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The Montague Reporter

YEAR 11 – NO. 28

also serving Irving, Gill, Leverett and Wendell

75¢

EDITOR@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

APRIL 25, 2013

LEVERETT ANNUAL TOWN MEETING, APR 27 9 A.M. AT LEVERETT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Good News; the Gill-Turners Bridge is not falling down!



l-r Mike Biagini and Kirk Stannaway do the heavy looking on as Howard Dwerney applies gentle persuasion on some reluctant concrete surrounding cable conduits with fiber optic cables inside, while excavator operator Nate Couture waits patiently.

By JOE PARZYCH

GILL-TURNERS FALLS – A reader of the Montague Reporter recently wrote that he heard that concrete on the bridge is of poor quality and crumbling, expansion

joints are failing, and apparently the whole mess will go the way of London Bridge.

According to Mass DOT engineer, Chris Hoynoski, this is not so. Newly poured concrete on the bridge is of highest bridge deck

specifications, with sample tests done on every pour. The bump at the expansion joint resulted from temporary blacktop sliding forward, like a scatter rug, when cars brake for the temporary plates, which are

see **BRIDGE** page 9

How the State Budget Impacts Local Government

By JEFF SINGLETON

In late January Governor Deval Patrick presented an ambitious state budget that appeared designed to leave a long term policy legacy. Stymied by nearly four years of recession, the Governor came out swinging, proposing major new initiatives in education and transportation to be funded in part by an increase in the state income tax.

The legislature responded with a rather cool and skeptical reaction to the governor's ambitious budget and tax plan. Their response has obscured an interesting reality. The bottom line, in terms of the main forms of state aid most towns in the region will receive this coming fiscal year, is not much different in the budgets produced by the legislature when compared with Governor Patrick's original proposal. A major difference, though, between the two budgets is that the House Ways and Means Budget does not fund some of the governor's key early childhood initiatives and its long term transportation investments are more modest than what the governor proposed. In addition, the funding sources are

different. The governor proposed funding increases to education and transportation through a one percent income tax hike; the legislature's solution was to raise taxes on cigarettes instead of income, and hike fees on nearly all and everything else.

Education

On the education side, the governor targeted early childhood education, proposing to reduce the waiting list for subsidized pre-Kinder-garten programs and to lift the cap on state aid to school districts who offer Pre-K education. Secondly, Patrick's budget fully funded the so-called "aggregate wealth model" for determining the main form of education aid, Chapter 70. This reform of the state aid formula, which considers income as well as property values in allocating state school aid, has been waiting for full implementation since 2007.

The governor also proposed a significant increase of over 15 % or over \$185 million in spending for higher education. This increase partially offsets the large cuts in higher education over the past decade, see **BUDGET** page 10

The level of state aid is not much different in the legislature's budget than in the governor's.

What's the Plan Living within 10 Miles, 12 Miles or More Miles of Vermont Yankee

By KATIE NOLAN

What would you do if you lived near a nuclear power plant during a radiological emergency? Evacuate as far away as possible? Hunker down in place, closing doors and windows? How would local schools respond? How would parents connect with their schoolchildren?

Franklin County towns located within 10 miles of the Vermont Yankee (VY) nuclear plant in Vernon, Vermont have radiological emergency plans, prepared with NRC funding and oversight, hold drills to practice for such emergencies and receive funding for emergency equipment. However, towns located within a 20-mile radius of VY, including Irving, Leverett, Montague, Shutesbury, and Wendell, do not.

During the March 2011 Fukushima Daiichi nuclear emergency, the Japanese government proclaimed an evacuation zone of 20 kilometers (12 miles) from the plant and recommended sheltering in place within 30 km (19 miles) of the plant. The U.S. embassy in Japan recommended that U.S. citizens relocate to 50 miles from the failing plant. Speaking to Congress during the emergency, Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) chair Gregory Jaczko recommended "evacuation

to a much larger radius than has currently been provided by Japan."

EPZ Expansion

Nina Keller, Wendell's hazardous waste coordinator, considered the panic after the Fukushima emergency, and wondered, "What would we do at our schools to avoid chaos?" in the event of a radiological emergency at VY. Last fall, Keller spoke with the Swift River (Wendell/New Salem) and Mahar Regional school committees and asked them to petition the NRC for expansion of the Emergency Planning Zone (EPZ) from 10 miles to 50 miles. Keller

said that expanding the EPZ would make more towns eligible for help in developing emergency plans and for training and equipment funding.

In February, both school committees sent letters to the NRC asking for the EPZ expansion to 50 miles from VY. According to Swift River and Mahar committee member Johanna Bartlett, the NRC recently wrote the committees to say that their letters had been received and that a more detailed response would be forthcoming.

Evacuation and Sheltering

Government agencies provide two responses for citizens during a radiological emergency: evacuation and sheltering in place.

Vermont Emergency Management see **PLAN** page 9



Jesus Christ Superstar Rock Opera at the Shea



At center, left to right, Martha King-Devine (Mary Magdalene) and Chris Rose (Jesus) surrounded by the cast of Jesus Christ Superstar at the Shea Theater on Saturday. In shadow at the back, Joey Stankiewicz (Judas).

By ELLEN BLANCHETTE

The Arena Civic Theater production of "Jesus Christ Superstar" at the Shea Theater in Turners Falls this week is an experience of richly sung music and pageantry that tells an ancient story of moral struggle. The rock opera by Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber looks at the interaction of Jesus and Judas and examines the inner struggles of both these men. The authors chose the moment in time that precedes the crucifixion with Jesus reflecting on what he is about to sacrifice and Ju-

das struggling with a choice to betray him. Director Catherine King and musical director Chris Devine have done an excellent job of building this strong cast performance with support and creativity.

The company sings the entire show and does it quite admirably. The cast is filled with superb singers who carry the show with great harmonies and rhythm while maintaining the dramatic intention of the words they sing. Chris Rose as Jesus has a rich smooth voice with velvet tones that powerfully fill the theater. He presents Jesus as a fine,

elegant, but humble religious leader who struggles with his choices and questions whether what he believes could be real, and yet, is committed to the sacrifice he knows must come. He stands tall and straight, interacts with the young people of the cast with honest affection, shows joy and sorrow in the course of the play revealing the complex man he portrays. There is an aura of beauty and peace about him, which is appropriate to the part he plays but not easy to accomplish. His is an excel-

see **ROCK OPERA** page 6

Pet of the Week



Shyann

My unique looks come with a very special personality. I am a Dixie dog. Dixie dogs are transported to northern adoption centers from southern shelters that are overrun with friendly and healthy dogs.

I am a young, active dog who would benefit from training classes. Dakin offers classes and there is a discount with my adoption.

My ideal home would provide plenty of exercise, play, and affection. The staff here thinks that I would be ok with older/mature kids. I get along with dogs my size so a dog sibling would be great. If you think that I might be the dog for you, please ask for the chance to meet me!

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

LINDA HICKMAN PHOTO



Flowering Crabtree Tree in Peskeompskut Park



JESSICA LARKIN ILLUSTRATION

By FRED CICETTI

Q. My daughter heard that grapefruit juice can be toxic for some people. Is that true?

The juice, itself, is not toxic, but you should be careful taking medicine with any grapefruit.

Grapefruit juice can raise the level of some medications in the blood. The effect of grapefruit was discovered after using juice to mask the taste of a medicine. So, be sure to ask your doctor or pharmacist if it is safe to have grapefruit with your medications.

Taking medicine can be hazardous to your health. You have to know what you're doing.

For example, calcium-rich dairy products or certain antacids can pre-

a.m. On Wednesday afternoon the Great Falls Farmers market opens for the season from 2 – 6 p.m. On Wednesday, from 4 – 6 p.m., the *Celestial Café* show with Emily Goodwin's three dimensional collages opens at Nina's Nook. Nina's Nook gallery is open Wednesdays and Thursdays 4 – 6 p.m. and Fridays and Saturdays, 1-6 p.m. and by appointment, 413-834-8800. On Thursday, May 2nd, there will be a memorial tree replanting in Peskeompskut Park from 5 – 7 p.m., 863-4804. This public event commemorates local women lost to domestic violence. Saturday, May 4th features several activities. From 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. is the Jurassic Roadshow "Home Team" at Barton Cove. This free event features local dinosaur footprints and geology, 659-3714. At 10:30 a.m. on Saturday is a Bilingual Concert with Mister G for families in Peskeompskut Park. This English/Spanish concert held in honor of Cinco de Mayo will be performed in the Carnegie Library if the weather is unpleasant. Tuesday, May 7th, features Spring/Mother's day card making for children of all ages at the Millers Falls Library from 3:30 – 4:30 p.m. On Friday, May 10th is The *Great Falls Coffeehouse with Moonmeadow Butterfly* featuring original songs with Shana and Joe Ricker at 7 p.m., 863-3221. On Saturday,

FACES & PLACES

CHRISTOPHER SAWYER-LAUCANNO PHOTO



Reverend Barbara Turner Delisle rings the bell at 2:50 p.m. on Monday April 22 at the First Congregational Church in Montague Center in memory of those killed and injured a week before at this time in the Boston marathon bombing.

May 11th, from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m., the Friends of the Montague Public Libraries are running a *Spring Used Book Sale* at the Carnegie Library. Books are all \$2 a bag. Also on Saturday morning at the Carnegie Library will be a program on *Frogs and Friends* from 10:30 a.m. – noon with Dawn Marvin Ward. Children of all ages are invited to learn about frogs and other amphibians. On Saturday from 10:30 a.m. – noon, the Great Falls Discovery Center has a program designed for elementary age children, *Watershed Investigators: Bird Songs and Homes*. The Turners Falls Fishway will open for the season on Saturday, May 11th. The fish viewing facilities are open Wednesday – Sunday, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m., through Sunday, June

17th, 659-3714. The Crabapple Blossom Festival ends with the Blossom Thursday Night Out in Turners Falls. Events include an Artist Reception for Celestial Café's Emily Goodwin at Nina's Nook from 6 – 8 p.m. Free self-guided *Turners Falls Historical Walking Tour* booklets, *Geological Walking Tour* Booklets, and *Downtown Attractions & Outdoor Recreation* guides will be available at the Carnegie Library, Great Falls Discovery Center, and Town Hall. The Carnegie Library is open on Monday- Wednesday, 1 – 8 p.m., Thursday, 1 – 5 p.m., Friday, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. and Saturday, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. For information call the Carnegie Library, 863-3214 or visit turnersfallsriverculture.org.

THE HEALTHY GEEZER

Mixing Grapefruit Juice with Medications

vent antibiotics from being properly absorbed into the bloodstream. Ginkgo biloba can reduce the effectiveness of blood-thinning medications and raise the risk for serious complications such as stroke.

You should educate yourself so you know what active ingredients are in the prescription and over-the-counter medicines you are taking.

Some people treat over-the-counter pain relievers as if they are harmless. They can hurt you if you take them improperly. They contain drugs such as acetaminophen, ibuprofen, naproxen sodium and aspirin. Acetaminophen is in Tylenol. Ibuprofen is in Advil. Naproxen sodium is in Aleve.

