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LAKE PLEASANT MILLERS FALLS MONTAGUE CENTER MONTAGUE CITY TURNERS FALLS

The Montague Reporter

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EDITOR@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES FEBRUARY 7, 2013



Landscape architect Peter Flinker facilitates a small-group discussion at Tuesday's event.

Turners Falls Residents Weigh In on Downtown Livability

By CHRISTOPHER SAWYER-LAUCANNO
TURNERS FALLS - About 45 people, most of them residents of Turners Falls, attended the Feb. 5 Downtown Turners Falls Public Planning Workshop on Livability.

is funded by the U.S. Dept of Housing & Urban Development Sustainable Communities Regional Grant Program. Ramsay kicked off the meeting by explaining that the purpose of the workshop was for those who live in Turners to make their views known on how best to achieve greater "livability" in downtown Turners.

all know," he said, "Turners is a great place and we can help you. You've already done so much." He noted that since October the consultants and Ramsay have gathered information on Turners, complete with maps, demographics, measurements, market analyses, photos and interviews with business owners.

see LIVABILITY page 6

A New Regional Elementary School District in the Making?

By JEFF SINGLETON

Should the Leverett and Shutesbury elementary schools join with Amherst and Pelham to form a new regional district? What are the educational and financial implications of such a move? Should the towns create a district for the elementary schools only or join with the existing high school-middle school district that already includes the four towns? On Saturday, Feb. 2 a crowd filled approximately two-thirds of the Amherst Regional Middle School auditorium to hear two reports by consultants hired to address these questions.

regional school district planning board, an entity required by state law for towns that want to study regionalization. Town meetings initially created individual town planning committees and in June, 2012 these joined to create the regional board. The planning board currently includes 12 members, three from each town. Why are these discussions different? "This time, we are hiring experts..." Consultant Malcolm J. Reid, who stressed that he was usually called "Mac," began the educational analysis by describing the key issues the process would need to address. These include governance questions (including the composition of a new regional school committee), buildings (community access, owning versus leasing, where elementary students would attend classes), Wednesday afternoon professional development time, the ownership of existing financial software, bidding for regional transportation services, union contracts (including equalizing wages and health plans) and numerous others. Reid also addressed concerns that have driven the current planning process, particularly the reality of declining see REGIONAL page 5

Help These Kids Help a Friend and Have a Great Time

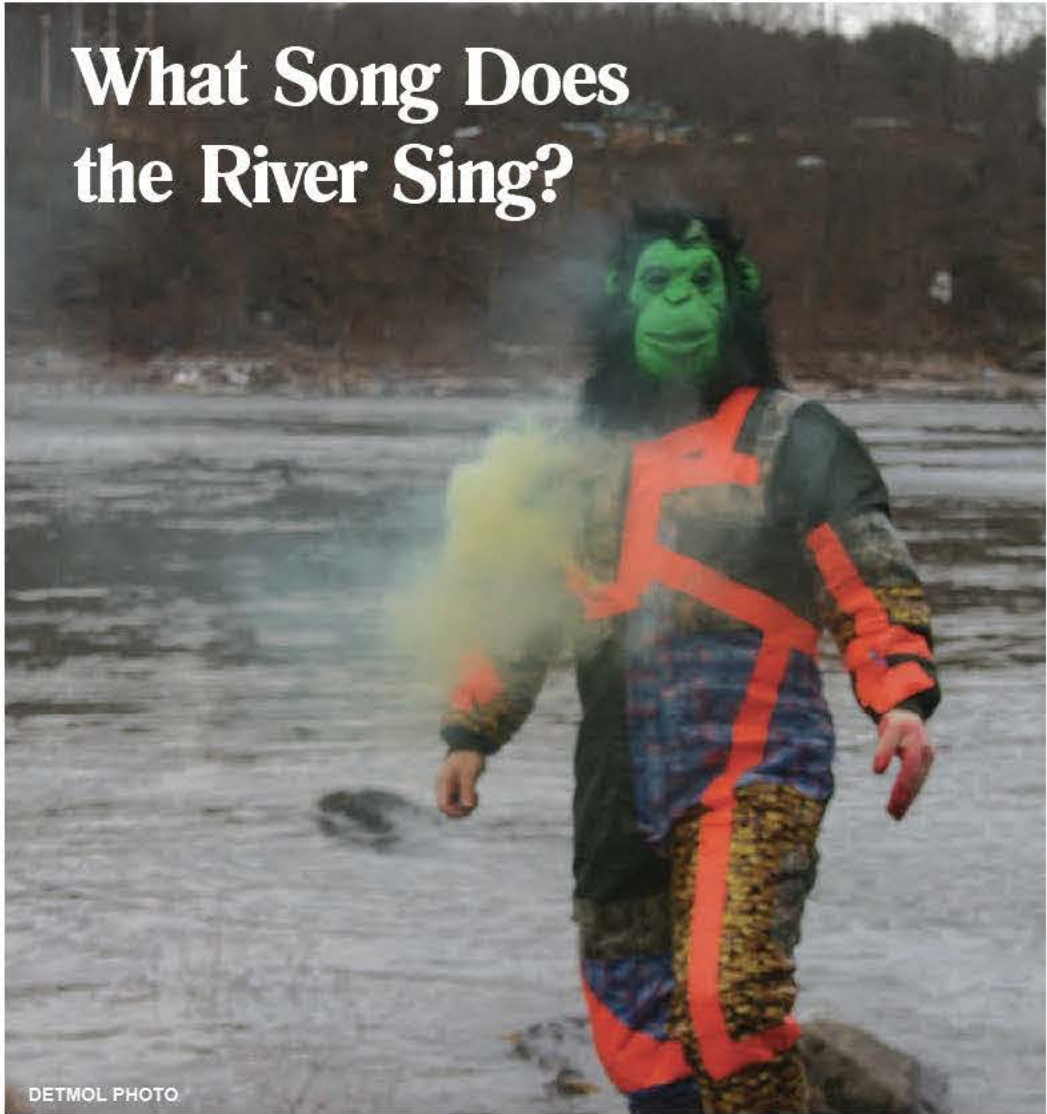


By LEE WICKS

Young people in Montague Center, concerned about a friend's health crises, have organized a benefit variety show. It will be held on Sunday, Feb. 10 at 2 p.m. at the Grange. Admission is \$10 for adults and \$5 for children, and all proceeds will be donated to their friend Parker Beauregard, to help with the ongoing costs of his treatment for Type I Diabetes.

Just days before Halloween, six-year-old Parker Beauregard, who lives in Greenfield, was diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes. He'd seemed tired, but this did not worry his parents at first. After all, he'd just started school. He was thirsty when he came home, but again, this did not seem like cause for concern. Then he began wetting his bed, and it was time to see a doctor. "His regular pediatrician couldn't fit him

in that day. He didn't think it was an emergency, but I knew something was very wrong," said Rebecca Beauregard, Parker's mother. South Deerfield Pediatrics squeezed Parker in, and he ended up spending four hours at the doctor's office undergoing blood and urine tests. He went home with enough insulin to keep his body stable for the night, and spent the following day at see HELP page 7



Torsten Zenas Burns mugs and billows silently at the Noisecapades.

By DAVID DETMOLD

GREAT FALLS - On Saturday, under freezing conditions but considerably more favorable skies than the inaugural Peskeompskut Noisecapades endured in

2011, over 70 noisicians and friends gathered once again on the far side of the power canal - past the collapsing, ice-encrusted foot bridge, the half-burned timber cross lying in a field beside a derelict brick pump house

from some long forgotten mill, now spraypainted with swastikas and "white power" slogans, down the zigzag path to the frozen bank of the Connecticut, in the shadow of the moribund one-lane see SONG page 12

PET OF THE WEEK Nevermore Alone



Lenore

I am a dainty little feline who needs a big dose of "Tender Loving Care". You see, I didn't eat regular meals while I was a stray, so I'm a little under-weight. (I sure am enjoying the good food the nice folks here at Dakin are serving, though.)

I am a very sweet little girl with a lot of love to give. I kinda feel like the "ugly duckling" who, if given the chance, will blossom into the beautiful swan (uh, or cat) that I know I can be! It's hard to see from my photos, but I have very pretty markings of brown and black circles on my back. So please come down to Dakin and see for yourself what a beautiful swan (uh, or cat) I am. I think I may be having an Identity Crisis! See my video: <http://youtu.be/j0Vlo7RF8Mc>
For more information on adopting me, contact the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society at (413) 548-9898 or infor@dvphs.org.

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Great Falls Middle School
Students of the Week

Grade 6
Victoria Veaudry

Grade 7
Paul Vinton

Grade 8
Veronika Sankova
Tommy Bochamnikov

The Montague Reporter

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Wendell Free Library Reading Aloud for Grown-ups

On Wednesday Feb. 13, the Wendell Free Library will host a Reading Aloud for Grown-ups evening program at 7:30 p.m. If you are a fan of NPR's *Selected Shorts*, then this is an evening for you!

Wendell's own Margo Culley and Jonathan von Ranson celebrate the short story by reading selected shorts from their favorite authors. As coincidence would have it, they have each chosen stories by the same Massachusetts author, Edith Pearlman, so we know the stories must be good!

When asked about her selection Culley simply said she made her choice in honor of Valentine's day. She will not reveal the story's title but only said that it is part of an Edith Pearlman collection that won the 2012 National Book Critics Circle Award and was a finalist for the 2011 National Book Award for Fiction.

Von Ranson had a bit more to say about his choice, "After a wonderful splurge of short story sampling in preparation for this event, I have found one with the requisite sex, drugs and natural history. The author

is from our state, the story is set, actually, in Massachusetts but it's exotic because it takes place in a school for girls."

Edith Pearlman has published over 250 works of short fiction and non-fiction in national magazines, literary journals, anthologies, and online publications. Her work has appeared in *Best American Short Stories*, the *O. Henry Prize Collection*, *New Stories from the South*, the *Pushcart Prize Collection*, and *Best of the Small Presses*. Her essays have appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly*, *Smithsonian Magazine*, *Preservation*, *Yankee Magazine* and *Ascent*. However, she is a New Englander by birth and preference. She has two grown children and a grandson.

Admission for the evening is free but donations will be gratefully accepted. There will also be refreshments for purchase. Proceeds from the evening are to benefit both the Wendell and the New Salem Friends of the Library Group. For more information, call the Wendell library at (978) 544-3559.



JESSICA LARKIN ILLUSTRATION

By FRED CICETTI

Q. I have found that I don't sleep as well as I used to when I was younger. How common is this?

Many people believe that poor sleep is a normal part of aging, but it is not. Sleep patterns change as we age, but disturbed sleep and waking up tired every day are not part of normal aging.

Seniors need about the same amount of sleep as younger adults – seven to nine hours a night.

Unfortunately, many older adults don't get the sleep they need, because they often have more trouble falling asleep. A study of adults over 65 found that 13 percent of men and 36 percent of women take over 30 minutes to fall asleep.

Also, older people often sleep less deeply and wake up more often throughout the night, which may be why they nap more often during the daytime.

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. The Meal Site Manager is Kerry Togneri. Meal reservations must be made one day in advance by 11 a.m. All fitness classes are supported by a grant from the Executive Office of Elder Affairs. Donations are accepted. Council on Aging Director is Roberta Potter.

For more information, to make meal reservations, or to sign up for programs call (413) 863-9357. Leave a voice message if the center is not open.

