this shift takes place, vehicles with wide loads will have to be detoured.

At the end of the project, the bridge will be almost entirely new, including wheel chair ramps. Existing abutments are scheduled for demolition; new abutments will be poured. The center piers will be left in place, but reinforced with driven piles and additional concrete poured around the bases of the piers.

At press time, Northern Construction is waiting for WMECO to relocate utility poles to make way for construction. Tree removal and preliminary work has already begun. The scenic turnout overlooking the falls on Route 2 will be closed and used as a staging yard for machinery and material while construction is in progress.

SANDERS from page 1

and urged the U.S. Department of Justice to intervene on behalf of Entergy Nuclear in its lawsuit against the State of Vermont. That would have been an obscenity, and I’m glad we were able to keep the Department of Justice out of that lawsuit.

“In Vermont, we look at the world a little differently than the NRC does.

“As all of you know, the Vermont legislature asserted their legitimate authority to make an independent decision about whether Vermont Yankee should continue to operate, and by an overwhelming, 26-4, bipartisan vote, the Vermont State Senate decided that the contract with Entergy should not be extended.

“Thank you, Vermont Senate.

“Now, there is a real issue that arises concerning the decent paying jobs at Vermont Yankee. The day after the plant is shut down, I am saying to Entergy, ‘Let’s begin the decommissioning process’. If we do that, there will be years of decent paying jobs for most of those workers.

“The law really is quite clear on this issue. The federal government under the NRC has the responsibility, and it is a very important responsibility, to make sure nuclear plants are as safe as possible. The NRC is not supposed to be an advocate for nuclear power.

“But the Supreme Court, and I mean the old Supreme Court, ruled in 1983 that the legal reality remains that Congress has left sufficient power in the states for nuclear power to be slowed or even stopped for economic reasons, or for other reasons.

“If the people of Vermont, or any other state, say, ‘Our future is not with nuclear power,’ they have the right to shut those plants down.

“In my view, the federal court made a decision that was wrong on the merits when it said the Vermont legislature focused on safety and they did not have the right to close Vermont Yankee.

“There are a number of issues,

above and beyond safety, that make it legal for the Vermont legislature to shut down Vermont Yankee.

“You could argue that Vermont Yankee is simply not reliable after the 2007-2008 cooling tower collapses, which caused Vermont Yankee to operate at reduced capacity and Vermont utilities to spend \$6 million to buy higher priced electricity. Reliability is an important issue.

“One could argue that Vermont Yankee is not even price competitive any longer. In fact, Vermont’s largest utilities have rejected contracts with Entergy because they have found less expensive sources of electricity.

“One could also argue that Entergy is not a reliable business partner. Entergy testified falsely to the legislature that it had no underground pipes at Vermont Yankee. Come to find out you do in fact have underground pipes and they are leaking tritium into the soil and groundwater, you have a trust problem.

“Vermont has the legal right not to extend Vermont Yankee’s contract under federal law. Above and beyond all of that, I have a serious problem when this nuclear plant, and nuclear plants

all over this country, produce extremely toxic waste everyday and they still don’t know what to do with it. It is irresponsible to continue producing that waste.

“It is especially important for us to be here today when virtually all of the Republicans in Congress, and some Democrats as well, want to see the United States undergo a nuclear renaissance, with 100 new nuclear plants.

“This is the same group that likes to say, ‘Get the heavy hand of government out of the marketplace. Let the genius of free enterprise do what they want to do.’ If it wasn’t for the fact the nuclear industry is one of the major welfare recipients of the federal government, it would be shut down tomorrow.

“The nuclear industry is one of the major welfare recipients of your tax dollars. The federal government has spent \$95 billion for research and development of commercial nuclear power, at the same time as R&D grants for wind, solar, geothermal and biomass are being opposed by the major utilities and the nuclear power industry.

“The nuclear industry is also the beneficiary of a very, very expensive insurance program supported by the taxpayers,

called the Price-Anderson Act. If, God forbid, a Fukushima-style meltdown were to occur in the U.S., it would cost tens of billions of dollars to clean up, and do you know who picks up the cost for that? The taxpayers of America.

“Corporations like Exelon and Entergy control a third of the nuclear power production in the country. And I say to them, ‘If you think it such a great idea, why don’t you go to Wall Street and the insurance industry a get them to invest in nuclear power?’ They know, nuclear power is extremely risky and it is not a good investment.

“In my view, and in the view of the vast majority of our state, we understand the importance for Vermont, America and our world in transforming our energy system away from nuclear power and away from fossil fuels. For safety, reliability and cost, we should be investing in energy efficiency, wind, solar energy, and biomass. When you do these things, we are going to be creating jobs in America, breaking our dependence on foreign oil, and reducing the cost of energy for the American people. This small state can lead America and the world in that direction.”



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SCHOOL from page 1

challenging year. Although he still felt himself to be a novice, he feels he was able to keep things on track, and is pleased that two years later Amherst Regional is stable.

In his fourth year he was once again chair of the Leverett school committee and feeling increasingly uneasy with the Union 28 governance structure, which had been in place since 1902. Although each member school in the Union 28 district sets its own budget and policies, it also provides three representatives who make up the Union 28 advisory committee as part of an agreement to share the central office expenses, including the cost of the superintendent's salary.

