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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

DECEMBER 13, 2012

Towns Lose Their Triple-Threat Lawmaker

WENDELL, NEW SALEM
TO THROW PARTY FOR REP. STEVE KULIK



Steve Kulik

By JONATHAN von RANSON

WENDELL—Steve Kulik, soon to be this town's ex-representative to the state house in Boston due to redistricting, helped give Wendell and every other small town in the Commonwealth a way to save good money on its health insurance costs. He also recently helped Wendell initiate a coming sea change in the level of technology required to meet state health code in owner-occupied housing. Native talent and 20 years in the legislature made this modest, engaging man effective and highly respected on Beacon Hill — to the point that in January 2011 he was named co-chair of the powerful House Ways and Means Committee.

Besides Wendell, losing Kulik as of Dec. 31 are New Salem, Pelham and northern Belchertown, while Shelburne, Buckland, Plainfield, Cummington, Middlefield and Chester gain his services. Wendell

and New Salem move to the Second Franklin District, currently served by Denise Andrews, to join Gill, Erving, Warwick, Royalston, Orange, Athol, Petersham, Phillipston, Templeton and the northeast corner of Belchertown.

Loyalty to Kulik showed when a group of town officials and politically active Wendellites, in October 2011, lobbied the redistricting committee to keep Wendell in his First Franklin District. (The effort was late and ultimately unsuccessful). The respect is showing again in an "appreciation open house" scheduled by Wendell and New Salem for Sunday, Dec. 16, from 3 to 5 p.m. at the Wendell Senior Center. There will be a short ceremony thanking Kulik and his similarly respected aide, Paul Dunphy, at 4 p.m.

State Senator Stan Rosenberg, Wendell's other voice in Boston, calls Kulik "a full-time, dedicated,

see KULIK page 6

NEWS ANALYSIS

Should Gill-Montague Be Set Free?



ELLEN BLANCHETTE PHOTO

L. to R: Mitchell Chester, Massachusetts Commissioner of Education, listens to Senator Stanley Rosenberg as he poses a question on why the school district was designated Level 4, with Representative Denise Andrews.

By ELLEN BLANCHETTE

TURNERS FALLS — Massachusetts commissioner of education Mitchell Chester came to Turners Falls last week and spent the afternoon talking to Gill-Montague Regional School District teachers and administrators. The message teachers delivered was that it is time for the district to be set free from the stigma of Level 4 status. While they value the things they've learned and the methods they've put in place through the Accelerated Improvement Plan (AIP), they would like to be able to implement the multiple new programs at their own pace, with a focus on putting the needs of their students first.

Chester was joined on the panel by Eva Mitchell and Joan Connelly of the state department of elementary and secondary education (DESE), state Senator Stanley Rosenberg, state Representatives Stephen Kulik and Denise Andrews and superintendent Mark Prince. Kulik had organized the meeting at the Gill-Montague School District in order to have the concerns of the educators heard.

Karl Dziura, president of the Gill-Montague Education Association, said that being labeled Level 4 stigmatizes the district. He said the AIP implementation erodes the goals it sets for student achievement. Teachers would continue the work begun under the AIP, but, he said, they would like to change the

pace. He told the commissioner that educators are in danger of not having sufficient time to absorb what they had learned and to implement new practices before they were asked to change focus once again. Teachers who spoke agreed with Dziura, asserting that the systems are useful but need to be rolled out more slowly.

High school science and math teacher Bob Pearlman told the panel that Turners Falls High School is a Level 1 school, with high performing students and outstanding, dedicated teachers, that finds itself in a Level 4 (or under-performing) school district. In fact, the Gill-Montague School District is the only one of all Level 4 dis-

see SCHOOL page 5

Yoga for Everyone



CLAUDIA WELLS PHOTO

Yoga instructor Dori McCormack leads a Yoga class for Franklin County Co-op members at Green River Yoga on Main Street in Greenfield.

By LEE WICKS

To people who have never tried it or found the right class, yoga often seems unapproachable. People think: I can't possibly twist myself into those postures; I'm too old, too stiff, too out of shape, and too busy to slow down for a class. Me meditate? I hardly have time to fold the laun-

dry.

This holiday season might be a good time to reevaluate all that resistance, and give the gift of yoga to yourself or a friend. Yoga gradually builds strength, flexibility, balance and peace of mind. It can be modified to suit individual needs, and it makes you feel terrific. Some of the senior center yoga classes use chairs.

All yoga classes use props that help people engage at their own level. Can't touch your toes? Use a block. Can't get your hand around your foot? Use a strap. If the thin Yoga mat doesn't sufficiently cushion your bony knees, a blanket will help. Maybe two. Props are provided at the studios, so you don't have to buy your own. All you need are some

loose comfortable clothes, and shirts that don't fall over your head when you bend forward.

Now here's the important part. Using these props is fine. It is desirable to protect your joints and relieve stress. It is important to be comfortable and mindful. My instructor says, "Pain is a bad teacher. Your body is the best teacher you will ever have." He offers a series of postures (also called *asanas*) as suggestions, and never fails to remind the class that anyone can rest at any time, or choose another posture that feels better. "Listen to your own body," he says, and two or three people fall into child pose. What's child pose? Just imagine a baby sleeping on her stomach with her knees pulled up against her chest. Sigh.

It does not matter one bit that the person next to you bends as gracefully as a reed in the wind without any props at all. Yoga is not a competition. It is a private conversation between you and your body, a quiet conversation that requires your full attention. It is accompanied by deep, conscious breathing, and the combination of breath and attention makes the outside world and all its problems melt away for a while. Best of all, every class ends with a period of rest (*shavasana*) in which you relax all your muscles and drift for a few minutes in a meditative state. You discover stored tension in your jaw, and let it go. You realize that you're

frowning, and those facial muscles relax as well. People leave a yoga class looking a little dazed, smiling, and calm.

Here in Franklin County, yoga classes and teachers abound. Greenfield's Market Co-op members can take classes with a different teacher every week for a nominal fee. The YMCA has free classes for members and fee-based classes for non-members. The Senior Centers in Turners Falls, Leverett, and Erving offer classes too, and there are many private studios, such as Community Yoga and Green River Yoga. Most places offer a first class for free, and this is important, because there are a lot of different teaching styles among very fine teachers, and people have varying needs. Teacher and student should be a good match. In a trial class, you can evaluate the pace and level and decide if it's for you.

Yoga videos for every level are also available online, and the Kripalu Center website site has a free introduction gentle yoga session for beginners, but I recommend starting with a teacher. It is too easy to feel as though you are doing the postures as demonstrated, only to learn that your neck is extended in a way that will cause injury. Videos are a good supplement after you've taken a series of classes.

If you are tempted to give it a try, the vocabulary can seem daunting.

see YOGA page 5

PETS OF THE WEEK

Luv-A-Bull-Mix



Fettucini

I'm a high-energy girl looking for an active family who would give me lots of exercise and play time. I'm about a year old, and spayed, of course, and people call me a luv-a-bull-mix. I love all sorts of toys, but my favorite is a tennis ball. I'm friendly to everyone I meet, wherever I go. I also love meeting other friendly dogs like myself. I'm a nice size for my breed too – more of a "petite bull"! One of the pluses about my breed is we have very clean coats and don't shed too badly. As you can see, I am quite beautiful! I am new here, but the staff thinks I'd be okay for a family with kids. Because I'm so energetic, I might be a bit much for smaller children though. If you'd like to meet me, ask any staff person!

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



Many families made easy gingerbread houses at the Carnegie Library on Saturday, Dec. 8. Back row, Izaiab; front row, R-L, Ivy, Julian, Austin, Gabriella, and Chloie.

WENDELL FREE LIBRARY EVENTS

Erin Go Bragh: Learn to Speak Irish

The Wendell Free Library is offering a free introductory course in spoken Irish, beginning Jan. 9. The classes, taught by Jim Dunn, will be held on Wednesdays from 7 to 8:30 p.m. for 10 weeks.

Spoken mainly in the west of Ireland, Irish is a Gaelic language

closely related to Scots Gael, Welsh and Breton.

With a conversational skills focus, meetings will explore the cultural and historical context of Ireland and Irish through film, song and discussion.

Jim Dunn is an escaped academ-



JESSICA LARKIN ILLUSTRATION

By FRED CICETTI

LEONIA, N.J. – *Q. I just turned 77 and I was wondering what my chances are of reaching 100. What do you think?*

If you want some idea about your life expectancy, you can check out a table provided by the U.S. Social Security Administration online at: www.ssa.gov/oact/STATS/table4c6.html. The table indicates that someone who is 77 today can expect to live another 11.26 years. Of course, if you are a healthy geezer, you can do better than the average.

If you want to reach 100, you should know that there are three major characteristics that seem to

enable you to become a centenarian. First, be female. Second, have fabulous genes. Third, maintain an optimistic outlook.

About 85 percent of centenarians are women. Scientists still don't know why women tend to outlive men. Researchers are increasingly finding evidence that genes play an important role in pushing lifespan beyond 90. Longevity is known to run in families, which suggests that genes are responsible for long lives. There have been many studies that suggest that optimistic people live longer and are less likely to develop diseases.

Lynn Peters Adler, who runs the National Centenarian Awareness Project, cites the following attributes common to centenarians:

- A positive but realistic attitude.
- A love of life.
- A sense of humor.
- Spirituality.
- Courage.

SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES – December 17th to 21st

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 by 11 a.m. the day before. The Meal Site Manager is Kerry Togneri. Council on Aging Director is Roberta Potter. All fitness classes are supported by a grant from the Executive Office of Elder Affairs. Voluntary donations are accepted. For more information, to make meal reservations, or to sign up for programs, call (413) 863-9357. Leave a message if the center is not open.

Monday, 12/17

10 a.m. Aerobics
10:45 a.m. Chair Exercise
1 p.m. Knitting Circle
Tuesday, 12/18
10:30 a.m. Chair Yoga
1 p.m. Solstice Concert with Roger Tinknell

Wednesday, 12/19

10 a.m. Aerobics
11:15 a.m. Friends Meeting

12:45 p.m. Bingo
Thursday, 12/20
9 a.m. Tai Chi
10 a.m. Coffee & Conversation
1 p.m. Pitch
Friday, 12/21
10 a.m. Aerobics
10:45 a.m. Chair Exercise
1 p.m. Writing Group

ERVING

Erving Senior Center, 1 Care Drive, Ervingside, is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. for activities and congregational 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, 12/17



Former Montague police chief Ray Zukowski pins the chief's badge on incoming chief Charles (Chip) Dodge, Wednesday, Dec. 12.

ic, with Ph.D. specialties in old and modern Irish literature, broad experience in teaching languages and literature at the college level, and is published in the field. He is an Irish citizen.

The text is *Buntus Cainte*, an inexpensive booklet with CD. Class size is limited. To register contact the Wendell Free Library at (978) 544-3559 or Jim Dunn at marigold@valinet.com.

THE HEALTHY GEEZER:

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"Centenarians are not quitters," she says.

Carmel B. Dyer, director of the Division of Geriatric and Palliative Medicine at the University of Texas Medical School, said she has seen dramatic effects from a positive outlook. "I've been practicing geriatric medicine for almost 20 years," Dyer said, "and I've noticed that my patients make the best of everything; when there are lemons, they make lemonade. I think if you're more optimistic, you're going to feel better."

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, America's population of centenarians – already the largest in the world – has doubled in the past 20 years to around 72,000. The bureau's lowest estimate for 2050 is 265,000 centenarians; its highest projection puts the number at 4.2 million.

"They have been the fastest-grow-

ing segment of our population in terms of age," said Thomas Perls, director of the New England Centenarian Study at Boston University.

Perls said the rise in 100-year-olds can be attributed largely to better medical care. He said centenarians also have good genes and have made common-sense health decisions, such as not smoking and keeping their weight down.