Monday 2/11
9 a.m. Foot Clinic by Appointment
10:10 a.m. Aerobics
10:45 a.m. Chair Exercise
1 p.m. Knitting Circle
Tuesday 2/12
9:30 a.m. Chair Yoga
1 p.m. Love Songs Concert
Wednesday 2/13
9 a.m. Foot Clinic by Appointment
10 a.m. Aerobics
11:15 a.m. Friends' Meeting
12:45 p.m. Bingo
Thursday 2/14
9 a.m. Tai Chi
10 a.m. Coffee & Conversation
1 p.m. Pitch

THE HEALTHY GEEZER:

Good Night, Sleep Tight

Nighttime sleep schedules may change with age too. Many older adults tend to get sleepier earlier in the evening and awaken earlier in the morning.

Here are some pointers to help you get better sleep:

Try to go to bed and rise at the same time every day, even on weekends. Sticking to a regular bedtime and wake time schedule helps keep you in sync with your body's circadian clock, a 24-hour internal rhythm, affected by sunlight.

Try not to nap too much during the day – you may be less sleepy at night.

Try to exercise at regular times each day. Exercising regularly improves the quality of your nighttime sleep and helps you sleep more soundly. Try to finish your workout at least three hours before bedtime.

Try to get some natural afternoon light in each day.

Be careful about what you eat. Don't drink beverages with caffeine late in the day. Caffeine is a stimulant and can keep you awake. Also, if you like a snack before bed, a warm beverage and a few crackers may help.

Don't drink alcohol or smoke cigarettes to help you sleep. Even small

amounts of alcohol can make it harder to stay asleep. Smoking is dangerous for many reasons, including the hazard of falling asleep with a lit cigarette. Also, the nicotine in cigarettes is a stimulant.

Create a safe and comfortable place to sleep. Make sure there are locks on all doors and smoke alarms on each floor. A lamp that's easy to turn on and a phone by your bed may be helpful. The room should be dark, well ventilated, and as quiet as possible.

Develop a bedtime routine. Do the same things each night to tell your body that it's time to wind down. Some people watch the evening news, read a book, or soak in a warm bath.

Use your bedroom for sleeping, not daytime activities. After turning off the light, give yourself about 15 minutes to fall asleep. If you are still awake and not drowsy, get out of bed. When you get sleepy, go back to bed.

If anxiety is keeping you awake, get up and write down a list of everything you need to do in the morning. Then put your mental list and your body to rest.

Try not to worry about your sleep. Some people find that playing men-

SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES – February 11th - 15th

Friday 2/15
10 a.m. Aerobics
1 p.m. Writing Group

ERVING

Erving Senior Center, 1 Care Drive, Erving, is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. for activities and congregate meals. Lunch is at 11:30 a.m., with reservations required 24 hours in advance. Call Mealsite Manager Rebecca Meuse at (413) 423-3308, for meal information and reservations. For information, call Polly Kiely, Senior Center Director, at (413) 423-3649. Transportation can be provided for meals, shopping, or medical necessity. Call the Center to confirm activities, schedule a ride, or find out when is the next blood pressure clinic.

Flu Clinic – Call the Senior Center at (413) 423-3649 to find out when the next flu clinic will be held. This clinic is free to Erving residents, sponsored by the Erving Board of Health and available on a walk-in basis. The shot is recommended for those over 55, those who work with children or the elderly, and those with chronic illness. Pneumonia shots will also be available for those over 60 who have never been vaccinated.

Telephone Reassurance – Phone calls every morning for seniors who want someone to check in

on them.

Shopping Trips – Thursday afternoon alternating from Turners Falls to Orange.

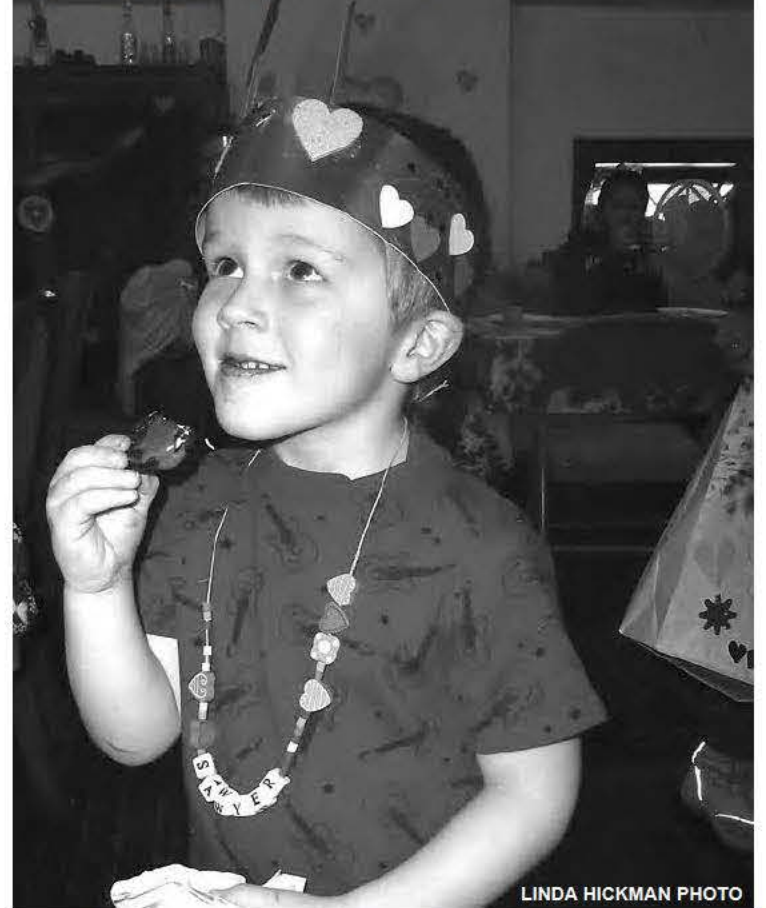
Quilting Classes Resume

A new series of 10 quilting classes will begin on Monday, February 11th and continue every second and fourth Mondays of the month. The Senior Center owns two sewing machines that participants may use or you may bring your own portable. Classes are led by Dianne Cornwell and her assistant Sandy. There is no fee for the class but donations are gratefully accepted. Call Polly at (413) 423-3649 for more information.

Monday 2/11
9 a.m. Tai Chi
10 a.m. Osteo Exercise
Noon Quilting
Tuesday, 2/12
8:45 a.m. Chair Aerobics
9:30 a.m. C.O.A Meeting
12:30 p.m. Painting
Wednesday, 2/13
8:45 a.m. Line Dancing
10 a.m. Chair Yoga
Noon Bingo
Thursday, 2/14
8:45 a.m. Aerobics
10 a.m. Posture Perfect
Noon Cards
Friday, 2/15
9 a.m. Bowling
9:30 a.m. Sit and Knit

LEVERETT

FACES & PLACES



LINDA HICKMAN PHOTO

Sawyer of Leverett enjoyed a chocolate-dipped Oreo and made many projects, including a beaded necklace and a heart-crowned headband, at the annual Valentine's Party at the Carnegie Library in Turners Falls on Saturday, Feb. 2. Many families from Montague and the surrounding towns attended the free popular event.

tal games is helpful. For example, tell yourself it's five minutes before you have to get up and you're just trying to get a few extra winks. If you are so tired during the day that you cannot function normally and if this lasts for more than 2 to 3 weeks, you should see your family doctor or a sleep disorders specialist.

Send your questions to fred@healthygeezer.com.

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Take-It-Easy Chair Yoga - Wednesdays at 10 a.m. at the Town Hall. Drop-in \$4 (first class free).

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

WENDELL

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

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Local Briefs

JESSICA LARON ILLUSTRATION

Compiled By DON CLEGG

There is **fresh ice** over at the Montague Center School pond, thanks to the MCVFD for the hose down. Get your skating in before it's buried under the 2-3 feet of snow that some folks are predicting for Friday night!

Meet Orion the Hunter, Gemini the Twins, Taurus the Bull and Sirius, the brightest star in the sky in **Winter Sky** at Northfield Mountain Recreational Area on Saturday, Feb. 9, 7 to 8:30 p.m. This program is an introduction to the winter constellations and the stories behind them. Winter is a wonderful season for stargazing with clear, crisp nights and plenty of dark skies. Enjoy stories about the Great Bear, known to some as the Big Dipper, the Seven Dancing Stars and the Queen of Ethiopia.

The program will take place both indoors and out, so dress warmly and bring a flashlight and binoculars. The program will provide a new way to enjoy those dark, chilly evenings. Recommended for ages 8 and up. Pre-registration required; call (800) 859-2960

Wednesday, Feb 13, from 2 to 4 p.m., the Senior Symposia Program at Greenfield Community College will continue its Spring 2013 session with a symposium entitled "**The Connecticut River Valley and the China Trade**", presented by Curator of Historic Interiors and Curatorial Department Chair at Historic Deerfield, Amanda Lange. Research on the American China

trade has focused mainly on the coastal cities, but this economic activity reached inland to the Connecticut River Valley.

Drawing on objects from Old Deerfield's extensive collection, Lange will illustrate that Valley inhabitants owned and consumed goods of the China trade. They also supplied outbound cargo (e.g. ginseng), sea captains, crew and travelers to vessels venturing to China and returning with treasures for Hartford and Wethersfield, Connecticut, as well as Northampton. Pre-registration is strongly advised by calling (413) 775-1661 or arrive early for limited same-day registration.

Thursday, Feb 14, from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. The Brick House on 3rd Street, in Turners Falls will host the opening of the show, "**A is for Avenue A: the ABCs of Gill-Montague**, the story of 2 river towns through the Art and Poetry of its children." This is a joyful collaboration between the Gill Montague Elementary School, Gill Montague Community School Partnership, and a UMass Honors class titled: "Engaging with the Community: Children, Art, and the Environment."

The fruit of the partnership between local students and those at UMass is the recently published, and funded by the Town of Montague: "A Children's Guide to Turners Falls." Stop in at the Brick House and make your own Valentine card while you are there! The New Renaissance Players

bring Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* to life for their 3rd Annual Family Show at the Shea Theater in Turners Falls. Join Alice as she wanders through Wonderland to meet some of literature's most iconic characters. The play features Lewis Carroll's quirky, humorous, and fanciful dialogue from both *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass*. The show features original music composed and performed by Daniel Hales, and the frost heaves. Performance dates are Friday, Feb 15 at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 16 and Sunday Feb. 17 at 3 p.m. and repeats the same days and performance times the following weekend. For more information or to purchase tickets online, visit theshea.org.

Registered Democrats in Montague will hold a caucus at the first floor meeting room of Montague Town Hall, 1 Avenue A in Turners Falls, at 6:30 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 21, to elect five delegates and three alternates to the Massachusetts Democratic Convention to be held Saturday, June 1, at the Tsongas Center at UMass Lowell to discuss and approve the party platform... and depending on timing, likely hear speeches related to a special US Senate election.

There will also be a brief meeting of the Democratic Town Committee following the caucus that any registered Democrat may attend. The meeting place is handicapped accessible. For information about the convention or caucus procedures, contact Democratic Town Committee chair Jay DiPucchio at (413) 863-8656 or visit the party website at www.massdems.org.

Send local briefs to editor@montaguereporter.org.

Montague Business Association to Host Meeting with Chief Dodge

Get updates on break-in prevention



DAVID DETMOLD PHOTO

Chief Dodge was sworn in this past December.

The Montague Business Association invites businesses and community members to attend a special meeting with Montague's police chief, Charles 'Chip' Dodge, Tuesday, Feb. 12, from 8 to 9 a.m. in the community room of the Montague Public Safety Complex, 180 Turnpike Road, Turners Falls.

Chief Dodge will brief businesses on the recent spate of break-ins in Montague, and provide suggestions on how to better keep businesses and residences from being victimized. In addition, Montague Business Association steering

committee member Stephan Smith from A. H. Rist Insurance will speak about crime prevention and safeguards from an insurance perspective. Both speakers will be available for questions.