Hajir is now winding up his fifth year and again the chair of the Leverett school committee.

He thinks the challenges ahead will not only be financial but will also stem from the implementation of the state's 2011 Curriculum Frameworks, which will require much more intensive professional development for school districts.

Right now a consortium of 24 states is developing a new assessment method known as Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers. Under these new standards of testing, not only correct answers will be required of students, but also clear processes to demonstrate how an answer was achieved. These assessments will begin in 3rd grade and continue through 12th grade.

He cites the serious problem of funding and sees the need for major restructuring of funding for public schools. For example the Chapter 70 formula of state aid for public schools is seriously outdated; it takes no account of special education. Funding for public schools needs to be national, Hajir believes.

As for school choice and charter school funding, the funding mechanism rewards the receiving school at the expense of the sending school district. Receiving schools and charter schools apply the money from students entering from other towns to their fixed costs; indeed they become rather dependent on it. The choice-out school is left short in meeting its fixed costs, which decline only marginally with the departure of a

few students.

Hajir is convinced the era of questioning and challenging the status quo in our public schools is also a great "opportunity to reinvigorate public education." It is important that a school committee enact good practices; these make everything else go better. "There may not be agreement but there should be a clear understanding that makes it possible for the rest of the district to feel they must deliver their best."

It takes some time to know fully what the job of school committee member is.

"In my fifth year I feel how much I have learned about the importance and responsibility involved in being on the school committee. Although I put a lot of work into it, I have gotten ten times more out of it, and am a member of my community in a deeper way."

Hajir still feels the real power and purpose of the school committee is to be the guardian of the schools.



from THE MILLS page 9

The town and the power company are at an impasse. The town of Montague can't use the footbridge without permission from First Light, and First Light can't use the canal drain without permission from the town of Montague.

The drain in question is located between the Southworth Paper Mill and Building #11 of the Strathmore Mill.

The foot bridge, which crosses the canal near the intersection of 3rd Street, needs a new deck, and the use of ice and snow melting chemicals in place of shoveling the deck has deteriorated some of the steel beams and plates of supporting steel framework. Ballpark estimates for reconstructing the bridge come to about \$200,000.

A restored, wheelchair-accessible footbridge is essential to any hopes the town or private developers have for the redevelopment of the Strathmore building complex. The canal drain is essential for canal maintenance.

Both utility companies and government bodies have powers of eminent domain, so the canal drain could be taken by First Light. Lawyers for both sides are discussing the problem. Another 99 years may pass before those negotiations are over.



CIRCLES from page 1

McCarthy, who established the Turners Falls Coal Company in 1899. McCarthy had a scale house at 60 2nd Street, opposite from where the Second Street Bakery is now located.

Coal dealer Philip B. Shanahan established Shanahan Coal Company in 1929 with offices and coal sheds on the corner of 11th Street and Avenue A. Shanahan bought the Turners Falls Coal Company in 1929.

Much of this history was supplied by historian Ed Gregory of Greenfield.

The Turners Falls Coal Company also sold grain and related items stored in a warehouse behind the scale house. One day when I was about ten, waiting for my father to pick me up, a man approached me in the Aubuchon Hardware that stood on the corner of Second Street and Avenue A. The man offered me a nickel to go to the scale house, next door, to purchase ten pounds of corn. He gave me the price of the corn, which was about 60 cents, as well as the nickel. Apparently, he hadn't paid his bill, and was embarrassed to go to the scale house to buy for cash. When I didn't run off with his money

and brought back the corn, he seemed embarrassed to have counted on me being more trustworthy than he had shown himself to be. A nickel would buy an ice cream cone or a big bar of candy.

Coal was a common source of heat in the '20s and '30s. F.I. Webster Hardware Store, located in the Grand Trunk Hotel building, situated where the former Cumberland Farms building is now, sold sacks of coal and also took orders for bulk coal, sold by the ton, and delivered by companies such as the Turners Falls Coal Company. The trucks had scissor hoists that elevated the dump bodies high above the cab to sluice coal into basement coal bins via a chute, amid a black cloud of coal dust.

While private homes filled coal bins in the basement to feed a furnace, coal parlor stoves heated most of the apartments in town. Starbuck Plumbing picked up the coal stoves in the spring and stored them. Women couldn't wait to get the dusty coal stoves out of the house so they could do their spring cleaning. During slack time, Starbuck employees cleaned, repaired and black-

ened the stoves for fall delivery and set-up.

Coal was dusty, dirty and dangerous. Dust from shaking down the ashes permeated the house. Coal gas sickened or killed a fair number of people each year.

My parents were overcome by coal gas one winter. They lay in bed, conscious but unable to move much of the night and most of the following day. It took a few days for the effects to wear off. Their narrow escape put an end to coal as a fuel in our home.

Back at Unity Park, the construction workers took delivery of enough black polyethylene plastic drainage pipes to handle a tsunami. The drainage pipes will drain surface water runoff from catch basins, as well as drainage from of the 20 foot by 20 foot water park, which isn't much more of a water park than a spigot and a water pail, in the view of an old timer observing the park construction.