Many prescription or over-the-counter medicines that treat multiple symptoms, such as cold and flu medications, also include acetaminophen and the other pain-relieving ingredients. So you have to be careful not to take too much of any one ingredient by ingesting more than one medication that contains that ingredient.

Seniors take more medicines

than any other age group because they have more health problems. Taking several drugs a day presents dangers. Here are some more tips to avoid these hazards:

Always inform your doctor or pharmacist about all medicines you are already taking, including herbal products and over-the-counter medications.

Tell your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist about past problems you have had with medicines, such as rashes, indigestion or dizziness.

Don't mix alcohol and medicine unless your doctor or pharmacist says it's okay. Some medicines may not work well or may make you sick if you take them with alcohol.

The best advice is this: Don't be afraid to throw a lot of questions about your medicines at your doctor, nurse or pharmacist. Here are some good ones:

When should I take it? As needed, or on a schedule? Before, with or between meals? At bedtime?

How often should I take it?

How long will I have to take it?

How will I feel once I start taking

this medicine?

How will I know if this medicine is working?

If I forget to take it, what should I do?

What side effects might I expect? Should I report them?

Can this medicine interact with other prescription and over-the-counter medicines—including herbal and dietary supplements—that I am taking now?

And, ask your pharmacist to put your medicine in large, easy-to open containers with large-print labels.

Send your questions to
fred@healthygeezers.com.

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Call us or contact
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with any questions.

Carnegie Library News

Turners Falls Crabapple Festival

By LINDA HICKMAN

The tenth annual Turners Falls Crabapple Blossom Festival runs from May 1st – May 16th. Many of the downtown streets and parks in Turners Falls are lined with flowering crabapple, cherry and apple trees. Various events are scheduled to encourage people to come and enjoy the flowers and Turners Falls' nature, culture, art, history and architecture. The festival is organized by the Montague Public Libraries, with collaboration and support from other partners, including RiverCulture. The Festival's first event is a *May Day Party* for young children at the Carnegie Library's Story Time on Wednesday, May 1st at 10:15



Flowering Crabtree Tree in Peskeompskut Park



JESSICA LARKIN ILLUSTRATION

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How will I feel once I start taking

Senior Center Activities - April 29nd to May 3rd

GILL-MONTAGUE

Gill/Montague Senior Center, 62 Fifth Street, Turners Falls, is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Congregate meals are served Tuesday through Thursday at Noon. Meal reservations must be made one day in advance by 11 a.m. The Meal Site Manager is Kerry Togneri. All fitness classes are supported by a grant from the Executive Office of Elder Affairs. Voluntary donations are accepted. Council on Aging Director is Roberta Potter.

For more information, to make meal reservations, or to sign up for programs call 863-9357. Messages can be left on our machine when the center is not open.

Monday 4/29

10:10 a.m. Aerobics

10:45 a.m. Chair Exercise

1:00 p.m. Knitting Circle

Tuesday: 4/30

Senior Center Closed

State Primary Election

Wednesday: 5/1

10:00 a.m. Aerobics

12:00 p.m. Lunch

12:45 p.m. Bingo

Thursday: 5/2

9:00 a.m. NO Tai Chi

10:30 a.m. to Noon: Brown Bag

12:00 p.m. Lunch

1:00 p.m. Pitch

Friday: 5/3

10:00 a.m. Aerobics

10:45 a.m. Chair Exercise

1:00 p.m. Writing Group

ERVING

Erving Senior Center, 1 Care Drive, Erving, is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. for activities and congregate meals. Lunch is at 11:30 a.m., with reservations required 24 hours in advance. Call Mealsite Manager Rebecca Meuse at (413) 423-3308, for meal information and reservations.

For information, call Polly Kiely, Senior Center Director, at (413) 423-3649. Transportation can be provided for meals, shopping, or medical necessity. Call the Center to confirm activities, schedule a ride, or find out when is the next blood pressure clinic.

Monday, 4/29

9 a.m. Tai Chi

10 a.m. Osteo Exercise

Tuesday, 4/30

8:45 a.m. Chair Aerobics

12:30 p.m. Painting

Wednesday 5/1

8:45 a.m. Line Dancing

10:00 a.m. Chair Yoga

10:00 a.m. Blood Pressure

12:00 p.m. Bingo

Thursday 5/2

8:15 a.m. Foot Clinic

8:45 a.m. Aerobics

10:00 a.m. Posture Perfect

11:00 a.m. Brown Bag

12:00 p.m. Cards

Friday 5/3

9:00 a.m. Bowling

9:30 a.m. Sit and Knit

LEVERETT

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

Take-It-Easy Chair Yoga – Wednesdays at 10 a.m. at the Town Hall. Drop-in \$4 (first class free). Senior Lunch – Fridays at noon. Call (413) 367-2694 by Wednesday for a reservation.

WENDELL

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



JESSICA LARKIN ILLUSTRATION

LOCAL BRIEFS

Compiled By **DON CLEGG**

Bingo at GSB in Turners Falls on Saturday, Apr 27, from 10 to 11:30 am with Carol Demers, a familiar face to many of us in the Town of Montague as the guest caller. GSB will provide cards, prizes and light refreshments; all you need to bring is yourself. Seating will definitely be on a first call, first reserve basis and no one will be admitted without a reservation, call 413-863-4316. Sorry!

Come see live **glassblowing demonstrations**. Items for sale will include blown glass jewelry, marbles, sculpture, vases, miniatures, guitar picks, wine bottle stoppers, goblets and perfume bottles at Rockland Glassworks (Spring Open Studio Sale) at 17 N. Leverett Road, Montague on Saturday, Apr 27, from 10 am to 4 pm.

Opening on May 1 at Nina's Nook, 125A Avenue A, in Turners Falls is "**Celestial Cafe**" featuring three dimensional collages by Emily Goodwin. Goodwin grew up in Protestant New England, but her intricate artworks have been inspired

by Catholic and Latin American imagery. She often combines religious elements with packaging, mythic, and fairy tale iconography to make 3-dimensional collages which she calls "Veronica's Icons" (after St. Veronica.) A reception with the artist is planned for Thursday, May 16 from 5 to 8 pm at Nina's Nook. Hours are Wed-Th 4-6 pm, Fri-Sat 1-6 pm or by appointment, 413-834-8800.

Red Fire Farm, 504 Turners Falls Rd., Montague, opens for the season on Saturday Apr 27. The early bird catches the worm. It's a perfect time to pick up organic bedding plants for your garden. Choose from perennial herbs and early flower varieties like snapdragons, pansies, and petunias. More plants as it gets warmer. Red Fire Farm also has early season organic produce available. Expect to see salad mix, spinach, black radishes, early greens, green garlic, etc. Of course, some of our local favorites will be in stock like eggs, sauerkraut, cheeses, maple syrup, and milk. Customers also can learn about our Farmstand Membership and CSA.

Just a reminder that the Turners Falls Alumni Association will host a **Community Tag Sale** at the parking lot of the Turners Falls High School on Saturday, Apr 27 from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. The rain date is Sunday, Apr 28th. Proceeds from the tag sale go toward the scholarship account.

The Newt Guilbault League will kickoff its **Youth Baseball season** with the annual parade from Turners Falls High School to the ball fields on Montague Street (next to Sheffield School) on Saturday, Apr 28, at 11 am.

Send local briefs to editor@montaguereporter.org.

Poets Wanted!

to submit original poems. Please email: poetry@montaguereporter.org for consideration in the monthly Poetry Page. Include 25-word bio. Poems may also be posted to Montague Reporter, 58 4th Street, Turners Falls, MA 01376.

No prior experience necessary, at least as a poet.

from **BRIDGE** page 1

in place while work on the reversal of fixity of expansion joints goes on underneath. In fact, workmen have been hard at work, unseen, underneath for most of the winter, and will continue to do so for quite some time. When workers reverse the fixity of the expansion joints and apply lubricant, they will seal the joints to prevent water and road chemicals from eroding them, as in the past. There is also a concerted effort to seal all bridge components against future corrosion of metal parts, as well as much of the concrete.

SPS used ground heaters to keep freshly poured concrete from freezing, a few times when they poured last winter. Freezing will cause concrete to crumble, but that did not happen. Ground heaters are portable oil fired hot water boilers that circulate hot water through hoses to heat ground or concrete.

The best news is that not only is the Gill Turners Falls Bridge not going to fall down, but there'll be alternating two-way traffic by June or late summer. The bridge will be open to full two way traffic by the end of November, hopefully sooner. SPS proceeded on good faith that the DOT would come up with the money, working through the winter to accelerate the project, using ground heaters when necessary. State and Federal money to the tune of \$387,000 came through, at long last, according to Gill's Town Administrator, Raymond Purington.

Christopher Janke of the Rendevous is happy to hear his proposed plan at the start of the project for alternating two-way traffic is being put into place, even at this late date, despite DOT District 2 Supervisor Al Stegman's insistence that it couldn't be done. "SPS has done a great job," Janke said, "The bridge looks gorgeous and will look fantastic when done. I'll be happy not to have to give complicated directions to customers who want to get back out of Turners."

Allied Painting will soon to be at work. Their first job is to sand blast beams, such as the massive four new beams over the bike path, installed out of sight of complaining citizens who see only a few workers topside. Applying a seal coating will be Allied Painting's next step. SPS' subcontracting painters next job is to clean and sealcoat the section over the power canal. They'll then switch over to the Gill end of the bridge and work their way back, according to Engineer Hoynoski.

Pouring the last section of bridge deck should take place in a week or two. The timetable hinges in part on the progress of Dodge Construction, a company working for Verizon. They are replacing four inch diameter PVC conduit pipe destroyed during concrete demolition. Of the 9 conduits only four cables went across the bridge, with all four cables using the same conduit. The original bridge engineers had the foresight to install a sufficient number of conduits, but the conduits failed to see service until a year or two, ago. A new manhole is part of the refurbishment. Street lights have marched up the new sidewalk to the last span waiting to be poured.

SPS is slated to re-grade the bridge approach on the Turners Falls end before paving. The re-grading should be a considerable improvement, according to Hoynoski.

Approaches on the Gill end of the bridge will see major configuration. The islands with traffic signals will be history. They've had the morbid propensity to being wiped out by cars, trucks and buses.

Most recently, a Kuzmeskus bus swung a bit too wide, or maybe not wide enough, and the traffic light lay on the ground—again. A local once suggested the traffic light posts be made of rubber. The new overhead signals, that have been up for at least a year, are high enough to be avoided by everything, other than a helicopter. The one-way right turn into Riverside will be history. People taking a chance to use it the wrong way to avoid the lights present an opportunity for an outstanding head-on crash. The art deco abutments sporting stylized eagles will get a sandblasting and a seal coating to make them look good as new, maybe better.

Job Superintendent Henry Dunphy said, "Work is already moving right along. We should have the job done well within the completion date. We're on the last span. New beams are in over the bike path. The painters are coming; It won't be long, now.

