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LAKE PLEASANT

MILLERS FALLS

MONTAGUE CENTER

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The Montague Reporter

also serving Irving, Gill, Leverett and Wendell

YEAR 11 – NO. 19

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

FEBRUARY 21, 2013



Japanese Rig to the Rescue

JOSEPH PARZYCH PHOTO

Jack Graves, superintendent for Northern Construction, oversees the complicated job of building a new bridge on Route 2 in Factory Hollow while maintaining two-way traffic. Green Japanese drilling rig is at work in the background.

By JOE PARZYCH

GILL – Work on the bridge over the Falls River on Route 2 is proceeding ahead of schedule. Northern Construction Superintendent Jack Graves anticipates finishing well before the completion date of November 2014.

The project ran into problems earlier, when encountering blasted ledge fill deposited during the bridge's original construction in 1931. The original contractor back-filled the abutments with chunks blasted from the ledge on the north side of the westbound lane of the

highway as it approaches the bridge. An earlier attempt to drive piles through the soil was thwarted by those chunks of ledge, necessitating a negotiated change of plans. The new plan calls for drilling holes for 30-inch steel casings in which to set the H-beam piles the contractor was unable to drive.

An SD 20E Caterpillar excavator carriage with a Japanese drilling rig mounted on front, capable of drilling 200 feet deep, is drilling the holes for the casings. Another problem recently arose when the drill encountered unstable soil which did not hold up the sides of the hole.

Graves Concrete Service supplied flowable fill to stabilize the sides of the hole by filling part of the hole with the mixture, which is soft enough to easily drill but firm enough to keep the hole open. Once the drill reaches bedrock 68 feet below, it will continue five feet deeper so the crew can cement the casings and H-beam pilings to bedrock. The casings will then be filled with concrete halfway up, surrounding the H-beams the remaining way with crushed rock to the surface.

Using crushed rock in the top see **BRIDGE** page 5

Towns, State Weigh School Budget Process



ELLEN BLANCHETTE PHOTO

Left to right: Tupper Brown, Michael Naughton, Claire Chang and Michael Langknecht at Friday's meeting.

By ELLEN BLANCHETTE

GILL-MONTAGUE – Members of various interested parties gathered in the community room of the Public Safety Facility in Turners Falls last Friday, Feb. 15, to discuss the Gill-Montague regional school district budget process. Representatives from local and state government joined the school committee to express concern over what many saw as a departure from the compact, which had ended the budget disputes that caused the state to take over fiscal control of the district.

Tupper Brown, Gill finance committee member, introduced the meeting with a bit of history. He included a review of how the

compact was developed, including the adoption of what is called Table B, a formula for creating balance in financing among the three parties – the state, the school district and the towns – so that there is confidence in maintaining fiscal sustainability over time.

Michael Naughton, Montague finance committee member, reiterated concerns many community members had over the decision to step away from a process that had maintained confidence over the last few years, and allowed the school district to pass budgets at town meetings. Jeff Singleton finished with a discussion of the need to examine the Chapter 70 formula, as well as enrollment, as part of

see **SCHOOL** page 5

Pride for the Town: Wastewater Treatment

By ANNE HARDING

MONTAGUE – Like many residents of Montague, I received my sewer bill recently and read the insert that claimed, "Sewer rates have not changed for 4 fiscal years, 2010-2013. Do you want to know why? Call (413) 773-8865."

I posed the question to Robert Trombley, Superintendent of the Montague Water Pollution Control Facility (WPCF) who gave me the short answer – rates have stayed steady due to self-directed process control changes. He added, "WPCFs are often custodial in culture, but the team in Montague is proactive and likes to try new things, pushing the envelope to improve their processes."

These changes are reflected in the rating change by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MA DEP), which ranks WPCFs based on facility equipment, treatment levels, flow volume and operational schedule (the highest rating is Grade VII). The Montague WPCF had a dual rating of IV/V. The recent additions of the wet weather chlorine tanks, SCADA system and



ROBERT TROMBLEY PHOTO

WPCF staff, left to right: Timothy Little, Scott Coombs, Timothy Peura, John Little, and Michael Little.

Missing from photo are Robert Trombley and Tina Tyler.

Fournier Press resulted in the increased rating of the facility to a Grade VI.

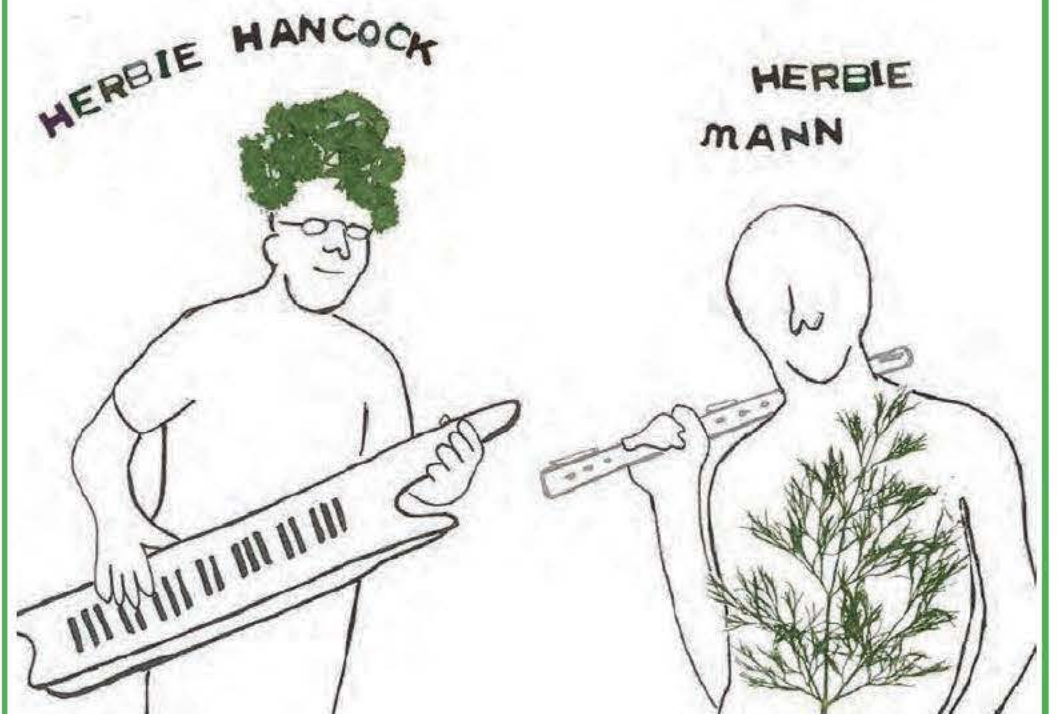
The facility uprating also affects personnel, since a fully certified operator must hold a license no more than 1 grade below the facility to be allowed to work unsupervised or act as shift supervisor. Two members of

Trombley's team, Mike Little and Tim Little, are scheduled to take the State examination to move from Grade III to Grade V operators. They currently hold emergency certification for weekend work and emergency call-in work.

Trombley is understandably proud of his seven-

see **WATER** page 9

Rotation Book Show: A Theme, a Blank Page, and a Deadline



Page from Amy Gordon's book, Herbs

By ANNE HARDING

TURNERS FALLS – In August 2011, 12 people signed on for a year-long shared art project, the rules of which are as follows: Participants each chose a theme and created the first page of a book, including instructions and information about the theme – some more detailed than others. Each month, members received another partici-

pant's book with their chosen theme, blank pages to work on, and a one-month deadline. The resulting collaborative art books – 12 books, each with its own theme, and each containing the work of 12 people – will be on display at LOOT beginning Sunday, Feb. 24, with an opening reception from 2 to 4 p.m.

Pam Allan, librarian, musician and coordinator of the rotation book project,

had participated in a similar project where participants were geographically widespread and books were mailed to each other on the first day of the month. She decided to organize a local project; this group hails from Turners Falls, Gill, Greenfield and Northfield. Rather than mailing the books, members tried to meet once a month to exchange books and hear a

see **BOOK** page 10

PET OF THE WEEK

Yo Momma



Momma Crabitz

I was a stray brought in to the Gardner Animal Control Facility with my kittens back in May of 2012. My babies all found new homes and I was left to wait... for several long months.

I recently transferred here to Dakin in the hopes that I might finally meet my own perfect family. I am a sweet girl with a great purr and a bit of a playful side. I really can't wait to get out of here and into a home with a sunny spot to stretch and a loving person to call my own.

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

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PAPER!
Week of February 25th
in Montague

more info? call: 863-2054

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WENDELL FREE LIBRARY

COA Film Series Presents "Bagdad Café"

On Sunday, Feb. 24 at 7 p.m., there will be a free screening of the film *Bagdad Café* at the Wendell Free Library.

Bavarian tourist Jasmin (Marianne Sägebrecht) fights with her husband in the Mojave Desert and storms off to a nearby café-motel, where she develops a prickly friendship with the owner, Brenda (CCH Pounder). In time, Jasmin makes a home for herself at the café, and her friendship with Brenda transforms both of them. The characters who collect at the café, including Hollywood-set painter Rudi (Jack Palance), form an odd sort of family in this quirky film. *Bagdad Café* (1988, PG, 92 minutes) is a story about friendship, pain, love, and humanity.



Marianne Sägebrecht playing Jasmin Münchgstettner and Jack Palance playing Rudi Cox

LEVERETT LIBRARY

Spring Yoga

On Thursdays, Feb. 28 through April 11, the Leverett Library will be hosting Spring Yoga programs. Bliss Yoga will be held from 5 to 6 p.m. Evening Yoga will be held from 6:15 to 7:30 p.m.

You can sign up for the entire series or simply pay for an single

"*Bagdad Café* sets us free from the production line of Hollywood's brain-damaged 'high concepts' and walks its own strange and lovely path. The charm of *Bagdad Café* is that every character and every moment is unanticipated, obscurely motivated, of uncertain meaning and vibrating with life." – Roger Ebert, *Chicago Sun Times*

For more information, contact Douglas Dawson at (978) 544-7762 or ddawson@post.harvard.edu.

drop-in session.

Register with Lisa Enzer at (413) 367-2658 or enzer@earthlink.net

More details can be found at www.livingroomyoga.net

This is a Leverett Recreation Commission program.



JESSICA LARKIN ILLUSTRATION

By FRED CICETTI

Q. Is it safe to buy medicine online?

Only if you are very careful. There are many fraudulent operators on the internet.