However, according to researchers at Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York, regular exercise, drinking in moderation and watching what you eat makes no difference to your chances of reaching the century mark.

Researchers studied nearly 500 people between the ages of 95 and 109 and compared them with more than 3,000 others born during the same period. They found that those who lived long lives ate, drank and smoked just as much as those who hadn't lived as long. The centenarians also did just as little exercise and were as likely to be as overweight as their long-gone counterparts.

Send questions to fred@healthygeezers.com.

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Monday, 12/17

9 a.m. Fitness Class
Tuesday, 12/18
9 a.m. Aerobics
12:30-2:30 p.m. Painting
Wednesday, 12/19
9 a.m. Dance
10:15 a.m. Weight Loss Group
Thursday, 12/20
9:00 a.m. Aerobics
10 a.m. Posture Perfect
Friday, 12/21
9:00 a.m. Bowling

LEVERETT Senior Activities

For information, contact the Leverett COA at (413) 548-1022, ext. 5, or coa@leverettma.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 12. Call (413) 367-2694 by Wednesday for a reservation.

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.

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Local Briefs

Compiled by DON CLEGG

The **Great Falls Middle School annual food drive** collected 530 pounds of nonperishable food items and donated them to the Franklin Area Survival Center on Monday, Dec 3.

Boys and girls, ages of 8 to 13, have the opportunity to show off their basketball skills in the **Hoop Shoot free-throw contest** sponsored by the Montague Elks Lodge. Registration starts at 9 a.m. on Saturday, Dec. 15, at the TFHS gymnasium, and the contest will start at 10 a.m. For more info, call John at (413) 423-3398.

The Pioneer Valley Symphony Orchestra and Chorus annual **Family Holiday Concert** will take place on Saturday, Dec. 15, at the Greenfield High School at 7 p.m. Performances will include Randall Thompson's "Frostiana," Debussy's "Clair de Lune" and Lauridsen's "Mid-Winter Songs," as well as playful holiday favorites. Order tickets at (413) 773-3664 or www.pvso.org.

Friends of the Montague Grange and Franklin County Home Care will host the annual **Make-and-Take Craft Fair** on Sunday, Dec. 16, from 10 a.m. to 3

p.m. at the Grange, 34 Main St. in Montague Center. Experience the joy of making beautiful handmade gifts in a relaxed, historic setting surrounded by friends, neighbors and helpful elves. Admission is free; all ages are welcome. Activities cost between \$1 and \$7 each.

Gift-making activities include rolling beeswax candles and unique candle holders, delicate snowflake beaded ornaments and jewelry, miniature terrariums with local plants, sewing gnomes and fairies and more. There will also be a bake sale. The fair is a benefit for the Grange and Franklin County Home Care.

The Baystate Health Blood Donor Mobile will host a **blood drive** on Wednesday, Dec. 19, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., in the parking lot behind the main hospital building in Greenfield. All blood types are needed. Eligible blood donors receive a \$10 retail gift card and will be entered in a raffle to win an iPad mini.

Baystate Franklin Medical Center's hospital-based women's a capella chorus, "Clinical Notes," will perform a **free holiday concert**, celebrating the winter solstice, on Friday, Dec 21, from

noon to 1:00 p.m. in the hospital's Main Conference Room.

Monday community meals coordinator, Amy Connelly, regretfully announced that there will be no meal on Christmas Day at Our Lady of Peace Church, 80 7th St. in Turners Falls, nor will meals be served on Christmas Eve., Dec. 24 or New Year's Eve, Dec. 31. Regular weekly community meals resume on Monday, Jan. 7, 2013 at 5:30 p.m.

Montague town planner, Walter Ramsey, was the first to correctly answer the Montague Reporter's contest question: What is missing from this picture? The photo appeared on Page 2 of the Dec. 6 issue. "Missing" from the photo was the drop-off mailbox for local deliveries, which had been removed from the Turners Falls Post Office. Local, same-day deliveries for the towns of Montague, Gill and Erving are still available if mail is deposited in the post office's local mail slot between 6:30 and 8:30 a.m. Otherwise, all mail is sent to Sturbridge, Mass., or Hartford, Conn., for processing.

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

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Property Crimes and Motor Vehicle Violations

Monday, 12/03

1:58 a.m. Suspicious auto at the Montague Bookmill.

6:14 a.m. Neighborhood disturbance at the Crocker Building, Avenue A, Turners Falls. Gathering dispersed by police.

11:00 a.m. Suspicious person in the alley between H and I Streets, Turners Falls.

Tuesday, 12/04

12:59 p.m. Domestic disturbance at Avenue A, Turners Falls. Peace restored.

4:08 p.m. Burglar alarm at Thomas Memorial Country Club, 29 Country Club Lane, Turners Falls.

4:49 p.m. Larceny at Sunrise Terrace, Turners Falls.

Wednesday, 12/05

12:40 p.m. arrested at

Fourth Street, Turners Falls, on charges of domestic assault and battery.

3:06 p.m. Burglar alarm at McCarthy Funeral Home, Prospect Street, Turners Falls.

Thursday, 12/06

8:29 p.m. Suspicious auto at the intersection of Turners Falls Road and Swamp Road, Montague.

Friday, 12/07

3:49 p.m. Trespassing at Federal Street, Montague. Unable to locate.

5:35 p.m. Larceny at Turners Falls Pizza House, 119

Avenue A Street, Turners Falls. Victims advised of legal options.

6:19 p.m. Domestic disturbance at Fifth Street, Turners Falls.

Saturday, 12/08

1:52 a.m. arrested at the

intersection of Third and Unity Streets, Turners Falls. Charges include operating an uninsured motor vehicle with a suspended license and revoked registration.

2:37 p.m. Larceny at Second Street, Turners Falls.

5:09 p.m. Fire alarm at Swift River Hydro on Canal Road, Turners Falls.

Sunday, 12/09

1:00 a.m.

arrested at the intersection of Canal and Fifth Streets in Turners Falls. Charges include motor vehicle lights violation and operating a motor vehicle while under the influence of alcohol.

6:19 a.m. Burglary at Fourth Street, Turners Falls.

8:47 a.m. Vandalism at Fifth Street, Turners Falls.

11:29 a.m. Burglar alarm at Millers Falls Rod and Gun, 210 Turners Falls Road, Montague.

12:34 p.m. Narcotics violation at Fourth Street, Turners Falls.

9:03 p.m. Domestic disturbance at Montague City Road. Advised of options.

~Looking Back: 10 years ago this week~

Here's the way it was 10 years ago this week: News from the Montague Reporter's archive.

Lights Out: Montague Pulls the Plug on Holiday Lights This Season

The tradition of holiday lighting in downtown Turners Falls began in the early 1990s with just four trees lit up on the corner of Third Street. By 1997, most of Avenue A was illuminated as well as trees in other villages. But during the fall and winter of 2002, there were no lights.

According to Montague superintendent of public works Edward J. Parks-Mleczo Jr., the highway department was too short-handed to commit the crews that season. In the past, the department donated its time to string lights, but three employees had left recently. Those positions had remained unfilled because of budget shortfalls. "It breaks my heart that we can't get out there," Parks-Mleczo said.

"I feel like we live in Grinch Falls," said Dolly Letourneau,

owner of Cup O' Joe café on Avenue A. "The little cheeriness that the lights bring to the town is important."

He Did It His Way

Retiring Dec. 31 at age 61, Ernest Hastings spent the better half of his adult life as Gill highway superintendent. Before taking that position, Hastings had started his own contract estimating business. He described his superintendent role as that of a working manager. "I used to be able to wheel and deal," he said, describing his ability to save the town money on projects. "I always ran the department like it was my own business, but what I did was not for the money. It was for the love of the town."

Shopping Tip

Buddy Rubbish, in his column "Absolute Rubbish," wrote: "Be extra careful on sale items this year, especially online. I bought a sweater that was 20 percent off. It was missing an arm."

2nd Street Baking Company to Help Local Farms and Survival Center

TURNERS FALLS – The 2nd Street Baking Company, 104 4th St., will sponsor a one-day benefit for the Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust's Campaign for Affordable Farms and the Survival Center next door. Ten percent of the proceeds on Saturday, Dec. 15, will be donated to Mount Grace's Campaign for Affordable Farms – Red Fire Farm Project. Diners can meet Mount Grace staff and enjoy coffee, breakfast, lunch or baked goods.

For the Campaign for Affordable Farms' first project, Mount Grace is collaborating with Ryan and Sarah Voiland, who own and operate Red Fire Farm, a 1,400-member CSA farm in Montague, to create a permanently affordable whole farm conserved for the community.

In response to the continual threat of losing much of their productive farmland to development, the Voilands acquired the 108-acre former Tuvek farm along the Connecticut River in Montague and the adjacent 14-acre Blue Meadow

Nursery property. Mount Grace will own the 122-acre farm as a community resource, and the farmers will own the house, office, barns, greenhouses and any future improvements. Mount Grace will then lease the land under a 99-year lease that requires the leaseholder to continue farming. Red Fire Farm will place a permanent affordability restriction on the farm building, so that the whole farm is always sold to the next farmer for a fair and affordable agricultural price.

The Survival Center is currently in the middle of a serious bread shortage; until last week, its bread was supplied by the J.J. Nissen Bakeries, a subsidiary of the now-bankrupt Hostess Corp. Diners at the bakery are encouraged to buy a loaf of bread to be donated to the adjacent Survival Center. You may also bring canned or non-perishable goods directly to the center.

Learn more about the campaign at www.mountgrace.org or at the 2nd Street Baking Company on Saturday, Dec. 15.

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Mother Nature Belongs at the Bargaining Table



By JILL STEIN

As the highly-scripted stagecraft of the presidential campaign fades from the headlines, there's a new show in Washington. "Fiscal Cliff" stars President Barack Obama, who urges Republicans and Democrats to agree on a "grand bargain" that would soften the economic shock of the impending across-the-board tax and spending cuts. But that bipartisan handshake would be nothing to celebrate.

Throwing the nation over the climate cliff will make our current fiscal challenges look like a minor bump in the road.

Here's why: Both parties are intent on imposing an austerity budget bloated with military spending and private-industry health insurance waste. That would be a raw deal for the American people.

It's a sign of Washington's rightward drift that a Democratic president has offered to put Social Security on the chopping block, even though it hasn't contributed one dime to the deficit. And Obama has offered to cut Medicare rather than pursue an improved "Medicare for All" insurance system that could save trillions over the next decade by eliminating the wasteful bureaucracy and medical inflation inherent in our private health insurance system.

Equally troubling, both parties are ignoring another problem that's truly critical: the climate cliff.

Our planet is rapidly approaching a geophysical tipping point at which the consequences of climate change,

such as the disappearance of polar ice caps and the melting of frozen methane deposits, will trigger an unstoppable acceleration of warming. Once that happens, it will render our climate incompatible with civilization as we know it.