Don't forget —stay on the sidewalk!"

"Yes, Henry."



Attention Lapsed Loyal Montague Reporter Subscribers: If your subscription to your paper has expired, please renew. Rates are \$25 for walking routes, \$30 for driving routes, \$50 for mail subscriptions. Send checks to us at 58 Fourth Street, Turners Falls, MA 01376. If you have any questions please call us at 863-8666.

Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity's Largest Annual Fundraiser

Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity (PVH) announces the "Feast for Habitat" that will take place on May 2, from 6 to 9 p.m. at Cows Building Supply, keeping with our construction theme. There will be food, wine, beer and sweet music. And it will be an evening to remember while raising funds through an extensive silent auction for Habitat housing.

Local restaurants will donate samples from their spring menus for the enjoyment of attendees.

Tickets may be purchased online at: www.pvhabitat.org/news-events/feast-habitat, or in person at the Amherst Book Store in Amherst, Cooper's Corner in Florence, State Street Deli in Northampton, World Eye Books in Greenfield, and Puffer Printing in Easthampton.

Great Falls Farmers Market Opening May 1

What better way to celebrate our agricultural blessings than to join us at the Great Falls Farmer's Market, opening Wednesday, May 1. Sponsored by the Montague Agricultural Commission, the Market happens every Wednesday on the lawn next to the Discovery Center, corner of 2nd Street and Avenue A in Turners Falls from 2 to 6 p.m.

We welcome all sorts of locally grown or produced products. There is a set-up fee of \$5 each week. Vendors from other towns are welcome too. Community organizations may also set up free displays. For more information contact Don at: (413) 336-3648, or greatfallsfarmersmarkettturners@gmail.com

The Montague Congregational Church Roast Pork Supper

Saturday, May 4th
5:30 p.m.

Roast Pork, Gravy,
Mashed Potatoes, Belgium
Carrots, Applesauce, Breads,
Dessert, Coffee, Tea & Milk
Adults: \$10.00
Children under 10: \$6.00
Reservations Call: 413-774-7256
Calls for Take Outs
Benefits the Steeple Fund

INTRODUCTION TO ZEN MEDITATION

at Green River Zen Center
Sunday, May 5
2-3:30 p.m.

- Instruction on posture, breath, concentration methods, mental training, and the journey of awakening. Refreshments at 3:30 p.m.
- You're also welcome to stay for regular service, meditation, and dharma talk, 4-6:30 p.m.

177 Ripley Rd., Montague
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"The Voice of the Villages"

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August, 2002

Welcome Michael Sullivan

The *Montague Reporter* welcomes Michael Sullivan as the new superintendent of the Gill-Montague Regional School District. We were impressed with his credentials and his straight-forward answers to questions posed during the interview. We sincerely hope that GMRSD has, at last, gained a permanent superintendent. For too long the district has struggled with leadership as it also struggled to lift itself out of the underperforming status of Level 4 that has been in place since 2007. Indeed, the hiring of a permanent superintendent was one of two criteria set forth by the state education commissioner for rescinding the Level 4 status.

Sullivan faces many challenges, including working with a school committee that has been divisive and often unsupportive of recent

superintendents. With the hiring of Sullivan, the school committee has a fresh opportunity to create a positive working relationship with its superintendent. We sincerely hope that the school committee and the superintendent can work together to continue on the present course for improvement of the district both in the classroom and on the school committee and in its financial cooperation with the towns, the other essential requirement for removing the underperforming label that has afflicted the district for six years. We have every reason to believe that this is the right direction, and we have a very positive feeling that Sullivan will be the one to make the GMRSD a school district of which we all can be proud.



C. SAWYER-LAUÇANNO ILLUSTRATION

Letters to the Editor



An Open Letter to Montague Town Meeting Members

I am writing as a concerned citizen in regard to the proposed Zoning Bylaw article that would allow dwellings under the required minimum area of 700 square feet with no minimum size.

A zoning bylaw is a rule which has been adopted for a reason, and hopefully for the good of the entire community. The current 700 sq ft bylaw has been in effect since the adoption of the Montague zoning bylaws in 1970 and has been approved (by necessity) by the Attorney General as have all of the Zoning Bylaws. Population pressure might explain a need for reduction in dwelling size; however, according to the US Census data, Montague's population has fallen

between 2000 and 2010 by 52 from 8489 to 8437. During this same period the number of housing units increased by 114 and the number of vacancies has increased by 36. Increasing the number of housing units at this time will only serve to depress the housing market further. It will not benefit the property owners of Montague.

These are the questions which the Planning Board should be prepared to address in regard to their proposal to change the current bylaw.

Has the 700 sq ft minimum requirement ever been challenged legally resulting in litigation costs to the town and if so, how many times?

Has the ZBA considered any

variance requests to the 700 sq ft minimum dwelling size requirement in the last 25 years? If so, how many requests were granted and how many were denied?

A change in the bylaw should only be considered following a series of public hearings (at least three or four to allow an opportunity for the community to participate) where the planning board and building inspector show the actual need for the proposed change. To do any less is to invite public distrust and place your motivation in question.

I urge Town Meeting Members to vote against the proposal.

Sincerely,
Kenneth Holmberg

Montague Pooper-Scooper Law is now in Effect

The Montague Police want to remind residents and visitors that we now have a pooper scooper/ dog and cat fouling regulation in effect. Officers of the Montague Police Department have been instructed by me, the police chief, to issue tickets to anyone found to be violating the regulation. There will be no warnings given for this.

The town of Montague's pooper scooper/dog and cat fouling regulation requires "anyone who owns, possesses, or controls a dog or cat within the town limits of Montague to remove and properly dispose of any feces left by said animal(s)."

A person who violates this regulation shall be fined \$25.00 for the first violation. \$50.00 for

the second violation, and \$100 for the third and each subsequent violations within a calendar year. Individuals who continually violate this regulation will be subject to a hearing before the Board of Health and may receive a fine of up to \$1000.00. Depositing feces in any drain, catch basin or waterway shall be punishable by fine of not less than \$100.00 for each and every offence.

We don't want to issue any tickets.

Thanks very much for your help,

Charles Dodge
Town of Montague Police Chief
cdodge@montague.net
Office: 413-863-8911 ext. 203

Thank You!

Approximately two-hundred and fifty (250) children and parents from throughout Franklin County attended Montague Parks & Recreation's Annual Peter Cottontail's EGGstravaganza that was held on Saturday, April 13 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 what was an absolutely beautiful spring day.

The EGGstravaganza would not have been possible without the generous support from Hillside Plastics, The Montague Elks, Greenfield Savings Bank, Sirum's Equipment Company, our many volunteers, and TJ Meyer. We would also like to make a special thanks to Peter Cottontail for setting aside time from his busy schedule to be present during the festivities. See you all next year!

Sincerely,
Jon Dobosz, Director
Montague Parks & Recreation Dept.

Everyone is invited ...



to a Rededication Ceremony and Memorial Tree Planting in Living Memory of Vivian Morrissey, Virginia Ferrer, Catherine Gochinski, Tracy Sheperd, and in honor of all past and present victims of Domestic Violence in our Community.
The ceremony will take place at...

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Local residents and organizations welcome your presence at this very special event.

Speakers Include:

Montague Police Chief Charles "Chip" Dodge
and
Mary Kociela, Northwestern District Attorney's Office

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Wendell Selectboard Candidates Speak: Interview with Christine Heard and Nancy Riebschlaeger

Heard seeks to continue "a well-balanced board that works extremely well." Riebschlaeger wants "to involve people more in issues that affect them."

Interview By Sharon Wachslar

Wendell is facing a contested race for the selectboard this year. The two candidates, incumbent Christine Heard, and challenger, Nancy J. Riebschlaeger, have each worked for the town in a variety of capacities for many years. On May 6, it will be up to voters to choose between them.

Heard and Riebschlaeger were eager to answer emailed questions about how they believe they can best serve Wendell as members of its selectboard. With the exception of the first question, both candidates were asked the same questions, allowing voters to compare "apples to apples."

For background, Christine, how long have you served on the selectboard and been chair? And Nan, which town committees or boards are you on and for how long?

Christine Heard: I've been on the selectboard for five terms (15 years) and have been chair for four years.

Nancy Riebschlaeger: I have been the town representative to Community Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) since 1999. I have been the vice-chair for quite a few years. I am also the CEDS representative to the Economic Development District Governing Board since it was developed in 2006. I am currently chair of the EDD.

I have been on the Energy Committee for three years and the planning board for three years. I am a member of the Full Moon Coffeehouse, president of Friends of the Wendell Meetinghouse, and alternate to Wired West, a member of the Broadband Committee.

You bring with you a wealth of experience in town matters, having already served the town in an official capacity for several years. How does this experience prepare you to be an excellent Selectboard member?

Christine Heard: I've been on the selectboard for five terms. Before that I was on the School Committee for a number of years. It is helpful on the selectboard to have a history in town government, with knowledge about town buildings and about previous decisions and activities. Knowing many people from diverse groups in town is also useful.

Nancy Riebschlaeger: I am conscious of how hard so many volunteers work for the town, and I would endeavor to make certain they were included in any selectboard issues that involve their areas of work. It is so validating to be included in discussions.

I have also had state training and certification in Municipal Account-



Christine Heard



Nancy Riebschlaeger

ing and Public Procurement so I understand both areas quite well. Most important, I know how to call Boston to get definitive answers to questions. For example, it took several calls to find out just what category our current audit procurement process fell under. What I had been told by other towns wasn't correct and I got the answer from the Inspector General's office.

What does the Wendell selectboard do? Why is it important?

Christine Heard: The Selectboard has many different jobs, but we generally oversee the whole town: physical plant, financial state, and the workings of town government. The selectboard is responsible for almost all town property and all town buildings. We act like a homeowner to make sure buildings are kept in good repair. I have also patiently worked with abutters to town property to successfully resolve boundary issues.

When something is not right with town finances, the selectboard must work to correct that. Thus, the Board has been involved in solving small and occasionally large problems through our fiscal manager and money management committee meetings. In recent years, the board has followed recommendations from a Wendell financial study committee and a Department of Revenue report to ensure the town is on a solid fiscal foundation.

When issues arise with a town official's performance or when a committee or board is having internal difficulties, we try to help sort that out. Often these issues demand compassion, respect for individuals' privacy, and the ability to work through problems effectively.

Nancy Riebschlaeger: The selectboard manages the affairs of the town that are not within the jurisdiction of other boards or town meeting created committees. Some decisions must also be taken to town meeting for approval. The selectboard is important because issues come up, and decisions are needed, on a regular basis.

The selectboard also has an opportunity to bring groups together to learn about issues and make decisions based on more input. Currently there is a lot of talk about what is going to happen to the town hall, but so far all of the people that use

that space have not sat down together to talk.