According to the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy (NABP), the professional organization that represents the state agencies that license pharmacies, only three percent of online websites reviewed appear to meet state and federal pharmacy laws.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) warns people to beware of online pharmacies

that:

- Offer very low drug prices that seem too good to be true.
- Are not licensed in the United States by a state agency.
- Allow the purchase of medicine without requiring a prescription.
- Do not have a licensed pharmacist available for consultation.
- Send spam or unsolicited e-mail offering deep discounts on medicine.
- Are located outside the United States and ship drugs from a foreign country.
- Ship prescriptions worldwide.

The FDA is conducting a public education campaign called *BeSafeRx: Know Your Online Pharmacy* to help consumers understand and minimize the risks of buying medicines online.

The risks include buying medicine that is counterfeit, contaminated, expired, not FDA-approved, or



VALENTINE'S CONCERT AT THE SENIOR CENTER

The Gill-Montague Senior Center Director Roberta Potter documented the Valentine's musical concert by Moonlight Davis and Morningstar on Feb. 12. Accompanied by pianist Ben Kohn, the beloved local vocal duo celebrated the many forms of love with ballads, blues, jazz, poetry, and standard folk songs. Their renditions of "The Thrill is Gone" and "My Funny Valentine" were especially relished.

GILL MONTAGUE SENIOR CENTER

Protect Yourself from Medicare Fraud

On Tuesday, Feb. 26 at 1 p.m., at the Gill Montague Senior Center on 62 Fifth Street in Turners Falls, there will be a free workshop on protecting yourself from Medicare fraud.

Come meet a representative of the Massachusetts Senior Medicare Patrol Program and learn the tools to become a better, more engaged health care consumer.

The Senior Medicare Patrol Program is a national program funded by the federal government com-

missioned to reduce Medicare fraud by helping beneficiaries and their caregivers to be more informed. Medicare fraud is estimated to be between \$60 to \$120 billion annually!

You can help protect Medicare and yourself and make sure benefits are available when you need them by making sure claims paid on your behalf are accurate.

Call the Gill Montague Senior Center at (413) 863-9357 to sign up.

THE HEALTHY GEEZER:

Prescription Drugs on the Web?

that contains none of the necessary active ingredients. Medicine bought online may also have too much or too little of the active ingredient. In the worst-case scenario, you will buy medicine with the wrong active ingredient. So, how should you proceed if you want to buy medicines online?

First, go to your doctor to get prescriptions.

Then, buy from a licensed pharmacy. Some websites have a seal of approval from Verified Internet Pharmacy Practice Sites (VIPPS). If not, check the NABP to see if the online pharmacy is licensed: www.nabp.net.

Make sure the website offers the services of a registered pharmacist. Legitimate online pharmacies have pharmacists you can consult. Often, these sites offer a toll-free number to connect with a pharmacist.

Just because you are buying online doesn't guarantee that you will get the best price. Do some comparison shopping at your local drug stores.

The FDA encourages consumers to report suspected fraudulent sales of medical products on the internet: www.fda.gov/Safety/ReportaProblem/ucm059315.htm

The FDA also encourages consumers to report any adverse effects from any medical product a t : www.fda.gov/Safety/MedWatch/default.htm.

Send your questions to fred@healthygeezer.com.

SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES - FEBRUARY 25TH TO MARCH 1ST

GILL-MONTAGUE

Gill/Montague Senior Center, 62 Fifth Street, Turners Falls, is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Roberta Potter is the Council on Aging Director. Congregate meals are served Tuesday through Thursday at Noon. Meal reservations must be made one day in advance by 11 a.m. The Meal Site Manager is Kerry Togneri. All fitness classes are supported by a grant from the Executive Office of Elder Affairs. Voluntary donations are accepted. For 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, 2/25
10:10 a.m. Aerobics
10:45 a.m. Chair Exercise
1 p.m. Knitting Circle

Tuesday, 2/26
9:30 a.m. Chair Yoga
1 p.m. Medicare Fraud Prevention Talk

Wednesday, 2/27
10 a.m. Aerobics
12:45 p.m. Bingo

Thursday, 2/28
9 a.m. Tai Chi
1 p.m. Pitch

Friday, 3/1
10 a.m. Aerobics
10:45 a.m. Chair Exercise
1 p.m. Writing Group

ERVING

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

activities and 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, 2/25
9 a.m. Tai Chi
10 a.m. Osteo Exercise
Noon Quilting

Tuesday, 2/26
8:45 a.m. Chair Aerobics
9:30 a.m. C.O.A Meeting
12:30 p.m. Painting

Wednesday, 2/27
8:45 a.m. Line Dancing
10 a.m. Chair Yoga
Noon Bingo

Thursday, 2/28
8:45 a.m. Aerobics
10 a.m. Posture Perfect
Noon Cards

Friday, 3/1
9 a.m. Bowling
9:30 a.m. Sit and Knit

LEVERETT

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

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

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

WENDELL

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

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Local Briefs

Compiled By DON CLEGG

Mammal Tracking in the Field is an opportunity to learn to interpret and identify mammal tracks and signs in the wild. Held at the Quabbin Reservoir, on Saturday, Feb. 23, from 9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 4 p.m. Trackers may find evidence of porcupine, fisher, bear, moose, and more. Trackers will be looking for scat, browse and bark stripping, evidence of scent marking, and tracks themselves.

The program will be led by Susan Morse, a wildlife ecologist and the Science Director of “Keeping Track,” a non-profit devoted to providing technical training to professional biologists, citizen scientist volunteers, land trust officials, and conservation planners. This program, for ages 16 and older, is co-sponsored with Hitchcock Center for the Environment, Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary/Mass Audubon, and Northfield Mountain Recreation and Environmental Center.

To pre-register, call Arcadia at (413) 584-3009 or register online at www.massaudubon.org. The meeting location will be sent upon registration. Dress warmly, and definitely bring a warm drink, a snack, and an extra jacket or sweater inside your daypack.

Join Northfield Mountain Recreation and Environmental

Center staff for a **family adventure by the light of the moon** while snowshoeing on Saturday, Feb. 23, from 6 to 8 p.m. Learn how to navigate like nocturnal creatures, pretend to be predators sneaking up on prey and learn about the shocking scientific mysteries rolled up in Wintergreen Lifesavers! A cup of cocoa and snacks will warm everyone on your return to the Center.

This program, for ages 8 and older, is free and no previous snowshoeing experience is necessary. Snowshoe rentals are available. Wear wind pants or gaiters if you have them, and dress in warm layers that can be shed as we get moving. Pre-registration is required by calling Northfield Mountain at (800) 859-2960.

Greening Greenfield will host a film and discussion on Wednesday, Feb. 27, at the Second Congregational Church, located on the Greenfield Town Common, starting at 6:30 p.m. **“Reclaiming Democracy”** is a film about two people who have worked with more than a hundred communities to help them reclaim decision-making for themselves and away from corporations. This event is free and open to the public. For more information, visit www.greeninggreenfield.org.

Eva Gibavic will present slides of **ceremonial stone sites** in Leverett

and then will show Ted Timreck’s film: “Great Falls: Discovery, Destruction and Preservation in a Massachusetts Town” at the Lerverett Library on Wednesday, Feb 27, at 7 p.m.

In 2008, the National Register of Historic Places found that a Native American ceremonial landscape at the Turners Falls Airport was eligible for recognition and recognized surrounding an 18 mile area as a Tribal historical district. Leverett, with its many ceremonial stone structures, is part of this district.

This program will be followed up in early spring (date TBA) with a walk around in Leverett to explore some of these structures. For more info, call Dawn (413) 367-9562 or Dan (413) 367-2656.

Franklin County Tech School’s **5th Annual Dodgeball Tournament** is Friday, March 1. Teams are open to anyone and will consist of 5 players. Registration is \$25 per team, with cash prizes for the last 2 teams standing. The tournament begins at 6 sharp and ends when one team remains. This is a double-elimination tournament. Teams must be registered by Feb. 27. The tourney is only accepting 40 teams, so call to register at (413) 863-9561 X233.

A **cabin fever potluck dinner** will be held in Wendell Old Town Hall on Saturday, March 2, starting at 6 p.m. Donations of money or non-perishable food are encouraged to benefit Good Neighbors. For more information, call Kathleen at (978) 544-8772

Send local briefs to editor@montaguereporter.org.

MILLERS RIVER WATERSHED COUNCIL Calling for Poetry

River Verses

*Millers River Watershed Council
2013 Poetry Contest*

Be a poet and let us know it!

As the river flows, MRWC is inviting folks in the watershed to let their creative verses flow by sponsoring a poetry contest.

The Millers River Watershed Council is asking participants to compose a poem about a local river or tributary, share what it means to you, how it looks to you, why you enjoy it, or how it makes you marvel at the world around us.

Rules:

Maximum 51 lines (1 for each mile of the Millers River).

A river or tributary in the Millers watershed must be named.

The poem needs to give a sense of the river and/or watershed.

2-poem limit per poet. Must be original, unpublished work.

Paper submissions: send 2 copies, one with & one without your name

Electronic submissions: send copies in Word.

Note your age on submission.

Categories:

Youth: 6 to 12, and 13 to 18

Adult: 19 to 30, and 31+

Acceptable forms: Standard poetry and/or Haiku.

Deadline: Thursday, Feb. 28th.

Winners will be announced April 5th at Poetry night @ MREC in Athol and asked to recite their winning entry. Prizes will be awarded! Submissions may be used by MRWC on its web site and are invited to be part of a future book of Millers River Poems; the proceeds will be used for river monitoring projects.

For more information visit: www.millerswatershed.org or contact Keith Davies, MRWC, MassLIFT-AmeriCorps Project Outreach Coordinator, at watershed@millersriver.net or (978) 248-9491. Mail: MRWC, 100 Main St, Athol, MA 01331.

Cabin Fever Potluck Dinner!

**Old Town Hall - Wendell
Sat, March 2, 6 p.m.**

Donations of money or non-perishable food encouraged.

Benefit for Good Neighbors.

For more information, call Kathleen at (978) 544 8772

Legislative Budget Hearings

The legislative Joint Committee on Ways and Means has scheduled its FY 14 Budget Hearing on Education for Tuesday, Feb. 26, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Greenfield Community College Dining Commons. The Joint Committee is chaired by Senator Stephen Brewer and State Representative Brian Dempsey, with co-chairs Senator Jennifer Flanagan and State Representative Stephen Kulik.

The House Committee on Ways and Means examines the Governor’s

proposed budget, released last month, and will release its own recommendations for the annual budget for deliberation by the House of Representatives. Prior to release of the House Ways and Means Budget, Joint Ways and Means Committee budget hearings are held across the state.

The Hearing is open to the public and will include a welcome and remarks from Bob Pura, followed by a series of testimony presentations by a panel of Commissioners of Early

Education and Care, Elementary and Secondary Education, Higher Education, the MA Secretary of Education, the President of UMass, a Mass Municipal Association panel and Education panels including MTA, MFT, MASS, MASC and MARS.