The fate of the coal silo foundations, constructed of mortar and stones, remain a mystery. Since they are historic in origin, they may have to be preserved.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Weapons Violations; Trespassing; Larceny at Skateboard Park

Wednesday, 4/11

4:47 p.m. Threatening, harassment on Turnpike Road. Advised of options.
10:04 p.m. Neighbor disturbance on Fourth Street. Advised of options.

Thursday, 4/12

4:02 p.m. Hit and run accident on North Leverett Road. Report taken.
4:54 p.m. Threatening, harassment on Avenue A. Advised of options.
7:03 p.m. Neighbor disturbance on Avenue A. Services rendered.

Friday, 4/13

10:11 a.m. Threatening, harassment on Griswold Street. Advised of options.
10:38 a.m. Threatening, harassment on Avenue A. Advised of options.
1:04 p.m. Threatening, harassment on Fourth.

Advised of options.

7:09 p.m. Annoying, harassing emails on Alice Street. Advised of options.

Saturday, 4/14

1:45 a.m. Domestic disturbance on Chestnut Street. Services rendered.

4:18 p.m. Brush fire at Greenfield Road and Hatchery Roads. Referred to another agency.

4:32 p.m. Trespassing at Silvio O. Conte Anadromous Fish Research Center on Migratory Way. Unable to locate.

7:42 p.m. General disturbance at Carroll's Market on East Main Street. Peace restored.

8:08 p.m. Suspicious persons at Railroad Salvage building on Power Street. Services rendered.

8:41 p.m. Brush fire at

Greenfield and Hatchery Roads. Unable to located.

9:48 p.m. Weapons violations at fields behind Bookmill on Greenfield Road. Unfounded.

10:18 p.m. Weapons violations in the parking lot on Bridge Street. Investigated.

Sunday, 4/15

12:05 a.m. Domestic disturbance on Seventh Street. Services rendered.

5:20 p.m. Environmental incident behind the Discovery Center building at the old Indeck Plant. Referred to another agency.

6:59 p.m. Burglary, breaking and entering on Turners Falls Road. Services rendered.

Monday, 4/16

12:39 a.m. Neighbor disturbance on East Main Street. Investigated.

3:39 p.m. Arrest of

[redacted], for disorderly conduct.

4:28 p.m. Domestic disturbance on Montague City Road. Advised of options.

5:16 p.m. Fire on Old Sunderland Road. Referred to other agency.

5:38 p.m. Safety hazard on Gill-Montague Bridge. Report taken.

Tuesday, 4/17

12:54 a.m. Unwanted person at Crocker Building on Avenue A. Services rendered.

9:50 a.m. Arrest of [redacted] for violation of harassment prevention order.

10:47 a.m. Larceny at skateboard park on Montague Street. Services rendered.

6:47 p.m. Domestic disturbance on G Street. Investigated.

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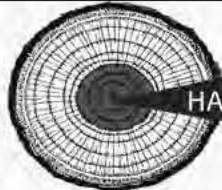
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MARY AZARIAN WOODBLOCK

BY LESLIE BROWN

MONTAGUE CITY – Gardeners come from all walks of life and garden for many reasons.

Some grow vegetables in order to have fresh, healthy food. Some grow flowers to beautify their yards and living spaces. Others choose plants and shrubs that flower and produce food.

All have a unique relationship to the earth.

Gardeners are scientific, intuitive, careful planners and risk takers. None are afraid of hard work. All have learned that despite hard work, successful crops depend on factors often

THE GARDENER'S COMPANION

Garden Zen

outside the gardener's control.

The lucky ones never lose the sense of the miracle of watching a tiny seed develop into a full grown plant bearing edible fruit.

The tomato seeds planted in late February have burgeoned into five- and six-inch plants, with two sets of true leaves. It's transplanting time again.

The tomato plants will finish their indoor life in six and eight inch pots, growing to ten to twelve inches tall. Without this work, there will not be enough root room for these rapidly developing beauties. Hopefully, in another month the weather will allow the tomato plants to move into the garden.

At last, after a too-dry winter, the garlic tops stand strong and a hearty eight inches tall. I have fed them and will keep them free of weeds to maximize bulb development. Sometime in mid-summer they will produce

so that all of the plant's energy can go into developing a sizable bulb. Garlic scapes are mild in flavor and, chopped fine, raw or cooked, can add pizzazz to any dish.

As directed, we removed the dying ferns from the asparagus bed last fall. These, while tired, at least provided a bit of color in the bed. Now there is nothing to see but the dry base of the stalks. We check anxiously every day to spot any spears emerging. Mid-April, and still no sign.

On our return from a brief trip out of town, we inspect the bed and see nine spears emerging! Apparently this was one of those cases of the watched pot never boiling.

Since this is only the first season of our asparagus experiment, we may only harvest a few spears this year. We can wait. Once a bed is established, asparagus roots produce indefi-

nitely, year after year, and require little tender loving care other than weed removal and a little fertilizer.