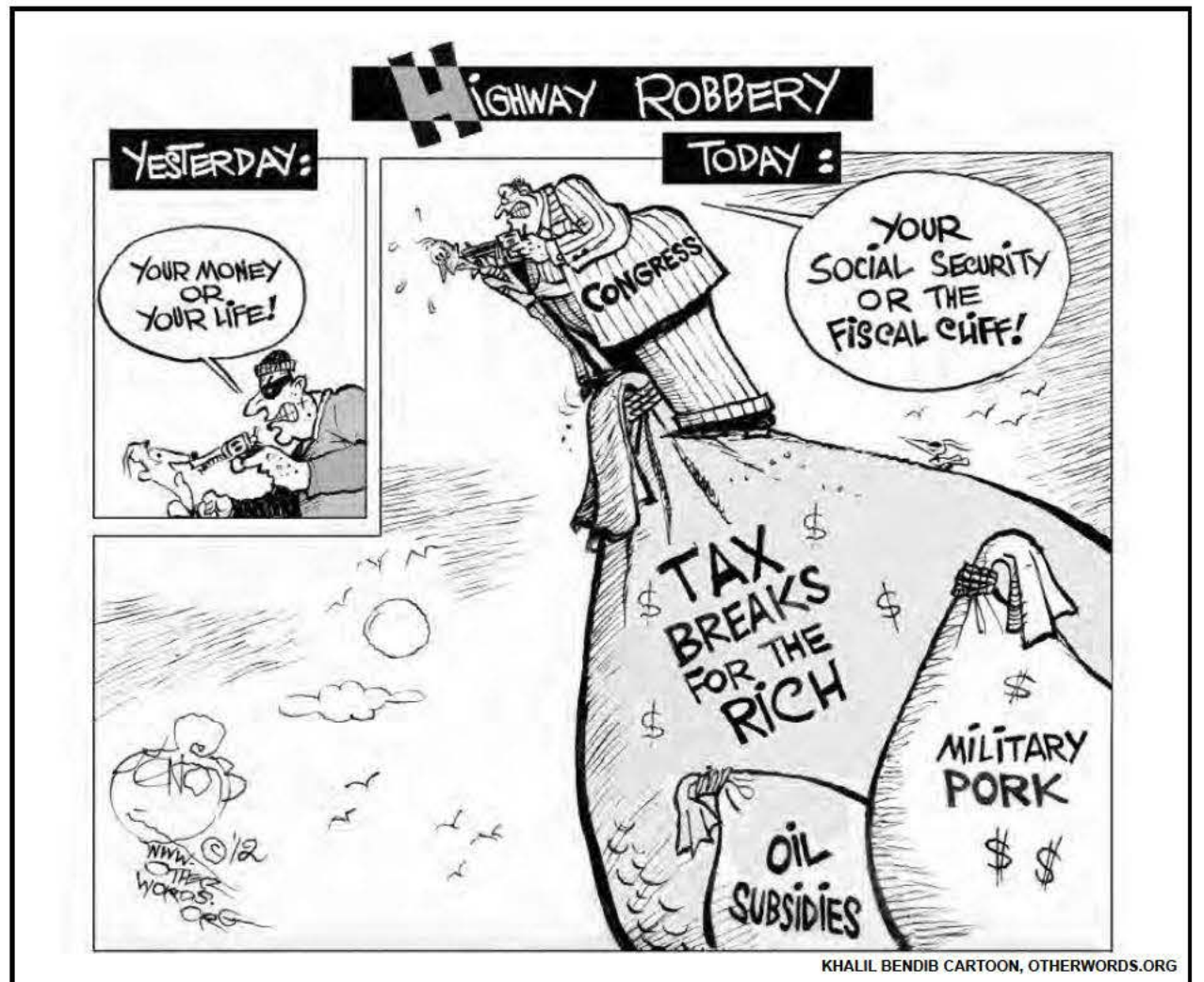
Throwing the nation over the climate cliff will make our current fiscal challenges look like a minor bump in the road.

Mother Nature must also have a seat at the negotiating table. In a nation already reeling from droughts, wildfires, and superstorms, budget priorities must reconcile the climate and economic imperatives. After all, they're ultimately one and the same.

Our current drive to expand oil and gas drilling on U.S. soil is part of a bipartisan energy policy that's doing nothing to reduce unsustainably high carbon emissions. Showpiece programs to encourage renewable energy alternatives like solar and wind can't avert climate disaster unless they replace fossil fuels.

The \$15 billion a year Obama wants to invest in renewable energy is a small fraction of what's spent every month on the latest Wall Street bailout. Any boost the environment might get from his administration's showpiece renewable energy programs is more than canceled by its promotion of dirty energy that runs from natural gas fracking to coal and nuclear reactors, and an expansion of oil drilling in national parks, offshore, and the Arctic.

We can avoid both the fiscal and climate crises only if we democratize our priorities and put public interest ahead of the profiteering elite. One blueprint for this is the Green New Deal, which served as the mainstay of my presidential bid



LETTER TO



THE EDITOR

Community Network for Children Program Thanks the Community

The Union #28 Community Network for Children program that supports families in Erving, Leverett, New Salem, Shutesbury and Wendell is very grateful and appreciative of the support shown by the local community on Dec. 3 during the successful Hope & Olive soup and game night benefit.

It was truly heartwarming to see families, community members and friends enjoying the warmth of the delicious soups and breads all donated by the following local restaurants: Hope & Olive, Wagon Wheel, People's Pint, Brick Wall Bistro, Gill Tavern, Magpie, Diemand Farm, Brass Buckle, Taylor's Tavern, Bread Euphoria, Franklin County Technical School's

Apprentice Restaurant, Rendezvous, Hattapon's Thai Kitchen, Main St. Grill, SOUP and Wheatberry Bakery.

In addition we had many generous donations from the following local businesses to support our gift table: Magical Child, YMCA of Greenfield, Hens & Chicks, Pierce Brothers Coffee Roasters, Dry Brook Stables, Roger Tincknell, Be With Horses (Su Hoyle), 2nd Street Baking Company, Ruth Uchiyama Photography, Art for Two with Heather Fulton, Craigieburn Alpaca Farm, Pineapple Dance Co., World Eye Bookshop, Greenfield Farmers Cooperative/ Jeff Budine, Dawn's Dance, French King Bowling, Yoga Center of Amherst Embodiment Yoga,

Cinemark, Nana Klette's Chocolates, Chef Myron's Sauces, Colleen's Crochet, Molly Mast's Sewing and Design, Artist April Woodard-McNiff and Authors Paul DuBois Jacobs and Jennifer Swender.

Please consider patronizing these businesses to show appreciation for their continued support of programs in the community.

— Gillian Budine, CNC Program Coordinator;

— Jessica Carlson-Belanger, CNC Program Assistant;

— CNC Community Council members

Aug 26, 2012

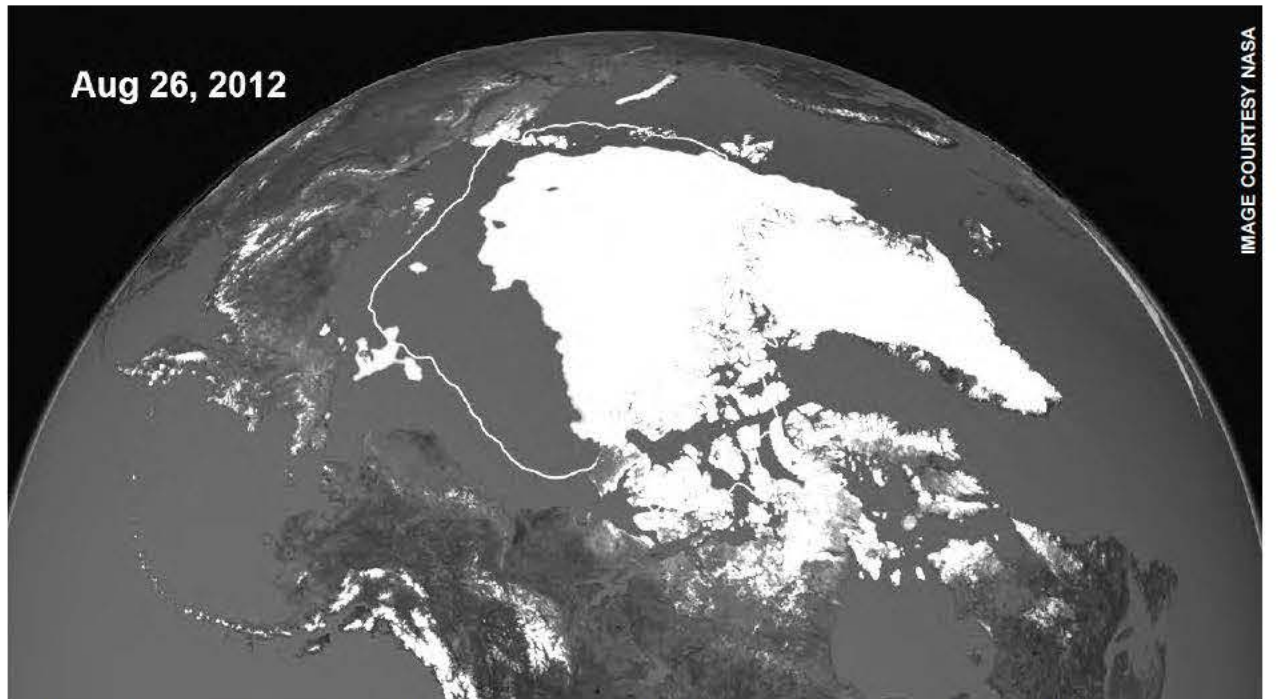


IMAGE COURTESY NASA

This graphic shows the extent of Arctic sea ice on Aug. 26, 2012, the day the sea ice dipped to its smallest extent in more than three decades of satellite measurements, according to scientists from NASA and the National Snow and Ice Data Center.

as the Green Party's nominee. Our plan would launch an emergency program to create 25 million jobs in green energy, sustainable agriculture, public transportation, and infrastructure improvements. It would also cut spending, making big tax hikes unnecessary.

Our Green New Deal would be funded by a combination of waste-cutting and targeted fair-tax reforms. These include scaling back the Pentagon's bloated budget to year 2000 levels.

A "Medicare for All" health insurance system would provide health care to everyone, while eliminating the massive private health insurance bureaucracy and reducing the medical inflation straining federal, state, and household budgets alike.

Our proposed tax reforms would extend the Bush tax cuts for 90 percent of Americans. It would rein in Wall Street speculation with a small (0.5 percent) tax on financial transactions, generating \$350 billion annually.

Capital gains would be taxed as income, and income would be taxed more progressively, with multimillionaires and billionaires paying in the 50-80 percent range, just as they did before the tax giveaways of recent decades.

If we are to have an economy that serves the people and creates a livable planet for the future, we must insist on nothing less than a grand bargain that is truly worthy of the name.

Jill Stein won half a million votes as the Green Party's presidential candidate in 2012.

This article first ran at OtherWords.org.



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Help Wanted for School Superintendent Search

By LEE WICKS

Choosing the next superintendent of schools for the Gill-Montague Regional School District is a hard job, and the Gill-Montague School Committee is asking for help with this process. To be as inclusive as possible, the school committee has voted to form a 15-member search advisory committee with broad representation. They are looking for three teachers, three parents, two administrators, one senior citizen, one student, two town administrators, one special education director, and two people from the community at large to help in narrowing a semifinalist field of eight to

ten candidates, to three to five finalists. Volunteers must commit to the interview schedule; only those who have participated in all the interviews may take part in the final selection. Participants must also maintain strict confidentiality throughout the process. This Search Advisory Committee will meet with members of the school committee and Pat Correia, a search adviser from the Massachusetts Association of School Committees, on Jan. 17 at 6 p.m. to define the role and charges of the search advisory committee. Semifinalist interviews have been scheduled for Mar. 11-13, 18

and 19. On Mar. 19, the screening committee will nominate three to five finalists to the school committee, who will be brought in for the final set of interviews and site visits. People interested in serving on this important committee should notify the school committee in writing by Jan. 4. The school committee will vote on the names and formally establish the advisory committee at its meeting on Jan. 8. After conducting a number of focus group sessions and distributing a survey on paper and online, the school committee determined that the Gill-Montague School District is seeking a dynamic, motivated educational leader with

a strong background in school finance, collaborative management style, and excellent communication skills to become the next superintendent. Respondents also expressed a strong desire for a superintendent who will commit to staying in the district for over three years. Students who attended the focus group sessions or responded to the survey said they would like a superintendent who is visible, friendly, well known, open-minded and progressive. The successful candidate will demonstrate an ability to promote and appreciate outstanding teachers, success in working with underperforming schools, superior administrative skills, success in

curriculum and technology development, knowledge of special education issues and programs, and an understanding of how government functions as well as the ability to build relationships with community leaders. To qualify, an applicant must be licensed or eligible for licensure as a superintendent of schools in Massachusetts. A masters degree is required and an advanced degree preferred. A successful candidate should also have a minimum of 10 years experience in education, including five years of administrative experience and or central office experience; five years of teaching experience is preferred.