This is a wonderful opportunity to see democracy in action. Stop in and watch the proceedings at any point throughout the day.

For more information, contact Bob Pura at (413)775-1410 or pura@gcc.mass.edu.

A2T Fundraiser

Access to Technology (A2T), a project of Thrive, is a small volunteer non-profit organization based in Turners Falls that recycles donated computers from businesses and schools and provides them to underserved populations in the Pioneer Valley.

Recipients of computers are identified through teachers, school administrators, attorneys who work

with underprivileged children, and staff of non-profit organizations working with low-income adults.

Over 1,000 computers have already been donated by organizations like Yankee Candle and Deerfield Academy.

While A2T is registered with the state as a charitable non-profit, in order to apply for the grant money necessary to hire a staff person and rent space, we have to establish our-

selves as a federally recognized tax-exempt organization (501c3). This is a lengthy and expensive process. A2T needs to raise just \$500 in order to move the organization to the next level.

There is a 30-day fundraising campaign going on now at gofundme.com. A donation of even \$5 would help enormously. To learn more, visit www.gofundme.com/funda2t.

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Cooperative Budget Efforts Must Continue

Concerned parties from the Legislature, the superintendent and school committee of the Gill-Montague Regional School District, Gill and Montague selectboards and finance committees, both towns' administrators, and the group of three known as the "tech panel" came together in the community meeting room at the Montague Public Safety Complex on Feb. 15 to explore the progress toward town and school district collaboration on an affordable and sustainable school budget. Such collaboration was successful for three past budgets under former superintendents Carl Ladd and Nadine Ekstrom.

Although the current interim superintendent Mark Prince has attended one meeting of the tech panel, it seems there has been a change in the District's view of the value of such collaboration. This was expressed by GMRSD committee member Mike Langknecht, who said, "I don't want our superintendent putting that much time into the tech panel."

Undaunted, Tupper Brown of the tech panel reiterated his hope that Prince would in fact join in the discussions about long-term sustainability, enrollment and Chapter 70 educational funding issues as well. The current GMRSD accounting service, The Management Solution, perhaps belongs at the table as well.

For their parts, Senator Stan Rosenberg, and Representatives Stephen Kulik and Denise Andrews expressed openness to learning and discussing the results of the investigation of the Chapter 70 formula. Kulik expressed the realities of changing the formula to favor a particular set of districts; doing so may benefit one group of similar

districts and penalize another group. Rosenberg thought enrollment was more of a problem than the Chapter 70 formula. Brown pointed out that while the district has shown a growth of 44 students this year, they would need 30 more students for Chapter 70 funding to the district to increase.

We want to support the process of collaboration between GMRSD and the towns for three reasons. First, the District is not only an educational entity, but also a financial department of the towns. This means that the towns cannot spend monies exclusively on town projects and ignore funding the schools. Second, while the District depends on the towns for the local contribution, it ought not to develop budgets that deplete or demand of the towns beyond their capacities. Third, it is important for all parties to acknowledge that neither the school district nor the towns are absolutely autonomous entities. The very regional agreement that delineates their individual responsibilities binds them together financially within the further financial realities of the state government.

There's plenty to discuss and on which to collaborate. For either the District or the towns to ignore the financial realities of the other leads into the sort of protracted, unpleasant and uncollegial interaction that we have seen too often in the past, and which has had a part in our district being sent to Level 4 in the first place. When the three past budgets worked on collaboratively came before town meeting, town meeting members knew they were a jointly developed product being recommended by both the District and the towns. What a difference it made.



CLAUDIA WELLS ILLUSTRATION

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

The Pros of Regionalization

In 1955, Leverett and Shutesbury joined the Amherst Regional Public School for grades 7-12. Also in the 50s the elementary school students went to the newly constructed Leverett Elementary School and existing one room schools in town closed their doors (originally there were 9 one room school houses in Leverett).

Since then, discussions of further regionalization with Amherst have taken place in 1968, 1976, 1992 and 2009. In 1992, Leverett voted to join a 4 town region for the elementary school with Amherst, Pelham and Shutesbury, but, because Shutesbury voted against it, the region wasn't formed. The 2009 study was a result of a state's proposal to regionalize schools by county, which would have been a drastic change for Leverett whose middle and high school students go to Amherst Regional School. Starting in 2011 a new regional study was undertaken, this time initiated by the towns. Again we are considering this option.

In his OpEd piece (Montague Reporter, Feb. 14), Jeff Singleton voices an opinion that there are no strong positives, financially or educationally for the smaller towns to join this region. I have been working with 11 other Regional School District Planning Board (RSDPB) members for many months now and have reached a different conclusion. Since Leverett and Shutesbury students go to Amherst Regional in 7th grade already, a clear alignment of curriculum would be beneficial, avoiding potential redundancy in curriculum and ensuring that all students are equally prepared for this transition. Amherst-Pelham and Amherst Regional Schools are embracing an array of strategies to improve learning and teaching from which our Leverett school would benefit.

In a region of this size there is the real possibility for the creation of a magnet school where innovative education techniques could be tried. Such a school could focus on languages, science, or math, etc. providing a different approach to education. This has been tried in

many regions in Massachusetts.

Another benefit of regionalization might be an expansion of shared positions for "specials" (art, music, etc.). It is difficult to retain talented teachers in these areas if you cannot offer a full time position. There is more of a possibility to add to the "specials" in a larger region than in a small union with each school in its own district.

The financial consultant for RSDPB, Mark Abrahams, looked at the FY13 budgets for all of the schools and the two unions and came up with an estimated savings of \$400-500 thousand or about 1 percent. This seems minimal to some but it does not take into account potential savings down the road in purchasing power, streamlining of some services and potential regional transition funding from the state to cover the \$177,000 estimated cost to pay for coordinated technology that was included in the projections. Also not included in the estimated savings, is the time that would be saved by Leverett and Shutesbury Town Treasurers who would have less financial data to process. In any case, what is wrong with saving around a half million dollars?

Also questioned is the claim that Amherst Regional central office administration costs would not increase for a PreK-12 region. On the surface it doesn't seem realistic that these costs would not increase with the addition of 3 schools to the region. Each school district and region has to file over 100 reports to the state so currently 5 sets of these reports are being filed. There would be one set for a PreK-12 region. The central office in Amherst now submits 2 sets so this task would be cut in half. Also there are now 5 budgets being created, met about, approved, etc. Amherst creates 2 of these; with a PreK-12 region, there would be one budget; there would also be one audit instead of five. This very real consolidation, along with the consolidation of other accounting functions would enable Leverett and Shutesbury to be absorbed at no extra cost and would potentially free up more time and resources for education.

Singleton questioned the assertion that the school budget would be clearer than it is now. Currently at the Leverett Annual Town Meeting there is a line item for the elementary school; for FY13 that amount is \$1,712,167 which is the budget approved by the Leverett School Committee. However that does not include \$460,853 in additional operating costs for the school (exclusive of debt service). The regional school budget is stated on one line item as \$1,238,608 (exclusive of debt service). Although all of the information is there in the budget, it is easy to mistakenly think that the elementary school costs \$1,712,167 and not over \$2,000,000.

There are also concerns about programs that are unique to our elementary schools being cut. This is not the case; all of the elementary schools in Amherst have their own programs to enhance learning. There is nothing about adopting common curricular goals, assessment practices, etc. that precludes project based learning, integration of arts and technology into the curriculum or any other program suited to that school's student body, including a greenhouse in Leverett, which supplies food for the lunch program and is a learning tool for our students.

I encourage everyone to come to the forum in Leverett on Feb. 28 (6:30 p.m. at the Leverett Elementary School) and also to check out the website, www.regionalschoolplanning.com, to get more details on the study.

If this is such a bad idea, why do we repeatedly consider it?

— Julie Shively
Leverett Selectboard

U.S. Casualties in Afghanistan as of 2/20/13

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remain in their original packaging with the labels. There is no need to speak with anyone. The service is discreet and strictly confidential.

Chief Chip Dodge said that his department and the District Attorney's office believe this is an important service.

They accept non-prescription medication, veterinary medication and vitamins and dietary supplements as well.



Left to right: Greenfield Mayor Bill Martin, District Attorney David Sullivan, and Montague Chief Chip Dodge

BRIDGE from page 1

half of the casings allows the pilings to sway slightly in the event of an earthquake. All new U.S. bridges have been mandated to be constructed to withstand the shock wave of an earthquake traveling through the earth, since earthquakes dropped bridges in California, according to Graves. The new bridge will stand on top of the H-beam pilings as if on stilts, which may wobble but will not snap.

During construction, Northern Construction will maintain two-way traffic by building the Northern third of the bridge first. Once it is complete, westbound traffic will use that new section while the contractor builds the middle third. Once they complete the middle section, the contractor will divert traffic to it, so that they can build the final, southern section.

During all this work, Northern Construction must maintain a walkway for virtually non-existent foot traffic, largely limited to nosy reporters and three kids who were skipping school last September.



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SCHOOL from page 1

the ongoing search for budget sustainability.

Among the attendees were Massachusetts State Senator Stanley Rosenberg; Representatives Stephen Kulik and Denise Andrews; Paul Dunphy, aide to Representative Kulik; John Hanold, chair; Sharon Kennaugh, Montague finance committee member; Chris Boutwell, Montague selectboard member; Frank Abbondanzio, Montague town administrator; Randy Crosier, chair; John Ward, Gill selectboard member; and Claire Chang, Gill finance committee member.

Representing the district was Interim Superintendent Mark Prince. School committee members in attendance were Joyce Phillips, chair, Michael Langknecht, Misty Lyons, and Leslie Cogswell, of Montague, Jane Oakes and Sandra Brown, vice-chair, of Gill. Andy Paquette from the district accounting service also participated. Seating was arranged around a U-shaped collection of tables and was filmed.

Brown stated that it appears the preliminary budget may be out of line with the compact, and raised concern over maintaining sustainability. Naughton said there is a \$300,000 gap between what would be affordable to the towns and what the budget asks of them. Projecting forward, he sees the gap increasing to well over \$600,000 the following year.

To this, Andrew Paquette of the business department said, "None of the numbers should be seen as cast in stone. It's an ever changing landscape."

Concern over the budget is not only about the numbers. Chang said she felt the tech panel was the only way the towns got out of the contentious meetings with the school committee. Langknecht said he did not agree. He said what changed was the school committee invited towns to provide their input before the budget was presented. Langknecht said the tech panel never looked at the district budget. And he pointed out, "I'm a

school committee and town member. We're all town here – all on the same side."