All Montague area businesses and community members are welcome and encouraged to attend this free Montague Business Association event. Montague Business Association steering committee member Lynne Rudié said, "By working together, business owners and citizens can protect ourselves and our neighbors more effectively, and can better safeguard the well-being of our town."

For more information, visit the Montague Business Association website: www.montaguebusinessassociation.com.

The Montague Business Association's mission is to support, promote and develop Montague's businesses and Montague's long-term economic growth.

Turners Falls Fire Distict Nomination Papers Available

Nomination papers for the Annual Turners Falls Fire District Election are now available to all district residents from the District Office located at 226 Millers Falls Road until Friday, March 1. Papers must be returned no later than Tuesday, March 5. The District Office is open Monday through Friday, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm.

All potential candidates need to obtain at least 30 signatures from registered voters of the Turners Falls Fire District.

Offices are as follows:

Prudential Committee, for a three year term

Water Commissioner, for a three year term

Treasurer, for a one year term (to fill an unexpired term)

The annual election will be held on Tuesday, April 23. The polls will open noon to 7 pm. District residents wishing to register to vote may do so at the Town Clerk's office located in Town Hall, 1 Avenue A, Turners Falls. For more information, call the District Office at (413) 863-4542.

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GUEST EDITORIAL

"Good Night Irene," Sandy, etc... Bizarre new weather challenges farmers

By DANIEL BOTKIN

2012, now officially the hottest year on record, thrust upon our consciousness the graphic and unmistakable effects of climate change, with melting polar icecaps, widespread crop damage in the heartland, and whole communities devastated on the Jersey shore. But what of the millions of gardeners, small-scale farmers and other micro-producers across the land who're trying to grow food for their families, their friends and their neighborhoods?

Thanks to the historical confluence of Peak Oil, global terrorism and other assorted health and environmental crises, interest and demand for local and "home-grown" food has never been higher. People of all walks, from gourmet chefs, to urban activists, to cancer survivors, to soccer moms – even schools, cafeterias and businesses – are finding new reasons (and ways) daily to join the real food revolution. Add in a stagnant economy joined with ever-spiking food prices, and we have the unique potential to transform millions of unlikely greenhorns into potential backyard farmers!

Ironically, however, this wave of newly-inspired, small-scale food producers coincides with the most extreme and dangerous weather ever recorded. Severe storms, droughts and temperature spikes across vast swaths of the nation (and planet!) are having a withering effect on all kinds of farmers, including many in the Connecticut River Valley directly hit by flooding from hurricane Irene in 2011, the sixth-costliest hurricane ever.

Then, last year, an unprecedented mega-drought lingered for months across much of our nation, devastating crops and livestock, sparing neither experienced nor newcomer, neither large farms nor small. Growers of all sizes should be preoccupied with the unpredictable new climate outlook. What extreme weather patterns could be possible? What will the "new normal" be? What kinds of technologies and methods could possibly buffer our crops and farms from its full impact? What does climate change say about our collective ability to keep farming at all?

Long before "global warming," every generation of farmers has surely had to deal with the mortal consequences of capricious weather. Even for the most experienced agronomist, the threat of extreme weather has always made farming inherently risky. But we farmers are infamous for both "manufacturing our own luck" and for being able to absorb and survive "unlucky" breaks with perseverance and

aplomb: "That's farmin' for ya!"

However, the recent changes in our weather are more than just proverbial, incidental – they're monumental, cataclysmic and unceasing, and they're increasingly affecting small farmers everywhere, and most of the bigs as well. I've personally witnessed several farming friends and associates here in the Valley, packing it in after facing down several seasons of these destructive weather events, with the bitter rejoinder: "I guess we weren't meant to farm now, after all!"

There are no hard statistics yet on farmers "done in by global warming." Nonetheless, I am fixated by the thought: How deeply it must be impacting all farmers, vocationally, psychologically, existentially, that an "anomalous" act of nature could, in a few days or hours, wholly liquidate all the hard work of even the most skilled and diligent practitioner. In farming these days, apparently, you need not only be "good," you also need to be prepared to lose everything on any given season, in a drought, a flood, a fire, or a 'super' storm.

Within these dramatic new parameters, farmers are either abandoning their field or scrambling to more cleverly occupy their field, urban lot, rooftop, hoophouse or backyard plot. We farmers, as well as every other permaculture-inspired intellectual or peasant who remains still committed despite the heightening risks, will have to be ever more resilient, nimble, persevering, and in some cases, must reinvent ourselves entirely: exploiting new angles, plants, seasons, products, methods and niches. This is shocking but not necessarily a bad thing, if it kick-starts us ultimately toward more ecological and "weather-sustainable" practices.

Many food growers and gardeners still reflexively seek to mimic commercial agriculture, with its ubiquitous tillage, long, straight rows, and dependence on machines, petrol and chemicals. But we're living in a uniquely urgent moment; there's no time for another generation to simply replicate every tradition and custom, as we seek for greater carbon neutrality growing the good food we all need. The extreme weather has sharply challenged us to question conventional growing methods like endless plowing and spraying, in favor of ones that highlight biological diversity, seasonal continuity, and discerning, hand labor.

Long ago, we in the West were duped by the premise that science and technology (and free markets) would always rescue us from our worldly excesses, and that simple, low-tech grassroots-oriented approaches, like conservation and



Official White House Photo (Uncropped)

STEVE KOZIOL ILLUSTRATION

homegrown food, were idealistic fluff, well-meaning but ineffectual responses. Sometimes the biggest of problems have to be broken down into smaller pieces; sometimes, the best solutions are the simplest ones, often hiding out in plain view.

In these dangerous times, many are left shell-shocked and believing in the impossibility of common citizens to affect change, or to be "part of a solution". But one prescription is obvious: growing food by hand offers anyone the concrete, delicious

optimism of green sustenance, and a renewed connection to nature, to oneself, to others, and to a more hopeful vision of the future. Growing food on any scale is solution-oriented work; it is inherently proletarian, generous and self-reinforcing, and it is one of the most sensuous and primal things one can do.

Today the need for healthy, local food is huge, and growing. And since today, as "permaculture" teaches us, anyone, anywhere can

be a bona fide, food grower, all of us are automatically deputized, "citizen farmers" with all rights and responsibilities conferred. It's a great and timely blessing, indeed; just what the doctor ordered!

Go forth, people. Go forth and "mulch-apply"!

Daniel Botkin is a longtime teacher, athlete and farmer living in Gill. He can be reached at www.laughingdogfarm.com

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Wake Up, Franklin County!

Can I really be the only one who thinks that this county is a complete mess these days? All I am hearing is generalized grumbling, usually followed by "well, nothing I do can change that." Everybody complains and nobody does anything to change it. I am appalled by the apathy of people in Franklin County.

We swallow the pandering of the politicians as if they actually are doing something that will benefit 'We the People of Franklin County.' We read about recovery and new jobs that are supposedly being created while watching our friends who are over fifty lose their high paying jobs and resort to grocery store bagging just to make ends meet. We see some great rebuilding projects – done by the Boston union workers who own all the state bidding officials – not by our local county contractors.

We hear that unemployment rates are on the decline, knowing full well that it's because benefits ran out before many around here found one of the few remaining jobs that exploit your full range of knowledge and experience and pay you like you are an idiot that just graduated from some dumbed down public high school or college.

Our cities and towns spend hours of time and thousands of paid consultant dollars to beg for state and federal money via "grants" as we continue to live beyond our financial means. We are so afraid of what could happen, what might happen and what is possible, that we are effectively blinded to what IS happening right here and now under our growing collective noses. Common sense has become as useless as a human appendix in today's culture.

We are being exploited. Don't be

afraid to voice your dissatisfaction with the status quo and demand action from those you have elected to lead. Form small discussion groups and clarify you're thinking. Communicate your thoughts to the local officials. Ask them why they are not taking actions to restore our county, our towns and our country to its founding principles. Reread the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. Do not back down when people try to intimidate you in town or public meetings.

Speak out fearlessly about the corruption we see on a daily basis. Loudly protest congressional politics on spending priorities. Let Congress know what you think about sending 20 F-16's and over 200 tanks to the Egyptian Muslim brotherhood, for free. Meanwhile our war veterans must beg and holler to get the benefits that are owed to them. Let them know how you feel about the meager health benefits for our sick and elderly facing drastic cuts, while we finance "nation-building."

Let Congress know that we come first as they spend our hard-earned tax dollars. Tell them we expect a rational budget that eliminates the debt that will saddle our children for most of the next hundred years. Remind them that charity begins at home, and that our county is being sadly neglected while we twist and turn in the winds of national and international intrigue, exploitation, and extortion.

More taxes are not the answer. Our government has the money to do everything we need to do to improve American lives.

Let Congress know that we are still a law-abiding nation, and this blatant nose thumbing and neglect of

fiscal duty is not acceptable. Demand that bills passed by the United States Congress can not be laden with totally unrelated pork. Make legislators look beyond their own special interests and realize they are there to make laws that make sense.

I have had it with hand wringing. I am trying to think of something that could work, something that could turn this around, but there appear to be fewer and fewer alternatives available. I would love to have intelligent, non-name calling discourse on this topic.

I seek peaceful solutions to the corrupt, immoral regime, which has blossomed while we slept. We need to return to our freedom-loving, independent roots. Let us remember who we are and why we have the freedoms we are letting slip through our fingers.

We need to wake up, Franklin County. It is almost too late.

– Rachel J. Roy
Turners Falls

Democrats Hold Caucus in Leverett

Democrats in Leverett will hold a caucus to elect delegates to the Massachusetts Democratic Party's 2013 Platform Convention on Sunday, Feb. 10 at 3:30 p.m. at the Leverett Library.

All registered Democrats in Leverett are eligible to participate. Starting this year, the Massachusetts Democratic Party will also hold a Youth Convention for high school organizers.

Contact Barbara Tiner at (413) 548-7919 for more information.

Poets Wanted!
to submit original poems. Please email: poetry@montagureporter.org for consideration in the monthly Poetry Page. Include 25-word bio. Poems may also be posted to Montague Reporter, 58 4th Street, Turners Falls, MA 01376. No prior experience necessary, as a poet.

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TALKING PICTURES

ZERO DARK THIRTY



1 eagle = the pits 4 eagles = the heights



By SHIRA HILLEL

Zero Dark Thirty, the recently released thriller based on the man-hunt for Osama bin Laden, has

received extensive media attention and has sparked much debate.

The movie, directed by Kathryn Bigelow and starring Jessica Chastain, has been nominated for

several Oscars. It is an emotionally powerful film that stayed with me for several days after I saw it.

Based on public knowledge and interviews with CIA insiders, the movie tells a fictionalized account of the investigation that led to finding bin Laden, and of the female CIA agent who doggedly followed her gut instinct and pursued what ended up being the correct leads.

The film opens with the audio, playing over a dark screen, of 911 calls on September 11, 2001, from agonized people who are literally burning up in the twin towers. The audience is immediately plunged into the emotional backdrop of events that would follow.

The U.S. counterterrorism practice known as extraordinary rendition, in which suspects were quietly moved to CIA “black sites” – secret prisons abroad – involved the participation of more than 50 nations, including Egypt, Libya and Syria, according to a new report released Tuesday by the Open Society Foundations.

The beginning part of the movie forces the viewer to watch lengthy, sadistic, brutal interrogation scenes

involving waterboarding and other forms of torture. The movie culminates in an adrenaline-rushing heart-pounding recreation of the Navy Seal raid in Pakistan on the large compound in which bin Laden was found and killed.