Well, in for a penny, in for a pound. I have planted my peas early this month. The unseasonable warmth and the earliness of the season may have led me astray, but I believe this trend of warm, dry weather will continue through this garden season.

We can certainly hope the near-drought conditions will not. Like many area farmers, I have begun watering my peas, salad greens and asparagus in earnest, as well as the roses and two heather plants bought recently. Many of us have rushed to garden centers and nurseries for flowering beauties. Certainly, it is imperative to water new plants, as transplanting is a stressor and the dry conditions could spell the loss of newly set flowers and shrubs.

Unfortunately, there is no cure for the lack of rain except to water as best as you are able. Resist the urge to rake up last year's mulch around tender growth. Leaves or straw will slow the loss of water; leaving

the mulch a bit longer will do no damage.

Maybe the best cure for no rain is to drag out the hoses and set up the sprinkler. All this activity just might bring on a rain cloud or two.

The smell of freshly watered soil, the feel of earth in the fingers, working with growing plants in your hands can take the mind away from stress and worries. When your hands are busily productive, the mind can wander as it pleases. Garden Zen will leave you tired in body and rested in mind.

As a teenager I struggled to play team sports. My mind was always racing, trying to direct my limbs and assessing negatively my every move. In gardening I can experience a wonderful harmony of body and mind, the same sense of oneness that sometimes fills me when I am doing Tai Chi. It is the losing of thought, the fluidity of motion that brings a sense of center and peacefulness.

This season allow yourself some Garden Zen. What you grow will feed your senses – and your soul.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ERVING POLICE LOG

Illegal Dumping; Car Crashed into Moose

Wednesday, 4/4

7:10 a.m. Arrest of [REDACTED], for

on a straight warrant.

12:05 p.m. Report of tractor trailer unit causing traffic problems at Route 2 and Prospect Streets. Gone upon arrival.

5 p.m. Report of illegal dumping at Mountain Road residence. Found to have permission from owner to use dumpster.

Thursday, 4/5

12:50 p.m. Criminal complaint issued to [REDACTED], for operating a

motor vehicle with a suspended license on Route 2. Criminal complaint issued to [REDACTED], for operating

allowing suspended operator to operate a motor vehicle on Route 2.

5:55 p.m. Report of domestic situation at Renovator's Supply at Strachen Street. Arrested [REDACTED], for

domestic assault and battery, intimidation of a witness, and a default warrant.

Friday, 4/6

1:45 a.m. Mutual aid in Northfield for possible armed robbery suspect at the New Hampshire border on Route 63 South. Unable to locate subject.

Saturday, 4/7

12:20 a.m. Suspicious motor

vehicle parked on side of Route 2 at Farley Flats area. Was resting. All set.

3:45 p.m. Criminal application issued to [REDACTED] for un-

licensed operation of a motor vehicle, no inspection sticker, and failure to wear a seat belt on Route 2.

6 p.m. Dispatched to Renovator's Supply for a report of a stolen motor vehicle. Report taken.

8:30 p.m. Report of a verbal altercation at Renovator's Supply. Report taken. Subjects separated.

Monday, 4/9

7:50 p.m. Report of assault on Lillian's Way. Found to be juveniles playing. Report taken.

Tuesday, 4/10

3:32 p.m. Report of unwanted male at North Street residence. Same was removed. Report taken.

6:45 p.m. Report of small brush fire by Box Car Restaurant. Erving fire department on scene.

7:12 p.m. Assisted Orange police with domestic situation at East Main Street address. One subject arrested.

9:25 p.m. Report of a juvenile being threatened on Mountain Road. Report taken. Under investigation.

Wednesday, 4/11

12:45 a.m. Assisted Orange police with perimeter for armed robbery at Cumberland Farms.

10:50 a.m. Open camp fire at High Street residence. Advised to put same out, per fire chief.

11:48 a.m. Illegal dumping on River Street behind parking lot on private property.

Thursday, 4/12

12:05 a.m. Criminal application issued to [REDACTED], for

defective equipment, unregistered motor vehicle and attaching license plates to a motor vehicle.

10:53 p.m. Assisted Northfield police with disturbance caused by unwanted male subjects at Aldrich Street.

Friday, 4/13

11 a.m. Report of traffic issue on Pratt Street. Resident complained of speeding vehicles and requested radar.

Saturday, 4/14

3:30 p.m. Criminal application issued to [REDACTED] for operating

a motor vehicle with a revoked registration and an uninsured motor vehicle.

9:30 p.m. Single-car crash involving a moose. Found to be in Orange on Route 2 at exit 14. Assisted Orange police and state police.

Monday, 4/16

7 p.m. Motor vehicle crash on Route 2. Motor vehicle into house. Struck propane tank.

10:50 p.m. Report of suspicious male walking eastbound on Route 2 near the paper mill. Unable to locate.

Tuesday, 4/17

5:40 p.m. Assisted state police with a two-car motor vehicle crash with personal injury on Route 2 in Gill.

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JESSICA LARKIN ILLUSTRATION

BY FRED CICETTI

LEONIA, NJ – Q. Does meditation have any real health benefits?