Naughton asked, "How should we move forward? Right now assessments are above what the towns can afford." Langknecht responded that the budget presented was one the business department said would come down. Chang said the recent public hearing was the first time she had been invited to engage in the budget process, and said she didn't feel there was a whole-hearted invitation for the towns to discuss it. She said this year hasn't followed that format and the budget is much higher.

Paquette said the budget as presented is just in its infancy, waiting for input from administration and staff. He said the number is what they came up with to meet the Feb. 1 deadline for presenting a preliminary budget. "By no means is this a fixed number – we haven't heard from Ways and Means yet. This was to meet a deadline."

Concerns continued to be raised about the compact and Table B budget formula being in trouble and the superintendent saying that the tech panel is not necessary. Singleton said, "We had a collaboration; it's important to recreate that collaboration."

Hanold spoke on the subject of waiting for change. He said the chances of the situation changing are in the "too small to measure" range. He said the town of Montague has had heads of departments submit requests for funding and he feels the town is on the right path. In January they had a first budget that included a bottom-up approach. "There is no white knight in our future, except for the people here around the table," Hanold said.

Prince said that statements that he isn't willing to make himself available are not accurate. He said, "I'm more than willing," and that "not one member had requested to meet with" him. Tupper Brown responded that maybe it was a communication problem, an impression given when Prince said the work of the tech panel was done. Brown was pleased to hear Prince was willing to meet with them. Hanold said they present a better image if they work together. The towns and district have unwound a lot of the problems with the state, but no longer have a road map for the future.

A meeting was proposed, and Prince was invited to a joint selectboard and finance committee meeting to be held at 6 p.m. on March 6 at the Montague Town Hall in Turners Falls. Brown said this meeting is about the long view.

Phillips commented on Table B, saying that Chapter 70 funding never came in at the level presented, but has always been lower. At the same time, the school district never put their budget at 2 percent, but it has been less for the past several years. In the last fiscal year, a lot of E&D money was

used for technology. Phillips made the point that when building the budget, the impact on the Level 4 status must be considered. She said, "We need to know as we look at any cuts, that we understand their impact on education. We have to be very careful. This plan was never real. Communication is important. Reality is important. What's important is our kids, and doing what's best for our kids."

Kulik said, "The district loses more than one million dollars in choice and charter money. Having those kinds of discussions around solving those problems would be useful. I don't happen to like choice. I don't think people use it for the right reasons."

Singleton suggested they look at the enrollment issue. Prince said they've started looking at that. They have looked at the kindergarten and first grade and discovered 40 students who never came into the district.

Rosenberg said, "I don't want to discourage anyone working on the formula, but I don't think the formula is where your problem lies. The formula worked very well in the first seven years of Ed Reform. It covered costs of requirements. Then enrollment dropped precipitously, and we went through a recession, and we adjusted regional numbers because the suburbs complained."

Kulik responded, "The problem with the formula is the outcome: you're not getting what you want or need. Show why this is hurting you." He suggested they look at enrollment and per-pupil spending. Rosenberg said Gill-Montague has very high per-pupil spending.

Sandra Brown said, "We're looking at why students leave," and mentioned exit interviews. Prince repeated his interest in the number of kindergarten and first graders entering the district, but agreed exit interviews are great, if parents will take the time to respond to them. He suggested maybe as students are leaving, they could have a survey as part of their packet. He added, "this is just a suggestion, nothing like this exists right now."

Tupper Brown summarized: "Everyone is content to have the tech panel continue working on Table B. On these broader issues we would like to form small groups to look at 1) Chapter 70 formula, 2) per capita cost, 3) choice and charter."

Brown continued, "Getting people to send their kids to public, rather than private, schools depends partly on what the district is like, and partly what public perception is of the district."

Singleton added, on the issue of enrollment: "Does the school district have to wait until we figure it out before we make an effort to address the problem and bring people back into the district?" Langknecht said this is the obligation of long-term planning by the school committee.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Single Scheme Fraud and Theft on a Person Over 60

Wednesday, 2/7 12:59 p.m. Vandalism at █ Avenue A in Turners Falls. 1:26 p.m. Summons issued for operation of an unlicensed motor vehicle when pulled over going through a signal on Greenfield Road in Turners Falls. 9:11 p.m. Domestic disturbance at █ 4th Street and 3 summons issued for assault and property destruction. Thursday, 2/8 7:52 a.m. Medical emergency at █ Griswold Avenue in Turners Falls. Removed to hospital. 10:50 p.m. Defective burglary alarm at Freedom Credit Union in Turners Falls. 11:26 p.m. Medical emergency at █ Chester Street.	Friday, 2/9 9:18 a.m. Break-in at Williams Garage in Turners Falls. 12:13 p.m. Police attempt to issue an arrest warrant at █ 4th Street; person not found. 7:24 p.m. Suspicious auto at Lightlife Foods on Industrial Boulevard in Turners Falls. 7:35 p.m. Threatening harassment at █ Masonic Street in Turners Falls. Saturday, 2/9 6:04 a.m. Medical emergency at █ Park Street. removed to hospital. 6:57 a.m. Hit and run accident at █ Federal Street in Montague. No injuries reported. 10:06 p.m. Harassment at █ Grand Avenue in Millers Falls.	Sunday, 2/10 1:42 a.m. Disturbance at Cumberland Farms in Turners Falls. 6:27 a.m. Well-being check at the Farren Care Center in Turners Falls. 8:51 a.m. Medical emergency at the house behind the Montague Minimart. Removed to hospital. 4:52 p.m. Police respond again to threatening harassment at █ Grand Avenue in Millers Falls. 7:04 p.m. Animal complaint at Powertown Apartments. 9:01 p.m. █, suffered personal injury and was arrested for a DUI and operating to endanger. Her car was in an accident after speeding and crossing marked lines.	Monday, 2/11 3:59 p.m. Well-being check at Connecticut River Internists in Turners Falls. 6:52 p.m. Vandalism at █ Millers Falls Road in Millers Falls. 7:07 p.m. Police investigate abandoned 911 call at the Franklin Emergency Center in Turners Falls. Tuesday, 2/12 9:17 a.m. Medical emergency at █ Randall Road in Montague. Removed to hospital. 11:55 a.m. Summons issued for a single scheme fraud and theft for over \$250 on a person over 60 years old at █ Federal Street in Montague. 12:57 p.m. Break-in and burglary at █ Old Sunderland Rd.
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THEATER REVIEW

Through the Looking Glass: The New Renaissance Players present *Alice at the Shea*



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE NEW RENAISSANCE PLAYERS

"Drink Me" pictures Ashley Blom as Alice

By DAVID DETMOLD

TURNERS FALLS – "Somehow it seems to fill my head with ideas, only I'm not sure exactly what they are."

So says Alice, the eternal woman child caught forever in the back-

wards land of dreams, as she reads the most famous nonsense poem of all time through the looking glass at the Shea Theater on Sunday, while the uffish jabberwock went whiffing through the crowd, burbling at the skeptical children and their rapt, wide-eyed parents. Alice (Ashley

Blom) led the audience on a merry chase through the distorted realm of Wonderland, where glue sniffers, mushroom fanciers, and other revelers on the forbidden fruit of fantasy waited round every episodic corner to make her smaller, taller, to blow her mind and nearly take her head off... all on a golden afternoon.

It was a very blustery day, as we approached the Shea, and signs and wonders were everywhere, from the balloons festooning the facade of LOOT on the far side of the Avenue to the solitary kestrel hawk with a sparrow in its claws standing still as a sentinel in front of the Colle. A flurry of feathers swirled in a biting wind in the doorway of the Shea, as mothers with young children tucked one under each arm ushered them into the theater to watch the New Renaissance Players unfold the familiar tale of Alice and her descent down the death-defying rabbit hole.

But under the innovative handling of director Jillian Morgan, the shopworn pursuit of the waist-coated white rabbit was dispensed with in favor of Alice, after the briefest of intros, walking directly into the mirror image world, where both Lewis Carroll's brilliant and transgressive *Wonderland* and his *Looking Glass* sequel changed places and perspectives with fast-paced and riotous glee.

High above the fray, like a retro *deus ex machina* from Hoboken, Daniel Hales, and his frost heaves, laid down cool and brilliant backing

tracks to keep the action hopping.

There were too many standout performances to detail, almost too much of a muchness overall, but Alice managed to thread the deranged needle in pinafored aplomb. "It's all very well to say, 'Drink Me,'" notes Alice, yet she bravely does, and before her chin hits her toes she guides us into the magic, hidden garden where whitewashed roses are stained blood red, where overweening, brilliantly costumed caterpillars instruct us in didactic tones to keep our tempers and force us to recite fractured poesy from days of yore.

We've all played croquet games like these, with unstable authority figures, rigid pink flamingos and evanescent hedgehogs, at peril of our lives. And we've become almost too familiar with the caucus races of pompous dodos and daft lories and their frumious feathered friends who run in dripping circles toward the crazed right wing of their mad Tea Party.

The shrill tones of Kim Overtree in her dominating role as the Queen of Hearts quite dwarfed her myopic but sympathetic husband, Brendan Kenny, and would seem to have left little oxygen on stage for other monarchs. But Christina Doe, as the delightfully simpering White Queen, and Jenny Silver, as her most awe-inspiring Red Highness, found more than enough space to breathe wondrous vitality into their larger-than-life personas, even so.

Yes, it's a children's classic, and Sarah Hodge-Wetherbee remembered this especially well as she directed her lachrymose Mock Turtle's performance to the children in the front rows, entrancing them with her sad, sad "Beautiful Soup." The kids nodded in sublime recognition as she reeled off the branches of arithmetic they were all too familiar with from their own classrooms: ambition, distraction, uglification and derision. And White Knight Joe van Allen kept the young ones enthralled with his manic Milli Vanilli star turn, lip synching a frost heave tune on the baffling chessboard of looking glass land.

Heath Verrill was inspired as the ovoid Humpty Dumpty, delivering a truncated poem before falling off the wall for good. And Emily Eaton pulled off the amazing role reversal of making everyone else on stage disappear the moment she crawled onto it in the guise of one scrumptious Cheshire kitten.

Nevertheless, it is disorienting to be gripped tightly in the clutches of a disordered dream you can never quite wake up from. Children know intuitively that the road of life is pitted with impossibilities, detoured by the demands of imperious adults, and subject to inscrutable rules. So it is no wonder they identify so well with Alice, as she steadfastly insists on rationality in a mad, mad world.

Even so, after the two and a half hour play had finally run its course, some of the actual children in the room had grown quite restless, or laid their heads down on their mothers' laps for naps of their own. But their parents remained wide awake through it all, reveling in their own sweet memories of childhood.