Zero Dark Thirty is a fascinating movie. Not because it tells a clear story – it doesn’t – but because of its emotional intensity. It doesn’t explain to the viewer what’s going on, so much as plop the viewer into the reality of the post-911 investigation. The viewer is not moved along by the plot because the details remain vague and hard to follow; instead, she is swept up in the momentum of the atmosphere and feel of the situation. The audience only follows the broad strokes of the investigation, but is encapsulated in the intrigue.

The major political players (George W. Bush, Dick Cheney, Barack Obama, and bin Laden himself) remain offscreen, are only mentioned in passing. The focus is completely on the experience of the intelligence agents working on the investigation.

As viewers, we are right there

with the characters onscreen, watching them sweat in dusty offices, seeing their nervous faces, hearing sheep ‘baa’ in the background, and watching colorful chaotic busy streets in Pakistan where one is disoriented and easily lost.

Zero challenges our set beliefs and morality. Much of the criticism revolves around its possible stance that the “enhanced interrogation” torture methods used on detainees resulted in some legitimate intelligence that led to the eventual finding of bin Laden and other al-Qaeda operatives.

The film does seem to show that some pieces of crucial evidence in the overall puzzle were discovered or at least corroborated by tortured detainees who eventually talked. But what does that mean? Zero Dark Thirty does not make the case that other tactics would not have been equally, or more, effective.

Instead, it shows the brutality of what “really happened” – even if that isn’t quite how it really happened. Our government did this, spent untold amounts of money on

see REVIEW page 6

REGIONAL from page 1

particularly the reality of declining enrollments and thus the financial “sustainability” of the existing system.

As to the educational impacts of reorganization, Reid’s presentation and report relied heavily on statements by planning board members and the central office staffs of the schools, particularly Amherst Regional School central office, which seemed to strongly support consolidation. The arguments for consolidation, like those that have been heard statewide in recent years, stressed the benefits of modernization and efficiency. According to the regional planning board, the four towns are now “locked into educational systems that are between 50 and 110 years old.” Although the current elementary schools are highly rated “without a structural shift that provides greater capacity, cohesion, efficiency and effectiveness, they will likely fall short of the demands required to provide a 21st century learning and education.”

More concretely, consolidation would simplify policymaking for both citizens and local officials: “There are [currently] three separate and distinct budgets. Having one budget would provide more

According to the Regional Planning Board, the four towns are now “locked into... systems that are between 50 and 110 years old.”

flexibility for decision-making. If these budgets were all one budget, the process would be more coordinated.”

Efficiency might also improve education: “All school districts in Massachusetts are required to submit approximately 110 reports to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education annually. To submit these reports once, as opposed to three times, would save

a tremendous amount of time and energy that could be used to support educational programs.”

Consolidation would also improve “curriculum coordination,” a popular concept among state and local education officials. The current system, with the elementary and secondary schools in different districts, results in “non-alignment in a variety of ways.” As a result, “children arriving at the shared middle school in 7th grade do not have the same preparation resulting in inconsistencies in knowledge and readiness.”

Services to students, particularly special education students, might also improve with consolidation. These services are more limited in the smaller elementary schools of Shutesbury and Leverett. It was also argued that these two communities would benefit from a consolidated teacher evaluation system, an important (and very complex) new state initiative. Amherst, it was argued, had developed a “robust” evaluation system which would benefit staff in the other schools.

On the downside, the report noted concerns, particularly in Leverett and Shutesbury, that consolidation might undermine local autonomy, independence, and the traditional character of the local schools. The consultant’s report attributed much of this sentiment to “the comfort in familiarity and fear of the unknown.” However, Reid stated he was confident these concerns would “dissipate in a short period of time based on the integrity of processes of the Current Superintendent and Central Office,” as well as a responsive new regional school committee.

What about the viability of the current school organization and potential savings from consolidation? This question was the subject of a complex, sophisticated analysis by Mark Abrahams and his son of the “Abrahams Group.”

Using Fiscal Year 2013 numbers, Abrahams estimated the current cost of education, including middle and high school, to the four towns, at approximately \$40,968,783. He then estimated the cost of consolidated K through 6 and K through 12 districts. Much of the potential savings came from increased state transportation aid to the new regional district (estimated at \$262,427) and state incentive money for consolidation (\$79,700). The regional district would also receive \$250,000 in Medicaid reimbursement, although this was money the towns, mostly Amherst, had received in the past.

On the administrative side, Abrahams’ analysis accepted the argument of Amherst Regional Central Office that it could administer the expanded elementary district without new staff. This administrative consolidation resulted in a savings of \$264,045 by essentially eliminating payments to Union 28. However, this was more than offset by the need to equalize, and thus increase, employee wages and benefits.

The bottom line? Abrahams estimated a reduction in total town costs for education in FY13 would have been \$482,739 or 1.2%, in a new district. However, these savings were not distributed evenly, and varied according to

assessment method and the type of region finally created. For example, using the current assessment methodology, based on enrollment, Leverett’s total FY13 expenditures would be \$487,446 lower under a consolidated system than under the present system. On the other hand, Shutesbury would pay significantly more. Under the so-called “statutory method,” which is heavily influenced by local wealth, Amherst would pay nearly \$216,000 more than it currently does, while Shutesbury would pay \$106,336 less.

The report noted concerns, particularly in Leverett and Shutesbury, that consolidation might undermine local autonomy.

Abrahams suggested these differences may be the result of the variable impact of state aid under a new system. A wealthier town moving into a new district with lower levels of wealth (as measured by property values and income) would, in effect, be receiving more state aid than previously. For the “poorer” town, consolidation would produce a larger total required local contribution and less state aid. Abrahams stressed that these were very preliminary estimates, dependent upon what sort of assessment method the new regional district implemented. He also noted that an initial assessment policy could be implemented that insured that no town paid more than it does now.

These reports have been posted on the regional planning board website: www.Regional-SchoolPlanning.com

There will be a series of public forums held in the coming month:

Amherst: Feb. 13, 7 p.m. Amherst Regional Middle School Library

Shutesbury: Feb. 27, 6:30 p.m. Shutesbury Elementary School

Leverett: Feb. 28, 6:30 p.m. Leverett Elementary School

Pelham: March 2 10 a.m. Ramsdell Room, Pelham Library

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Police Respond to Domestic Assault in Turners Falls

Wednesday 1/23

5:30 a.m. One car accident on Kettlehole Lane. Vehicle off road into tree line. No injuries. Vehicle towed.

10:22 a.m. [redacted]

arrested at his residence on a warrant to apprehend for simple battery.

11 a.m. Theft at [redacted] 4th Street.

Advised of options.

4:04 p.m. Safety hazard at F.L. Roberts in Turners Falls.

5:37 p.m. Medical emergency, [redacted] 7th Street. Removed to Hospital.

Thursday 1/24

3:55 a.m. Burglar alarm at Connecticut River Internists, 8 Burnham Street, Turners Falls. Malfunction.

8:41 a.m. Vandalism and property destruction, [redacted] K Street,

Turners Falls.

Friday 1/25

12:15 p.m. Restraining order summons issued, Grove Street, Turners Falls.

2:33 p.m. Arrest warrant for person at [redacted] Highland Circle. Subject not found at residence.

3:52 p.m. Threats and harassment at [redacted] Winthrop Street. Advised of options.

7:03 p.m. Theft at F.L. Roberts, Turners Falls.

5:22 p.m. Accident with property damage at Judd Wire, 124 Turnpike Road.

10:46 p.m. Disturbance at Powertown Apartments. Unable to locate.

Saturday 1/26

2:39 p.m. Suspicious person taken into protective custody, Avenue A Extension near Cumberland Farms in Turners

Falls.

9:09 a.m. [redacted]

[redacted] was arrested at [redacted] 3rd Street, Turners Falls, for domestic assault and battery.

Also arrested at this address was [redacted]

[redacted] for assault and battery with a dangerous weapon and Class E drug possession.

11:53 a.m. Disturbance at [redacted] 4th Street.

Sunday 1/27

12:21 a.m. [redacted] arrested for driving while intoxicated, after being pulled over for speeding and crossing marked lines at Federal Street and Lake Pleasant Road.

3:20 a.m. [redacted]

arrested at [redacted] Central Street for disturbing the peace, disorderly

conduct, resisting arrest, and assaulting an officer.

4:20 p.m. Animal lost at [redacted] Green Pond Road.

Monday 1/28

12:49 a.m. Suspicious automobile at Scalpers Lodge, Lake Pleasant.

8:49 a.m. Medical Emergency at [redacted] Morgan Circle, Turners Falls. Removed to Hospital.

12:16 p.m. Restraining order violation on Center Street, Montague.

Tuesday 1/29

9:41 a.m. [redacted] arrested for assault and battery at his residence, [redacted]

[redacted] after a

911 call for a domestic disturbance.

9:08 p.m. Safety hazard at the railroad tracks in Millers Falls.

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REVIEW from page 5

a program that savagely tortured people for nearly 10 years.

Mike Scott writes in the *New Orleans Times-Picayune*: "The U.S. government did torture prisoners of war in the name of its so-called war on terror and, by extension, in the name of all Americans. What Bigelow and [screenwriter Mark] Boal seem to be arguing is that such actions take a deep cosmic toll on the people responsible – whether directly, in the case of Chastain's character, or indirectly, in the case of you and me."

James Oliphant of the *National Journal* writes: "Sequences of brutality pile upon one another, America's moral choices are laid out before the uncomfortable viewer. Yet, Bigelow intercuts them with scenes from other terrorist attacks.... While she and screenwriter Boal are right when they say that the film itself doesn't take a position with respect to torture, its protagonists

clearly believe in its value right up the point where bin Laden is killed. And since the film, despite what its detractors insist, refuses to draw a straight line from torture to critical intelligence, the viewer alone must supply the necessary context to fill in the blanks....

"While critics maintain that Bigelow has stacked the deck, that the telescopic nature of the story conflates torture and the end result in a way that endorses its use, it's not that clear-cut.... [H]er unflinching willingness to make us, as viewers, feel the pain inflicted on the detainees... makes all of us accomplices in the act," argues Oliphant. "The film is about the way our national choices, expressed through our elected government, make us feel as citizens, and about our concepts of justice, security, and revenge. Unlike most politicians and pundits, Bigelow refuses to reduce those concepts to abstractions."

Writing in *Time*, film-maker

Michael Moore also defends the film: "I guess where I part with most of my friends who are upset at this film is that they are allowing the wrong debate to take place," writes Moore. "You should NEVER engage in a debate where the other side defines the terms of the debate – namely, in this case, to debate 'whether torture works.' You should refuse to participate in that discussion because the real question should be, simply, 'is torture wrong?' ... You will be repulsed by these torture scenes but, make no mistake about it, this has been done in your name and mine and with our tax dollars. We funded this."

Are we safer now that bin Laden is dead? Was he still central to the leadership of al-Qaeda and all of its spinoff organizations? Did we sacrifice our own integrity in this long, cruel process?

I left the theater wondering if the years of effort and suffering were worth it after all.



MCTV Update

MCTV's Owen Weaver and Cindy Tarail recently filmed an interview with Staff Sergeant Chris Williams of the Montague Police Department, kicking off a new series: *Get to Know Your Local Police Department*. Williams describes his work and some current events. Upcoming interviews will include: Montague's planning for a school safety code in response to the Sandy Hook school shootings, the community policing program that began in the fall of 2012, and public education about domestic violence.

MCTV welcomes viewers' questions for Sergeant Williams or about local police work and public safety issues. Call (413) 863-9200 or visit MCTV online at montaguetv.org to contact the station.

MCTV has been filming events at the Greenfield Savings Bank Community Room including a recent presentation by the SHINE Program that featured health insur-

ance for seniors.