YOGA from page 1

Ignore it. There are numerous forms of yoga. I define them here for the curious-minded, but I've learned that most teachers incorporate different kinds of yoga into their practices, blurring the lines between one type and another. If you find a teacher who always encourages you to work at your own level, it will not matter what kind of class you take.



Easy Yoga class with Lisa Enzer offered through Mass Housing TAP Resident Assistant Program. May 2012

Common types of Yoga are: *Hatha*, a very general term that can encompass many of the physical types of yoga. If a class is described as Hatha style, it is probably going to be slow-paced and gentle, and provide a good introduction to the basic yoga poses. *Vinyasa*, also called slow flow, is a general term that is used for a more vigorous style based on the performance of a series of "sun salutations" in which movement is matched to the breath. *Ashtanga*, a physically demanding, fast-paced, intense style of yoga and the inspiration for what is often called power yoga. *Bikram* is generally referred to as "hot yoga". It is practiced in a 95- to 100-degree room, which allows for a loosening of tight muscles and profuse sweating, which is thought to be cleansing. *Anusara*, a relatively new form of yoga, pairs strict principles of alignment with a playful spirit. *Restorative Yoga* spends long periods of time lying on blocks, blankets and yoga bolsters – passively allowing muscles to relax. The vocabulary of the poses is not complicated. Downward dog, upward dog, cat, cow, cobra, plank, and warrior all look pretty much as you might imagine. The resting pose (*shavasana*) translates to corpse pose. In tree pose, you stand on one

leg with arms raised high like branches, and if you can't do that comfortably, sink into child pose (so wonderful!), or stand still and aligned in mountain pose... and breathe. A sun salutation combines a number of poses into a series of flowing movements that use all your muscles. It is graceful and pretty, takes a while to learn, and is often demonstrated in daunting yoga videos that discourage more people

than they attract. Some people practice yoga regularly to great effect and never do a sun salutation. Others master it, or create a version of their own. My teacher would not judge. He'd simply encourage any set of movements that helped you connect with your breath and your desire to safely explore the limits of your body. What unites all yoga practices at every level is breath. To fill your lungs while paying attention to the air in your abdomen, your chest, and then your collarbones, and then release that air slowly, feeling emptiness, until your body commands the next breath, can be a profound experience. If you did only this, you would still be practicing yoga, according to my teacher, and it would do you a world of good. The holiday season is not a time of joy for everyone. There's the stress of shopping, made worse in hard economic times. There's sadness for the recently divorced, or those who have lost a loved one in the previous year. There are unreasonable expectations, caused by holiday TV specials and tear-jerking movies. There are families in which religious differences have to be negotiated. This stuff can raise your blood pressure, but there's an antidote. Find a yoga class you like...and breathe.

from SCHOOL page 1

districts in Massachusetts with no schools designated as underperforming. Both elementary schools have been named commendation schools – Gill Elementary in 2011 and Montague Elementary in 2010. At Turners Falls High School, student achievement rates exceed state levels of improvement. Pearlman also said that the work this year of implementing the AIP has been difficult and that it interferes with time spent with students and in collaboration with other teachers. He feels the stress is adding to the problem of retention of teachers and administrators in the district. This is the second year of the AIP, which is the required process for a district to move out of state oversight. Pearlman said he teaches three different classes and so has to meet the AIP requirements to collect data and develop lesson plans for each of the three classes. This keeps him at his computer unnecessarily, taking away from time with students. Jeffery Jobst, a high school technology education teacher, said the use of math, science and engineering design and the use of tools and machine processes are what his classes are all about. He said, "It has been a pleasure to put students to work in real-life experience by designing items for teachers and programs all over this district." He said that he used to collaborate with teachers on projects, but that since they've been working on the AIP this has largely stopped. He said curriculum and creativity are being compromised, and that students are not being challenged enough. Elementary school teacher Susan Pelis said that turnover at the schools has had an impact on students. An early childhood education teacher for 25 years, Pelis has been in the district for seven years. She said that Gill Elementary has had five principals in seven and a half years. "Last year Montague Elementary lost a principal, assistant principal and the superintendent, all of whom left for jobs in other districts," she noted. She then listed the names of the five superintendents at the district for the past seven years. Joanne Flagg, a sixth grade teacher at Montague Elementary, said that last year the district lost 21 percent of its teachers, who

took their training and used it in other districts where they don't have to work with an AIP. Flagg said that it's a huge loss in a small school district. The conversation inevitably led to why the district was designated Level 4. Rosenberg asked Chester if the budget issues that brought the state into the district for fiscal oversight hadn't occurred, would the district still have been categorized Level 4. Chester explained that when the towns failed to pass a budget and the state took over financial leadership, it started the process that led to the district review, which showed other problems in governance, in curriculum continuity and within the school committee. This ultimately led to the development of the AIP. While he didn't directly answer the question Rosenberg had asked, he seemed to suggest that the district wouldn't have been designated Level 4 had the towns found a way to settle their budget issues. By the time they did, with the compact agreement in 2010, the state's attention was focused on the district. Questions remain, however. At what point will the district be

allowed to continue without state oversight and without the dark cloud of "underperforming" hanging over it? "You have accomplished a lot," Chester said. "My goal is that all you're doing not be in vain. Is this time to let you go? I often think that things done for good can be done badly. We always have to consider unintended consequences." Chester said that he needs to weigh the value to the district of the continued assistance and support that comes with the Level 4 designation against the possible harm that continued status does to the district's reputation. Is this the right time to let the district go and continue to build the process of improvement on its own? That is precisely what he needs to consider, Chester said.

CORRECTION

In "Shop to Pop Until Summer" (Dec. 6), the organization run by Lynn Nichols and Don Kruger was misidentified. It is called Shop Western Mass (www.shop-westernmass.com).

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KULIK from page 1

very effective legislator.” Some legislators, he said, “specialize in constituent services, some in policy, some in politics. Steve has a terrific record in balancing all three.”

Kulik got into local government after moving in 1976 from the Boston area to Worthington. Soon he was a selectman, and in 1993 he won a seat in the Massachusetts legislature. Commented Rosenberg, “He’s used well his experience as a selectman on issues that municipal leaders have to deal with. He can get into the weeds, the complicated issues, and resolve them effectively.”

As an example of Kulik’s style, Rosenberg cited the Municipal Health Insurance Reform Bill, “a bill to lower the cost of health insurance for municipalities by grouping aggregation. It was a real

benefit to the towns. We worked two years on it, the two of us. We were in many debates together in front of municipal officials, and we had different approaches to the issue. In the end we compromised, and the bill that passed balances interests and works very well.”

In recent weeks, Kulik has been recuperating from a knee replacement, the surgery carefully timed for legislative recess and performed soon after the November election. His first official outing was to a meeting in Montague last week. In a telephone interview, he said he was walking with a cane. “I’d been having pain when I was standing,” he said. “Now it’s gone. Miracles!”

What’s non-legislative life like?

“Life as a legislator is sort of all-consuming,” he answered. “It doesn’t know a normal daily clock. I get emails and phone calls at all differ-

“I agree: the grassroots is where things come from. The state is there to support initiatives coming from communities.”

— Rep. Steve Kulik

ent times of day, constituents to respond to, meetings, events at all different times. I do treasure and highly value the time that I can take off, so to speak, to enjoy living in Worthington.” He said it’s “very much like Wendell, a very small town, quite representative of the district I represent. It sustains me. There’s a pace of daily life that I appreciate when I get to spend extended time here. It connects me to rural life and values.

“In my spare time I like to read. I like a variety of novels, history...

I’m a great fan of music, both live and recorded, primarily jazz and blues. I like reading about jazz and blues, learning about them.”

Kulik and his wife, Suzanne, have two children: a son, age 30, in New York City working as a musician, and a daughter, 27, who’s a first-year student at Tufts Veterinary.

In the latest redistricting, what caused Wendell to be put with more eastern towns?

Elected in 1993, Kulik noted that he has been representing Wendell since 1994, when his district reached eastward to include Wendell and New Salem, Leverett and all the way to Athol at its easternmost end. “Then, in 2002, my district lost Athol but retained Wendell, New Salem and Leverett, and picked up Shutesbury, Pelham, and the northern part of Belchertown, going from 12 to 16 towns,” creating the district that expires at the end of the year.

The shape of his new district, Kulik said, has been driven “by what’s been happening in Berkshire County. It’s been losing population for four decades.” To hold to population requirements, Berkshire districts have generally “had to expand east into Franklin, Hampshire and Hamden Counties.” This time the expansion – in Paul Mark’s Second Berkshire District – for the first time took in Greenfield, large enough in population to equal many Berkshire towns combined. Partly to compensate for Mark’s new “focus” in the east, Kulik’s district was drawn back westward.

“The way the final map comes out, everybody’s a little unhappy about some aspect,” said Kulik. He remarked on the “groundswell of support coming out of Wendell” last year to keep Wendell in his district. “It was noticed. The chair of the redistricting committee said to me, ‘What’s going on in Wendell?’ They took a second look at it, but in order to keep all districts within the numerical requirements, they needed to make the change.”

In the absence of much action from the federal government, are the states dealing satisfactorily with issues like climate change that threaten a livable planet?

“I think we’re doing a lot in Massachusetts and New England,” he said, “but this is global, and Washington is not dealing with it satisfactorily, in my view. We belong to the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative here in Massachusetts, but I believe there needs to be a federal carbon tax, or a cap-and-trade system, in order to get serious about climate change... to wean us off fossil energy. It’s one of the great disappointments I’ve had, the current gridlock in Washington. Money, particularly since Citizens United, can be a corrupting influence, in how it steers policy discussions... If the states get serious

enough, they can make a difference.

“Green Communities,” he added, referring to the state’s energy outreach to towns, “has been sort of a grassroots-type of effort. It empowers communities to do energy planning, energy conservation. This summer you could see that the communities rewarded with Green Communities designation were heavily tilted to Western Massachusetts.”

What about grassroots, the local level?

“I agree: the grassroots is where things come from. The state is there to support initiatives coming from communities.”

Did it feel audacious to ask the legislature to let Wendell write its own bylaws around housing and health and sanitation?

“In my mind [the home rule bill for Wendell] was extremely appropriate,” Kulik said. “It was a very Wendell kind of thing to happen. I don’t think there are many communities in the state that would do it. Simple living is an area that state government’s been lagging in, that they’ve been largely unaware of. I was really happy to help out on it.

“Wendell is ahead of the curve on this. What will result – a changed state policy through the regulations – will be taken advantage of by many people in lots of communities, and it will have been directly spurred by Wendell asking its legislator to file this bill. It’s the fire that got the Department of Public Health’s attention.” The DPH last April indicated its intent to create an alternative housing category to enable simpler, lower-energy living than is currently allowed. “Once it’s resolved,” Kulik said, “I think there are a lot of people in Western Massachusetts who will embrace the freedom to live alternatively, more simply and energy efficiently, in an environmentally conscious way.”

When he was told about the compliments from Sen. Rosenberg, Kulik said, “I love working with Stan. We generally see eye to eye on things. I’m glad he’ll continue to represent you, and I think Denise Andrews will work hard to serve you well. And I’m touched that people in these communities want to say good-bye. You never get disengaged with the towns you’ve represented. I’ll always be interested, always be an unofficial second state representative.”



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West Along the River

The December Journals 2012

By DAVID BRULE

December 1. Time to be getting in the wood. The snow falls softly and white, right on cue for this first day of December. Whiteness in the dun woods, faint and soft sound of the crystals on the brown leaves, leaving the smell of snow in the air. The morning is full of promise, and I'm looking forward to the simple chores that reaffirm existence.