Local Artists Embrace Teaching Their Trades

By LEE WICKS

Two young men, one a glass blower and the other a potter, have come back to their home towns to establish themselves as artists, forge community through a shared creative experience, teach and prosper. After spending time with them I can't decide if I want to learn to work with glass or clay – or both. Their studios welcome people of all ages and levels of experience.

What struck me about Tomas Black, founder of The New Green Gate Pottery Studio on Cave Hill Road in Leverett, and Noah Rockland, of Rockland Glassworks in Montague, is how they are combining a sound business plan with their personal artistic imperatives. No *prima donnas* here: they are

artists with a keen eye towards the marketplace. Each produces objects that are likely to sell. And they do.

Black produces mugs and serving bowls in the watery, sun-infused colors of France, and sells them for \$45. Rockland makes pendants and a number of other small objects in the same price range, along with stunning vases and bottles that cost much more.

When summer turns our landscape green, it is easy to drive right by The New Green Gates Pottery Studio, but in the snow the bright green studio can't be missed. It was once an unused garage on his parents' property, and Black renovated it into a sunny space with doors that open wide on warm days. Here he

see ARTISTS page 7



Mason Wicks-Lim makes a dragon with mom Ali Wicks-Lim.

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A History of the China Trade in the Valley

By JEFF SINGLETON

GREENFIELD – In 1783 a ship named the “Empress of China” sailed from New York Harbor for the Far East. It was the first American-owned ship to attempt to profit from trade with China.

The voyage of the Empress took 1-½ years, round trip. Its outbound cargo included tar, turpentine, wool, silver coins and four tons of ginseng roots. Ginseng was, and still is, highly valued in Chinese medicine. A variety was grown in the province of Manchuria but the Chinese emperor had a monopoly on the internal trade, and could not satisfy the demand. The American product, although considered inferior, was in great demand. A 1798 advertisement in the *Hampshire Gazette* soliciting the herb for the China trade contained detailed instructions for its harvesting and processing.

Ginseng was just one connection between the Connecticut River Valley and China in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries, according

to Amanda Lange.

Lange is the curatorial department chair at Historic Deerfield. Her lecture on “The Connecticut River Valley and the China Trade” was part of the Greenfield Community College Senior Symposia, a popular series hosted at GCC’s downtown center. Approximately 45 seniors attended this particular event, a fast-paced slide show lasting nearly two hours.

The valley supplied other trade goods, capital, and of course sailors for the China Trade. People in the valley also coveted spices and a variety of objects, ranging from lacquer boxes and porcelain bowls to finely carved ivory chess sets. Most importantly, China was virtually the only source of tea for Americans prior to the mid-nineteenth century.

Lange’s presentation not only described the key products of the trade but also several specific voyages, based on the diaries of the men and women who made them. A particular focus was the experiences of westerners in Chinese ports, or more

properly, in the one port they were allowed to visit. China profited from trade but attempted to ban merchants and sailors from its territory. Under the so-called “Canton system,” in force prior to the 1840s, most foreigners were required to stay in thirteen “factories” (trading posts) in Canton (Guangzhou) harbor during the trading season.

Some of the items in the China trade were perhaps not as politically correct as ginseng. Lange showed several slides of sailors bludgeoning seals for their furs on desolate South Atlantic islands. She estimated that the crew of the ship *Neptune*, which sailed from New Haven in 1796, may have destroyed as many as 80,000 seals.

Then there was opium, a highly addictive drug when smoked, which produced huge profits for British merchants. Attempts by the imperial Chinese authorities to stop the illegal trade led to two “Opium Wars” in the nineteenth century. These resulted in the Chinese Empire being carved up into foreign “spheres of influence” for nearly a century. In response to an inquiry about American involvement in the trade, Lange wrote:

“All the countries trading with China sold opium to the Chinese – including the Americans. Even if you weren’t involved closely with opium production –



Panax ginseng.

COURTESY OF ITMONLINE.ORG

as the British were in India – you still traded it for Chinese goods. Only one American company, Olyphant and Company, refused to trade in opium, mostly for religious reasons. They were derisively called “Zion’s Corner” for their stance.”

On the lighter side, Lange showed numerous slides of finely carved boxes, ivory chess sets, and colorful porcelain bowls. (Porcelain itself was a Chinese invention, and thus is called “china” in some English-speaking countries.) So for those who think the “global economy” is a product of the internet age, think

again. The process was a bit slower, to be sure, but the cultural connections (and the profits) were significant.

GCC’s Senior Symposia will continue in March and April.

Upcoming lectures will include: “We the People or We the Corporations?,” on the Supreme Court’s *Citizens United* case, on March 5; “So You Think You Know Puccini?,” on March 21 and 28; “Helping Hand Monkeys,” on April 3; and “Winslow Homer at the Clark,” on April 9.



1784 painting of the *Empress of China*. The ship was financed in Philadelphia and built in Baltimore, before setting sail for China from the port of New York.

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from **ARTISTS** page 6

teaches; his students range from ages 3 to 65, and he works closely with homeschooling families looking to enrich their children’s education.

Black creates production pieces for craft fairs, local restaurants, and stores, and he constructs two or three sculptures a year. His sculptures are

one-of-a-kind, whimsical interpretations of Pioneer Valley life. Black would like to do more, but he already works between 100 and 120 hours per week.

The long workweek is not a problem for Black, who is twenty-six years old. He has 50 students right now, and says he’d happily welcome more. Ceramics changed his life, and he loves passing the satisfaction of making something lovely with one’s own hands along to others. He says, “Everyone has artistic talent. Art is just a creation of your experience in the world. Ceramics is functional as well as beautiful. It takes away the questions like *Is this art? Am I an artist?* that keep people from expressing themselves.”

Black is dyslexic, and he says this was rough: he had to work very hard to keep up in school, and in the summer needed to take supplemental education classes. One year after a summer of hard work his parents asked him what he’d like to do as a reward, and he chose to take a ceramics class. It was an instant match. He said, “It intuitively felt

right. It made sense to me. The teacher thought I’d done it before!”

Black became an apprentice before he started high school, arranged his schedule at Amherst Regional High School so that he could take a lot of ceramics classes, and then attended Alfred University – the Harvard of ceramics programs. Now he is thinking of pursuing an MFA at UMass-Amherst. To learn more about his classes and his work go to www.thenewgreengates.com.

Noah Rockland is twenty-one years old and has known that he wanted to work with glass since he was 16. His studio, which is just minutes from Montague Center, is set up for students with a long table and individualized work stations, each with its own torch, safety glasses and tools.

Rockland specializes in flame work. He works at a table with a torch and a set of tools that he uses to create shapes from the molten glass. He does not insert a long metal rod with a lump of molten glass into an open furnace, as some glassblowers do. The whole scale of



Lovely Perfume Bottles

flame work is different. His pieces are intricate and delicate. The stopper on a perfume bottle features a bird, lizard or frog. Cabinet door-knobs look like hard candy in swirled colors. His glass pendants are as lovely as gems.

Rockland’s work echoes the earth tones and patterns of nature, and though he has traveled and apprenticed with master artists, the landscape of home called him back when he decided to establish his studio. Rockland’s work is available in local galleries and at craft fairs. There’s a

full listing on his website, www.rocklandglassworks.com.

Like Black, Rockland creates production pieces for these venues, and he looks forward to a time when he can afford to make extravagant pieces of art, but for now he has to make a living and he’s delighted that a large part of that can come from teaching. “I hope that a large part of my income always comes from teaching,” he said. “It is thrilling to share my passion with others, and to see people realize the creativity that is theirs.”



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NOTES FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD MEETING

Land Trust Moves Forward On Cronquist Property

By JOSH HEINEMANN

Mount Grace Land Trust's Paul Daniello, who had turned around and driven home on Jan. 30 rather than trying to find his way to the Wendell town offices through that night's fog, was waiting in the selectboard office on Feb. 13 as board members came in, either from home or from the financial managers' meeting down the hall.

Wearing a highly visible bright orange shirt (in case of more fog), Daniello did not protest having to wait until his 7:30 p.m. posted speaking time, which was necessary to meet requirements of the open meeting law. Even at 7:30 no one came into the room to hear his business with the selectboard.

His business was to have papers signed by the Wendell selectboard that will move forward a conservation restriction (CR) on the Arthur Cronquist property, 66.7 landlocked acres near Cold Brook Road, on the west side of town. The former Metacommet Monadnock trail, now part of the New England National Scenic Trail system, runs through the property.

The same papers will then need a signature from the state Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, and then Wendell will receive money to pass on to the Mount Grace Land Trust. Once the CR is in effect, Wendell will be responsible for administering its terms, which will mean someone will have to make an annual walk around the property and make sure no one is building a house there.

Kathleen Leonard opened the meeting by reserving the town hall on March 2 at 6 p.m. for a "cabin fever get together," a potluck event to benefit Good Neighbors.

Paul Richmond, as a member of the Full Moon Coffeehouse committee, came in with a request to make some small changes that will help the coffeehouse accommodate the preliminary work being done to the town hall to allow for improvements to the town hall kitchen. The aim of those improvements is to allow the

kitchen to be used to prepare food for the public.

At the coffeehouse now, the sound engineer sits at a table that sits on a larger table in the back of the room. The sound engineer needs that elevation to see the stage over the audience. Currently, the larger table is moved into place for each coffeehouse. The committee would like to leave that large table in place, build doors around its perimeter, and store paper goods underneath. Those paper goods are now stored in the room by the front door that Good Neighbors is taking for storage.

The committee also wants to cut a small hole at floor level to allow electric service to reach the sound board without cluttering the doorway. Richmond assured board members that the hole could be patched over easily if it proved to be a problem.

Board members had no obvious objection to the changes, and selectboard chair Christine Heard said they should try it for two months and come back if any problems arise.

Richard Clough is resigning from the highway commission but he has not turned in his official resignation letter. Lisa Winter resigned from the zoning board of appeals (ZBA), leaving Jenn Gross and Pam Richardson, who is out of town for the winter; alternates are Ted Lewis and Patty Scutari. The highway commission meets two Tuesdays a month, and the ZBA meets on demand.

Town clerk Gretchen Smith sent the selectboard a schedule of elections that will take place in Wendell this spring. On Tuesday, April 30, the state primary will be held to choose candidates to run against each other to fill the Senate seat that John Kerry left. The last day to register to vote is April 10. The annual town election is May 6, with the last day to register being April 16. June 3 will tentatively be the annual town meeting, with the last day to register being May 14. And the final election to fill Kerry's seat will be June 25, with a June 5 deadline for voter registry. (The deadline to obtain

an absentee voter application is at noon, one day before the election.)

Smith suggested combining the primary and the town election, but rules say that would require two sets of poll workers and two ballot boxes, and so combining the two voting days would save no money.