Meditation definitely reduces stress. And too much stress is bad for your health.

There is some research that indicates meditation may help with: allergies, anxiety, asthma, binge eating, cancer, depression, fatigue, heart disease, high blood pressure, pain, sleep difficulties and substance abuse.

I started meditating in 1976, when Dr. Herbert Benson pub-

Om – The Word on Meditation's Health Benefits

lished his book, *The Relaxation Response*.

The techniques he advocated work. In the years since, I've found that, when I forget to meditate, I get a stress buildup. As soon as I meditate, I feel better. And the effects of the meditation carry through the day.

I studied Zen Buddhist meditation, which involves many of the same techniques that Dr. Benson wrote about. Zen meditation is more structured and its purpose is to bring spiritual enlightenment, not just relaxation.

Is there a difference between meditation and prayer? Many sources define prayer as a form of meditation. There are similarities between the two. I would explain it this way: it's possible for an atheist to meditate.

Meditation is classified as a

mind-body practice in complementary and alternative medicine (CAM). Meditation has been practiced for thousands of years. There are many types of meditation. Most of them originated in ancient spiritual traditions.

How does it work?

If you pay close attention to your mind, you'll find that it has a mind of its own. All day long, the mind brings up thoughts you didn't ask for. Much of your thinking is as voluntary as breathing or circulation. Unfortunately, a lot of the stuff your mind comes up with is negative.

I'm such a failure... When am I gonna catch a break?... Everyone is against me... What's the point of anything? Etcetera, etcetera, etcetera....

Where do these thoughts come from? Years of experience

and the collective consciousness of humankind. They're all stored away just waiting for the chance to appear. They usually surface when your body or mind is under a lot of stress. When you meditate, you clear away this stress-intensifying clutch.

The primary benefits of meditation are immediate relaxation and a better understanding of how your body, mind and spirit work together so you can handle stressful situations. Over time, you will gain greater peace for yourself and those around you.

I have learned a lot from studying Zen and Eckhart Tolle, a German philosopher who advocates many of the teachings of Zen. In Tolle's book, *The Power of Now*, he explains meditation can help you stay in the moment. That in itself is a potent stress-reliever.

"The eternal present is the space within which your whole life unfolds, the one factor that remains constant. Life is now. There was never a time when your life was not now, nor will there ever be," Tolle writes.

Past and future are mental constructs. If you dwell upon the past, you can fall into the abyss of guilt, regret, resentment, and many other negative feelings. If you concentrate on the future, you can build up overwhelming obstacles that will make you fearful.

Tolle points out we are all capable of dealing with the present moment, but no one can rectify imagined mistakes of the past or the projected challenges of a future. Neither the past nor the future exists. Accepting this reality gives you an amazing high.

[More about meditation in our next column.]

If you have a question, write to fred@healthyeezer.com.

REHAB from page 6

renewal. At that point, MCTV hopes to be chosen for ten more years as the town's cable access provider, and to remain the building's tenant.

Muller's proposal led to a multifaceted discussion among the EDIC members present, chair Andrew Killeen, Linda Ackerman, Lyn Reynolds, Nathan Donovan, and town planner Walter Ramsey.

Muller began the discussion by saying the cable access station had been interested in the 38 Avenue A building since 2005, and made its first proposal for rehabbing the property last year.

After the meeting, Muller explained, "We've run out of room where we are, which was never really the ideal space to begin with. We've wanted to move into the 38 Avenue A building since December of 2005, despite its serious disrepair. Now, it is available and we're willing to make the capital investment to

build it to our needs."

Muller said among the building's advantages, "It's right at the base of the bridge, right on Avenue A, next to the Discovery Center, with lots of parking behind it." As well, the move would not require the major expense of rerouting the station's iNet broadcast cable; something that would make a move to other locations on the Avenue "prohibitively expensive," Muller said.

The EDIC acknowledged that as recently as a month ago, the board had felt its hands were tied due to the lack of a clear agreement with DCR, not to mention the EDIC's lack of funds to apply to the rehab or demolition of the building. Recent orders to remediate mold and meet fire code at 38 Avenue A from the board of health and building inspector left the EDIC with little choice but to seek bids for the work of rehabbing or demolishing the building, with the only source of funds for either option being the town of

Montague. Those bids will be opened on April 18th.

Lyn Reynolds pointed out two salient points: first, the best interest of the town was the bottom line of the EDIC's choice of action. And second, the amended agreement with DCR now allowed the board great flexibility in what it chose to do with the Cumby building.

Nathan Donovan pointed out that MEDIC has been responsible for 38 Avenue A for roughly 27 years. He did not want MEDIC to remain the landlord of that building for another decade.

Reynolds suggested gifting the building with rehab done, and a tenant in place if, for example, MCTV's proposal were accepted.

Andrew Killeen had yet another suggestion: What if the building were given to MCTV immediately and MCTV began the rehab in advance of the final signature from DCR on the new agreement?

Linda Ackerman followed up with a question for Muller: if the rehab costs you've projected increase by 50%, would MCTV still be interested?

Muller replied, "I'd have to go back to my board with that."