Out to the woods, a walk along the Paquag, known now to us as the Millers River, given an English name after being known to the indigenous people by that other name for a mere 12,000 years. I'll be checking first on the beaver's progress. He's stashing branches into the shallow water along the shore, stems down into the sand, tops up, so that he can munch safely when ice covers all. He and his family are even rooting up the patch of invasive Japanese knotweed tubers. This is an encouraging sign, an ancient indigenous species adapting to an intruder, and happily for us, ridding us of 50 square feet of cursed foreign bamboo that's crowding out our native plants.

Gather wood, chop wood, stack wood. Beaver and I have more than a few things in common. We both take our time, and are nicely rewarded for our efforts. Quite a pleasant December chore, if I do say so. We have more downed oak in our woods than ever to harvest. Deeply satisfying it is to gather up that windfall, aptly named, and probably the original meaning of the expression, for what else are these limbs scattered about but something the wind has knocked down, a true windfall, and fallen for

our unexpected profit?

Sure enough, there's money hoarded all year to buy fuel oil from the local robber barons: modest sums made by playing in the band these past 12 months. It pleases me to think I've got more than a little in common with old Uncle Billy, who lived in this house, and like me, made pocket money playing with his band for dances at the Redmen's Hall, back in 1910.

You think about things like that when you're getting in the wood, working at your own pace of a snowy December morning.

Are there many of us anymore, who do such things partly for enjoyment, and partly out of Yankee thrift? I chuckle to myself thinking about long-time neighbor Walter Carlisle, village personality, who like me, loves his woodpile. Sawing, spitting, hauling day after day, we've moved the equivalent of an Egyptian pyramid over our lifetimes. Walter's longtime helper, Monsieur Vincent, hardy *Québécois* woodsman, worked on that pile until the day he died, literally, top-



Illustration by Louis Agassiz Fuertes

pling over onto the waiting logs that one winter's day, years ago. Figure that's maybe what'll happen to me too one day, maybe along with Walter! Could be worse ways to go!

December 5. The tug of war between the seasons has been going on all week on the battleground that is December. Sometimes winter has the upper hand, only to be pushed back by autumn and summer. But we know who will win out over the next three months.

Sixty degrees today melted any snow and have even brought out a few clouds of mosquitoes hovering and swarming over what remains of the leaf-clogged frog pond.

Just when we thought we had seen everything that could occur in this backyard, this day something most unusual occurred, a tempest in a bird's teacup.

Tinny-sounding alarm calls reached our kitchen from the deck outside the door. We raced out to see a distraught white-breasted nuthatch crouching on the boards, bombarded by another furious nuthatch, hell-bent on knocking the living daylight out of his clans-

man.

Nuthatches are those stubby little black-and-white birds that have always reminded me of a small tobacco pipe that the Breton sailors call a *brûle-gueule* (a "burn-your-snout"). This stubby pipe stays lit in stormy weather, but is so short that the lit bowl could burn the tip of your nose or your face! Nuthatch looks just like

that, at least to me. Now, our little bird is usually seen circling head-first down the tree trunks, but this day he was being pecked to within an inch of his life. With Monique stepping in to protect the downed bird, I dashed off to the closet to get the shoebox, which usually serves as a recovery room for stunned or drunk birds.

Indeed, it once served that purpose for a beautiful chocolate-colored wood thrush who needed to sleep it off in the darkness and safety of the shoebox, after carousing on fermented crabapples and sailing inebriated into the kitchen window!

So just as I was going to pick up the distraught bird, who was weighing his options that included choosing between my hand or his attacker with murder on his mind, the assailant flew in for another assault, within inches of my hand. That was one angry nuthatch! Don't know what the downed bird had said to him, but he was going to teach him a lesson, or kill him, whichever came first.

I popped the victim into the

shoebox slammer, placing him in protective custody, until he could collect his thoughts. The attacker moved off to a nearby tree, still piping his tin-horned voice full of nuthatch threats and insults.

A quarter of an hour later, as dusk was falling, I opened the box near a sheltering pine, and the badly shaken bird flew out. He sat on a low branch for a long time, probably reflecting on his sins, or just thanking his lucky stars he'd live another day to spend whacking open his favorite sunflower seeds. We had never seen such aggression among our birds, especially in the winter season. When it's spring or summer, birds court and defend their territories, and there's plenty of fighting. But never in the winter.

That was one angry nuthatch!

December 11. Where, oh, where is winter? Chime the Christmas bells of my mind. Soon enough, soon enough, be careful of what you wish for, drone the more wise voices. But I'm one of those characters, more and more rare these days, who really needs the nip in the air this time of year. I long for the cold slap across the face and nose, the freezing breath ballooning up over my head, all that helps sharpen the thinking on a good cold winter morning.

Christmas is coming fast, the tree is trimmed, the season's bright lights are up, the bird feeders stocked, snow tires and four-wheel drive ready to go. Some of us catch ourselves looking longingly at the skis and snowshoes loafing idly by the back door. The 12-year-old in me finds myself looking woefully out the window, up into the unyielding gray sky.

Squirrels are ready, they've packed on the fat, looking prosperous, plump, and self-satisfied like London City merchants out of Charles Dickens. Skunks and opossums still wander around in the midnight mildness when they should be sleeping in deep winter torpor somewhere cozy.

Thoreau said the other day (or was it his journal entry for Dec 11, 1856): "That grand old poem called Winter has come round again." Well, not yet, not for us in 2012. I must satisfy myself with poems about winter found in a book. Then I'll go to the living room to give the snow globe a shake, just to watch the floating flakes settle on the birches within.

Soon enough, soon enough.

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NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD

Emergency Management Director Candidates Interviewed

By KATIE NOLAN

James Hackett and Philip Wonkka interviewed with the Erving selectboard for the emergency management director position Monday, Dec. 10. Hackett, of High Street, was formerly a member of the Erving police department and is also a former selectboard member. Wonkka, of Moore Street, is currently deputy chief in the Erving Fire Department.

Both candidates were asked to describe their view of the EMD responsibilities. Hackett mentioned “oversight” and “delegation” and said, in the case of a natural disaster, the EMD would be the incident commander unless it was necessary for a larger agency, such as the Federal or Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (FEMA or MEMA) to take over, in which case the EMD would be the town’s liaison to the agency. Wonkka said that, while the EMD can be incident commander during an emergency, he is more likely to be working as a facilitator with FEMA or MEMA.

Asked about potential conflicts with other work and obligations, Hackett said, “I have no conflicts at this time.” Wonkka said, “I don’t feel I have any.” Wonkka continued that, in an emergency, other fire department officers could fill in for his fire responsibilities.

Asked what he would first do if hired, Hackett said he would inventory

supplies and equipment, set up an emergency operations center (EOC) and confer with current interim EMD and police chief Chris Blair and deputy EMD Laura Conway. Wonkka said he would “look at what we have now” and work on the town’s comprehensive emergency management plan. As for the EOC, Wonkka said, “I would push

Erving candidates James Hackett and Philip Wonkka offer differing views on emergency management responsibilities.

that, there needs to be one.” Assistant assessor Jacqueline Boyden asked both candidates about their ability to work with FEMA and MEMA paper work. Hackett replied that he was sure he could handle it because he works with contractor paper work on a weekly basis in his current job managing maintenance at the former Northfield Mount Herman School campus. Wonkka said he had looked up FEMA forms online and felt he could work with them. He said, “We stumbled with that during the last incident,” but felt that the town could be better at documentation in the future.

The selectboard did not select a new EMD at their Dec. 10 meeting. Town

administrator Tom Sharp speculated that they would make the selection at their next meeting, Dec. 17.

The selectboard signed a five-town agreement on sharing insurance costs for Union #28 employees and retirees. Erving was the third town, after Leverett and Shutesbury, to sign the agreement. Shutesbury town administrator Becky Torres told the selectboard that she had attended the Dec. 6 Swift River (New Salem/Wendell) school committee meeting, where members asked for language changes to the agreement specifying how to determine the towns’ share in the event that U28 dissolves.

Torres said that the unrevised agreement already addresses that issue. The Erving selectboard signed the unrevised agreement. Selectboard member Margaret Sullivan thanked Torres for her “time and effort” in getting the agreement written.

It was reported that Mackensy Bailey had resigned from the school committee and from the school regionalization planning committee.

The selectboard also noted that Dennis Wonsey had resigned from the finance committee. Because Winniphred Stone also resigned from the FinCom recently, and there is a long-term vacancy on that committee, the two remaining members do not constitute a quorum and cannot meet to work on the fiscal year 2014 budget.

meaningful difference.”

The Tufts Health Plan Foundation is currently focusing on healthy aging to help meet the challenges of an aging society.

Through grants in three areas – health & wellness, purposeful engagement and empowerment – the foundation seeks to fund programs that will elevate the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of older adults; enable them to contribute their experiences and knowledge to their communities; and ultimately help older adults live healthier lives.

The foundation will also work more closely with a select group of grantees on capacity-building strategies.

Franklin County Home Care Corporation Among Recipients of Tufts Health Plan Foundation Grant

WATERTOWN, MA – The Tufts Health Plan Foundation announced last week nearly \$1 million in new funding to 31 Massachusetts and Rhode Island-based organizations as part of its second cycle of funding for 2012.

Included in the grants is the Franklin County Home Care Corporation, which received \$65,000 to fund its Take Steps to Healthy Aging program.

Now in its third year of funding, the program will continue to train leaders and offer participant workshops in four evidence-based areas – Stanford’s Chronic Disease Self-Management, Healthy Eating, Keep Moving and Matter of

Balance – as well as expand into three new areas: Diabetes Self-Management, Powerful Tools for Caregivers and Fit for Your Life.

“This is a critical time for healthy aging programs as the population of older adults rises exponentially and, as a result, more family and friends are devoting their time to informal caregiving,” said David Abelman, Tufts Health Plan Foundation president.

“Our grantees are doing outstanding work in their communities through a wide variety of programs that improve the lives of older adults. It is an honor to stand by their side as we work together to make a

NOTES FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD MEETING

Idoine Announces He Will Step Down From Finance Committee

By JOSH HEINEMANN

Finance committee chair Michael Idoine announced at the Dec. 5 Wendell selectboard meeting that he plans to retire as chair and member of the FinCom as of June 2013. He has served on the FinCom since 2003, when he replaced Dan Keller, who had just been elected to the selectboard. Together with Jim Slavas, he deciphered the arcane formulas by which the state determines a town’s obligation to its regional high school, and why Wendell is assessed over \$9,000 per student at Mahar High School, while Orange, with similar income and property values and indicators, pays under \$6,000.

In that time he and Slavas met with the Mahar school committee again and again to try for a more equitable approach to school finance, but without success. He said the problem is not as much with Orange as with the state, the state’s finances and the way the state distributes education aid.

Working with Slavas, Idoine oversaw the financing and construction of the new library, town office building, water system and the septic system that serves the town buildings. Recently, following the recommendations of the state Department of Revenue, the FinCom has made an effort to get all of the town’s spending settled at the annual town meeting, and avoid as much as possible authorizations through the year at special town meetings, an approach that gives the assessors a moving target as they try to set the tax rate.

During his tenure on the FinCom the process of setting a budget has become more organized and more computerized. Idoine is looking to add new people to the FinCom, especially

younger people and women. He added that the state has decreased aid to towns by 30 percent in the last six years, and the town, although in better financial shape than many other towns, will have to make difficult decisions starting this year. At the same time, people are facing the same crunches at home that the towns, the states and the federal government are facing.

Selectboard member Geoffrey Pooser said he is making an effort to recruit people for town boards. Selectboard chair Christine Heard asked him what he tells them, and Pooser said, “I just lie.” The handbook says boards should be made up of ordinary citizens, “even a housewife.”

Idoine is retiring to free up time to focus on his home and land, including his sawmill business.