It was also difficult for the energy committee to get a seat at the table concerning the intended solar contract the selectboard was preparing to sign. I think this was a complex issue that needed a separate meeting where people could be educated about the various aspects of the way the municipal energy credits work and what value they have. I also think this was a situation where it could have been a benefit to the town to not take the first offer that came along but to request proposals from other potential solar bidders.

What are the selectboard's current strengths, and what could be improved upon?

Christine Heard: We are a well-balanced board that works cooperatively extremely well. We focus on discerning and assisting in projects the town needs or wants, such as broadband access in town and increased energy sustainability. It's our job to oversee activities, ensuring they are legal, fiscally responsible, and utilize local resources as much as possible.

Nancy Riebschlaeger: The current selectboard has done its job. As a town we have not had issues with things not being taken care of.

I think improvement can be made being more inclusive and open. I would try to involve people more in issues that affect them:

- I would begin to institute fragrance free meetings and change the cleaning products in our town buildings to make the spaces more accessible for those with chemical sensitivity.
- I would post our agenda on the townsfolk listserv and the web page and also post the minutes.
- I would like to read a town bylaw at each meeting. We have bylaws that go back to the 1800's. Just as we do today, the town meetings in the past passed bylaws that they intended to guide the town. How many people know that we have passed the Precautionary Principle?

• Sometimes it might simply be calling the chair of a committee that has an interest in a topic that is going to be on the agenda.

What makes you uniquely qualified to serve on the selectboard and foster these improvements?

see CANDIDATES page 6

Wendell Elections

On Monday, May 6th, only 6 days after the April 30th election, voters in Wendell must return to the polling place for the annual Town Election. The following candidates are on the ballot: Selectboard (3 yr - contested): Christine Heard and Nancy Riebschlaeger; Board of Assessors: Stephen Broll; Board of Health: Jennifer Lynn Christian; Moderator: Kathy Ann Becker; Constable: Anne M. Diemand Buc-ci; Cemetery Commissioner: Richard J. Mackey; Road Commissioner (3 yr): Harry S. Williston III; Road Commissioner (1 yr): Geoffrey T.

Richardson; School Committee (3 yr): John C. Fitzgerald; School Committee (1 yr): Jessalyn Lee Zaykoski; Tree Warden: Peter S. Zera; Library Trustees: Laurel Brenneman and Phyllis Lawrence. Write-Ins are allowed for any of the listed offices. Write-Ins are expected for the two open positions on the Planning Board. For our local election, the write-in candidate that receives the most votes will win. If there is a tie, the result is a "No Vote" and the position cannot be filled. Polls open at Noon on Monday, May 6th and close at 8pm.

Montague Democrats to Hold Special Election Caucus for Selectman

As a result of a recently declared vacancy in the office of Selectmen, Montague Democrats will hold a special caucus to select a candidate for Selectman on Thursday, May 16, 2013 from 6:30 to 7:00 PM in the 1st Floor Meeting Room of the Town Offices, 1 Avenue A, Turners Falls. Successful candidates receive the party nomination to appear on the Tuesday, June 25 town election ballot for Selectman along with the special Senate election held on the same day. Caucus voting is by paper ballot.

Only registered Democrats may run in this, what amounts to a primary election for local offices. Democrats who wish to run in the caucus must deliver their intention in writing to Democratic Town Committee Chair Jay DiPucchio by 5:00 PM, Monday, May 6. Notice may be by mail, email or in hand. Verbal declaration cannot be documented and is not acceptable.

Individuals choosing to run without Democratic party nomination should check rules with the Town Clerk. Occasionally, candidates for the caucus nomination also gather signatures for nomination through the Town Clerk process so that they can still appear on the June ballot if they are defeated at the caucus.

By the Democratic Town Committee's vote following the 2003 caucus, registered un-enrolled voters also may vote in the Democratic caucus. No absentee balloting is allowed. All caucus candidates must be present at the end of balloting (or make other arrangements with the Chair) or their election may not be certified.

Questions/Letters of Intent? Jay DiPucchio, Democratic Town Committee Chair
35 Central Street, Turners Falls, MA 01376-1326; call 413-863-8656
jdipucchio@verizon.net

Montague Special Election

Montague will be holding a Special Election to fill the unexpired term of Selectman Patricia Allen on Tuesday, June 25, 2013. The Town will be running a dual election with the State to fill Senator Kerry's vacant seat and the soon to be vacant Selectman's seat.

Residents interested in running for the remaining one year term should obtain nomination papers from the Town Clerk's office by 5:00 p.m. on or before Thursday, May 2nd. Thirty signatures of qualified registered voters from Montague are all that is needed to earn a place on the ballot. All nomination papers must be returned to the Town Clerk's office no later than 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, May 7th.

The Town Clerk's office is open Monday, Tuesday and Thursday 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and Wednesday 8:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Town Hall is closed on Fridays.

For more information please call the office at 863-3200, ext 203.

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Legal Notice

The Wendell Planning Board will hold a hearing on Tuesday, May 14 at 8 p.m. at the Wendell Town Offices concerning Bylaw Changes. The changes remove the requirement in Article V, Section A, #6 that the primary residence be in existence for 10 years in order to add a secondary dwelling. Article VI, Section J, the secondary dwelling article will be changed by removing item a which restricts occupancy to two persons. The use table, Article VI, Section F Residential will be changed under Permanent Motor Homes to Y from N. A new flood plain bylaw will be added that creates a Flood Plain Overlay District in which some activity will be limited to reduce hazards. The full text of this article will be available at the Town Offices, the library and on the Planning Board website by Friday, April 26. The map will be available in the Town Coordinators office during her normal business hours.

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is seeking writers to cover local board meetings. Modest compensation and editorial guidance provided. For information, contact 413-863-8666 or editor@montaguereporter.org

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LOOKING BACK: 10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Here's the way it was on April 14, 2003: News from the Montague Reporter's archive.

Gill: Funds, and Their Lack

Funds, and the lack of funds, were on the minds of the Gill selectboard at their regular meeting, Wednesday, April 23. The board grappled with the uncertainties of the state budget, gave the go-ahead for the recreation commission to solicit donations for their summer program, permitted a fundraiser at the Gill Municipal Building, and decided to find a mere \$100 a year to fund the launch of a new town website.

Eagle Watch

We've had a chick! After the first two eggs failed to hatch, the third egg in the Barton Cove nest had a small hole in it and the female eagle was showing signs of something happening

CANDIDATES from page 4

Christine Heard: My knowledge of people in town and town government is very helpful. I am a good listener, a calm person, and a team worker who positively impacts the effectiveness and stability of town government, while including many diverse opinions.

Nancy Riebschlaeger: I believe I have a skill in seeing a larger picture and realizing the different issues involved in a situation and the people who would be affected or have knowledge and concern about the issue.

Using the town hall as an exam-

under her while the male arrived with fish.

Harmonies of Color

Ann Feitelson won first place in the third biennial Hands Across the Valley Quilters Guild quilt show held in March at Amherst College with her quilt entitled "I Sing You Seven-O." Inspired by "Mrs. Carpenter's quilt top," circa 1860, Ann created geometric quotes from the antique quilt in her winning entry. The quilt took over a year to make; Ann is now working on a new one that promises to be equally complex.

Biodiesel on the Horizon

A new movement in Western Mass has many residents filling their cars' tanks with fuels made from plants instead of petroleum. One Montague family is running their car on

used vegetable oil they pick up from local restaurants. According to a recent survey, over 25 other families in the upper Pioneer Valley are using a diesel fuel made from vegetable oil in their cars and farm vehicles.

New Fore Some At Oak Ridge

With new ownership comes change. But sometimes the wisest course, when you're taking on ownership of a community treasure, is to leave things pretty much the way they've been. That's just what the new owners of the Oak Ridge Golf Course in Gill have decided to do. There will be no price increase from last year, but there will be a breath of fresh air in the clubhouse, where new tabletops, chairs and curtains will lend a renewed country feel.

ple, there is use by the Full Moon Coffeehouse, Good Neighbors, town meetings, and it is part of our historic district. The use and needs are different in each case. A meeting (with food!) could be arranged where all of these groups can talk together.

What do you love about Wendell, and what would you like to see change?

Christine Heard: What I love about Wendell . . . I could go on for a long time! I love that we are surrounded by natural beauty. I am very proud of our schools that are able to effectively educate children both academically and socially.

I find tolerance is a hallmark quality in Wendell. I notice that although people have differences, they are willing to listen and to respect each other's opinions.

I have never had much of an agenda for change in Wendell. I just want to facilitate what Wendell wants. I think we are in a good place and that people have good ideas. I want to assist townspeople to accomplish what they want.

Nancy Riebschlaeger: I love the people in Wendell. What I would like to see change is more conversation between departments of the government and between the government and the public. There used to be department meetings that helped us understand what things were being worked on by different committees.

What do you think most voters

don't know about you that you wish they did?

Christine Heard: I believe people know me pretty well. As selectboard chairperson, I facilitate meetings so as to include everyone and to maintain a respectful and calm atmosphere, even when tempers are hot. We set high standards for behavior at selectboard meetings and in town government. I like to encourage people to adhere to these high standards.

Nancy Riebschlaeger: That I thoroughly investigate questions. If I don't know the answer I will call the correct state department until I get the answer. When the planning board saw a need to have an alternate I first asked the Planner's List-serv how that is done. After talking to several people I found the place in state law where it said that the provision for alternates needs to be in the zoning bylaws.

Is there anything else you'd like to add about your candidacy?

Christine Heard: I really love being on the selectboard and working for the town. I find it very interesting! Wendell is an amazing town with many very bright, dedicated volunteers. It's a lot of fun to help the town accomplish its goals.

Nancy Riebschlaeger: I think that voters need to have a choice more often than they do. I would be a change that some might welcome, some might not; that's democracy.

ROCK OPERA from page 1

lent performance that give the production its heart. Joey Stankiewicz as Judas stands in contrast to Jesus with a wildly broad performance that includes yelling and whining, crawling in agony on stage over what he has done, blaming the man whom he has betrayed for putting him in this awful position, and going through the gamut of emotions from anger to grief in a rich portrayal of a tormented man. Stankiewicz has a powerful deep voice that at times reaches a shriek in his effort to punctuate his vocalizations. His melodrama stands in stark contrast to the calm control of Rose and so portrays the difference between the two men they play.

Martha King-Devine who plays Mary Magdalene sings like an angel, has a smile that melts the heart and every time she is onstage the room lights up. Her struggle is simpler. She is overwhelmed with love for Jesus and so fears her own emotions. Her solo performance of "I Don't Know How to Love Him" demonstrates her wide range of emotional and vocal skills. Her performance is wonderful in every way.

The opening scene sets the stage for the rest with its full-throated musical blend of harmonies and an active chorus that moves constantly around the stage in what looks natural and unscripted but is clearly choreographed. The mix of colors on stage with the cast dressed in multicolored costumes creates an atmosphere of excitement. Choreographer Susan Edwards Dresser does a terrific job of creating this onstage magic with the chorus singing and dancing, seemingly always moving except when they sit quietly to listen to one of the main characters in solo performance.