Community producers continue to be active at MCTV, helping to create local programming. Brett Leighton filmed local bands, including Tawdry, at the Rendezvous and at the Arts Block in Greenfield. Oren Clark caught footage of some of the music and activities at the Pumpkin Fest and Weaver created a video with it. Laurel Facey faithfully videos the monthly Discovery Center's Coffeehouse. Janet Masucci films the Gill Selectboard meetings. In September, volunteers helped MCTV staff capture all the excitement of the 2012 Montague Soapbox Derby. Highlights are now being aired, and complete coverage is available to anyone who would like it.

To find these productions, check the program schedule at montaguetv.org. Locally produced video is available on the MCTV website or at vimeo.com/mctvchannel17.

LIVABILITY from page 1

idents. This, in turn, spawned a larger "Working Group" of about 30 stakeholders who have been meeting regularly. The result has been the identification of six focus areas: Avenue A businesses and buildings; Improving Avenue A streetscape; Parks and Recreation and their connectivity to residents; Priority Development Sites; Destination; and Building Community. He said that evening's workshop would allow the attendees to weigh in on each of these focus areas.

Ted Brovitz next addressed the

crowd. He stressed that this was an opportunity for the planner and the consulting team to hear directly from those who live in Turners. "We're here to take notes and listen to you." He also noted that so far the group had identified several areas for potential growth. Those enterprises with the best potential included medical and professional businesses, specialty clothing stores, and general merchandise shops and food services (perhaps niche or ethnic restaurants). Shops for furniture, electronics and appliances, gifts and novelties and sport-

ing goods were seen as having limited potential.

He also stressed the ideal location of Turners. "More than 12,000 cars travel Route 2 each day; about 40,000 vehicles roll up and down Interstate 91." This definitely has the ability to be a destination for some of folks who now just by-pass the town.

Following these presentations, Flinker divided the attendees into small groups of seven or eight. For the next two-and-a-half hours, the groups rotated from table to table corresponding to the six focus

areas. At each table a consultant listened and took notes while the residents expressed their visions for the future of the downtown. There was definite excitement among the "stakeholders," and they quickly engaged the consultants in animated conversation.

While ideas were different from group to group, a few major themes did seem to emerge. Of major concern was maintaining the population diversity, and that housing affordability not be compromised by "development." There was general agreement that there were too

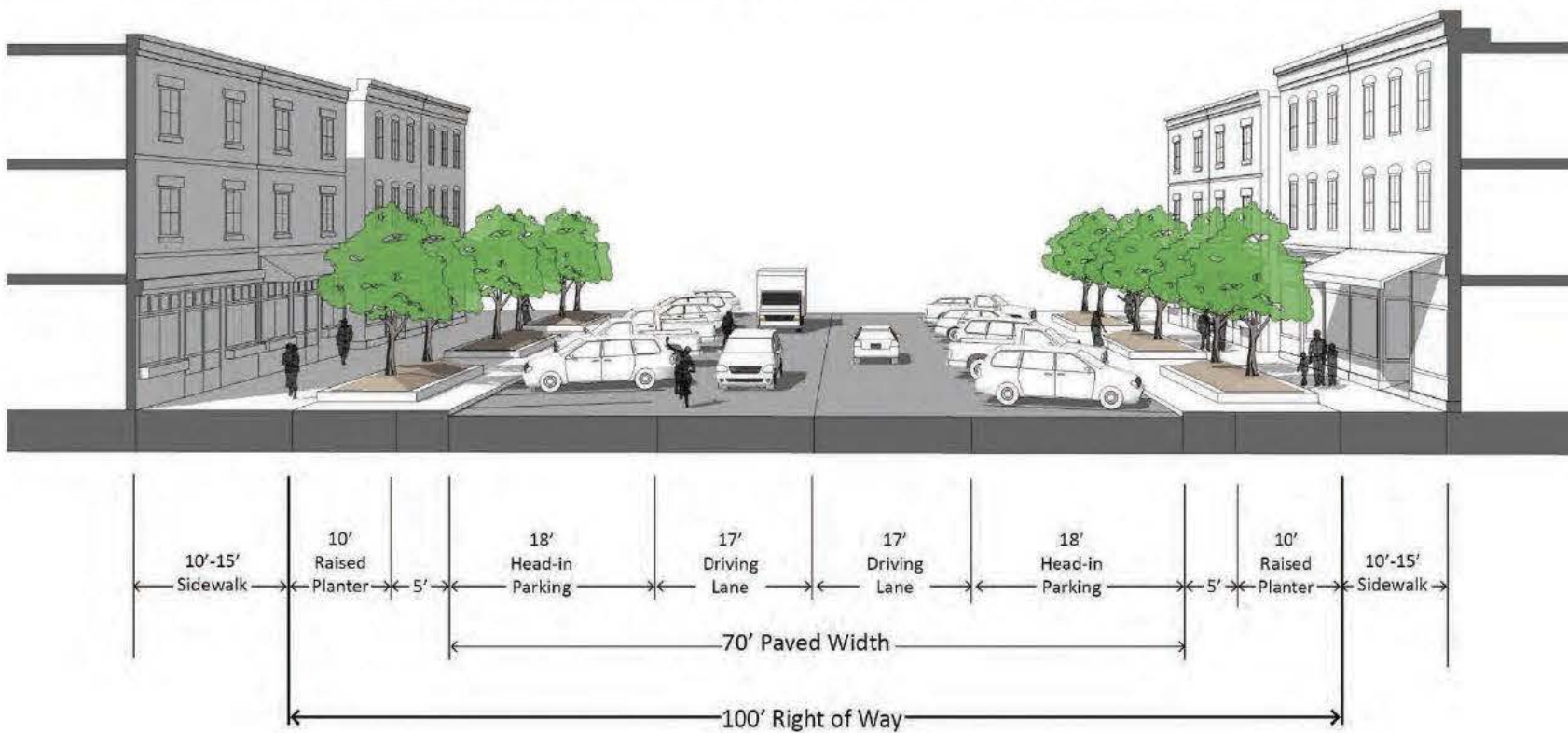
many vacant downtown storefronts, and that businesses of all types should be encouraged to start up or relocate to Turners.

A number of possibilities were put forth for the reuse of the former Strathmore Mill and the rapidly crumbling Railroad Salvage Building. Among the proposals for the Strathmore was the creation of housing and artists' spaces, a museum, and community center. For Railroad Salvage, suggestions ranged from using the site for building mixed-income housing to high-end condos.

Concern was also expressed about the need for Turners to be more responsive to the Latino population that, according to Brovitz, now amounts to 15 percent of the population of Turners Falls. Similar views were expressed about the need for creating more community places for teenagers. The skate park, originally slated for the final phase of the Unity Park renewal, was stressed as being extremely important.

By the end of the evening, the consultants had volumes of notes to ponder, and they assured the participants that they would take all the ideas into consideration. They will continue to meet with the Advisory Committee and the Working Group to develop the possibilities further. By June they aim to have a full set of data and a large number of recommendations for the town. The consultants emphasized that increasing livability is a long process, but that vision is necessary for positive change to occur.

Turners Falls Avenue A Schematic Section | Prepared by Dodson & Flinker, December 2012



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Attendees were treated to a slideshow of data and schematics, in preparation for the group discussions.



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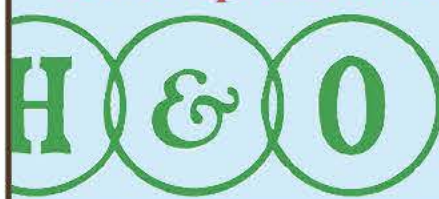


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Gill subscriber Claire Chang enjoys her Montague Reporter on the north shore of Oahu, Hawaii.

HELP from page 1

Baystate.

Three months later, the daily shots and monitoring have become routine for Parker. He's a real trooper who doesn't complain, said his Mom, but his family is still reeling from the shock. "Raising a kid with a life-changing disease like diabetes is stressful, especially for the parents. More than ever, you are conscious of your child's everyday and long-term health. You need to learn how to monitor blood sugar, what foods to feed him, when to inject insulin and when to feed him sugar. You worry about the future."

Even though the family has health insurance, co-pays for testing, supplies and hospital visits total more than \$300 a month. This is where the Beauregards' extended com-

munity comes in. His mom and dad have known Bella Latanzi from Montague Center since she was a baby. In fact, Bella inspired them to start a family of their own. Naturally Bella has known Parker since he was born, and Parker has spent considerable time in Montague with Bella and her friends.

When they learned of his condition and the economic pressure on his family, they immediately wondered how they might help. The success of last summer's presentation of the Travelling Rhubarb Circus inspired them, and the variety show began to take form.

The performers will be:



Event beneficiary Parker Beauregard

Lucia Mason, age 14, of Montague; Ivy Muller, age 12, of Shutesbury and Montague; Celia Bales, age 15, of Gill; April Weintraub, age 14, of Amherst; Chloe Castro Santos, age 13, of Gill (youth, piano and voice); Karen Werner of Montague (puppeteer); Scotty Swan of Northampton (magician and puppeteer); Elsie Almeida of Turners Falls (youth, singer); and Laurie Davidson and Tom Carroll of Montague (music and movement).

Bella Lattanzi, age 13, of Montague, will make the introductions. Tumbling segments from the Travelling Rhubarb Circus will be presented as well!

The benefit will be filmed and aired on MCTV and hopefully GCTV.

Rebecca Beauregard said, "When this happened, I suddenly felt sorry for everyone in this situation. We are so fortunate to be surrounded by caring friends and Parker can't wait for the variety show."

The Dragon King Puppet Show Comes to Wendell to Celebrate the Chinese New Year



Tanglewood's marionettes, operated by skilled puppeteers, are three feet tall.

SUBMITTED BY ROSIE HEIDKAMP – The Tanglewood Marionette Troupe will perform "The Dragon King," a Chinese folktale, at the Wendell Town Hall on the Chinese New Year's Day, this Sunday, Feb 10 at 4 p.m.

We'll use it as an excuse for Wendell to celebrate the Chinese New Year, ushering in the year of the Snake. Activities begin at 3:45 p.m. A Q&A and refreshments will follow the performance. Families are welcome to attend this special free event.

Bring your friends and neighbors along for an enjoyable afternoon at a multi-generational cultural arts performance and celebration. Come dressed up for the occasion if you would like.

The Troupe offers this description of the program:

A terrible drought has overtaken the land, and all the world has turned brown and lifeless. The Dragon King is ruler over all things water, and the people are beginning to wonder why he has not brought the life-giving rains in such a very long time.

An underwater fantasy based on Chinese folklore, this award winning production tells the tale of an intrepid Grandmother who journeys to the bottom of the sea to seek the Dragon King, and the answers to why he has forsaken the land above.

Enjoy three-foot-tall marionettes, colorful sea creatures, an exciting adventure, and a Dragon King that

will knock your socks off!

Seating is limited, and people will not be able to be seated once the performance has started. Please be on time.

This program is sponsored by the Wendell Free Library, with financial support from the Wendell Cultural Council, the Trustees of the New Salem Academy and the Friends of the Wendell Free Library.

Tanglewood Marionettes travels with its own stage, lighting and sound system. Based in Ware, they tour nationally.

For more about Tanglewood Marionettes and the Dragon King production go to www.tanglewoodmarionettes.com.



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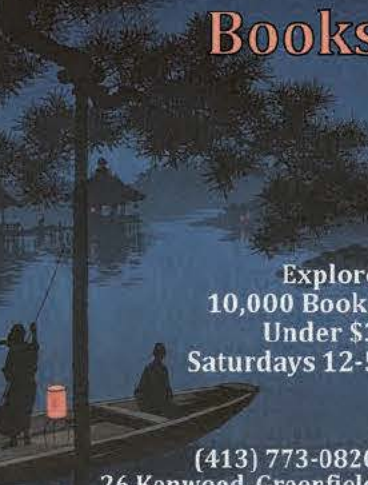
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NOTES FROM THE MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD MEETING

Pay Scale for Reserves, Regionalized Fire Services, and Making Money Out of Sludge

By PATRICIA PRUITT

The Feb. 4 meeting was full of positives.