Heard and selectboard member Dan Keller met on Dec. 1 at the town hall to look at the layout of the kitchen and the outside of the building to address issues that the next door neighbor, Martha Senn, has with screening and trespassing. Pooser suggested that perhaps Senn could share some of the cost of screening the arborvitae and the fence she asked for at the regular meeting Nov. 21.

But Heard said that the cost of the fence is minimal, and the town should just put it in place; it would make sense for the town to buy a six-foot strip of land from Senn in the back of the building.

Keller added that Senn has already started the screening process by planting several arborvitae, and that the town could just start mending fences by continuing the visual screen. For now the town will give Senn two-week written notice for any work done on the back of the building, except for

emergencies, and will assume liability for workers injured there.

The selectboard received a report that the town hall generator wiring was reconfigured so that it provides electricity to the freezers as well as to the furnace and lights. That work is a good accomplishment, but board members felt that it should have received authorization from the proper authority. Keller said that the electrician who installed the generators originally received no guidance for what needed to be connected and so followed his own best judgment.

Following the recommendation of the planning board, the selectboard appointed Sarah Wells to the planning board. Wells has been coming to planning board meetings and is willing to become an active member.

Firefighter Alia Kusmaul asked about planting trees in the new cemetery on New Salem road, and board members said she should speak with the cemetery commission.

It was announced that the former microwave tower on Locke Hill Road is finally down.

Poets Wanted!

to submit original poems. Please email: reporter-poems@montaguema.net 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, as a poet.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE WENDELL POLICE LOG

Tools and China Set Stolen; Fireworks and Gunshots Heard

Tuesday, 10/23

2:30 p.m. Breaking and entering at barn at Wendell Depot. Tools and china set taken.

Thursday, 10/25

6:45 a.m. Two-car accident in center. No injuries.

Thursday, 10/25

8:12 p.m. Medical emergency/death on Old Stage Road. CPAC called to investigate.

Tuesday, 10/30

2:08 p.m. Jennison Road resident reported her debit card charged by overseas company.

Wednesday, 10/31

1:16 p.m. Davis Turn resident reported hitting a deer on Montague Road. No injuries.

Friday, 11/02

9:25 p.m. Report of fireworks/gun shots on Old Stage Road. Told to

cease.

Monday, 11/05

2 p.m. Cemetery commissioner reported lock cut off equipment trailer at highway department garage. Nothing taken.

Friday, 11/16

7:41 p.m. Report from Shelburne control of a hysterical woman, possibly suicidal, at the depot railroad crossing park-

ing area. Located and transported to Franklin Medical Center for evaluation.

Tuesday, 11/27

1:30 p.m. Motor vehicle accident on Montague Road. No injuries.

Wednesday, 11/28

8:20 p.m. Motor vehicle accident on Lockes Village Road. Driver gone on arrival, vehicle towed.

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NOTES FROM THE GILL SELECTBOARD MEETING**Board Reviews FY 2014 Budget Projections**

By P.H. CROSBY

In a switch from their usual time and day due to scheduling conflicts, the Gill selectboard met Tuesday, Dec. 4, with two members physically present and a third participating by speaker phone from Florida. Administrative assistant Ray Purington began with project updates, which included continuing investigation of minor problems with the new boiler at the safety complex.

A noisy fan in the meeting room needs to be addressed. The cause may be a bad motor.

Six bids for work on the town hall roof were opened Nov. 28. Low bidder was RDI Roofing LLP in Southampton at \$52,780. The board is still in the process of reviewing references, but is cheered by the fact that the bid came in under budget. The roof color will be determined with the help of the historical commission, which is reviewing the choices.

Gill's FY 2013 tax rate has now been set. The hearing was held two weeks ago, and the Department of Revenue has now set a rate of \$15.34 on a thousand.

The board has submitted Montague resident Chris Boutwell's name as Gill's representative for GMRSD collective bargaining negotiations. Boutwell is willing to represent both Gill and Montague, assuming the school district accepts this arrangement.

The Green Communities grant contract is ready to be signed. The town can get to work spending the \$139,900 on planned projects as soon as the signed contract comes back from the state. The energy commission, including Janet Masucci, who was present, was again congratulated.

Next Purington shared FY 2014 initial revenue projections, "which don't look very promising." The state is already projecting a 1 percent cut in state aid in the current year, due to lower-than-expected revenues.

That means a reduction of about \$2,340 for Gill, which Purington thinks can be squeezed out of this year's budget without too much trouble. "As long as this is the only cut," Purington added, "and the cuts don't

keep coming and coming like they did in 2008."

What Gill still doesn't know about FY 2014 projections is how much free cash the town will have. The town accountant will turn attention to that estimate next. Purington's overall recommendation regarding planning for FY 2014 was to ask town departments for level-funded budgets, but to ask them to prepare a level-service budget at the same time, just to get a picture of what's really needed.

Ann Banash suggested the reverse. "I'd rather see what they feel they really need, then let them know if they need to cut back." Board members agreed that last year's process of detailed, department-by-department budget planning with the board had helped everyone develop a common understanding of departmental needs that should help make the process smoother this year.

With regard to other projections, Purington noted that the Solid Waste Management District (SWMD) is projecting an increase in Gill's assessment from \$3,321 to \$3,631 not quite 10%. The District would like to put its director back to full-time next year instead of 80 percent time.

Banash felt a 10 percent increase was a lot to ask. "We can't increase our town departments by 10 percent. I think we should send a letter saying it's too much."

Purington noted the SWMD has actually reduced its total budget by 3 percent. It is only Gill's fair-share assessment that has gone up. He suggested board members study the details of the Solid Waste Management District's budget before

responding.

Board members acknowledged the receipt of a \$500 grant via the Solid Waste Management District; this will be used for new recycling bins and office products. John Ward noted the irony of balking at a \$300 increase in the SWMD assessment when they "just earned us a \$500 grant, especially when the increase will be used to increase a highly-effective staff person's time by 20 percent."

Randy Crochier granted the point. "That woman [SWMD Program Coordinator Amy Donovan] walks on water," he said.

Sewer bills will be sent out soon, the first ones with the new and higher rate. A hearing was held, and board members think people understand the increase was necessary and overdue. Ten real estate liens have also been issued for unpaid sewer use charges totaling \$4403.43.

In a final item, the Board reviewed a letter from Paul Marguet on the subject of a potential hybrid cruiser purchase. Marguet is a police officer in Northampton and a resident (and past police officer) in Gill. He doesn't feel the Ford Fusion being considered by Gill provides sufficient space for a policeman and all the equipment he needs to wear and carry, as well as any passengers that need to be transported.

Ward asked, "But is there any vehicle that fits our budget that can carry everything they feel needs to be carried?" Banash stated that she needed "to see a visual," that board members should have "a dog-and-pony show" to see exactly how well the vehicle can serve space needs.

French King Bridge Death**Office of Northwestern District Attorney Statement**

Erving police responded to a 911 call on Monday, Dec. 10, reporting a male subject climbing over the railing of the French King Bridge in the towns of Erving and Gill. Upon arriving at the scene, police observed a body floating in the water downstream from the bridge. Montague Fire personnel recovered the body of Henry Cohen, age 60, of West Springfield, from the Connecticut River by 1:15 p.m. Cohen is presumed to have jumped from the bridge prior to the arrival of Erving police. The incident remains under investigation by the Erving Police and the Massachusetts State Police assigned to the Northwestern District Attorney's Office.

NOTES FROM THE MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD MEETING**American Battlefield Protection Grant Nears Final Vote**

By PETER KOBEL

After postponing discussion of an American Battlefield Protection grant application to the National Park Service for several weeks, it was taken up again at the Montague selectboard meeting on Monday, Dec. 10. Frank Abbondanzio, town administrator, reported that the application is nearly done and will be completed for final approval by the selectboard next week. The application is due January 17, 2013.

The application is for a federal grant in the range of \$30,000 to \$40,000. It would fund research on a 1676 battle that took place between colonial militia and Native Americans of several tribes in a village on the Gill side of the Connecticut River during Metacom's Rebellion, also known as King Philip's War. If the grant is awarded, research could begin this summer.

Abbondanzio said that the research grant could lead to increased "historical tourism" in the area and could benefit Montague financially. Abbondanzio has previously described the possibility of a Native American heritage center being established in the region, and, he said, the

research grant would put Turners Falls in a good position to host such a center. Selectboard member Pat Allen spoke enthusiastically about synergistic possibilities in working with the Great Falls Discovery Center and Historic Deerfield.

Earlier in the fall, however, selectboard member Mark Fairbrother vehemently opposed approving the grant, and he remained silent during the discussion.

Sally Pick gave a glowing report on the Solarize Montague program. In the spring, the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center announced that it had selected Montague as one of 17 cities and towns for Solarize Massachusetts, which offered reduced-cost solar electric systems (or photovoltaics) to Montague residents and businesses.

Pick, a member of the Montague energy committee who spearheaded the program, said that 37 households have contracted for photovoltaic systems (42 signed up initially, but 5 dropped out). Seven systems have been installed, and four more are currently being installed. The others are still going through the permitting process.

"I was so impressed by

the enthusiasm of Montague residents for getting solar through the Solarize program," Pick, said after the meeting. "Over the coming year, it will be fun to see all of the installations go up throughout our town. It would not surprise me if many more people got solar in the next few years after seeing it on other houses in their neighborhood and realizing that it's becoming the norm."

It is unclear if the state program will be continued, or if Montague might get more funding.

In other actions, the selectboard voted to appropriate \$7,500 from the Community Development Discretionary Account (CDDA) to Turners Falls RiverCulture for the first six months of 2013. The board also approved a request from the Department of Public Works for \$1,000 from the CDDA to do a feasibility study on a landfill, to determine if a garage could be sited there.

Tom Bergeron, DPW superintendent, proposed that his department's employees be permitted to continue working a four-day work week for the winter months. The board approved the four-day work week until April.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG**Sick Raccoons and Loose Cows****Tuesday, 11/27**

7:35 a.m. Alarm sounded at Mount Hermon School; checked OK.

8:55 a.m. Assisted Williamsburg Police with stolen street signs investigation.

11:10 a.m. Court process served to party on Main Road.

3:20 p.m. Neighbor complaint on Main Road; officer mediated dispute.

Thursday, 11/29
9:20 a.m. Sick raccoon at West Gill Road residence.

Friday, 11/30
12:00 Suspicious person on Highland Avenue under false pretense of Chimney Sweep Business.

6:15 p.m. Court Process served to resident on Center Road.

7:50 p.m. Harassment Prevention order served to resident on West Gill

Road.

Saturday, 12/1

9:10 a.m. Motor vehicle accident on Ben Hale Road.

Sunday, 12/2

7:00 p.m. Motor vehicle accident on Route 2 at the Wagon Wheel Restaurant.

7:45 p.m. Cows loose on Main Road.

Monday, 12/3

7:20 a.m. Welfare check of elderly resident on West Gill Road; problems with home phone.

Tuesday, 12/4

7:55 a.m. Assisted resident on Barney Hale Road with Firearms issue.

8:10 a.m. Harassment prevention order issued to party on North Cross Road.

1:10 p.m. Court process issued to party on Mountain Road.

1:40 p.m. Mailbox vandal-

ism on Center Road.

4:05 p.m. Tractor trailer unit causing traffic problem at the Gill Montague Bridge.

Wednesday, 12/5

6:50 a.m. Resident of Boyle Road complained of firearms issue regarding a resident on North Cross Road; under investigation.

12:20 p.m. Department of Children and Families complaint of residence on Dole Road; under investigation.

5:15 p.m. Court process issued to resident on Mountain Road.

Thursday, 12/6

9:15 a.m. Sick skunk at residence on West Gill Road.

12:20 p.m. Harassment prevention order issued for party at 1 Lamplighter Drive.

Friday, 12/7

11:05 a.m. Mountain

Road resident reported neighborhood issues with youths shooting BB guns.