The light mood of the first act turns decidedly darker in the second act as the story progresses toward the crucifixion. A brief comic break arrives in the form of David Peck playing King Herod. Surrounded by beautiful young women, Peck is decidedly coquettish even while he is alternately flirting with the girls and deciding Jesus' fate. He moves lightly with grace while singing his lines with perfection. The scene then shifts to a portion of the play that includes Jesus being subjected to 39 lashes of a whip while simultaneously, a crowd of people slashes at Jesus in a way that suggests he is being cut, after which he lies bloody, weak

and exhausted on the stage. This scene feels very real and so can be difficult for some to watch.

The glue that holds this whole production together is the brilliant orchestrations by musical director Chris Devine. Using the magic of modern technology, Devine acts as a one-man orchestra, playing many instruments against a pre-recorded orchestration of his own creation. In the overture, this pre-recorded orchestral track plays while he can be seen playing his electric violin in the pit. This violin offers an eerie sound that sets the stage for the complexities to follow. He continues this throughout the show, performing on electric and acoustic violin, mandolin, guitar, flute, saxophone and keyboard by mixing live with recorded original material. Devine provides a flawless soundtrack, and he even finds time to jump up and sing on stage in a portrayal of Pontius Pilate with as much skill as he does everything else. And of course, he was onstage performing while at the same time accompanying himself from the orchestra pit.

This show is complex and could not have held together as well as it did without the fine direction of Catherine King. She and the entire cast are to be commended for their talent and all the hard work this success required. There is another weekend of performances at the Shea Theater on Friday, April 26 and Saturday, April 27 at 8 p.m. and a matinee on Sunday, April 28 at 2 p.m.



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Next Week's Senate Special Election Primaries

By SHIRA HILLEL

Following party primaries next Tuesday, April 30, the 2013 Massachusetts senate special election to fill Senator John Kerry's seat will take place on June 25.

There are two Democratic and three Republican candidates. One Independent is running as a general election candidate, Jack E. Robinson, a businessman and frequent Republican candidate.

Following Kerry's resignation to become U.S. Secretary of State, Governor Deval Patrick chose his former chief-of-staff William "Mo" Cowan to serve as interim U.S. senator until a special election.

while imposing taxes that would harm middle-class workers and local businesses.

"It was like a hostage situation where we not only paid the ransom but we let the insurance companies keep the hostages," said Lynch, a 57-year-old from South Boston.

Markey, who has served in Congress since 1976, has received many more endorsements than Lynch. Kerry endorsed Markey, and he has also landed endorsements from high-profile Democrats including Victoria Kennedy, the widow of the late Senator, Ted Kennedy. Lynch has emerged as a favorite among organized laborers who have a history of helping turn out the vote in Mas-

sachusetts elections. Democrats agreed on the need to be strong on national security and foreign policy, particularly in response to North Korea and Iran. They both agreed on tough sanctions against Iran and support for Israel.

With regard to domestic policy, both candidates are against cutting Social Security and bashed the Republican stance on Social Security and Medicare.

When asked about medical marijuana policy here in Massachusetts, Lynch said that "legalization was a terrible decision." He sees marijuana as a gateway drug. In contrast, Markey supported the referendum and said that "stringent standards that protect against abuse" could be

enforced and "medicinal marijuana prescribed by a physician is sound policy."

Both Democrats are closer in their environmental positions and have excellent environmental voting records but Markey has been a tireless campaigner for alternative energy and a strong and vocal supporter of closing Vermont Yankee.

supported the state's case for same-sex marriages that is now before the U.S. Supreme Court.

both Democrats have significant leads over the Republican candidates. It showed that while Democratic hopeful Markey is indeed the special election front-runner, Lynch may be the Democrat best positioned to defeat any of the Republican candidates in the general election.

Despite Markey's primary lead overall and within the party, unenrolled voters are gravitating toward Lynch, who holds a 6-point lead among independent voters. While some Democrats think Lynch is too conservative, that level of popularity and the fact that 21 percent of likely Democratic primary voters are still undecided indicates that



Rep. (D) Edward J. Markey



Rep. (D) Steven F. Lynch



Gabriel E. Gomez (R)



Michael J. Sullivan (R)



Daniel Winslow (R)

Debates offered candidates in both primaries a chance to reach out to voters who have yet to become engaged in the quiet special election senate race.

Democratic Hopefuls

The Democratic primary candidates are Representatives Stephen F. Lynch and Edward J. Markey.

In last Tuesday night's final primary debate in Springfield, Markey criticized Lynch's votes against the auto bailout and President Obama's health care overhaul legislation. These votes have positioned him outside the Democratic establishment that has coalesced behind Markey.

Markey voted in favor of Obama's health care legislation. Lynch said the legislation gave up too much to insurance companies

sachusetts elections.

In Tuesday night's debate, Markey cast himself as an experienced lawmaker and liberal successor to senators Kerry and Edward M. Kennedy, while Lynch, a onetime ironworker, positioned himself as a defender of the American worker and painted Markey as the defender of corporations, big banks, big telecommunications companies and trade treaties that shipped jobs overseas. Lynch pressed Markey for supporting NAFTA and a Wall Street bailout without doing enough for Massachusetts fishermen. Markey has emphasized his steadfast support for issues that are important to many Democratic activists here: gun control, abortion rights and President Obama's health care law.

Last week's Boston bombing has made homeland security an even hotter issue than it was before. Both

Republican Hopefuls

After former Senator Scott Brown unexpectedly declined to run, opting instead to sign on as a Fox News commentator, the lesser known Republican primary candidates to emerge are Gabriel E. Gomez, former Navy SEAL pilot who has worked in the private sector, Michael J. Sullivan, former U.S. Attorney for the District of Massachusetts and former Acting Director

Abortion Stances Cut Across Party Lines

Among the five candidates, there seems to be three positions on abortion, without regard to party. In an early debate in March, Markey and Winslow said they supported abortion rights without qualification. Lynch and Gomez called themselves "pro-life" but said they believed Roe v. Wade was settled law. Sullivan called himself "pro-life" without qualification.

Results of Last Week's Poll

A poll conducted last week by the Western New England University Polling Institute concluded that

Sullivan Accepts Offer from Gill-Montague School District

By ELLEN BLANCHETTE

Michael Sullivan has been officially hired as the new permanent superintendent of the Gill-Montague Regional School District. At the school committee meeting on Tuesday, April 23, the committee voted unanimously in favor of approving the contract previously negotiated in executive session with Sullivan. The contract runs for one year, from July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014, at a salary of \$130,000 plus benefits valued at \$75,000. Asked by Sandra Brown, member from Gill, if he could begin before July 1, he said this was not possible as he is responsible for

many year-end tasks in his present job as assistant superintendent for the Longmeadow school district. He did say he could trade a few days with the person taking over his job in Longmeadow, so they could each get some experience in their new position while completing their current jobs. He will be in the Gill-Montague school district on May 21 to meet with Joan Connolly and Eva Mitchell, of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. He expressed his pleasure in being hired as the new superintendent and said he was looking forward to beginning the work of helping the district move forward.



Coach Gary Mullins drove this car in the parade behind a big sign that said "GRAND MARSHALL. Walking behind him, members of the Turners Falls High School girls softball team.

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NOTES FROM THE MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

Montague Agriculture Commission to Sponsor Farmers Market

By PATRICIA PRUITT

The big news at the April 22 selectboard meeting was the sponsorship of the Turners Falls Farmers Market, slated to open on Wednesday, May 1. There are several very important benefits to the Montague Agriculture Commission's sponsorship of the Market. Most importantly it allows the Farmers Market to be covered under the town's insurance umbrella. In addition it will help to connect local farms to the market, hopefully leading to its expansion of offerings, and it will appoint and assist a volunteer coordinator in planning and marketing of the market, as well as apply for grants to improve the market. Don Clegg, who has worked tirelessly managing the Market since 2008, will continue as manager with assistance from the Agricultural Commission. The selectboard approved the sponsorship unanimously.

Select Chairman Boutwell recused himself from presiding and voting on the upcoming liquor licensing hearings due to his employment in a closely related business.

The first up in a trio of hearings involving vendors of alcoholic beverages was Lew Collins of the bar, Between the Uprights; Collins was seeking a Use of Public property permit and a Real Property Café License for 4 outdoor café events and one night event of the 6 events slots allowed his establishment. He said he will return later when he decides what he wishes the 6th event to be. The event dates are May 18, 2013; June 15, 2013; July 20, 2013; Oct 19, 2013; Nov 27, 2013. The majority board approved the permit and the license.

The second hearing was for a liquor license for an Annual off premises Chapter 15 Package Store, Wine and Malt, All Alcohol License for F.L. Roberts & Company,

Inc. d/b/a Turners Falls F.L. Roberts, Bradford E. Manton II as Manager, at 132 Third Street, Turners Falls. This hearing was a repeat of a former hearing in which full discussion of the business as proposed was held. The majority board voted to approve the request.

Hearing #3 concerned a transfer of stock for the annual off Premises, Chapt 15 Package store with an All Alcohol License, registered as Purple Meadow Ventures, Inc. d/b/a Jay K's Liquors, Melissa Winters as Manager, 59 Avenue A, Turners Falls. Winters and her husband, Christopher Sexton sought the selectboard's approval to change their declared percentage of stock from 100% to 50% for Winters as president and 50% for Christopher Sexton as Treasurer- Director of the business. This change was made at the request of Mass. ABCC. The board approved the request by majority vote.

NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD

Refunds for Faulty Software

BY KATIE NOLAN

On Apr 22, the Erving selectboard approved transfer of the French King Bowling Center liquor license from Ralph Semb to Erik Semb. Erik Semb was the only attendee at the hearing held to solicit public comment. Ralph Semb is in the process of applying for a liquor license for Weatherhead's convenience store located near the bowling center.

The selectboard signed a business license for Laura Herbert of Old State Road, doing business as The Compost Queen (thecompostqueen.com). The new business will provide customers in local communities, such as Bernardston, Erving, Gill, Greenfield, Montague and Northfield with a 5-gallon compost bucket, pick up their collected kitchen scraps weekly, biweekly, or monthly and deliver finished compost when it's ready.

Selectboard member and town treasurer Margaret Sullivan said that the town had

documented many problems with the payroll software bought from Vadar Systems last year, and had asked for a refund. As a result, Vadar refunded one-half of the town's cost for this year. Sullivan said she had informed Vadar that Erving will not renew the payroll software contract for next year. After the meeting, Sullivan said that other Vadar software systems used by the town, for tax collection, water collection and tax titles, were satisfactory.

The selectboard agreed to meet at 6:30 am on May 8 at Erving Elementary School, before the annual town meeting, in order to re-organize after the town election on May 6. Selectboard chair Eugene Klepadlo is running unopposed for another 3-year term.

Town administrator Tom Sharp told the selectboard that the town will offer training for elected officials, committee members, and town employees on legal aspects of harassment, open meeting law, and state ethics re-

quirements in May. Trainers will include representatives from the Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association (MIAA), the state ethics commission, and town counsel Donna MacNicol.