At this point Muller left the room, and the EDIC pondered how to broach the subject to the selectboard later that evening. In the end, the members of the EDIC voted in favor of allowing MCTV to rehab and subsequently occupy the building for a period of two years. The EDIC meeting adjourned then to attend the selectmen's meeting on the second floor of town hall.

Walter Ramsey updated the selectboard on the negotiations with DCR and the need for the selectboard to sign off on the amended agreement with DCR. Pat Allen made that motion, and it passed unanimously.

Next Andrew Killeen presented MCTV's proposal, which included rehabbing the interior

of the building so MCTV, the Montague Business Association and RiverCulture could all utilize space at 38 Avenue A. Having RiverCulture as a tenant would meet the quasi-governmental body requirement outlined in the new agreement with DCR.

Chair Mark Fairbrother opposed the idea, preferring that a commercial entity move into 38 Avenue A, but when Allen made a motion to support the EDIC's plan of action, allowing MCTV's proposal to move forward, the motion carried 2 for, 1 against.

In other news, the EDIC approved a request from the Montague Business Association and MCTV to hold a shredding party in front of the Cumby building at 38 Avenue A on Thursday, April 26th, from 3:00 to 7:00 p.m. Eric Wartel of Valley Green Shredding will donate the use of his shredder for the fundraising event for MCTV.



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Ferry Meadow Farm - part XXXVI

Turners Falls 2017

BY ELOISE MICHAEL — Marissa goes out to find Dave. Brigid chats with me while I eat.

A few minutes later, Dave comes in smelling smoky like a camp fire and grins at me. "Hey," he says.

"Hey," I say back. I am glad to see him, but I realize that training me to work on the Big House will be extra work for him.

"I'm really sorry to take you away from the fire," I say. "Can you just give me something to do, and then go back?"

"Depends on how good you are with a hammer," he says.

I say nothing, worried that I will not be good with a hammer at all. I have finished my food, so

I thank Brigid and wash the bowl.

Dave and I go outside. The sun is setting. The clouds are salmon pink, and the sky still brilliant blue. The whole thing is reflected in the river, which is smooth like a pond. We cross the yard, and Dave opens the door, letting me in ahead of him. I stop and look around, not sure where we will be going.

"What we're doing," Dave says, "is laying floorboards."

He leads me down the hall and into a room which is half full with a pile of wood. "They're salvaged from different buildings," he explains. "It's nice if you don't have to cut 'em too much, and it's also nice if you can get them all

to match in a room. Don't have to, but I try anyway."

I nod, trying to picture the kind of work I will be doing in a few minutes.

"So I measure the length I need," he waves an arm down the hall, "in the room. Then I come here and paw through the pile for one that's a good match. Right now we could use a board that's four feet long and matches these." He points to a pile, then hands me the tape measure.

"OK," I say, tentatively measuring one. "Like this?" I ask, nervous that I have gotten it wrong somehow.

"Yup," he grins. "Think you got the first part down."

Dave works with me until it's time for him to go to bed. I hope that he is doing this because he likes talking to me and not

because he is afraid I will mess something up if he leaves me alone. By 10:00 o'clock, I am pretty sure that I won't mess up.

My hands are tired from sawing and hammering, even though I have work gloves, but I tell Dave I will work a couple more hours after he goes to bed. "It will keep me from getting bored," I say, "by myself."

"I know that you are hiding from someone. And that's why you have to sleep during the day."

"That's pretty much it," I tell him.

"Are you sure you'll be OK here by yourself? At night? I mean — what if the person you're hiding from —"

"If the person I'm hiding from shows up," I say. "There's not much you or anyone can do to help me."

He waits for me to say more.

"It's not that I don't trust you.

It seems like the fewer people there are who know, the better."

"Sounds exciting!" Dave says, like he's trying to make a joke of it. "Are the FBI looking for you?"

"Something like that," I say. "Seriously, though, I'll be fine. Why don't you get some sleep?"

"OK. Goodnight, Theresa."

"Goodnight."

He stays for an awkward second, then smiles. "See you tomorrow."

"Yeah, see you."

"OK," he says, finally turning to walk out. Then he calls back from the door. "Don't do more than you want to. It's fine to stop whenever you're feeling burnt out."

"Thanks," I call back, but I know I will work hard. I want Dave, and all of them, to be glad I am here.

— Continued Next Issue

HIDDEN from pg 8

honing her craft. Think Selena with her father at the wheel; a young Debbie Gibson touring the malls; Naia Kete, refining her talents week by week, passing the tip cup at the Rendezvous in Turners Falls and at Northfield Coffee and Books. These are the ones who make it on the big stage. Our job, locally, is to applaud those who haven't yet gotten that recognition, hoping we can say we saw them when...

Part of the fun is the spontaneity. Will a guest player be a James Taylor fan? Is someone on a Beatles kick this week?

Truly, I don't go for the cover songs. What I love are the originals. A songwriting guest player will take the stage with the house band, and there's mere seconds of off-mike discussion. The bassist silently fingers a chord change or two, the guitarist(s) nod in agreement, the drummer clicks sticks counting, "one, two, three, four," and they are off. They play in sync, they play in tune, and they play as if they have known all the

songs all their lives.