12:00 p.m. Boat blocking intersection of Mountain Road and Main Road; owner spoken to.

3:45 p.m. Spoke with resident on North Cross Road regarding firearms issue.

Sunday, 12/9
11:50 a.m. Alarm sounded at residence on Barney Hale Road; checked OK.

3:45 p.m. Loose dog on Main Road from Munns Ferry Road.

4:15 p.m. Male person going to jump off French King Bridge; no one located.

4:50 p.m. Disabled motor vehicle on Main Road on bad corner; assisted until removed by AAA.

5:45 p.m. Responded to Bernardston for reported suicidal party with a knife.

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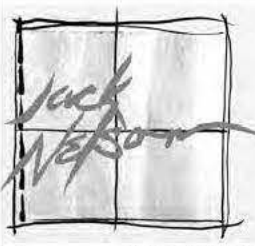
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Richard Andersen Wins Teaching Award



Relaxing at the Shakespeare & Company bookstore in Paris, Andersen finds time for his Montague Reporter.

By DIX McCOMAS

AMHERST — Richard Andersen, a writing and literature professor at Springfield College, recently won his college's first

annual "Excellence in Teaching" Award.

What pleases Richard most about the award is that it comes from the students. It is based entirely on their enthusiasm. They

nominate the candidates, and their evaluations determine the recipients. "I don't think of myself as a best teacher," Richard says. "I do think of myself as someone who cares, and there are many of us at the School of Human Services."

The School of Human Services at Springfield College is an accelerated program for adults in the human services field who've discovered they can't advance in their careers without a college degree: "What our students have overcome just to be sitting in those classrooms humbles any of my accomplishments and those of any faculty people I know."

And Richard's accomplishments are considerable. He earned his Ph.D. at New York University in 1977, and after a four-year stint at Boston University, won a Fulbright Professorship in Norway as well as a Karolyi Foundation Fellowship in France. He returned from Europe in 1985 to serve as the first James Thurber Writer in Residence at Ohio State University.

Among Richard's other firsts are books written on the works of William Goldman, screenwriter of such classics as *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, *All the President's Men*, and *The Princess Bride*; the metafictionist Robert Coover; and the Puerto Rican literary star Abraham Rodriguez. His other critical studies include books on Pulitzer-winner Arthur Miller,

Nobel laureate Toni Morrison, and two of Shakespeare's plays: *Richard III* and *Macbeth*.

But Richard doesn't limit himself to academic subjects. His 25 published books include several on writing; three historical fictions (one tells the story of the Massachusetts 54th, the first free black regiment to fight in America's Civil War); a book on success skills that's been translated into three languages; a biography of Michael and Catherine Karolyi (Hungarian aristocrats who helped overthrow the Hapsburg monarchy and established Eastern Europe's first democratic government in 1918); and a personal examination of contemporary education entitled *Arranging Deck Chairs on the Titanic*.

Richard's first children's book, *A Homerun for Bunny*, will be published in 2013. It recounts the story of Bunny Taliaferro, an African-American kid who was banned in 1934 from playing in an American Legion regional baseball tournament. The only black player on a team from Springfield, Massachusetts, Bunny became the object of racist threats when his team arrived in Gastonia, North Carolina.

Richard fleshes out the story: "The players on Bunny's team were given a choice. They could play without Bunny, or they could withdraw from the tournament. They voted unanimously and without debate to return to return to Springfield, where they were greet-

ed as heroes. Thirteen years before anyone ever heard of Jackie Robinson, these fifteen- and sixteen-year-old kids took a stand for their friend and against racism."

If you get the idea from the books Richard has written that he is fond of subversive activity, you already have some idea of his approach to teaching. His critical studies, novels, and even the children's book mirror the kind of positive self-directed rebellion that Richard seeks to inspire in his classes. When I asked what gives him the greatest pleasure as a teacher, Richard says, "I love following the impulse of the class. When you do this, it may seem as if my plans for the day are unraveling because I don't often know where the discussions will lead. But then something magical happens and you're into it and, almost without knowing how, everything falls into a place that's better than any you could have planned. I've learned to trust our students."

That Richard's students find themselves enlarged by the generosity of his philosophy and practice is clear from the enthusiasm of their accounts that earned him the "Excellence in Teaching" Award. "He is just the kind of professor that an individual who has been out of the classroom setting for quite some time needs," writes one student respondent to the award committee, whose regard for Richard is not unusual. "He is phenomenal in supporting academic success and for developing self-esteem."

Holiday Recycling Guidelines

During the holidays, the average American family throws away up to 10 additional bags of trash! In towns that require "Pay-As-You-Throw" town trash bags, those 10 additional trash bags would cost \$15 to \$30. A large portion of this trash is generated from wrapping paper, boxes, tissue, packing materials and shopping bags. Save money on town trash bags, save money for your town, and be kinder to the earth by recycling or reusing your holiday waste.

The Springfield Materials Recycling Facility, which accepts recyclables from 75 communities in western Massachusetts, asks

residents to keep the following recycling guidelines in mind.

Wrapping and tissue paper are recyclable if they do not contain foil, metallic inks, or glitter. Tape is OK. Paper shopping bags and gift bags are also recyclable, and any type of handle is OK to include. Also recyclable are greeting cards (except those with foil, wire, or glitter), envelopes (plastic windows are OK), catalogs, calendars, corrugated cardboard boxes, and paperboard gift boxes. When opening or wrapping presents, keep paper grocery bags, a paper lawn and leaf bag, or a recycling bin handy to collect mixed paper recyclables.

Please do not include the following items in municipal recycling: ribbons, bows, tinsel, holiday lights, bubble wrap, packing peanuts, polystyrene (Styrofoam), plastic bags, and plastic "blister pack" packaging.

Clean, dry packing materials such as peanuts and bubble wrap, inflatable "air pillow" packaging,

and Styrofoam sheets are accepted free for reuse at The UPS Store, 21 Mohawk Trail, Greenfield: (413) 772-2523.

Holiday lights are not recyclable in the town's municipal recycling because they get wrapped around the sorting equipment at the recycling facility and they cannot be processed there. Holiday light strings are accepted for scrap metal recycling at wTe's Non Ferrous Division (the former Kramer's), 28 Montague City Rd, Greenfield. wTe will pay 40 cents per pound for holiday light strings. Additionally, you can get a coupon for 25% off of HolidayLEDs.com energy efficient holiday lights by mailing in your old light strings for recycling: see www.holidayleds.com/holidayledscom_christmas_light_recycling_program.

For more information, contact: Franklin County Solid Waste District at: (413) 772-2438, or info@franklincountywastedistrict.org.

Erving Sets Special Town Meeting

By KATIE NOLAN

Erving will hold a special town meeting to consider tax and water billing, transfer overlay money, amend the elected official salary funding, and authorize the selectboard to set license and permit fees.

Article 1 would allow the town to consolidate billing for utility charges, fees and property taxes.

Article 2 would transfer money from the 2005 overlay account to the 2009 overlay account. An overlay account is established annually to fund anticipated tax abatements, exemptions and uncollected taxes.

Articles 3 and 4 would amend the funding sources for treasurer,

tax collector and town clerk salaries.

Article 5 would authorize municipal boards that issue licenses, permits or certificates to fix reasonable fees for them. If the special town meeting approves this article, the selectboard will be able to establish dog license fees in accordance with a new state law that requires dog license fees be set not by the dog's gender, but whether or not it is "intact."

Erving currently charges \$3 per year for a license for a male or spayed female dog and \$6 for an unsprayed female, and these amounts are listed in the town bylaws.

The special town meeting will be held Monday, Dec. 17 at 7 p.m. at the Erving Town Hall.

Wendell's COA Film Series Likes It Hot

The Wendell Free Library will screen Billy Wilder's brilliant comedy *Some Like It Hot* (1959) on Sunday, Dec. 16, at 7 p.m. Admission is free.

Musicians Jerry and Joe (Tony Curtis and Jack Lemmon) accidentally witness the St. Valentine's Day Massacre in 1929 Chicago. On the run from the mob, they join an all-girl band traveling to Miami Beach by donning makeup and dresses to hide their identities. Things heat up on the road when they meet Sugar Cane (Marilyn Monroe), the band's ukulele-play-

ing vocalist.

Some Like It Hot is included in both *Time* magazine's and the American Film Institute's lists of 100 Best Movies. It is No. 1 in the AFI's list of 100 Funniest Comedies.

"Wilder's comedy is one of the enduring treasures of the movies, a film of inspiration and meticulous craft, a movie that's about nothing but sex and yet pretends it's about crime and greed," film critic Roger Ebert wrote.

The film screening is presented by the Council on Aging.

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HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE LEVERETT POLICE LOG

Three Outstanding Warrants

Saturday, 12/1 12:41 a.m. Caller reported several mailboxes knocked over on Long Hill Rd. Investigation indicated a vehicle skidded off the road during the snowstorm, knocking down mailboxes, then left the scene. Monday, 12/3 6:07 p.m. Reported fami-	ly disturbance at a North Leverett Rd. residence. Peace restored. Friday, 12/7 11:15 a.m. Medical at a Montague Road residence. Subject transported to Cooley Dickinson Hospital by Amherst Fire Dept. ambulance. Monday, 12/10 1:15 p.m. Reported possi-	ble B&E at a Long Plain Road residence. Entry possibly made, nothing taken. Under investigation. Tuesday, 12/11 6:00 p.m. Arrested [redacted] on three outstanding default warrants for violation of probation.
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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.

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

EVERY THURSDAY

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

Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: Open Mic Night, 9:30 p.m.

EVERY FRIDAY AND SATURDAY

Montague Inn: TNT Karaoke, 8:30 p.m.

ART SHOWS:

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Wendell Free Library, Wendell: A small retrospective of watercolors by former Wendell resident Craig Letourneau. Focuses on New England landscapes, English urban scenes and portraits.

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Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: Paintings by Christine Winship.

LOCAL EVENTS:

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 13

Arts Block Café, Greenfield: WRSI's

Holiday Hootenany with Heather Maloney. 5 to 7 p.m., free.

Leverett Elementary School: LES Chorus Winter Concert. 7 p.m. in the gym.

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: Readings by author David Arfa, "The Life and Times of Herschel of Ostropol: The Greatest Prankster Who Ever Lived." 7 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: DJ Bobby, dance party. 8 to 10:30 p.m.

The Shea Theater, Turners Falls: Movie: *Its a Wonderful Life*. 8:30 p.m. Free.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *The Sweetback Sisters'* Country Christmas Singalong Spectacular. 9 p.m., \$

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 14

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: Animals in Winter. Discover the ways our local wildlife prepare for our long winter months. For children aged 3 to 6 and their parents. 10:30 to 11:30 a.m., free.

Leverett Congregational Church: Leverett Community Chorus Annual Winter Concert. 7:30 p.m., suggested donation.

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: Pamela Means, folk rock jazz, 8 p.m.

Arts Block Café, Greenfield: Erin Harpe & the Delta Swingers, delta blues with a twist. 8 p.m., \$

The Shea Theater, Turners Falls: A Christmas Carol Radio Show. 8 to 10 p.m. \$.

Deja Brew, Wendell: Josh Levangie and the Mud, Blood & Beer Band, singing all your Johnny Cash favorites and more. 9 to 11:30 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Hobson's Razor, reggae/rock/funk. 9:30 p.m., \$

Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: Community Smokes, rock/reggae. 9:30 p.m. to midnight.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 15

Barnes Gallery, Leverett Center: Group exhibit & open studios. Fabulous gifts. 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Stone Soup Café, 339 Main St., Greenfield: Rusty Belle, eclectic acoustic

americana. Lunch, music, and friends. 12 p.m. Sliding scale.

Memorial Hall, Shelburne Falls: Live from the Metropolitan Opera in HD: Verdi's Aida. 12:55 p.m. \$.