Reviewing the town's police and firefighter accident coverage, Klepadlo asked Sharp to research the costs of several additional line items, including coverage for family travel expenses if a police officer or firefighter injured while on duty is hospitalized distant from Erving and for adaptive home and vehicle expenses.

In other Erving news, the recreation commission is sponsoring a town-wide tag sale on Apr 27. A group tag sale will take place at Veterans Park on Moore Street and maps of private residence tag sales will be available at French King Bowling Center, Weatherhead's, the Pocketsaver Store, town hall, the library, the senior center and Erving Elementary School.

NOTES FROM THE GILL SELECTBOARD

Unmarked Cruiser, Abbreviated Meetings

By DAVID DETMOLD

The Gill selectboard meeting came to an abrupt halt about halfway through on Monday, when John Ward stood up from the table and announced, "I am done with this meeting. You no longer have a quorum," and walked out.

The frustration had been building since the meeting came to order, when the first item on the agenda was whether or not to put town of Gill markings on the new \$32,727 four wheel drive Ford Interceptor SUV police cruiser. It would have cost the town about \$500 to mark the new vehicle, and an additional \$200 to take the town of Gill decals off one of the older vehicles, to allow the department to continue to maintain one unmarked cruiser.

Ward had advocated marking the Interceptor, since it was the police department's new front line vehicle, and since, as Ward put it, it was the first cruiser bought and paid for by the town's own taxpayers in many years since grant funding for cruisers is no longer available.

But police chief David Hastings resisted the idea that the new cruiser should be marked, saying he would be the officer primarily driving the Interceptor, and since he was often on call when not actively on duty, he might find himself in the position of driving the Interceptor to dinner in a neighboring town, where the sight of a marked town of Gill police cruiser in the driveway might create the wrong impression.

The purchase of the new cruiser has been dogged by one controversy after another, as members of the town's energy commission, with initial support from more than one member of the selectboard, explored buying a fuel efficient hybrid vehicle as a front line cruiser. Such a choice would have put Gill in the position of being first in Franklin County to invest town funds, along with some Green Community grant funds from the Department of Energy Resources, to offset the higher sticker price, in an alternative vehicle for

the police department, gaining potential annual fuel savings as an added benefit.

But even though a fuel efficient hybrid appeared on the state of Massachusetts' list of biddable police cruisers for the first time this year, the selectboard ultimately sided with Hastings, two to one, in favor of purchasing the Interceptor, citing its safety record in crash test results, among other factors.

More recently, Ward has called into question Hastings' decision to invest in a four-wheel drive option for the Interceptor, and Hastings' more recent request to spend an additional \$2,160 in added safety features like a passenger cage, window bars, gun rack, and push bumpers. Another \$2400 is being sought for computer upgrades in the department's cruisers, including the new Interceptor. Town meeting had allocated \$33,000 for the purchase of the new vehicle, equipped; Hastings proposes spending Northfield Mount Hermon payments in lieu of taxes to the town for some of the extra features.

Ward called into question the need for those extra features on Monday. "The reason we spent more on this vehicle, and got a less fuel-efficient vehicle, is entirely because it is safe," he said, noting the Interceptor's tested reliability to withstand a 75-mile per hour rear end collision.

Hastings replied, "You are hung up on a hybrid vehicle. But you're just kicking a dead horse." The police chief added that he had watched hours of televised coverage of the manhunt for the Boston Marathon bombers last week, and never saw a single police hybrid cruiser in the mix.

But the meeting's main issue was whether to leave the new cruiser unmarked.

Ward cited a 100-year old state law that prohibits police departments from transporting minors in enclosed police vans, or paddy wagons, and said that would not apply to transporting minors in the interceptor should the town choose to mark it, but Hastings said the transport of minors in a marked police

vehicle was still a concern. He also said an unmarked cruiser would be of value to the department in certain surveillance situations, and in some domestic violence incidents.

Ann Banash, speaking via conference call, said, "Since the chief's been in town, he's been the one to have an unmarked car. I don't have any problem with that. The precedent has been set. I think he should set it up the way he wants. We should move on."

She declined to second Ward's motion to mark the Interceptor, as did acting chair Randy Crochier, who added he had received more comment — entirely negative — on the topic of marking the new cruiser, and unmarking one of the older cruisers, than he has received on any issue since he was elected.

Hastings left the meeting, and the board turned to other items on the agenda, like the anticipated May 1st start date for the town hall roof project, and a recent meeting called by representative Denise Andrews with the Mass Department of Transportation to determine an accelerated schedule for opening the Gill-Turners Bridge to two way traffic, after four years of renovation, and \$40.7 million allocated for the job.

Administrative coordinator Ray Purington was beginning to tell the selectboard that even more money would be needed to open the bridge to two-way traffic before winter — an additional \$387,000 in fact. The state has come up with that sum, and the lead contractor in the bridge repair project, SPS New England, has apparently agreed to open the Gill-Turners bridge to "alternating one way traffic" by June, with regular two way traffic finally returning by November of this year. At this point Ward, still smarting from the failure of his motion on marking the new police cruiser, abruptly left the meeting.

He returned later to sign warrants, so employees and other bills could be paid, and remained in session with the selectboard and finance committee for a follow up budget hearing.

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NOTES FROM LEVERETT SELECTBOARD MEETING

School Budget Alternatives May Be Ruled Out of Order

By DAVID DETMOLD

Due to the ABCs of town meeting procedure, the school committee may not be allowed to present their recommended version of the elementary school budget for a townwide vote this Saturday. That was the upshot of a joint budget hearing between the selectboard and the finance committee on Tuesday night, with town moderator Larry Farber present to review the 30 article warrant for the Apr 27 annual town meeting, which gets underway at the elementary school auditorium at 9 a.m.

The selectboard and the school committee have been engaged in a public tussle over which board should con-

trol the budget for janitorial and maintenance functions at the elementary school, and that struggle is due to be resolved Saturday.

For many years, the school committee and the school principal and superintendent have had the authority to hire and administer janitors at the school and provide for the school's custodial supplies. But this year, despite repeated votes by the school committee – including a unanimous vote by the school committee on Apr 22 to retain custodial authority for the school within the school budget, the selectboard has determined to zero out all building maintenance and custodial line items from the school side of the budget, and place that authority un-

der a newly-empowered town facilities manager, under the selectboard's control.

The selectboard maintains that licensed, professional operators are required to maintain shared services like the public water supply and septic system that supplies not just the school but surrounding town buildings. The selectboard has sought efficiencies in joint purchases of supplies for all town buildings, and members of the selectboard have criticized the school committee for, in their view, diverting funds needed to hire a third part time janitor to maintain standards of cleanliness the town expects at the school and spending that money on instruction instead.

The school committee has countered that criticism by pointing to the yearly drumbeat from town hall to level fund the school budget. Also, with the town now committed to hiring a part time facilities manager to oversee joint utility systems and overall maintenance for all town buildings, the shared facilities maintenance, which the school's head

“My gut reaction,” said Farber, is “I think that’s a substantive change. They had to bring a special article to undo what the selectboard has done.”

may be enough to perform the more basic custodial tasks.

This argument may be rendered moot, however, in light of Tuesday's hearing, where Farber, preparing to wield the gavel at his second annual town meeting, was undertaking a quick study of the standard manual for town moderators as the discussion proceeded in front of the selectboard and finance committee.

“My gut reaction,” said Farber, speaking of the school committee's vote to present alternatives to the selectboard's budget, “I think that's a substantive change. They had to bring a special article to undo what the selectboard has done.”

The point of order Farber referred to lies within the tradition of New England town meeting, as outlined in the standard reference work for town moderators, *Town Meeting Time*, which generally holds that voters must be warned in advance of town meeting of the articles they will be voting on. In this particular case, the article in question, Article 3, merely states, “I move that the Town vote to raise and appropriate such sums of money as shall be necessary to meet Town expenses.” The motion to flesh out the details of that article, which the selectboard has voted to adopt and chair Rich Brazeau will present to town meeting, specifies a dollar amount being reduced from the school budget (\$208,202) and added to the town side of the budget.

According to Union 28 business manager Michael Kociela, the school commit-

tee voted on Apr 22 to present two alternatives to the selectboard's budget to town meeting, one to restore \$129,787 (to cover salaries for two custodians, plus custodial supplies, grounds maintenance, and equipment maintenance) and another to restore those funds plus the salary for a third part time janitor, as the selectboard has recommend-

ed in their budget, for a total of \$149,787. Both alternatives the school committee hoped to

offer to town meeting for consideration would leave some school facilities maintenance costs in the town side of the budget.

Selectboard member Peter d'Errico said the change would prevent the school committee from moving funds from custodial and maintenance lines to other areas of their budget. He noted that the school committee had been unable to find money to hire a third janitor this year, but had found funds to purchase Ipads for all classrooms.

Reached for comment on the procedural question, fifteen-year Montague town moderator Ray Godin said, “It comes down to the moderator's best judgment. Moderators can be very rigid or very flexible depending on how the article is intended. I have always taken the case that the town meeting needs to have latitude, and I have always based my decision on how well people are warned.”

ZBA Leadership Change?

In other news, the selectboard buttonholed Farber, who besides his one year tenure as town meeting moderator also serves on the town's zoning board of appeals, to support a change in leadership at the helm of the ZBA, where Don Putnam has been the long time chair. Members of the selectboard, and the town clerk and town administrator, said Putnam had been difficult to contact recently, and the ZBA had not met recently despite pending business. Farber supported the idea of finding a new chair for the ZBA. Farber said, “This past year, when we had the controversy,” re-

garding the gravel pit owned by Richie Roberts on Route 63, “we needed someone to make decisions. Are we going to mediate? We could not get a response from Don. I agree we need a new chair.”

Water Line Connection Cost

The selectboard has written to the Amherst town manager to see if Amherst would be willing to write down the cost of a possible water line connection, to solve the water contamination problems affecting about a half dozen homes on Teawaddle Hill Road, down gradient of the former town landfill. While exploring the financing possibilities for this approach, the selectboard is also spending less than \$5,000 from previously allocated funds to survey private land in the area where new wells could be dug, and easements secured, to bring potable water to the affected homes. A warrant article seeking \$15,000 for the survey is likely to be passed over at town meeting, because the survey cost came in lower than expected.

An opportunity for candidates for town-wide office to make stump speeches in advance of town meeting drew only one candidate not already present for the selectboard's normal business. Ken Kahn, 25-year veteran of the planning board, tossed his hat back in the ring for another three year term, saying it would be useful to have someone who had helped in writing the town's zoning by-laws still involved in case the town ever needed to defend their enforcement.

D'Errico is running for a third three year term, citing the need to get the town's high-speed last mile broadband network up and running, something he has been spearheading with the broadband committee.