Nomination papers for the town election are available at the town clerk's office and will remain available until March 14. The last day to submit signed nomination papers is Monday, March 18. Three-year town positions to be voted on are: one selectboard, one board of assessors, one board of health, one cemetery commissioner, one road commissioner, one town constable, one school committee position, two library trustee positions, and one planning board position to fill a vacancy.

The planning board also has a 5-year position, and the school committee has a one-year position. The tree warden election is for one year. The various incumbents running have not yet all filed their nomination papers.

Several boards have asked for clerical help, and the selectboard is considering how to create that position so it will be useful, and also attractive to a potential clerk. A problem is that the hours would be irregular, maybe one hour one week and 20 hours another week, and some of the scheduling may be rigid, following the meeting times of the various boards.

Two clauses in the town's contract with Seaboard Solar seem to contradict each other. One would allow the town to cancel the contract if Seaboard does not have its photovoltaic panels on line by June. The other has Seaboard paying the town \$50,000 a year starting in June no matter how far the installations have progressed. Board members thought the latter clause works better for Wendell.

Dan Keller agreed to write a letter of recommendation for Tom Chaisson, who has done many construction jobs in town and has finished the work well and on time.

NOTES FROM THE GILL MONTAGUE REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

G-M Budget Process Continues

By ELLEN BLANCHETTE

In his report to the school committee on Tuesday, Feb. 12, Interim Superintendent Mark Prince said his goal is "building a budget for a 21st century education for our students, within our means."

Prince said the principals are preparing their building level budgets and meeting with staff and school community council members to determine what is needed to ensure those educational needs are in line with the requirements of the accelerated improvement plan as required by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the mission of the district. At the same time the central office administrative team is also preparing their budget requests.

Prince will meet with all parties to review their preliminary budgets and make adjustments as appropriate. He emphasized that this will take time, require multiple meetings, and that it is a collaborative process to "develop a budget that meets the educational and fiscal priorities of the district." He assured the school committee that when the process is complete, the community could be sure the budget presented will be based on the educational needs and priorities of the district.

Earlier in the evening, the school district offered a public hearing on the budget. Prince presented a brief overview of the budget process and all the various components of income and expenditures with charts and graphs to break down the information in an easily understandable way.

Members of the Gill and Montague select boards and finance committees attended and asked questions that reflected concern that the budget process was not including the towns. Prince replied that this meeting was the way in which the towns were being included. Claire Chang of the Gill finance committee said she had not been informed of the meeting until the day before. John Ward of the Gill selectboard

said he had also not known about the meeting until Monday and said several of the elected officials could not attend due to the short notice.

John Hanold, chair of the Montague finance committee, said the school district process seemed to be based on a search for more revenue, rather than looking for ways to bring down spending and developing a budget based on affordable town assessments. He said Montague is about \$270,000 short for the current assessment in the preliminary budget.

Montague town member, Jeff Singleton, said he felt there should be some sort of equity in budget planning, considering what the towns can afford in the same way they look at state aid, "as it is what it is."

The preliminary budget for FY14, with numbers presented at the Jan. 22 school committee meeting, is \$17,292,956, up from last year's budget of \$16,567,640. This is subject to revision downward before it goes to town meeting in May. Budget increases are based on real numbers in utilities and salaries but are estimates in other areas not fully examined as yet. They reflect more recent information from the state but that is also subject to change. As always, this is a "snapshot in time."

Prince introduced Edward Wilkins who is the new Facilities and Energy Manager for the school district. Wilkins began working for the district on Dec. 3, 2012. He is the former maintenance director from Spencer-East Brookfield Regional School District. He has a degree in HVAC Systems management and has been a school custodian and school system maintenance manager for over twenty years.

Speaking to the school committee, Wilkins said how glad he was to meet everyone. He offered a brief assessment of what he has found, and said the buildings have been well maintained. Regarding snow removal, he said the custodians had put in 20 hours over the weekend so that the schools could open

on Monday. Joyce Phillips, school committee chair, said, "They're a terrific team."

Patricia Gardner, principal of Turners Falls High School, offered a presentation of the highlights of the school and then sat down with the committee to review a draft of the new Program of Study for the high school. Some additions to course offerings will include classes in drafting using the CAD program, web page design and creative writing.

In working closely with Special Education Director Walter Solzak, Gardner said they have developed materials in such a way as to be sensitive to the needs and feelings of students while making sure those students can see that the high school is offering a variety of wonderful programming with some very caring teachers. A list of athletic and extra curricular programs is included in the Index.

Gardner said, "We really are an academic high school," and went on to talk about students who excel in sports and academics and then find the time to participate in the high school musical as well. The school committee approved the direction of the materials, with some detailed edits and corrections. The committee then moved on to a discussion of the superintendent's evaluation process, of setting meeting dates and reviewed the school calendar for next year.

The next regular school committee meeting will be held on Feb. 26 at Turners Falls High School at 7 p.m.

Poets Wanted!

to submit original poems. Please email: poetry@montaguerreporter.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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PERSONAL INJURY, WILLS & ESTATES, WORKER'S COMP

WATER from page 1

member team and credits their forward thinking with the changes at the WPCF; while the team credits Trombley with listening to their ideas and valuing their input. Together they work to improve processes. The profession of the WPCF operator is not particularly glamorous on the surface – people often turn up their noses at the mention of sewage treatment as the work can be dirty and repetitive.

A look behind-the-scenes tells a different story. These guys are the unsung heroes of the green movement, and their jobs are multifaceted: part lab technician, part mechanic, part scientist, part laborer, part brain-stormer and more. Their mission says it all: *To protect the health of the public and protect the environment by producing from sanitary and industrial sewage a clean effluent which flows to the Connecticut River. To do so safely, efficiently and cost effectively.* The Montague WPCF takes its job seriously.

Montague WPCF typically handles close to one million gallons of effluent daily – a combination of residential and industrial wastes, with the bulk of industrial wastes originating from Southworth Paper, LightLife Foods, and Australis Aquaculture.

If you drive by the treatment facility, one of the most visible features is a pair of large turquoise tubes – at least one of which is slowly rotating at all times. These Siemens screw pumps are lifting the wastewater uphill to the aeration tanks. From the aeration tanks the wastewater moves to secondary tanks where the biological work of organic digestion takes place. In simplistic terms, the work of the secondary tanks is to separate the sludge from the clean water (effluent), which exits to the Connecticut River.

Like many early systems, Montague used only primary treatment tanks when it was built in 1962: heavier solids sank to the bottom of the tanks to be pumped out, and lighter wastes were skimmed off. Back then, approximately 40 percent of pollutants were removed as sludge before the water was released to the Connecticut River. Today, 96 percent or more of pollutants are removed as our facility has increased in complexity – waste

now goes through mechanical, primary, secondary and chemical processes before it returns to the river.

Incoming sewage (influent) first runs into a mechanical device known as a bar screen that prevents large debris from entering the plant where it could harm valves, pumps and other equipment. Debris might include toys, bricks, rags, plastic bottles, tree limbs and more. The next stop is an aerated grit chamber that removes large particles such as sand, gravel, wood chips, metal, eggshells, bones and other objects that won't decompose and also might damage equipment. Both of these pieces of equipment were added during the 1982 upgrade of the Montague WPCF, and an additional heavy-duty automated bar screen was added in 2011.

Influent next enters the primary treatment tanks – a series of four huge rectangular concrete vaults where heavy solids settle to the bottom and light weight pollutants float on the surface. The tanks use rectangular clarifiers to remove the pollutants from the tank. These clarifiers contain a series of continuously moving parallel chains with flights that scrape the settled solids into hoppers on the bottom of the tanks and push the floating materials into a scum removal device.

The facility uprating also affects personnel, since a fully certified operator must hold a license no more than 1 grade below the facility to be allowed to work unsupervised or act as shift supervisor.

first of the self-directed changes were initiated in 2008, when the facility began the move to an extended aeration process and began to address the issues of combined sewer overflows into the Connecticut River during heavy rains.

According to Trombley, the staff, led by senior operator John Little, believed that better process control would dramatically improve performance by reducing the amount of sludge shipped out of the facility. To do this, flow rates were slowed and more pounds of waste were kept in the secondary treatment system for longer periods of time. The duration increased from 5 to 7 days to 15 to 21 days, and the volume of solids in the system increased from

The activated sludge secondary treatment system was added in 1982 in response to changes in the Federal Clean Water Act. The

The Teenage Perspective on Downtown Turners

By FAITH KAEMMERLEN

The Rise Up class at Turners Falls High School met with the Downtown Livability Planners Walter Ramsey and Kate Tooke on Feb. 5 to give the teenage perspective on what makes downtown Turners Falls a place where teens want to live, work and hang out.

They discussed what's hot and what's not in Turners, and brainstormed ideas for how to revitalize the downtown area and make it both a destination and a place where people want to grow up and continue living. The students enjoyed being taken seriously by adults and knowing their opinions would be shared at the larger planning meeting.

Some ideas that emerged were outdoor areas that offered opportunity for safe recreation for a variety of ages, a fitness center or gym that could serve the community for a reasonable rate, more shops that cater to youth interests and style, and an entertainment hotspot where youth can safely



L-R: planner Kate Tooke with TFHS students Brianna Young, Seth Reipold, Jovanna McKelvey, and Giordan Noetzel

hangout with their friends, listen to music and get a bite to eat.

These 15-18 year olds expressed concern that there are no real jobs in Turners, and worry that they will have to look to live

elsewhere in the future. Meanwhile, they would like more stores in the downtown area so they can get part time jobs before graduating high school.

about 5,000 pounds to anywhere from 35,000 to 55,000 pounds.

This extended aeration process allows increased consumption of solids by naturally occurring microorganisms, and a resulting reduction of waste sludge. This reduction has saved the town approximately \$80,000 annually in sludge shipping costs. In addition, as the process improvements evolved, the facility began to accept septage for a fee from local haulers and sludge from the Town of Greenfield. Montague gains the fees and the haulers save transportation costs by disposing locally. It's a win-win.

The Montague operators have developed a complex system of alternating use of the aeration tanks and cycling the sludge through secondary and aeration processes multiple times, ultimately sending the waste sludge for disposal and releasing the clear effluent water to the river. Included in the recent upgrades was the installation of valve actuators used to automate the routing and re-routing of the sludge by tying the operation of the valves to the new SCADA system (Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition). This computerized system enables remote monitoring and control changes. In time, the WPCF hopes to have their systems fully tied to the SCADA system.

During the warm months, the

water passes through the chlorine contact tanks. The process changes have not only reduced final sludge volume but also reduced power consumption and halved chlorine usage. Another side benefit is the reduction of nitrogen, ammonia and phosphorus content in the effluent.