The selectboard voted unanimously to approve Chief Dodge's proposed 3-step pay range for part-time reserve officers and to extend time-and-a-half pay to reserves as an incentive to work on holidays. The new reserves pay range is as follows: entry-level, \$14.62; mid-level, \$15.31; top-level, \$16.00. An entry-level officer will have to work 416 hours of shifts to move to the next level. A mid-level officer will need 624 accumulated hours to move up.

In other personnel news, the selectboard, as personnel board, also approved education incentive pay for officer Peter Lapachinski, who has completed an associate degree in Criminal Justice at Greenfield Community College and will graduate from the Police Academy this month. His new salary will start as of Feb. 17.

Chief Dodge was pleased to announce a new in-house service at the public safety complex: a drop-off box for old or no longer needed medications. Do not throw old prescriptions in the toilet or trash! Put them in a plastic baggie and drop them in the Med box at the police station. Unfortunately liquid medications and needles cannot currently be put in the box. For needle disposal, go to the town nurse or board of health, both in town hall.

Fire Chief Bob Escott also had some potentially good news. Franklin County fire chiefs are working on getting a grant through the Franklin

County Council of Governments to study regionalization of fire services throughout the county. Chief Escott could not say what the position of the Montague Center fire district is on the question of studying regionalization, but hopes they will support it. Escott said fire districts throughout the county are dealing with manpower shortages and regionalization may be one way to handle that problem while increasing cost effectiveness of services.

Bob Trombley, superintendent of the Water Pollution Control Facility, and Jan Amin, executive director of Franklin County Solid Waste Management District, offered an update on the changing realities in the field of solid waste management.

Trombley outlined the major changes from 1996, when waste was disposed into the town landfill, to the disposal of liquid waste at a cost of \$330,000, to the present Fournier Press and other innovations at the waste treatment plant. These allow Montague to produce a waste product that is 35-45 percent solid, which cuts down considerably on the costs of transportation to sludge disposal facilities. 2012's post-new-equipment costs were \$179,000.

However, the dwindling number – from two to only one – of these disposal facilities is another development that alarms Trombley and Amin, given the cost of transporting waste over ever-increasing distances to plants outside of Massachusetts. Amin added that she and Trombley have been working on these various issues for

over a year. She supports finding local solutions to shipping long distances. The F.C. Solid Waste District moves 5 million gallons per year.

Recently the treatment plant has been taking in waste from Greenfield and septage companies. This has proved profitable, creating a revenue stream of \$106,000 from Greenfield and \$96,000 from septage. All of this has gone on without increasing the nitrogen levels, even while handling additional waste.

Frank Abbondanzio cautioned the importance of not entering into long-term contracts. Trombley agreed, and explained three requirements must be met before taking in outside sludge: it must be from a small town; we must have the capacity to meet its needs; and doing so must be economically advantageous to both parties. Lead operator John Little spoke from the audience, saying there may be a future solution in using our sludge cake as compost for agriculture.

Cindy Tarail of MCTV invited selectboard members to appear monthly or at their convenience on MCTV to give background on issues or to have discussions for the benefit of the town residents. Select member Pat Allen responded favorably to the idea.

The Massachusetts Cultural Council has awarded the RiverCulture program \$18,000 for the first six months of 2013.

As a final positive gesture, the board approved the use of the bandstand in Peskeomskut Park on May 23, 2013, from 3 to 5 p.m., for a wedding!

NOTES FROM GILL SELECTBOARD MEETING

Gill Rejects Hybrid Police Cruiser

By JEFF SINGLETON

On the fog-bound winter night of Jan. 30, the Gill Selectboard rejected an impassioned plea from the town's Energy Commission to show leadership in the battle against global warming by purchasing a hybrid police cruiser. The cruiser, a Ford Fusion would have averaged well over 40 miles per gallon. The board opted instead to purchase a Ford Police Interceptor SUV whose city mileage was estimated at 16 mpg, and highway rate at 21 mpg. Selectboard members Ann Banash and Randy Crozier rejected the Energy Commission recommendation, and instead went with the Police Department's recommendation, while selectboard member John Ward was a strong supporter of the hybrid.

During the sometimes contentious discussion, Police Chief David Hastings and Sergeant Christopher Redmond raised a number of objections to the Fusion. "I don't like anything about it," declared an irritated Hastings at one point. Generally, however, the officers appeared sympathetic to the goal of reducing gas mileage, but objected to specific features of the hybrid. The Fusion, they maintained, was too small for some members of the force and not as safe as traditional alternatives.

On the other side, an Energy Commission statement emphasized the need to take dramatic action in the battle against global warming. Noting that "the situation for this planet, and particularly for human life, is desperate and fast becoming hopeless," the statement argued that "under these circumstances, it is

absurd that anyone should have to wage a campaign to persuade the town of Gill to buy an easily available hybrid police car." Commissioners stressed the need for local action: "If Gill cannot take the simple and painless step of buying a hybrid police car, if people in a presumably forward looking Massachusetts town cannot imagine the importance of their acts in this respect, it is certain whole countries cannot act any more reasonably."

Commission members pressed the officers to be more specific about safety concerns, noting that the hybrid had been rated "4" on a scale of 5 by the state. Although it was not entirely clear what these numbers signified, commission members argued that the hybrid was comparable to the alternatives. As far as interior space was concerned, the commission statement noted that New York City currently uses a number of hybrids and "no one can say with a straight face that Gill policemen are bigger than New York City policemen."

The Gill officers, however, objected to the comparisons with New York City, arguing that opinions of local police who actually use the vehicles should carry great weight. This argument in fact did seem to carry weight with Crozier and especially Banash, both of whom voted for the Interceptor rather than the hybrid.

Town voters have already approved the funds to purchase the car so the Selectboard decision would appear to end the discussion for now. Whether this is the beginning or end of a longer

policy debate remains to be seen.

In other action, the Gill board discussed using town hall as a potential alternative to the fire station as a voting site. A state expert has noted a number of concerns with town hall, including the vulnerability of one of the handicapped parking spaces to winter ice falls from the roof. It was suggested that the new metal roof, soon to be installed, might address this problem. Addressing fears expressed by some residents that the Town Clerk favored a move from the fire station, Crozier took full responsibility for initiating the discussion.

Responding to indications that the Regional School District may no longer support the fiscal compact with the towns that ended state financial control a few years ago, the board voted to strongly endorse both the compact and the technical panel that updates it. There was general agreement that rejection of the compact would endanger the district's efforts to end its Level 4 underperforming status.

The board will attempt to meet with the town conservation commission to specify local concerns as part of the First Light power license renewal process. March 1 is the upcoming deadline for comments to be submitted. Priorities for local and regional grants, administered by the Franklin Regional Council on Governments, were discussed. Board members expressed surprise (and approval) of the decision of the Franklin County Fire Chief's Association to study regionalization of fire services.

CORRECTION

Last week, the *Reporter* erroneously printed an announcement for a Management Study in the town of Gill. That Study was conducted in 2009. We regret the error.

Montague Nomination Papers are Now Available

Nomination papers for the Annual Town Election, Monday, May 20 are now available at the Town Clerk's Office until Thursday, March 28. They must be returned no later than Monday, April 1 by 5 p.m.

Seats are as follows:

Selectman, Town Clerk, Treasurer/Tax Collector,

Assessor, Board of Health, and Parks & Recreation and Tree Warden, each for a 3 year term.

Library Trustees has 3 seats, each for a 3 year term.

Montague Housing Authority has one seat for a 5 year term.

Soldier's Memorial Trustees has a Veteran's

seat for a 3 year term.

Nomination papers are also available for Town Meeting Members for each precinct.

The annual town election will be held on Monday, May 20, 2013. The deadline to register to vote is, Tuesday, April 30.

Nomination papers regarding school committee

seats are provided by the Gill - Montague Superintendent of Schools at 35 Crocker Avenue.

The Town Clerks office is open Monday, Tuesday and Thursday 8:30a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and Wednesday 8:30a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Town Hall is closed on Fridays. For more information please call the office at (413) 863-3200 (Ext 203).

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NOTES FROM THE LEVERETT SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Leverett Elementary Locks Front Door

By DAVID DETMOLD

In the wake of the slaughter of first graders and their educators at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, CT, schools across the nation are tightening their security policies, even as politicians in Washington temporize about legislation to limit access to guns through increased background checks and bans on high capacity magazines and military-style assault weapons.

In this context, the Leverett school committee voted unanimously on Monday night to lock the school's front door during school hours.

"We like to think of ourselves as an open and welcoming school, but things change," said Catherine Brooks, school committee member. "There will be some minor inconveniences."

Principal Anne Ross said the school was already equipped with security cameras and locking systems that would allow staff to keep the front door locked during school hours, monitor arrivals, and open the door remotely from the office. She said the only staff change required will be to place an aide at the front door perhaps fifteen minutes

before the closing bell, to allow parents arriving early to pick up their children, to come inside.

Ross said the front door will be locked as of Monday, Feb. 11, allowing the school to communicate the change to parents by mail in advance. All other exterior doors to the school are already locked during school hours.

Ross has also included a \$7,300 capital request for the April 27 annual town meeting to upgrade the locks on all 40 interior doors, to allow those doors to be locked from the inside of classrooms and other rooms, along with a request for \$1,000 to extend the front door intercom system to the nurse's office.

Ross said the current setup allows for classroom doors only to be locked from the outside, from the hallway, which would mean, in an emergency situation, teachers would have to briefly leave their students, exit the classroom, lock the door from the outside, then pull the locked door shut as they re-entered the classroom.

As Ross explained, "The recent tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary School has us thinking about the current security we have throughout the building. If there ever

was a threat in the building, the teachers would lock down, shelter the children, pull the shades, and make it look as if no one is there. The doors lock on the outside, so the teachers would have to step into the hall to lock the doors. That's a process to go through at a time when you are nervous."

School committee chair Dawn Sacks said, "Locking the front door. That's a big change to go through in Leverett." But she said the community appeared, at this point, to be supportive of the change.

In other news, the committee reduced their preliminary budget request for FY14 by about \$6,000. The additional savings were found by reducing line items for textbooks and instruction (\$3,150), professional development (\$3,800), library materials (\$4,000), and field trip transportation (\$1,000), then adding back \$6,000 to help reverse an ongoing deficit in the after-school program, which allows the school to engage over 100 students in structured activities after regular school hours until their parents get back from work to pick them up.

The cuts will allow the elementary school to present a preliminary budget see LEVERETT pg 10

NOTES FROM THE GILL-MONTAGUE REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Want to Serve on the GMRSC?

By ELLEN BLANCHETTE

Nomination papers are now available for pick-up in the Gill-Montague Regional School District Superintendent's office for school committee positions. The Gill and Montague town elections will be held on May 20. Completed nomination papers are due back in the superintendent's office no later than 4 p.m. on April 1. Nominees are required to obtain ten signatures from any Gill and/or Montague registered voters.

Voters in both towns vote on all nominees. There are three seats available, one 3-year Gill seat, and two 3-year Montague seats. Current members who are up for re-election this year are Jane Oakes of Gill, and Joyce Phillips and Marjorie Levenson of Montague.

None have announced their intentions as yet. For more information, contact Robin Hamlett at (413) 863-9324.

Congratulations to John and Abigail Adams Scholarship Winners!

The Gill-Montague Regional School District announced the names of six additional students in the Class of 2013 who have been awarded the John and Abigail Adams Scholarship. Recipients become eligible for the scholarship based on their high academic achievement on MCAS tests.