No candidates have surfaced yet for the two openings on the school committee, or the open seats on the assessors and finance committee. Leverett's commitment to open democratic governance is unique in Massachusetts in that it is the only town in the Commonwealth that still nominates town wide officers and elects them on town meeting floor.

from PLAN page 1

Vermont Emergency Management's (VEM's) radiological emergency plan asks that people evacuate only if told to do so by public safety officials, usually in briefings broadcast over emergency alert system radio stations. Parents are asked not to pick up their children at schools, but to meet them at official reception centers.

Sheltering in place involves going indoors to a lower floor near the center of the building, away from windows and doors; closing all doors and windows; turning off all window fans, air conditioners, clothes dryers, kitchen and bath exhaust fans, and other sources of outside air; and listening for instructions on emergency alert radio stations.

Schoolchildren to Reception Centers

According to VEM, “All schools within the Emergency Planning Zone have emergency plans. Early in an emergency, school children inside the Emergency Planning Zone would be transferred to reception centers. We recommend you do not pick up children at school, instead meet them at reception centers. Children who live inside the Emergency Planning Zone but go to school outside the zone will be kept at their schools until their parents

pick them up. Parents should listen to their local Emergency Alert System radio station to confirm this information at the time of an emergency. The station will announce the proper reception center.” VEM identifies the western Massachusetts reception center as Greenfield Community College, located approximately 12 miles from VY.

Keller says she has questions about the school emergency plans: Are all staff members trained to respond to a radiological emergency? Who is in charge of school response? Are there backup personnel if designated responders are absent? Who will communicate with families?

The online student handbook for the Pioneer Valley Regional school district, which has three schools located within 10 miles of VY, states that, “In case of an accident or emergency at the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Station, a specific plan and procedure are in place. Plans are on file in the school office should you wish to read the specific plan...” Pioneer Valley superintendent Dayle Doiron said that it is not the district's policy to hand out copies of any of the school's emergency plans, because they contain confidential information regarding how the district would respond. How-

ever, she said that the specific school plans are based on the generic plan provided by VEM. Doiron said that Pioneer staff are trained for various potential emergencies, including radiological emergencies. Parents would be informed in the event of an emergency through an automatic calling system.

Keller said she has concerns about relying on school bus drivers to bring children to reception centers in the event of an evacuation, which she considers “a weak link.” She said that, while first responders and public safety employees are trained to act in emergencies, school bus drivers are not first responders. In addition, contacting bus drivers, who aren't scheduled between dropping children off at school in the morning and picking them up in the afternoon, could be a problem during an emergency.

However, according to one Union 28 school bus driver, drivers at his company received classroom training on radiological emergencies in 2012. They were told about the different levels of radiological alert and told that, in the event of an evacuation, bus drivers would be responsible for driving students from EPZ schools to a reception center.



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BUDGET from page 1

which some estimates place at over \$450 million when adjusted for inflation.

Transportation and Taxes
Even more ambitious than his education proposal was a \$13.7 billion, ten year transportation plan designed “to support the transportation system our residents and the economy need and deserve...” The proposal, funded primarily by borrowing, would increase the state’s main form of highway aid to cities and towns, Chapter 90 by fifty percent to approximately \$300 million per year statewide. It would also have poured \$4.6 billion into highway maintenance and approximately \$7.7 billion into modernizing rail, bus and other forms of mass transit.

But the governor also stressed that his proposals must be funded “honestly and sustainably.” In doing so, the governor proceeded to the third rail of Massachusetts politics, the income tax, proposing to raise rates from the current 5.25% to 6.25%. He also raised a number of business taxes and eliminated a variety of exemptions. These increases were partially balanced by a significant cut in the sales tax and a doubling of the value of the personal exemption in the income tax (for both individuals and married couples).

The response of the legislature to all this was “we shall consider it carefully.” This has generally been interpreted to mean that the income tax increase was dead on arrival. Sure enough, when the house budget and tax proposals surfaced in early April the Governor’s tax plan was replaced by more modest increases in cigarettes, gasoline and assorted business taxes. This resulted in much more modest initiatives in transportation and education.

The Impact
However, a review of the key local aid data for a sample of towns in the region shows the differences

State Aid: Governor's FY14 Proposal Versus House Ways and Means									
			FY 13	FY14 Gov	FY14 HWM				
Gill-Montague	Chapter 70		6,010,369	6,037,994	6,037,994	Montague	Unrestricted aid	1,212,188	1,212,188
	School Choice Rec.		640,098	646,810	646,810		Chapter 90		753,192
	School Choice Send.		-996,485	-1,094,460	-1,094,460	Gill	Unrestricted Aid	205,734	205,734
	Charter Reimburse		155,535	114,273	167,683		Chapter 90	228,181	228,181
	Charter Sending		-593,156	-674,540	-804,935	Leverett	Unrestricted aid	150,975	150,975
Mahar	Chapter 70		5,286,040	5,303,865	5,304,190		Chapter 90		122,565
	School Choice Rec.		855,746	925,949	925,949		Chapter 70	271,766	274,741
	School Choice Send.		-531,667	-476,709	-476,709		School Choice Rec.	142,008	153,413
	Charter Reimburse		16,522	17,291	15,712		School Choice Send.	-33,081	-30,000
	Charter Sending		-164,428	-166,128	-152,754		Charter Reimburse	34,656	21,668
Amherst-Pelham	Chapter 70		9,233,467	9,272,992	9,272,992		Charter Sending	-96,798	-95,067
	School Choice Rec.		567,688	637,205	637,205	Shutesbury	Unrestricted aid	143,436	143,436
	School Choice Send.		-111,968	-121,578	-121,578		Chapter 90		204,327
	Charter Reimburse		275,007	124,456	169,585		Chapter 70	584,974	608,488
	Charter Sending		1,190,761	1,041,202	1,150,072		School Choice Rec.	0	0
Franklin Technical School	Chapter 70		3,344,406	3,509,995	3,375,636		School Choice Send.	-46,465	-44,000
	School Choice Rec.		0	0	0		Charter Reimburse	0	0
	School Choice Send.		10,000	5,000	5,000		Charter Sending	0	0
	Charter Reimburse		0	0	0	Wendell	Unrestricted aid	147,409	147,409
	Charter Sending		0	0	0		Chapter 90		287,263
Swift R	Chapter 70		626,107	629,107	629,007	Swift R	Chapter 70	96,322	93,272
	School Choice Rec.		96,322	93,272	93,272		School Choice Rec.	-81,334	-52,308
	School Choice Send.		-81,334	-52,308	-52,308		School Choice Send.	0	0
	Charter Reimburse		0	0	0		Charter Reimburse	0	0
	Charter Sending		0	0	0		Charter Sending	0	0

between the Governor’s budget plan and those being developed in the legislature are not that great. (Please see chart above for a detailed look at the numbers.)

Take, for example, the main form of education aid to local school districts, Chapter 70. Most of the districts in the area have received nearly identical amounts of aid under the two budget proposals. Gill-Montague, Amherst-Pelham and Mahar – negatively impacted by the limitations in the funding formula- receive virtually identical amounts of aid (a flat increase of \$25 per student). On the other hand, Greenfield, which received a huge increase in state education aid under the Governor’s proposal, would benefit substantially from lifting the cap on early childhood enrollment and from the full implementation of the “aggregate wealth model,” neither of which is funded

in the house budget.

The state data also shows significant variations in the impact of school choice and charter school programs on local districts, although these differences are not influenced by state budget proposals. For example the Gill-Montague district loses approximately \$450,000 to the school choice program and is projected to pay nearly \$600,000 net for charter school tuitions. Mahar Regional, on the other hand, may gain \$450,000 from school choice and pay a relatively small amount, approximately \$150,000, for charter school tuition. Amherst-Pelham, on the other hand, is a school choice “winner,” receiving approximately \$500,000 in revenue from the program, but loses nearly a million dollars in charter school tuition.

Outside of education, the two most important forms of state aid to towns in the region are so called “unrestricted aid” and Chapter 90. Unrestricted aid was created in 2010 to replace local aid generated by the lottery, formerly called “lottery aid,” and something called “additional assistance,” which was distributed according to a needs-based formula. While it can be an important source of local revenue, unrestricted aid, according to one state policy analysis, “has never had a formula of its own, since previous years’ aid amounts have either been cut across the board (FY 2010 and FY 2011) or level funded (FY 2012).” A state aid program without a formula is not a happy program and FY 14 seems to be following this rather nebulous trend. Unrestricted aid is level funded in the

Governors budget and shows very small increases for most towns in the House budget.

Finally, there is Chapter 90, a form of state aid that reimburses cities and towns for specific road projects. Each year the state allocates a total amount to a city or town based on a complex formula. Towns then have projects approved and are reimbursed from the fund once projects are completed. The governor proposed a 50% increase in total chapter 90 money and the House has allocated a similar amount in its budget.

Thus despite major variations in funding and priorities, the impact of the Governor’s and the legislative budget proposals on local aid are nearly identical at this point. This does not mean there are no differences in the two budgets. The House Ways and Means Budget does not fund some of the Governor’s key early childhood initiatives and its long term transportation investments are more modest.

What’s Next?
As of this writing a modified transportation bill is being discussed by the House Senate Conference Committee. A Chapter 90 funding measure has been separated from the transportation bill and is awaiting approval of the House budget, which is being debated this week. The Senate will create its own budget in May, with a conference committee to iron out differences between House and Senate in June. At that point the Governor can either sign the legislature’s bill, veto it, or veto parts of it. Stay tuned.
The data for this report was taken

from the reports of the Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services, also affectionately known as “cherry sheets”, because long ago the numbers were apparently distributed on cherry colored pieces of paper. The Chapter 90 estimates were taken from a list on the website of the Massachusetts Municipal Association, which may have been originally produced by the Massachusetts Highway Department. Also helpful was the big file on Chapter 70 calculations for FY 14 which one can download from the website of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Racket at Grout Circle

Monday, 4/15 12:01 p.m. Burglary, breaking & entering at Unity Park on Unity Street in Turners Falls. 2:17 p.m. Disorderly conduct in Peske Park in Turners Falls. No such person found. 6:16 p.m. Burglar alarm sounded at the Hallmark Institute of Photography at 27 Industrial Drive in Turners Falls. Accidental, defective alarm.	Tuesday, 4/16 6:47 a.m. Loud noise disturbance at Grout Circle in Millers Falls. Advised to contact police if recurs. 7:37 a.m. Burglary, breaking & entering at Pinewood Circle in Turners Falls. Stolen property worth over \$250. Report taken. 7:56 a.m. Threatening harassment at the Franklin Emergency Shelter at 15 Farren Avenue in Turners Falls. Advised of options. 10:16 a.m. Suspicious automobile at Millers Falls Road in Millers Falls. Investigated. 5:38 p.m. Robbery on 4 th Street in Turners.	Wednesday, 4/17 7:05 a.m. Loud noise disturbance at Grout Circle in Millers Falls. Services rendered. 2:16 p.m. Larceny at T Street in Turners Falls. Report taken.
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Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: *Celtic session*, 10:30 a.m.