Little and Trombley believe it won't be long before the EPA establishes limits on these pollutants in effluent. It is hoped that continued experimentation will lead to a process with more predictable levels of nitrogen and phosphorus, possibly eliminating the need for more costly equipment when EPA levels are established. When that happens, Montague's WPCF will be ahead of the curve.

The sludge, meanwhile, travels to a gravity thickener and finally to the newest piece of equipment in the facility – the bright blue Fournier Press that presses additional water out of the sludge, leaving a lighter-weight end product with a "cakelike" consistency that has been used in capping landfills and compost facilities. The press has generated another \$80,000 annually in savings and the team has done some on-site experimentation with composting of the cake, with a dream of eventually handling the waste locally. Another dream is to build a small biodiesel facility to produce fuel

for town trucks.

The Combined Sewer Overflow Project construction began in 2008 and turned into a \$6.7M multi-phase project that was funded in large part by grants. Throughout the project, the Montague WPCF kept the facility running smoothly while working closely with the construction team.

The challenging topography of the town means that eight pumping stations are required to bring the effluent to be treated. There were several physical changes to the system to better manage the flow of storm water and sewage – the result is that during wet weather, a great deal more water is being routed to the plant, and less is discharged to the river untreated. A wet-weather chlorinated bypass system was added in 2009 to disinfect stormwater surges if needed.

Witnessing the obvious satisfaction taken by the employees when visiting the Montague WPCF, it is not surprising they were awarded an "EPA Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant Excellence Award" in 2011. The staff was also invited to present *Montague Process: Plant Modifications Remove Nitrogen While Reducing O&M Expenses* at the 85th Annual Water Environment Federation Technical Exhibition and Conference, held last September in New Orleans.



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This Wednesday, Feb. 27, TEDxShelburneFalls will host a free "TEDxLive" event at Greenfield Community College, simulcasting one day of this year's four-day flagship conference from California on a big screen in the college's Sloan Theater.

TED, which has been running conferences for 26 years now, is a nonprofit organization devoted to "Ideas Worth Spreading."

This year's conference theme is "The Young. The Wise. The Undiscovered," and Wednesday, Day 3, will comprise of four 105-minute sessions spread throughout the day, from 11:15 a.m. to 9:45 p.m. in our time zone.

The first session, *Disrupt!*, runs from 11:30 a.m. to 1:15 p.m. and includes musician and blogger Amanda Palmer, legal activist Larry Lessig, and five others.

The second, *Dream!*, from 2 to 3:45 p.m., includes futurist Stewart Brand, nuclear scientist Taylor Wilson and five more.

The third, *Create!*, from 5:15 to 7 p.m., includes graphic artist Martin Villeneuve and designer Yu "Jordy" Fu.

And the final session, *Sustain!*, includes, among others, sustainability strategist Leyla Acaroglu and Afro-Cuban alchemists the Pedrito Martinez Group. It runs from 8 to 9:45 p.m.

There will be an after-party and discussion at the 99 Restaurant on Colrain Road.

Buckland-based Stacy Kontrabecki, curator and organizer of TEDxShelburneFalls, explained "I wanted to give local Tedsters a peek at the live TED conference and experience the speakers months, even years before the videos of their talks hit the TED.com digital archive. By doing so, we can begin discussing and testing/practicing their ideas

immediately in order to hasten the change we want to see in our world."

Kontrabecki herself will be attending the TEDActive2013 simulcast in Palm Springs for the entirety of the week, so the local TEDxShelburneFalls and Greenfield Community College community will be coordinating and staffing the event on Feb. 27.

Leo Hwang, Dean of Humanities at the college, as well as educators across the faculty and staff, are excited to participate in this partnership. "TED talks have become an inspiring resource for educators, academics, intellectuals, artists, and people curious about their world.

"Hosting the simulcast at a community college is a wonderful opportunity to expose students to a diverse range of contemporary artists, musicians, scientists, and creative professionals. Giving students access to new ways of thinking, new ways of creating, new ways of being, empower them to imagine different possibilities, different professions, and inspire them to move through their own worlds differently, and that, is central to the mission of Greenfield Community College," notes Hwang.

TEDxShelburneFalls can be followed on Twitter at #TEDxShelburneFalls.

GREAT FALLS MIDDLE SCHOOL 2nd QUARTER HONOR ROLLS

GRADE 6

First Honors

Samantha Bocon
Lindsey Bourbeau
Ryan Campbell
Reilan Castine
Kyle Dodge
Rebecca Harrell
Jenna Jacobsen
Anna Kochan
Mireya Ortiz
John Putala
Hunter Sanders
Keltyn Socquet
Sarah Waldron
Amelia Worden
Cassidhe Wozniak

Second Honors

Madison Adams
Dominic Carme
Reagan Fiske
Ryan Kucenski
Jacob LaBelle
Alexis Lacey
Danielle Lively
Julia Massey
Holly Tetreault
Will Turn
Hannah Welles

Third Honors

Timothy Fritz
Logan Kordana
Bianca Martin
Edison Ovalle-Bartolon
Shawn Rivard
Kallie Ryan
Brandon Swenor

GRADE 7

First Honors

Daniel Adams
Malik Baker-Gore
Hannah Bogusz

Amanda Cooke
Alora DeForge
Sienna Dillensneider
Kasia Dobosz
Chloe Ellis
Hannah Graves
Maya Hancock-Pezzati
Samantha Kolodziej
Carlie Kretchmar
Kyle Kucenski
Snejana Lashtur
Simon Lorenzo
Abigail Loynd
Aliyah Sanders
Kaeden Socquet
Madison St. Marie
Jeremy Towle

Second Honors

Korey Bousquet
Madison Chmyzinski
Kaylee Jackson
D'ahnee Smith
David Tricolici
John Wheeler

Third Honors

Lynn Arsenault
Jacob Desbiens
Adrianna DiMaio
Sahaley DuPree
Peyton Emery
Kylie Fleming
Kurtis Kuenzel
Zachary Lastowski
Kayli Messinger
Hadyn Patenaude

GRADE 8

First Honors

Gabrielle Arzuaga
Tionne Brown
Tahner Castine
Nicholas Croteau
Savannah Donahue
Jordyn Fiske

Kaili Lynch
Ian Moriarty
Nicholas Morin
Owen Ortiz
Haleigh Paulin
Will Roberge
Patrick Salls
Amanda Savinski
Yanira Smith
Kate Sprankle
Kortney Thurber
Riley Wood
Jordan Wyman

Second Honors

Richard Craver
Jemma Dickson
William Doyle
Stone Dresser
Cassandra Harris
Melissa Hersey
Tess Hunter
Madelyn Johnson
Bryn Kruzlic
Michelle Leh
Frederick Smith
Mark Waite

Third Honors

Timothy Black
Daniel Cloutier
Nolan Courtemanche
Madison Currier
Christion Diaz
Jenna Hackett
Ryan Howard
Calley Hubert
Claire Johnson
Dylan Mailloux
Alison McKenna
Robert Rinaldi
Veronika Sankova
Hailey Trott
Brianna Wilder
Alysha Wozniak

ANNUAL POET'S SEAT POETRY CONTEST Calling all Franklin County Poets!

The Annual Poet's Seat Poetry Contest is now accepting entries! Sponsored by the Friends of the Greenfield Public Library, the contest is open to residents of Franklin County. Submit up to 3 poems; postmarked by March 11. Adult and youth category (ages 12-14 and 15-18), and prizes! Details available at the library and at: www.greenfieldpubliclibrary.org.

from BOOK page 1 bit about the new pages.

Allan has worked as a librarian for over 30 years and enjoys art projects for relaxation, meditation and fun. She found that art has moved closer to the top of her priority list with a defined project in which she will be showing and sharing the art with other book group members. In addition to creating a page each month, Allan sent out reminders of approaching deadlines, coordinated meeting places for book swaps and acted as the book drop-off zone.

The evolution of the book group was a bit like a web, as Allan approached fellow musicians Annie Chappell and Susan Farber; then co-librarian Kim Sprankle, who invited friend and lampwork glass artist Ericka Almeida; then artist Nina Rossi, who invited artist and teacher Karen Gaudette; then friend and math teacher Sally Reid, who invited friend and writer Amy Gordon; then neighbors Jen Audley and Anne Harding and bartender/radio host Lorraine Algonzer, who all happened to be at the Twin Peaks night at the Rendezvous.

Algonzer had not previously considered herself an artist, and had never done anything like the book project. She loved tapping into a creativity she didn't know she possessed and meeting so

many new people. Getting to know the other artists, learning about their lives and the stories behind their contributions was terrific, she said. The project was "nothing like I expected, and way more than I expected."

Sally Reid, who travels between Greenfield and Wellesley, loved having a prompt for writing and art in a fun, low-stakes event, though she confesses having the books on display feels like the stakes have been somewhat raised. Reid invited friend Amy Gordon who shared her love of old photographs with the group with her "Portraits" theme.

For the Portraits theme, participants were tasked to choose a vintage photo and create a story, letter, or article about it. The responses were as varied as the group, with many blending fact and fiction, and others hunting for clues about the identity of the subjects and finding out their story. Gordon found the project pulled on her in ways she hadn't expected. "It was an invitation to reveal parts of yourself to strangers who became friends over time."

Annie Chappell has a fascination with maps and their many incarnations. She loved the book project – both receiving the projects each month and following her own book as fellow artists added their maps to her book.

Susan Farber started making collages in the '80s with house-mates in Syracuse. It was free fun for poor students. "What I love about this project is that it's easy to replicate among friends, cousins, students, neighbors, or anyone with whom you'd like to build connections. And it's free and fun!" Farber used the new book's theme at the start of each month as a focus for morning journal writing. Like many of the group, she sometimes felt stuck wondering what to say about shoes, or bricks, or water... Other themes came easier. She found her art and writing became looser, weirder and more playful as the months and pages passed.

Come and meet these and other artists of the Book Rotation Project at LOOT, at 62 Avenue A in Turners Falls, and take the opportunity to participate in "Where I Live – A Community Art Project for Turners Falls, Neighboring Towns, and Anywhere in the World."

Create a postcard: draw, write, color, sew, collage, photograph, anything goes. Show us whatever you imagine when you think about "Where I Live." Schools and other groups are very welcome to participate. Return completed postcards to Nina's Nook or LOOT in downtown Turners Falls or mail to: LOOT, 62 Avenue A, Turners Falls, MA 01376.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE WENDELL POLICE LOG

Change, & a GPS, Stolen From Cars

Wednesday, 1/16
11:56 p.m. Domestic problem at Lockes Village Road residence. Resolved without incident.