The six recipients are: Katelyn Dodge, Ceara Dolhenty, Joseph D'Ovidio, Daniel McCormack, Abigail Rubin, and Dakota Smith-Porter.

The John and Abigail Adams Scholarship provides a tuition waiver for up to

eight semesters of undergraduate education at a Massachusetts state college or university. Massachusetts public high school students become eligible for the scholarship when they score at the Advanced and Proficient levels on grade 10 MCAS tests in English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics.

In announcing the names of these students, Interim Superintendent Mark Prince and Principal Patricia Gardner join the Secretary of Education, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, and Commissioner of Higher Education in congratulating these high-performing students.

For further information, please contact principal Patricia Gardner at (413) 863-7200.

NOTES FROM THE WENDELL TOWN CLERK

Open Registration for Dogs, Town Officials

Dog Licenses Available

Dog licenses are available at the Town Clerk's Office. All dogs 6 months and older must be licensed and tagged every year. Proof of rabies vaccination and the appropriate fee is required. The fee is \$4 for a neutered or spayed dog and \$5 and for an unaltered dog. A late fee of \$20 will be applied for dogs licensed after May 31.

Dog licenses may be purchased on Wednesday evenings 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. or Saturdays from 9:30 a.m. to noon. Call (978) 544-3395 x 102 with any questions.

Nomination Papers Available

Nomination papers for the Annual Town Election are now available at the Town Clerk's Office. The last day to obtain papers is March 14, and nomination papers submission to the registrars of voters for certification are due by Monday, March 18.

Offices that have one 3-year term position open are: Selectboard, Board of Assessors, Board of Health, Cemetery Commissioner,

Road Commissioner, and Town Constable. Planning Board has one 5-year term position and one 3-year term position to fill. The School Committee has one 3-year term position and one 1-year term position to fill. Library Trustees have two 3-year term positions open. Moderator and Tree Warden each have one 1-year term position open.

The annual town election will be held on Monday, May 6. The polls will be open from Noon to 8 p.m. The deadline to register to vote is Tuesday, April 16. For more information, call the Town Clerk at (978) 544-3395 x 102.

Election Dates and Absentee Voting

There are three election dates scheduled for Wendell in 2013 thus far. The date for the State Primary is Tuesday, April 30 with a voter registration deadline of April 10. The Annual Town Election is on May 6 with a voter registration deadline of April 16, and the date for the State Election is Tuesday, June 25

with a voter registration deadline of June 5.

In addition, the Annual Town Meeting is set to begin at 7 pm on Monday, June 3 with a voter registration deadline of May 14. All registered voters should keep their registration information up to date and inform the town clerk of any changes in name, mailing address or residential street listing.

The deadline to obtain an absentee voter application for any election is Noon the day prior to the election date. Applications are available at the town clerk's office or online at: www.sec.state.ma.us Submit your application early to allow sufficient time for the ballot to be mailed to you and returned by the close of polls on Election Day.

To vote absentee, you must be out of town on the day of the election, have a religious belief that prohibits you from being at the polls, or have a physical disability that prevents you from going to the polls.

For more information contact (978) 544-3395 x 102 or townclerk@wendellmass.us.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GILL POLICE LOG

Horses and Heavy Wind

Monday, 1/28

11:35 a.m. Disabled motor vehicle on Main Road. Officer assisted with removal.
12:10 p.m. Animal complaint of horse loose on Boyle Road. Owners located to capture same.

Tuesday, 1/29

8:15 a.m. Motor vehicle accident on Main Road at Munn's Ferry. No injuries.
11:40 a.m. Animal Complaint of horse loose on Boyle Road. Owners located to capture same.
12:45 p.m. Assisted Mount Hermon School with suspicious subject.
5:50 p.m. Disabled motor vehicle on Main Road.

Subject out of gas.

Wednesday, 1/30

9:10 a.m. Alarm sounded at elementary school; employee error.

6 p.m. Hit-and-run property damage accident on Main Road. Under investigation.

Thursday, 1/31

8:05 a.m. Wires down on Main Road at North Cross due to heavy winds. Main Road shut down.
8:40 a.m. Wires down on North Cross Road. Officer assisted WMECO.
9 a.m. Wires down on Route 2, reported on fire. Officer investigated.
10:30 a.m. Officer located operator of hit-and-run from

previous evening. Resident on West Gill Road. Under investigation.

6 p.m. Walk in report of past accident occurred on Tuesday on the Northfield Mount Hermon campus.

Friday, 2/1

2:30 p.m. Structure fire at residence on Main Road.
4:25 p.m. Assisted state police with foot pursuit from motor vehicle stopped on Route 10.
5:30 p.m. Welfare check of resident on Main Road. Subject OK.

Sunday, 2/3

1:55 p.m. Sick raccoon in area of the public safety building. Officers unable to locate.

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NOTES FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD MEETING

Planning For The Unplanned

By JOSH HEINEMANN

Outside the Jan. 30 selectboard meeting, the fog was so thick that virtually everyone coming into the office room mentioned it upon entering. It rolled and coiled like an opaque mass across roads, and a traveller might suddenly be surprised to find himself in a clear stretch of road, then a moment later find himself back in the blinding mist.

Paul Daniello from the Mount Grace Conservation Land Trust was scheduled to meet the board at 8 p.m. to discuss the Cronquist property conservation restriction, but by nine o'clock, he still had not reached the office building.

The board had completed their other work by then, and after a failed effort to reach him by phone at the Land Trust, the only phone number on hand, the board adjourned with the hope that he had turned back or stayed home rather than try to drive through that fog.

Charles and Shay Cooper met the selectboard to discuss implications and consequences of the town joining, or electing not to join, the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). After weighing both options, the board decided the town should join the program. The Coopers, of Kentfield Road, own one of the two Wendell houses that lie within the floodplains as shown in the maps that the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) has provided the town. The other house is unoccupied and is on the market.

The NFIP allows people who own homes within a designated floodplain to buy flood insurance at a reduced rate, and in fact, outside the NFIP, flood insurance is either prohibitively expensive or unavailable. The NFIP also requires banks that finance homes within the floodplain to require home buyers to buy that insurance, which costs an average of \$900 a year.

As homeowners within a flood-

plain, the Coopers had received information about the program from the town, and before this meeting they had read it carefully. At first they were skeptical about the value of the NFIP, but they learned that a town that does not sign up becomes ineligible for other kinds of federal disaster relief. The documents were vague about what kind of aid might be at stake, but in the last decade, Wendell and other Franklin County towns have gotten federal aid to help pay for tornado, ice, and hurricane and flood damage.

Joining the NFIP will cost the town nothing beyond the expense of the paperwork, and FRCOG offers help both with that and with writing the necessary bylaws. The Coopers' situation allows them not to be forced to buy flood insurance, and Charles said they were not interested right now.

Selectboard member Dan Keller said his main worry, when Pat Smith of the FRCOG first brought

the program to the town's attention, was of forcing another expense on households. Selectboard chair Christine Heard said she was skeptical at first, saw the virtue of making flood insurance available, but did not like the obligation either. That is why she contacted the Coopers, as owners of Wendell's only occupied house in the mapped flood plain area.

Selectboard member Jeoffrey Pooser said the idea of "the insurance-industrial complex rearing its ugly head creeps me out," but then he added that in practical terms joining the program makes sense. Charles Cooper said the program also allows townspeople to buy mudslide and other insurance, and town coordinator Nancy Aldrich said that outside of the program the town would not be able to get hazard mitigation grants. Board members agreed with the Coopers, and decided the town should participate in the NFIP.

Continuing his office's response

to Pooser's concern about low-flying surveillance helicopters, (now former) Senator Kerry sent the town a letter stating that the Massachusetts National Guard is the appropriate avenue for the town's communication.

Aldrich said that there would be cost associated with the town connecting to and being served by the Massachusetts Broadband Initiative (MBI)'s middle-mile fiberoptic line, but that the amount it will cost is still up in the air. Connecting to the MBI's line will also save on internet satellite bills for the police station, and on telephone bills for the office building, because it will enable long-distance calls to be made using a voice-over-internet service.

Heard said that the emergency management committee meeting, called to organize how each town building might be used during a sustained emergency, was productive and went quickly. The commit-

see WENDELL page 12

from LEVERETT page 9

reduced by approximately \$36,000 from last year's total to the selectboard and finance committee at the school budget hearing scheduled in town hall for Feb. 19 at 7 p.m. The rest of the savings resulted from the reduction of one 6th grade teacher, when the current double 6th grade class graduates in June, and from the hiring of new teachers at a lower step than recently departed senior staff.

Selectboard member Peter d'Errico addressed the school committee on Monday, urging them to craft a budget that looked at the big picture of education spending in town, including the FY14 request from the Amherst-Pelham Regional School for a roughly \$900,000 increase, which will translate to a \$100,000 assessment increase for Leverett this year.

D'Errico said a recent budget presentation by Chris Condit, on

behalf of the library trustees, got him thinking about the town's budget making process, after Condit told the selectboard on Jan. 29 that he had come before them "to advocate for the library." Advocacy, in a budget situation determined by finite and arguably insufficient resources, involved not only speaking for one department's budget, but in effect speaking against the budgetary needs of other departments, d'Errico argued.

"It's like saying books are more important than police," d'Errico continued. "Here's what we need. You find the money. We're basically trying to function in a dysfunctional tax system, locally and in the state. That's what keeps me up at night. All departments should look at the budget as a whole, not say, 'Here's what we want - it's up to you to cut the baby up.'"

Regional school representative Kip Fonsh said the regional

school's \$900,000 budget increase should be viewed in the context of ongoing cuts, including an equal cut of \$900,000 to close a roughly \$1.8 million deficit for the coming year. He predicted those cuts would lead to not only a reduction in staff, but also a reduction in electives, and an increased focus on the core curriculum. "Streamlining and efficiency" are the hallmarks of the regional budget, said Fonsh, resulting in "fewer choices for students."

Meanwhile, the school committee objected to the selectboard's suggestion they should fund a third janitor's salary (\$24,273) out of their operating budget, although they seemed open to the idea of funding a portion of the town's proposed facilities management position, in recognition of the fact that the school shares a public water supply, and other utilities such as a

septic system with other nearby town buildings. The selectboard recommended the school hire another janitor after hearing several complaints about the appearance of the school in recent weeks; the school committee felt the school was being kept clean enough, generally, in view of the pressure to conserve finances.

The committee approved Ross's recommendation to increase the cost of pre-school tuition from \$28 to \$30 a day, \$15 on half days, an increase from the current tuition of \$28 a day, \$12.90 on half days. Ross said individual financial hardship would be taken into account in determining sliding scale rates, and that no child would be denied a slot in the pre-K program due to finances. The continuing balance in the school's preschool revolving fund has declined from \$28,348 in FY'08 to just \$2,651 last year, prompting the increase.

The school committee noted the impending departure of ten school choice students, when the double 6th grade graduates next year, will result in a \$50,000 loss to the school choice revolving fund, which LES has used as a cash reserve account to subsidize programs like the after-school and pre-K programs in the past. That cash account is currently at about \$120,000, according to Union-28 business manager Mike Kociela.

Reporting on the progress of discussions on regionalizing the elementary schools of Leverett and Shutesbury with the schools of

Pelham and Amherst, committee member Sarah Dolven said, "This is a huge process, with multi-layered concerns. We have to get educated. We are the conduit to the community" on school regionalization, which Dolven characterized as coming "fast and furious."

Superintendent Joan Wickman, who admitted any comment she made on the possibility of Leverett and Shutesbury regionalizing K-12 with Amherst-Pelham would smack of "sour grapes," because "of course, you're just defending your jobs," nonetheless spoke up in favor of Leverett Elementary's current emphasis on arts education, the greenhouse program, and the adventure program.