EVERY TUESDAY

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

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

EVERY WEDNESDAY

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

Between the Uprights, Turners Falls: *Karaoke with Dirty Johnny*. 9 p.m. to midnight. Friday Night Karaoke begins on March 1. Free.

Corner of Avenue A & 2nd Street, Turners Falls: *Farmers Market*. 2 - 6 p.m.

EVERY THURSDAY

Montague Center Library: *Music and Movement with Tom Carroll and Laurie Davidson*. Children and their caregivers are invited. 10 to 11 a.m. Free.

Between the Uprights, Turners Falls: *Open Mic with Dan, Kip, and Schultz* from Curly Fingers Dupree Band. 8:30 to 11:30 p.m. Free.

ART SHOWS:

Great Falls Discovery Center:

colorful paper quilts and story quilts created by K-8 students.

**LOCAL EVENTS:
FRIDAY, APRIL 26**

Memorial Hall, Shelburne Falls: *Erin McKeown*, renowned & locally based singer-songwriter. CD release show. 8th Annual Benefit Concert for the Academy at Charlemont. Student musicians to open show. 7 p.m., \$

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: *Carrie Ferguson*, folk pop, with special guest *Heather Pierson*, singer/songwriter. 7:30 p.m.

Montague Bookmill: *Who'd Da Funk It*, funk, and *Height With Friends*. 8 p.m., \$

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: Arena Civic Theater presents *Jesus Christ Superstar*. 8 p.m., \$

The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Bright Lines & Shangri Lips*, rock plus. 9:30 p.m., free.

SATURDAY, APRIL 27

Montague Common Hall: Quebecois music jam. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Memorial Hall, Shelburne Falls: *Live from the Metropolitan Opera in HD: Handel's Giulio Cesare*. 12 p.m. \$

Full Moon Coffeehouse, Wen-

dell Town Hall: *Rani Arbo and Daisy Mayhem*. Benefit for the Montague Reporter! Open mic at 7:30 p.m., headliner at 8 p.m. Dessert. Sliding scale tickets. Good times.

Turners Falls High School Theater: Gill-Montague Education Fund 9th Annual Gala. With *UnionJack*, British invasion band with hits of the '60s and '70s. 7:30 p.m., \$

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: *Jennifer Matthews*, roots singer-songwriter, 8 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: Arena Civic Theater presents *Jesus Christ Superstar*. 8 p.m., \$

Montague Bookmill: *Fancy Trash*, roots and indie, with *Kevin O'Rourke of Lo Fine*. 8 p.m., \$

Arts Block Café, Greenfield:



Valley dynamo Erin McKeown plays a benefit for the Academy at Charlemont this Friday, April 26, at Memorial Hall in Shelburne Falls.

Leah Randozzo, Sandy Bailey, Jeff D'Antona, & the Family Band. 8 p.m., \$

Deja Brew Pub, Wendell: *Ottomatic Slim*, chicago-style blues. 9 to 11:30 p.m.

Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: *Moose & the High Tops*, '70s and '80s classic hits. 9:30 p.m.

The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Art opening for *Halie Theoharides*, 8 p.m. Live band 9:30 p.m., free.

SUNDAY, APRIL 28

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: Arena Civic Theater presents *Jesus Christ Superstar*. 2 p.m., \$

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: *Brian Dolzani*, melodic folk americana, 2:30 p.m.

Arts Block Café, Greenfield: "A Dream of Music: A Half-Century of Visions and Visitations by Joseph Marcello and Friends." Featuring Marcello's work set for chamber orchestra and voice. 3 p.m., \$

Leverett Congregational Church: The *Leverett Community Chorus* presents their *annual Spring concert*. Includes Celtic, Hebrew, Ghanaian, South African and North American choral works. 4

p.m.

Arts Block Café, Greenfield: *Leah Randozzo, Sandy Bailey, Jeff D'Antona, & the Family Band*. 8 p.m., \$

Deja Brew Pub, Wendell: *The Surly Temple*, with Jim Henry, Guy DeVito, Doug Plavin, and Tommy Boynton. 8 to 10 p.m.

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

MONDAY, APRIL 29

Deja Brew Pub, Wendell: "All Small Caps," night of spoken word. 7 to 10 p.m. Open mic at 7:30, with featured readers to follow.

The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Dada Dino's Open Mic*, 8 p.m., free. Sign up starts at 7:30 p.m.

TUESDAY, APRIL 30

Sloan Theater, Main Campus, Greenfield Community College:

Faces of Homelessness Speaker's Bureau - currently and formerly homeless individuals who are passionate about sharing their life stories and educating the public about homelessness and its solutions. Speakers with diverse backgrounds and life experiences provide a glimpse into the challenges of homelessness and the stability that comes with a place to call home. All of them exemplify resourcefulness, perseverance

and strength in a society where housing is not a guarantee for anyone. 11 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.

Sheffield Elementary School Cafeteria, Montague: *Family Math Night*. Students must be accompanied by an adult. 6 - 7:30 p.m., free.

Leverett Library, *Leverett: Open Poetry Night*. Local poet Nick Fleck will lead the evening sharing some of his work. Anyone, poet or poetry fan, is welcome to share a poem. 6:30 - 8 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 1

Sloan Theater, Main Campus, GCC: *Dance Concert Preview* - GCC's dance department presents a short preview of selected pieces of a variety of dance styles for the final semester concert. Free pizza for attendees. 12 - 1 p.m., free.

THURSDAY, MAY 2

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: *The Collected Poets Series* featuring Karina Borowicz & Diane Wald. 7 p.m.

Academy of Music Theatre, Northampton: Pioneer Valley Performing Arts presents *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* that unlikely hit musical with unlikely heroes who learn that winning isn't ev-

everything and that losing doesn't make you a loser. 7 p.m. For tickets, call 413-584-9032 x105

Deja Brew Pub, Wendell: *Jen Spingla & Alyssa Kelly, etch-a-sketch original* (folk-) rock. 8 to 10:30 p.m.

FRIDAY, MAY 3

Academy of Music Theatre, Northampton: Pioneer Valley Performing Arts presents *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*. 7 p.m. For tickets, call 413-584-9032 x105.

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West Along the River

Spring's A-teasin': Notes on the Arrival of Spring and Anything Else that Comes to Mind

By DAVID BRULE

ERVINGSIDE – Hoover woke me out of a winter's drowse the other morning at 7:30. I was sitting in the Adirondack chair listening to winter birds singing their spring song. He was wearing his fresh shiny coat as chipmunks will do in the springtime. He had slept the winter away somewhere in a warm den padded with his stock of sunflower seeds, and now, having jumped across this page, he was on the arm of the chair, looking me directly in the eye and insisting on his breakfast, as if he had just stepped out to get something at the store and came back four months later. Relieved that spring had finally happened, I declared winter over. But April doesn't give in so easily. She flirts and teases, warm and suggestive, then turns a capricious cold shoulder, just because she can, and just because she wants to.

The sun was warm but the day was chill.

You know how it is with an April day

When the sun is out and the wind is still,

You're one month on in the middle of May.

But...

It seemed to begin on one morning when the very first spring song piped feebly from the brush pile on the edge of the yard. That was back in February. But that little

voice started the long slow move to spring. It was the song sparrow, our constant and modest gardener, who after spending the winter quietly and seriously working the seeds spread out on the snow, suddenly tried out his pipes, and liked what he could do.

The first redwing dropped into the yard right on time. His date is usually Feb 16 or 17, a timetable which he has consistently respected in my notes, for the last 50 years. There he was, the first of millions who will soon be swarming north. He'll spend part of his business day now over in the frozen marsh, perching on a cattail stalk, setting up his summer territory before his future mate arrives in a few weeks. They travel separately, the ladies lingering longer in the sunny south.

Shortly after, a jet-black gentleman arrived, late in the afternoon. A purple grackle, which some now call the *common* grackle, paused a long while in the top of the pine, warming his plumes in the sun. Years ago, he would have been called *purple*, and his cousin was the *bronze-backed* grackle, both proud of their plumage, and distinguished one from the other by their names. But some bird bureaucrat decided to change all that and call them both just "common". Took the color out of our bird lists and the color right off the grackles' backs! Some of us still long for the days when grackles had real names, when common mergansers were American, when northern flickers

were yellow-shafted, when harriers were marsh hawks, and so on. Don't get me started.

The 8th of March brought winter back for a day. The snow that filtered down all night in the street lights' glow reminded me of the seven-day snows of Russia. The connection with International Women's Day, Russia, and Jude Wobst in snow, brings back a memory of a merry bus ride on the 8th of March many years ago when the above mentioned Russian teacher, myself, and a band of Russian women plunged through the immense darkness of the Russian night on the way to a Karelian folk concert in some far corner near the Arctic Circle. That night, the women were performing in Russian and *vebst*, (the indigenous language of the region), and were already in full form. Their lively polyphonic songs kept us all in high spirits and laughter. Songs mixed nostalgia, sentimentality, and triumph of the enduring spirit pouring from the Russian soul. They were rejoicing that we had reached March, that we had gotten through winter, and that we were still alive in spite of all.

The mated pair of Canada geese bring me back to the present, to the river. They wing softly in slow nuptial motion every morning through gray skies, calling and circling their home marsh. In the brush pile a band of English sparrows squabble in their cockney Old London street slang, joyful in their fighting and jostling over a trifle among the twigs. This may have something to do with choosing a spring mate, or they may just like a good ruckus.



photo courtesy of blog.audubonguides.com

Purple Grackle

The wood frogs congregated in the pond just yesterday, and suddenly it's true Spring. They have now spent a good week croaking and carousing, courting and copulating in a drunken spring fling. Evening rain only excites them more. Then the peepers have joined in, their silver bell notes ringing all through the woodlands and marsh.

By day, the snowbirds call, trilling from every bush, pouring out their spring song for us before departing. A simple gift to this house for keeping them well fed through this classic snowy winter. Juncos, tree sparrows, white throats do call before drifting away to the north like the bank of snow lingering on the north side of the house, near the

holly bush. We're in the mood for thinking of the summer crowd that will soon show up. There'll be the catbird, rose breast, oriole and summer redbird tanager, any day now!

Ah but, the radio brings us back to stern reality. Sleet and cold rain, temps in the 30s are on the way. Not so fast Miss April, not so fast.

*.. if you so much as dare to speak,
A cloud comes over the sunlit arch,
A wind comes off a frozen peak,
And you're two months back into the middle of March.*

*Two Tramps in Mudtime
by Robert Frost*

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As humans, what are some of the choices we have made in life? We had chosen to go to the moon, pursue peace in the Middle East, feed the hungry, clean up our environment.

We have made choices in the spiritual realm as well, what faith, where to go church, to be baptized or not. What control does man have over his own true salvation?

The Bible says: "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." (Eph. 2:8).

Man really has no control or power to save himself from sin, death or hell. Christ has the power and authority to save man. Salvation rests only in Christ.

The Bible says: "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12).

Salvation is a true gift. Receive that gift by asking Christ to be your Savior.

This is as written.

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