Sunday, 1/20
5:11 a.m. Breaking and entering at Deja Brew Pub: 4 packs of cigarettes taken, window broken.
8:30 a.m. to 4:50 p.m. Six unlocked vehicles on Lockes Village Road and Locke Hill Road entered and change taken.

Wednesday, 1/23

10:30 a.m. Resident on Farley Road reported her rental car entered on Sunday, 1/20 and a GPS taken.

Thursday, 1/31
10:52 p.m. Lockes Village Road resident reported problems with ex-girlfriend. Advised to go to Court in morning and seek a restraining order.

Monday, 2/4
8:24 p.m. Locke Hill Road resident reported hearing gunshots nearby. Police

unable to locate responsible party.

Wednesday, 2/6
3:30 p.m. Arrested Lockes Village Road resident for violation of restraining order. Transported to Franklin County Jail for court appearance the following day.

Wednesday, 2/13
5:35 p.m. Former town resident reported possible child molestation. Turned over to District Attorney's Office for investigation.

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ALL THE TIME:

EVERY SUNDAY

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: Celtic session, 10:30 a.m.

EVERY TUESDAY

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

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

EVERY WEDNESDAY

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

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

EVERY FRIDAY AND SATURDAY

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

ART SHOWS:

Great Falls Discovery Center, open 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

FEBRUARY 2 through MARCH 31

Nina's Nook, Avenue A, Turners Falls: Sensual>Sexual>Smut. Erotic art by local artists. Open 4 to 9 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 14 for Valentine's Day!

LOCAL EVENTS:

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 21

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

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Half Shaved Jazz. 8 p.m., free.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 22

Sloan Theater, Main Campus, GCC: Roots of Peace Speaker Series. Marian Kelner, animal rights advocate. 1 to 2:30 p.m., free and open to the public.

Arts Block Café, Greenfield: Café Buenos Aires. Chamber ensemble plays Argentinean composers; Tango dancers. 6:30 p.m., \$

Deja Brew Pub, Wendell: Gumbo Diablo, latin, new orleans r&b, roots, rock and reggae. 9 to 11:30 p.m.

Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: Rock 201, classic rock. 9:30 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Uncle Hal's Crabgrass Band, funky-tonk. 7 p.m., free.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: Lewis Carroll's Alice in Wonderland. Staged by the New Renaissance Players. 7:30 p.m. \$

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: Andre Villoch, with special guest Matt Cranstoun, singer-songwriters, 7:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 23

Arts Block Café, Greenfield: Sugarhouse, funk/rock. Open stage benefit, so bring instruments; admission is free, but donations of food or cash for the Food Banks of Greenfield and Brattleboro are encouraged. 1 p.m.

Brick House, Turners Falls: Andre Villoch, singer-songwriter. Substance free, all ages venue. 2 to 3 p.m. \$

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: Lewis Carroll's Alice in Wonderland. Staged by the New Renaissance Players. 3 p.m. \$



COURTESY ANDRE VILLOCH

Michigan-based singer-songwriter Andre Villoch will appear in back-to-back area engagements, this Friday night at Mocha Maya's in Shelburne Falls, and Saturday afternoon at the Brick House in Turners Falls.

Between the Uprights, Turners Falls: Fundraiser to help send TF Football standout Ryan Wilder to a tournament in Australia. Call 863-2882 for more info. 6 to 9:30 p.m.

Full Moon Coffeehouse, Old Town Hall, Wendell: Darlingside, rock, classical, folk; with Katie Sachs and the Bear Mountain Boys opening. Dessert available. 7:30 p.m., \$

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: Torn Shorts, folk, rock, country, blues, 8 p.m.

Arts Block Café, Greenfield: Christa Joy, singer-songwriter. Full band show. 8 p.m., \$

Deja Brew Pub, Wendell: The Wildcat O'Halloran Band, guitar-based blues, 9 to 11:30 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Zombie Nurse, with John Kurtyka's Limp

Flamingo. 9:30 p.m., \$

Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: Ultimatum, classic rock. 9:30 p.m.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 24

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: Lewis Carroll's Alice in Wonderland. Staged by the New Renaissance Players. 3 p.m. \$

Bowker Auditorium, UMass, Amherst: Film screening, Keeping Score, Revolutions in Music: Stravinsky's Rite of Spring. 5 p.m. Free.

Montague Bookmill, Montague Center: Dead of Winter Film Series, Big Deal on Madonna Street (1958, dir. Mario Monicelli). 7 p.m., free.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Oscars on the big screen. Red carpet starts at 7 p.m.

Deja Brew Pub, Wendell: The Harmaniac Brothers, multi-instrumentalists incorporating harmonica, 8 to 10 p.m.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 25

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Dada Dino's Open Mike. 8 p.m., signup at 7:30 p.m. Free.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 27

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: Play reading, The Beauty Queen of Leenane (Martin McDonagh). 6:30 p.m., \$

Second Congregational Church, Greenfield: Film screening, Reclaiming Democracy. Presented by Greening Greenfield and the Traprock Center for Peace.

Strategies for transferring power from corporations to communities. Refreshments to follow; discussion inevitable; donations welcomed. 6:30 p.m.

Leverett Library: Leverett resident Eva Gibavic presents a program on Ceremonial Stone Landscapes, featuring slides, a film screening, and discussion of the area around Great Falls and the Turners Falls Airport being designated a Tribal Historical District by the National Historical Register of Places in 2008. 7 p.m., free.

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

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 28

Deja Brew Pub, Wendell: Blue Pearl, blues/jazz, 8 to 10 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Imetajuju, debut performance. 9 p.m., free.

FRIDAY, MARCH 1

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: Lonesome Brothers, hick rock, 8 p.m. Free.

Arts Block Café, Greenfield: Dan Kennedy, new age piano, with guitarist Manfred Melcher. 8 p.m., \$

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By LESLIE BROWN

Part 3

We have taken to walking down to the lake each evening to watch the sunset. When the sun sinks quickly behind the mountains to the west, the whole of the chain of elevation surrounding the water glows with color, some nights peach, others rose, still others deep red before the mountains themselves become purple as the darkness falls. On Sunday, the slate-topped stone walkway that stretches along the shore is filled with families as is the park of picnic tables and vendors, swings, exercise machines and the skate park.

We have followed several horses and riders down to the lakeside where many exercise their animals and relax themselves. But tonight they have all lined up in front of an open area in the park. A band soon arrives, speakers are set up and several horn players, a tuba, a drummer

and an accordion player who doubles as the singer begin a concert of popular Mexican songs of patriotism followed by songs for anyone in the crowd celebrating a birthday. Last, of course, traditional love songs.

We walk back to the *casita* by way of the plaza in the semi-darkness and return home never feeling unsafe in this friendly town. We settle in for a light supper, some reading, catch up on emails and then to bed as it is after ten o'clock.

The next morning we are up before eight, hoping to catch the ferry that travels across the lake to a smaller village opposite. We expect to take the small water taxi at eleven, explore the village and have lunch before returning. We arrive about twenty minutes ahead of schedule and wait.

A bit after eleven with no boat in sight, we inquire of an ex-pat who has been exercising on the walkway. "Don't forget, we're on Mexican time," he says. We wait some more. At last I walk down to the pier and find a new sign that reads trips on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Well, on Mexican time things have changed.

We amble up the street after visiting the resident burro, El Blanco, and

THE GARDENER'S COMPANION

On Mexican Time: Part 3



COURTESY OF ESCAPETOAJIJIC.COM

Partiers rest on the steps after the Ajijic Carnival parade.

soon find crowds massing around the street at the corner of Constitution. We decide to wait too as obviously something is about to happen. About a half hour later, a crowd of young boys fly down the street, pursued by ugly masked creatures, rather like the running of the bulls. All of them are followed by a marching band of drums, trumpets and a tuba. When the masked and costumed creatures get to the intersection, they begin a lively dance to the music of the band and then move off noisily to the next street corner. Flour and colored confetti are thrown.

Later on our own street, we hear that there will be another parade in our neighborhood tomorrow, a Mardi Gras sort of party leading up to Lent,

but not before a three day festival coming up after Valentine's Day. So much party, so much fun, laughter and happiness!

Part 4

Fat Tuesday and the best parade ever!

First the anticipation. Folks started gathering at the corner of Constitution well before ten to grab an advantageous spot on the curb or to snatch up the little bit of shade under an orange tree although the parade was not scheduled to begin until 10:15. Then came the excitement of the sighting of masked and costumed persons gathering two blocks down the street. Next was the arrival of a carload of musicians. But still no parade. All these followed by the churros on their handsome horses, some with small children on the saddle as well and all in their finest boots and shirts.

Now in the distance we get a peek at large marionettes twice human size. At last the police arrive to cordon off the street and preparations begin in earnest. At 11:15 the street is charged by boys of all sizes running, followed by a hideous masked figure with a gray beard and a stick. Then people of all sizes, in scarf masks like banditos, throwing flour and confetti at the crowds. A large band of trumpets, drums and the inevitable tuba blast down the street followed by floats of young girls dancing, a float from the local gym featuring a pole dancer (male) and another male made up like a female with balloon

breasts and a huge puppet pumping iron. Another float follows with mermaids sporting beautifully crafted paper tails of green and gold, more riders, a huge paper mache horse, another large dancing puppet and a float featuring a huge golden sun. Then another band followed by more costumed persons in rubber masks, a float bearing the queen and princess of the Carnival. We are all pelted with flour, hollowed eggs filled with confetti and hard candies. An hour of happy fantasy, music and dancing, laughter and celebration.

Later in the park by the lake, more drink, more food, and music well into the night.

Our *casita* is made of yellow-painted stucco with curving brick ceilings and tile floors capped by the roof of traditional curved sections of pipe. It stays cool in the heat of the day and yet is never too cold. Ajijic is located on a plateau surrounded by the Sierra Madres. It is a mild and temperate climate with an average daily temperature of 72. It is hot mid-day but not humid and as we are two blocks from the lake, there is often a cooling breeze. Tomorrow we will again attempt to catch the water taxi that plies a route from our shore to the shore of the village opposite. We are much content to enjoy our town, the local people and their crafts and customs; however, we are now ready to explore a little farther a field.

Lent notwithstanding, we go to bed to the sound of trumpet, drums and tuba. More festival!

Life

When man begins with man, he forfeits God's friendship, wisdom, power and blessing. Man's life without these in place leaves him in a most dire position, friendless, clueless, weak, in disfavor with God.

However, when man begins with God, he can claim all the promises of God, through friendship with God. He has inner peace, knowledge to face life, power to live it and the blessing of God.

The Bible says: "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly" (John 10:10)

Christ has at His disposal all things, for they were created by and for Him, and will provide all we need. Eternal life is a good place to start.

Begin new life with Christ.
Ask him to be your Savior

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