"This is where the quality of education happens," said Wickman, implying that such programs might be at risk if Leverett were to become part of a larger region. (For details on the educational and financial pros and cons of the proposed regionalization plan, see article on page 1.)

A forum on the proposed school regionalization will be held at 6:30 p.m. on Feb. 28 at the Leverett Elementary gymnasium. On Saturday, March 9, at 9 a.m. at the middle school, the regional planning board will decide whether to bring the proposal forward to town meeting voters in Leverett, Shutesbury, and Pelham in November, and Amherst will schedule a special election.



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

EVERY WEDNESDAY

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

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

EVERY THURSDAY

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

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

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

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

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Nina's Nook, Avenue A, Turners Falls: *Sensual>Sexual>Smut*. Erotic art by local artists.

LOCAL EVENTS:

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 7

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: *The Collected Poets Series* featuring *Cindy Snow* and *Betsy Wheeler*, 7 p.m.

Deja Brew Pub, Wendell: *Richard Chase*, acoustic driven originals, 8 to 10 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Falltown String Band*. 8 p.m., free.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 8

Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Friends Coffeehouse with Mark and Beverly Davis, String Plucked Duo*. Folk, classical, rock and jazz-informed plucked string instrumentation. 7 to 9 p.m., suggested donation.

Pothole Pictures, Memorial Hall, Shelburne Falls: *Never Cry Wolf* (1983). PG, 105 minutes. 7:30 p.m. Music before the movie: *Whistlestop*, old-time music. 7 p.m.

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: *The Peachy's*, americana blues, 8 p.m.

Arts Block Café, Greenfield: *Dan Kennedy*, new age piano. 8 p.m., \$

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Village Hill*, jazz/fusion. 9:30 p.m., free.

Deja Brew Pub, Wendell: *Rhythm, Inc.*, reggae, 9:30 p.m. to midnight

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 9

Northfield Mountain: *The Winter Sky*. Indoor and outdoor program to introduce the constellations and their stories. Ages 8 and older. Pre-register by calling (800) 859-2960. 7 to 8:30 p.m.

Pothole Pictures,

Memorial Hall, Shelburne Falls: *Never Cry Wolf* (1983). PG, 105 minutes. 7:30 p.m. Music before the movie: *Daniel Hales & the Frost Heaves*, indie rock, folk, country mix. 7 p.m.

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: *Pamela Means* and *Brook Batteau*, benefit for the

venue, 7 p.m.

Wendell Free Library: Movie screening, *The Island of Dr. Moreau*. 7:30 p.m.

Arts Block Café, Greenfield:



Brattleboro jazz singer Samirah Evans will bring her *Handsome Devils* to Saturday's *Mardi Gras* party at Greenfield's Arts Block Café. The party is now a benefit for Samirah following a chimney fire at her house. 8 p.m.

Happier Valley Comedy Show with the *Ha-Ha's & Side of Toast*. 7:30 p.m., \$

Arts Block Café, Greenfield: *Mardi Gras Party* featuring *Samirah Evans* and her *Handsome Devils*, jazz/blues, and *Lil' Orphans Cajun Express*, cajun dance. Benefit for Samirah and Chris after their recent house fire. 8 p.m., \$

Deja Brew Pub, Wendell: *Boys Night Out*, vintage rock feat. *Jeff Bauman*. 9 to 11 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Glamour Shots!* Party with photographer *Joanna Chattman*. Wear your '80s/'90s glamorous best. 9:30 p.m.

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

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 10

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: *Ray Mason*, indie rock, 2 p.m.

Montague Bookmill, Montague Center: *Dead of Winter Film Series, Monsoon Wedding* (2001, dir. Mira Nair). 7 p.m., free.

Deja Brew Pub, Wendell: *Steve Crow, Peter Kim & Joe Fitzpatrick*, warped americana, 8:30 to 10:30 p.m.

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

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 12

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Ginevra & Mike's Open Mike Cabaret*. 8 p.m., free.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 13

Augusta Savage Gallery, New Africa House, UMass, Amherst: a talk by Dr. Katherine Anne Paul, *Bardo & Rebirth: Tibetan Visions of Potential Lifetimes*. 7 to 8 p.m. Free.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Shout Lulu*, southern string band. 8 p.m., free.

Deja Brew Pub, Wendell: *Simon White* and *Boo Pearson*, acoustic reggae, 8 to 10:30 p.m.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 14

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: *Allie Farris*, piano-driven classic rock. Northeast debut. 8 p.m., free.

Deja Brew Pub, Wendell: *The Roosters*, classic rock dance music by *Bruce Scofield* and *Mark Feller*, 8 to 10:30 p.m.

CALL for PHOTO SUBMISSIONS

Four Seasons on the Leverett Trails. March and April exhibit at the Leverett Library. Sponsored by the Leverett Trails Committee. See www.rattlesnakeguttertrust.org/trails/photo-exhibit/ for more information. Deadline February 15.

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 has been extended to February 15. Visit slateroofpress.com for more info.

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SONG from page 1

bridge that has been choking off the lifeblood of Turners for the last three years, and in the shadow of the dam that has been choking off the free run of the River herself for centuries.

In the same anarchic vein as the Noisecapades' 2011 engagement, the urge to command an audience's attention, to play something recognizable in any time-honored College of Music Knowledge as an offering of the mainstream curriculum, to harness melody, rhythm, or lyric to any traditional communal experience was, at first hypothemic blush, entirely absent. But this did nothing to deter the crowd from risking frostbite in pursuit of sonic chaos.

*What song does the river sing?
What song does the river sing?
Moving down the line...*

Thus sang Bryan Gillig, playing a yellow kazoo and a large portable wooden squeezebox perched wheezily on the gelid rock and crumbled cement foundations of the former Montague Paper Mill, and it was a good question the whole 2-1/2 hour series of five-minute performances might have addressed. But that was not the point. Or, as jazz saxophonist Wayne Shorter happened to put it the next day in the *New York Times*: "One thing we talk about is that to 'play that' we have to maybe play music that doesn't sound like music."

Dust Savior, from Northampton, knelt on a sort of prayer rug by the river's edge in a Stetson hat, a long black coat, leggings, and handsomely tooled red leather boots as she beat a tambourine and cried,

*The tip of this mountain will be an island!
The tip of this mountain will be an island!
And when you die, be ready to die again...*

Asked the meaning of her performance, she looked with pity on her interlocutor for the obtuseness of the question and replied, "It's really just a message."

Neil Young, of Central Street, got the proceedings going promptly at 2 p.m., even though there were no more than a brave and shivering few straggling down the path at that hour to hear him.

Young had forewarned attendees it would not be possible to perform on the river ice. First Light Power had lowered the gates of the dam to release water from last week's warm rains, and the resulting torrent had washed most of the remaining ice away.

"We will be trying to keep time," said Young, referring to the duration



Performer Crank Sturgeon leads the assembly in a participatory vocal piece.

of the acts, not to any attempt at metrical rigor. He struck a gong at "interstitial moments" between acts, and once to end an act that had gone past its limit. "We will keep going until we are through," he added, although many in the audience departed before others had arrived, as the chill of the day dimmed their ardor.

Young himself performed a work in progress he called *Slide the Hammer*, which involved a neat trick the Norse gods would have appreciated: casting a shiny metal finish hammer with a dimpled black rubber handle out across the ice-slick rocks, reeling it back with a ten-foot length of sash rope, then tossing it in a different direction, with a satisfying clatter. Young tossed the hammer again and again, creating a metallic tintinnabulation on the frozen rocks. At the same time he swirled a marble in the bottom of a perforated metal canister, producing the small whirring noise a mourning dove might make if it were pinioned to a rapidly rotating pottery wheel. The small crowd watched respectfully.

Shortly after, two women strummed ukuleles with stiff fingers, looking neither at themselves or their audience as they sat on plastic milk crates and mumbled inaudible words about a friend of theirs who was an inveterate liar. As they sang, a fair-haired child stood nearby and clutched a large block of ice he had found, half the size of his torso.

Abortus Fever, of Holyoke, arranged four monotons on a driftwood stump, plugged into a battery powered micro-cassette player, and proceeded to flail large numbers of amplified electrons in the frozen air.

He reproduced the sounds of mating cicadas in a whirling electric storm and caused them to mutate into hyperactive monkeys hurtling through intergalactic underbrush at warp speed. Another Holyoke artist, Gastric Lavage, performed while framed within the archway of the foundations of the former paper mill, on an unamplified electric guitar, so quietly as to be inaudible to many.

This year's Noisecapades had an elegiac, almost prayerful quality, underlying if not unifying the disparate pieces. Has humanity

really evolved so far from nature that it could no longer sing? Is all technology doomed to fall to pieces, like the graffiti-covered rubble of the old Cutlery Mill? Are we doomed to follow the apocryphal roadmap of messages tagged on the cement fish ladder - 'Lola '09', 'Crack the System', 'Mega' - that served as a backdrop for Holyoke video artist Torsten Zenas Burns, as he posed in a gorilla mask and ultra-punk hazmat suit, lighting the small colored smoke bombs he had strapped to

Overture's rice ball ceremony, and the wind, on which seventeen Canada geese took wing toward the shores of Wissatinnewag. They were soon joined by innumerable others, flying in all directions, in ones or twos, or in chevrons and phalanxes uncountable. Yamasaki Brown may be onto something. Perhaps the pattern of music is best appreciated in silence, and the purpose of art best revealed in the sky.



WENDELL from page 10

tee decided that the town hall could be used to house displaced and temporarily homeless people; its kitchen is not now ready to feed people but a committee is working to make it usable, even for preparing food for the public.

The Diemand Farm already has a legal commercial kitchen. The office building meeting room could hold people with special needs, possibly day sleepers, and meetings could be held in the selectboard office.

The senior and community center has no generator, but could be supplied electricity, and therefore heat, with a portable generator - the police department has several - and serve as a medical office.

The library can provide daytime living space, water, books, and a playground. The highway garage holds the emergency operations center and has a large, but not wheelchair-accessible, upstairs meeting room.

One unanswered question is how long the generators can run before they use up the propane in their tanks. One answer is that running

time depends on the load, and no absolute answer exists, but it should be possible to get a rough idea, and add tanks or exchange the ones in place for larger tanks at one or more buildings if necessary. The highway garage generator is not strong enough to run the building compressor, and should be replaced with a larger one.

During an emergency, every town building in use should have a town official on the premises.

Keller said that nationally known folk and blues singer Tom Rush owes Wendell's Klondike Koehler a favor, and so will be performing at the March 30 Full Moon Coffeehouse.

Building occupancy is limited to 150 people, although that number was probably exceeded at Vic Scutari's memorial, and Keller suggested reviewing that number with fire chief Everett Ricketts and building inspector Phil Delorey. Tickets will be available to Wendell residents first. One change that should be made before then is to install illuminated exit signs inside the building.

Pooser said that at the food-related meetings, the Finance Committee made an impassioned plea for new members to fill out the committee. Member Doug Tanner wanted to make a spending distinction between hard and quantifiable assets, like improvements being developed for the town hall kitchen, and less quantifiable expenses, like consultants and food security. Pooser said that Good Neighbors recently incorporated as a non-profit organization, and that 30% of Wendell takes advantage of the Good Neighbors food distribution.

Aldrich had a letter from FRCOG offering technical help in several areas, and asking that the selectboard prioritize what they considered the town's needs. Board members discussed the list and chose broadband internet connection for every household first, followed in importance by: a regional information technology analysis, a conference on the aging population of towns in Franklin County, and a study of regionalizing fire services within the county.



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