Montague Grange: Gender Role Free Contra Dance. Please bring soft-soled non-street shoes to protect the wooden dance floor. 7 to 10 p.m. \$.

Wendell Free Library: Movie screening, *Carnival of Souls* (1962), thriller/horror. 7:30 p.m., free.

The Shea Theater, Turners Falls: A Christmas Carol Radio Show. 8 to 10 p.m. \$.



This Saturday: Rusty Belle grace the community meal at Greenfield's Stone Soup Café with their eclectic, rollicking brand of Americana. 12 noon; sliding scale.

Arts Block Café, Greenfield: Honky Tonk Holiday Ho-Ho-Hoedown with Girl Howdy. 8 p.m., \$

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: Conor Mulroy, bluegrass metal, 8 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: The Wildcat O'Halloran Band, 9 to 11:30 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Rockit Queer, dance party, with DJ Funkadelic Fem. 9:30 p.m., \$

Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: Ultimatum. Classic rock w/new female vocals. 9:30 p.m. to midnight.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 16

Montague Grange: Montague Make and Take Craft Fair. Craft projects for all ages, and homemade refreshments. New this year: mini-terrariums! Benefits local causes. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Arts Block Café, Greenfield: Valley Classics series. Trio Lumiere will perform two Beethoven trios, in honor of his birthday, complemented with trios by Schubert and the modern Argentinian composer Astor Piazzolla. 3 p.m., \$

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Annual Voo Christmas Spectacular. Song, dance, readings. 7 p.m., free.

The Shea Theater, Turners Falls: A Christmas Carol Radio Show. 8 to 10 p.m.

\$.

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

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 18

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Kurtyka Kills Christmas. Annual pageant, film & rock opera. 9 p.m., \$

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 19

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: Play reading, *Rope*. 6:30 p.m., \$

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

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 20

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Half Shaved Jazz, with Larry Klein, Jon Oltman, Seth Hoffsommer, and Dave Bilodeau. 8 p.m., free.

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

Deja Brew, Wendell: The Impossible Side Effects, '60s and '70s rock. 9 to 11:30 p.m.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 21

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: Siobhan Hotaling, folk pop rock, 8 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: End Times Party! Album release show for The Ambiguities. DJ Doomsday, dance party, visuals, fog. Apocalyptic song circle. 9:30 p.m. until the end.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 22

Barnes Gallery, Leverett Center: Group exhibit & open studios. Fabulous gifts. 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Montague Bookmill, Montague Center: Tim Eriksen presents Star in the East: A Concert of Christmas Music. Two shows, 7 p.m. and 9 p.m. Early show is family-friendly: children under twelve free. \$.

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: Eric French, rock blues, 8 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: The Impossible Side Effects, '60s and '70s rock. 9 to 11:30 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Ghost Quartet Reunion Show. 9:30 p.m., free.

Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: Christmas Party with Moose and the Hightops, current and classic hits. 9:30 p.m. to midnight.

Feeding Tube Records, Northampton: Fat Creeps, Zebu!, Potty Mouth. 10 p.m. \$

CALL for ART SUBMISSIONS

Nina's Nook, Turners Falls: "Triple S: Sensual> Sexual> Smul" show in February 2013. Artists may submit up to three works for consideration. Email jpegs to naban@verizon.net, with "SSS" in the subject line, OR mail jpegs on disc to Nina's Nook, 125A Avenue A, Turners Falls MA 01376. Include a non-refundable fee of \$10 (check to Nina's Nook or PayPal to naban@verizon.net) by Jan 20, 2013.

CALL for POETRY SUBMISSIONS

Slate Roof Press, Greenfield: 1st Annual Poetry Chapbook Contest. Winner will become an active member and have a limited-edition, art-quality chapbook published by Slate Roof, a member-run non-profit collaborative. \$20 reading fee, deadline Jan 4, 2013.

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By LESLIE BROWN

It is the longest night and the shortest day. The winter solstice, which starts the journey from the darkness to the light, has been celebrated by many cultures with fire, dance and feasting.

This year the solstice falls on Dec. 21 at 6:12 a.m. This will be the point at which the sun reaches its most southerly declination in the northern hemisphere. South of the equator, the solstice marks the sun's high point and their longest day. The word *solstice* comes from Latin words meaning "sun" and "to stand still."

Ever since we changed the clocks

at the end of October the darkness has increased and the days have shortened. While we can for a bit enjoy more light in the early morning, soon it will be dark at 4 o'clock. For many of us, the sense of body time is so strong that this change of one hour takes a considerable adjustment in body rhythm. Happily, while the winter sun is low, we see it often on winter days, and it helps to cheer the short, cold days.

Over the ages the winter festivals of the solstice stem from our regret for the increasing dark and our longing for the return of the light. Many of today's yuletide traditions began with ancient mid-winter festivities in pre-Christian times. Fire was a symbol of hope and boughs of greenery were gathered to symbolize the eternal cycle of creation.

The ancient Mesopotamians celebrated the new year hoping that their

chief god, Marduk, would be successful in battling the monsters of chaos who brought the dark season. In the extreme northern climates like Scandinavia the sun disappears for great lengths of time. In this ancient land, scouts were sent to the mountain tops to await the return of the light. When they returned home with the news of first light, the villagers celebrated with feasting and bonfires.

Such archeological sites as Stonehenge and Avebury in England and the Newgrange Passage Tomb in Ireland are oriented toward the sun. These incredible structures, which represent unfathomable feats of construction in an age of few tools, are thought to be sites for burial, the time of the body's darkest hour. The Newgrange Passage Tomb is lit only by a single roof box over the entrance. The inside is illuminated

for 17 minutes on the morning of the winter solstice.

Many nations mark this night with a festival of light, celebrating a variety of religious and cultural connections all of which represent the new year to come and the rebirth of the sun. The lighting of candles, torches and bonfires to encourage and welcome the new light come to us from traditions thousands of years old.

You can join two local solstice celebrations and get in the spirit.

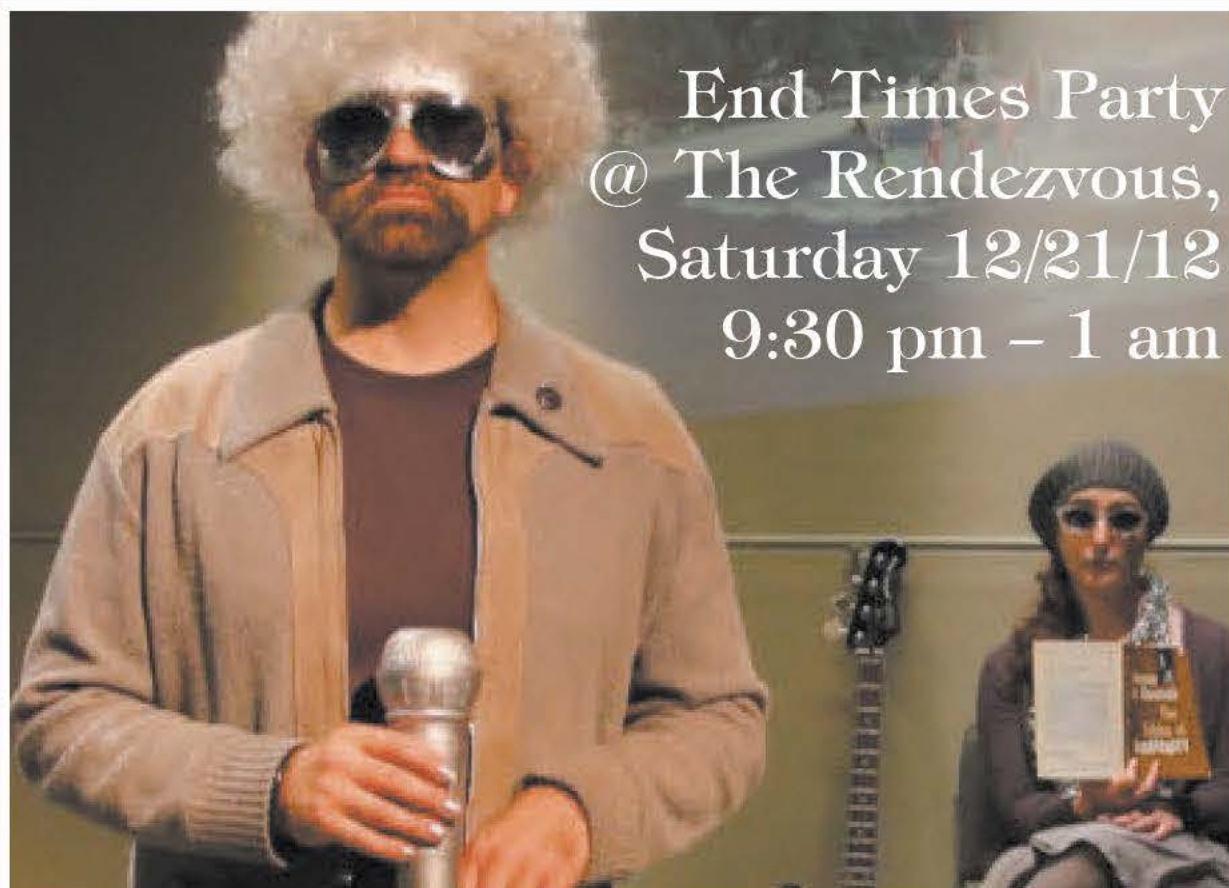
There will be sunrise and sunset gatherings at the UMass-Amherst Sunwheel at 7 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. on Dec. 21. The Sunwheel, an outdoor stone aligned with the rising and setting of the sun at the solstice and equinox, is located south of McGuirk Alumni stadium just off Rocky Hill Road. A \$3 donation is requested.

On Saturday, Dec. 22, at 6:30 p.m. there will be a solstice celebration

with storytelling, music and juggling at the Center for Cultural Evolution, 68 Van Nuys Road, Colrain. Reservations are recommended and can be made by calling (413) 624-5140. The suggested donation is \$10 for adults and \$6 for children. Please bring a canned good for the Franklin Area Survival Center.

In these days of electricity, of television, of the computer and the furnace, we are far away from the early reliance on wood fires, oil lamps and candlelight to keep the dark and cold away. Still, we hang on to the dread of cold and darkness, even playing with the clock to extend the period of light.

Gather friends and family for caroling and the lighting of a tree. Enjoy the light of many candles and have a bonfire in the snow. Listen for the call of the owls. Watch for the beauty of the evening rise of Venus and Orion in the night sky. Enjoy the hearty foods of the winter garden: root vegetables, soups of squash or potato and fresh or aged cider with strong local cheese. Hold the light against the darkness, warm yourself with love and watch for signs of spring.



The ethics of ambiguity: Montague's Ambiguities will headline what just might be the last party in town.

If the world ends on Dec. 21, this is the way you want to go out. The end will begin with an apocalyptic song circle: Abe Loomis, Carrie Ferguson, Daniel Hales, John Crand, and Shawn Goldthwaite will take turns swapping originals and covers on the cheery themes of planetary annihilation, eschatology, epic natural disasters and/or a general sense of impending doom – culminating in a chance to sing along to a few chestnuts of the genre, like "It's

The End of the World as We Know It (and I Feel Fine)."

From there, the bass and beat will get turned up as the Ambiguities celebrate the release of their new hip-hop/indie-rock infused EP, *Everything Rhymes With the End Times*, with a live set.

After that, and until the end of the world, DJ Doomsday and DJ Selah will spin end-timey dance numbers so patrons can shuffle, swing, and shake off this mortal coil together on the dance floor.

Throughout the evening, Thomas Ratte will cultivate the perfect apocalyptic ambience via an alchemical blend of psychedelic lights, visuals, and a good old-fashioned fog machine.

The event's \$3 cover will include a copy of *Everything Rhymes With the End Times* at the door. Partygoers dressed as zombies will be let in free of charge.

There is no money-back guarantee, in the event that the world does not end.

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