The house band is made up of a revolving bunch of musicians who blend seamlessly each week. The drummer, Joe "Joey" Fitzpatrick, is the one constant. He plays thick and heavy on the hard rock tunes, then lightens it up and bounces effortlessly along when tackling the intricate grooves of a deceptively pop-sounding Steve Crow original. (Joey and Crow play at the Deja Brew in Wendell once a month in a trio with bassist Peter Kim — check 'em out.) It is lots of fun when Crow's songs are in the set. I love to write and I love to dance, and when Crow is on at the open mic, you'll see me bop-pin' around, pen and notebook in hand. Crow's licks are irresistible when backed up by Joey's hop-pin' beats.

When Katelyn Richards and Lincoln Hubley take the Roadhouse stage on their night off from gigging as the guitar-drum singing duet, Sound-a-Licious, it's clear why they get so many bookings. Richards' origi-

nal songs calm the feisty honky-tonk crowd while simultaneously consoling the indie rocker. Her voice is clear and courageous while Hubley's hits precise, crisp, light and sure. I personally hope Naia Kete brings Blake Shelton back East if only to check out this duo's Dolly Parton, Lady Gaga, and Sugarland set — they are that good, and, yes, their set list is that diverse.


So if you've got the chops and you want to play out, the Roadhouse is the place to be on Thursday nights. Want to jam with Trailer Park's Tom Mahnken on sax? Maybe you want to play behind an honest, gritty, sweet, soul-searching songstress like Northampton recording artist Celia? Or perhaps you want to share the stage with Mark Herschler, the prolific songwriter of Lil' Shack Records, who regularly collaborates with Grammy winner John Cruz and has his songs recorded by Cruz and Grammy nominee Jack Johnson. These are accomplished artists, and whatever your musi-

cal style, they've got your back.

I go to the Route 63 Roadhouse open mic to listen to quality music, at a price I can afford, in an atmosphere that makes everyone feel like a local.

The bartender, Jessica Gershman, (who is co-owner with Robert Brownlee) goes out of her way to make her Thursday night guests feel welcome. The drink specials hover at 1992 prices, seemingly immune to soaring inflation rates. The menu lists standard but yummy quality

bar fare like chicken tenders and pizza, and Jessica willingly starts up the kitchen fires even for only one hungry customer who craves her waffle fries.

Thursday nights at the Roadhouse have become my guilty pleasure, and I am happy to finally share my secret. Please, join me next week. I don't know who will be on stage, I don't know what eclectic mix of music will be, but I do know it will be a rockin' good time. 

Notice of Public Meeting

Turnpike Road Energy Park Master Plan and DPW Facility Planning

Thursday April 26th
7:00 PM

Public Safety Complex Community Meeting Room
180 Turnpike Road, Turners Falls MA

The Montague Planning and Conservation Department and the Landfill Area Reuse Committee will present a draft plan to redevelop 183 acres of municipal land off Sandy Lane as a sustainable light industrial park. Also incorporated into this study is an analysis of existing Highway Department facilities and proposed facility relocation options. Review the Draft Plan at: www.montague-ma.gov. All are invited to attend. Input is critical at this early stage of the plan.

For questions or comments please contact
Walter Ramsey, Town Planner at planner@montague-ma.gov.

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Winterland, Greenfield: **TNT Karaoke**, 9 p.m.

EVERY THURSDAY

Between the Uprights, Turners Falls: **Acoustic open mic** with Dan, Kip & Shultz from *Curly Fingers DuPre* hosting. 8:30 to 11:30 p.m.

Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: **Open Mic Night**, 9 p.m.

EVERY FRIDAY

Burrito Rojo, Turners Falls: **Song Shop Open Mic**, 8 p.m.

EVERY FRIDAY and SATURDAY

Montague Inn: **TNT Karaoke**.

ART SHOWS:

NOW through APRIL

Leverett Library: **Photographs from the East Leverett Trails**.

Wendell Free Library: fabric arts exhibition, **Painting with Thread**, by Helen V. Purple of Petersham.

NOW through APRIL 29th

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: **Sculpture by David Flood** in the Great Hall. Open Fridays & Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

NOW through MAY 12th

Nina's Nook, Turners Falls: **Fervor from the Truth: Spiritually Obsessive Works**: Edite Cunha, Gina Vernava.



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NOW through JUNE 10th

Gallery at Hallmark, Turners Falls: **Images from the '50s**, by Martin Karplus. Opening reception 4 to 7 p.m. on Friday, April 13th.

LOCAL EVENTS:

THURSDAY, APRIL 19th

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: **Kamer blue butterflies**. Join Lindsay Webb, wildlife biologist, 7 to 8:30 p.m.

Rendezvous,

Turners Falls: **Shana Falana (NYC) & Ryder Cooley**, ambient pop/ experimental/ folk/ multi-media/ musical performance, 8 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: **Tommy Filiault & Friends**, acoustic rock, 8 to 10 p.m.

FRIDAY, APRIL 20th and 27th

SATURDAY, APRIL 21st and 28th Shea Theater, Turners Falls: **Radium Girls**, 7 p.m. Also, Sunday matinees on April 22nd and 29th at 2 p.m.

FRIDAY, APRIL 20th

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: **Luke Mulholland with special guest Seth Adams**, 7:30 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: **Empty Banks**, formerly *Nobody's Fat*, & *Michael Graffius*, free, 9:30 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: **The Reprobate Blues Band**, 9 to 11 p.m.

Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: **Equalites - Reggae Funk**, 9:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, APRIL 21st

UMass Amherst Curry Hicks Cage: **31st Annual Pow Wow**, Donations welcome, vendors and food available. Come and support. 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Pleasant Street Community Garden, Greenfield: **Garden Party**, garden tours, 1 to 3 p.m.

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: **Leland Sundries** with singer-songwriter Joan Hutcheson, 7:30 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: **Rockit Queer**, the dance party, with DJ Greg2000, 9:30 p.m.

Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: **Psycho Magnetic**, 9:30 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: **Josh Levangie & The Mud, Blood & Beer Band**, 9 to 11 p.m.

SUNDAY, APRIL 22nd

Millers River Environmental Center, Athol: **Early Birding with Jeff**, 7 a.m.

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: **Ray Mason**, 2 to 4 p.m.

Boswell's Books, Shelburne Falls: Five local poets read from their works: **Margaret Lloyd, Henry Lyman, Trish Crappo, Doug Anderson and**



The Russians Are Coming plays at Wendell Free Library on Sunday, April 22nd at 7 p.m. Free. **Annie Woodhull**, 6 p.m.

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

Deja Brew, Wendell: **John Sheldon**, 8 to 10 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 25th

World Eye Bookshop, Greenfield: **Katherine Mayfield** will answer this question and talk about her new memoir, *The Box of Daughter*, 4 to 6 p.m.

Greenfield Public Library: Film showing of *The Growing Edge: Beyond Sustainability to Regeneration*, 6:30 p.m.

THURSDAY, APRIL 26th

Stoneleigh-Burnham School, Bernardston Road, Greenfield: **The 21th Annual Poet's Seat Poetry Awards ceremony**, 7 p.m. in the Capen Room.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: The return of the LPs!! Performing **Los Lobos' The Neighborhood**, 9:30 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: **Larry Kopp**, blues guitar with vocals, 8 to 10 p.m.

FRIDAY, APRIL 27th and

SATURDAY, APRIL 28th Memorial Hall Theater, Shelburne

Falls: Pothole Pictures presents *The Third Man*, 7:30 p.m. Music at 7 p.m. before the show on Friday features Daniel Hales and the Frost Heaves. On Saturday, Jason Bourgeois.

FRIDAY, APRIL 27th

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: **Young Children's Story Hour** about Ants, 10:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Loot, Turners Falls: **Word = Object Art Show**, opening reception, 7 p.m.

Montague Bookmill: **Murray and Falkenau**, 8 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: **The Diamondstones** and special guests, 9:30 p.m.

Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: **James Montgomery Blues Band**, 9:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, APRIL 28th

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: **Investigation Station: Metamorphosis**, 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: **Introduction to Vernal Pools**, 1 to 2:15 p.m.

Montague Grange: **Quebecois jam session**, a convergence of fiddlers from ME, NY, MA, VT, NH, and elsewhere to play, share, swap, listen to Quebecois tunes. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.



The Third Man plays at Memorial Hall in Shelburne Falls on April 27th & 28th at 7:30 p.m.

As You Write It II, 1 p.m. Featuring local writers **Rosalie Bolton, Estelle Cade, Patricia Carlisle, Lillian Fiske, Fran Hemond, Robin Panagakos, and Joseph Parzych**.

Literacy Project, Greenfield: Readings from **Edite Cunha** and **Emily Goodwin** with photographs from **Lindy Whiton's** exhibit, *Grounded in Magic*. 3 to 5 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Sunday locals, **The Spring-fed Band & Grainne Buchanan**, 6 p.m. Free.

Montague Bookmill: **Home Body and Jeremy Dubs** present *Speak!* 8 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: **Le Chéile**, an

Irish Session, 8 to 10 p.m.

MONDAY, APRIL 30th

Deja Brew, Wendell: **All Small Caps**, a night of spoken word, season finale, featuring **Jordin Davis** and **John Godfrey**, 7 to 10 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: **Dada Dino's Open Mic**, 8 p.m. Free.



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At the Spring Parade...

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Ellen Blanchette Photos



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They rode in wagons, rode horses, drove tractors and golf carts, tiny cars and vintage cars. Joining in the line were Stewart's Nursery, Dick's Maple Syrup, Greenfield Savings Bank, Sam's Pools, fire trucks from Turners Falls and Erving, even the Franklin County Sheriff drove in the parade. The Mutton & Mead Medieval Festival was well represented as actors pranced by in costume and on horseback. There were drummers, dancers, a Turners Falls beauty queen. Volunteers tossed out beaded necklaces, candy and favors to the spectators lining the route, who used the occasion to spark front yard barbecues and family reunions. The phrase is tried and true, but it can definitely be said that a good time was had by all!



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