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Call It A
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LAKE PLEASANT

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YEAR 11 – NO. 20

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

FEBRUARY 28, 2013

Real Pickles Seeks Real Paradigm Shift



Holland (l) and Rosenberg (r) will no longer be the sole owners of Real Pickles.

By SHIRA HILLEL

GREENFIELD – Eleven years ago, Montague residents Dan Rosenberg and Addie Rose Holland started a small business making and selling fermented vegetables. They committed to supporting local farms, and using local organic vegetables in their products. They also committed to only selling locally.

The business they started, Real Pickles, has grown immensely in the last decade, achieving much recognition in the organic food industry. They now supply over 300 stores in the Northeast. Three years ago, when they outgrew their previous community kitchen space, they invested in a solar-powered, energy-efficient food facility in Greenfield.

Rosenberg and Holland, showing their commitment to both talking the talk and walking the walk, have now decided to further buck the dominant paradigm laid out for successful local

businesses. Instead of selling to a larger food corporation, they are making the company a worker cooperative.

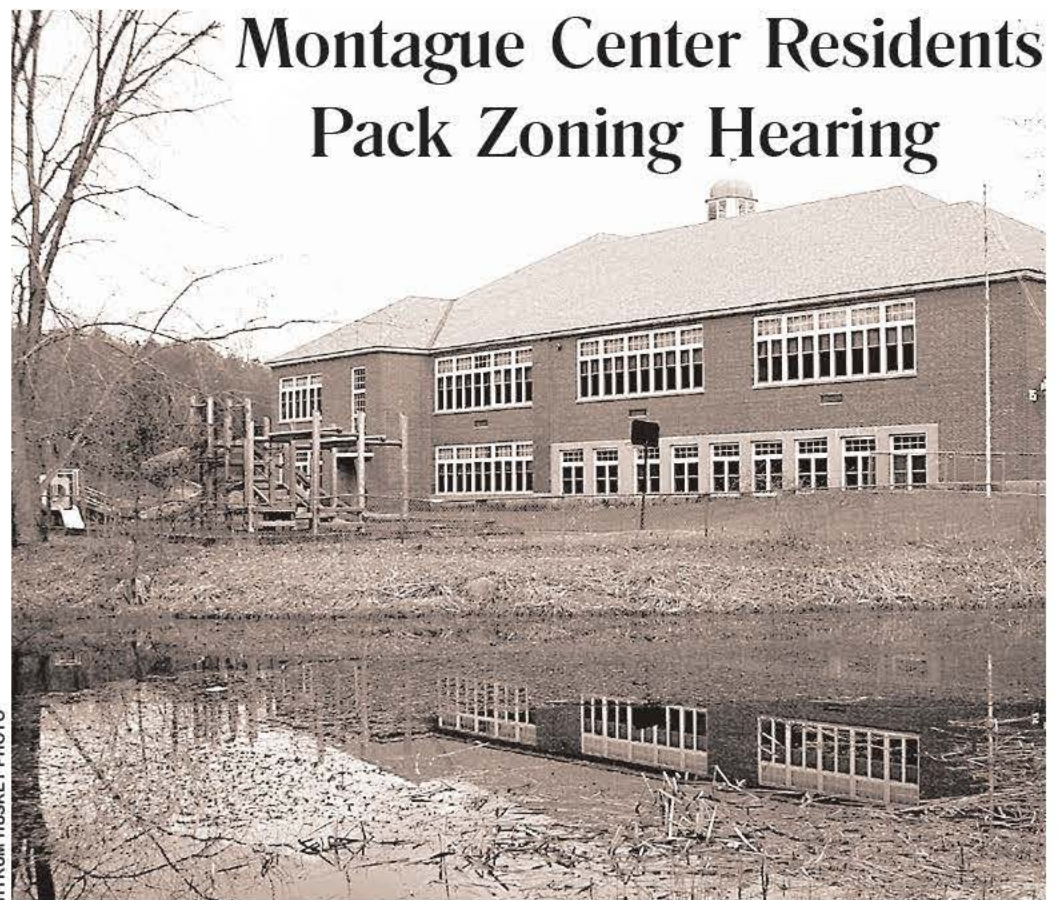
As they put it in their press release on the transition: “We are committed to keeping Real Pickles a small business working to truly change the food system, and so we clearly must choose a different direction.”

The concept of “multiple bottom lines” is gaining traction: a business venture can yield not only financial profits, but environmental and social ones too. “The bottom line is defined differently by corporations and co-ops. For the co-op, it is measured by its benefit to the workers. For the corporation, it is measured by financial profits,” said Holland.

Morale is high among the current twelve-member Real Pickles staff. With its meaningful mission and team spirit, it seems like an idyllic, warm, and friendly place to work.

see PICKLES page 6

Montague Center Residents Pack Zoning Hearing



Though changing or removing Section 5.4.7 will affect planning throughout the town, Tuesday's discussion returned repeatedly to the fate of the currently unused Montague Center School.

By MIKE JACKSON

MONTAGUE – A planning board hearing held Tuesday night turned contentious, as residents of Montague Center opposed to an apartment project slated for the former Center School building accused town officials of “auspicious timing” in proposing changes to the town’s zoning bylaws.

The current bylaw requires all dwellings to be at least 700 square feet in area. Last October the Zoning Board of Appeals granted developer Mark Zaccheo, of Greenfield, a variance on that requirement, which is now facing a potential court challenge.

The hearing began with an unrelated proposal, as the board weighed redistricting 74 acres on West Mineral Road, a dead-end country lane east of the airport, from Industrial to “Agriculture-Forestry-4.” The

reasons were many: several adjacent parcels are restricted from development; archaeological “issues”, wetlands and habitat may complicate its use; residents are in favor; the town is targeting industrial development elsewhere; and it would complete a corridor from the Montague Plains to the Connecticut River. That proposal was referred to town meeting in May, as Montague Center residents trickled in, eager to discuss the main course of the hearing, Section 5.4.7 of the Zoning Bylaws.

That bylaw may need to change at least somewhat to comply with a state statute prohibiting zoning law from regulating the interior of single-family buildings. Citing a growing demand for single-bedroom apartments driven by reduced household size, town planner Walter Ramsey and building inspector

see HEARING page 5

By JONATHAN von RANSON

WENDELL – The five Wendell residents who took a charter bus to the Forward on Climate rally Feb. 17 in Washington D.C. reported back on the weekend’s experience. While their impressions were different, some even contradictory, nearly all saw it as a key moment in a big, essential cultural shift, possibly even a precursor of a leap in human spiritual history.

The five – Jenny Caron, Alistair MacMartin, Chris Queen, Ilna Singh and Jim Thornley – carpooled Saturday morning to the bus departure point at the Staples parking lot in Greenfield. Annie Hassett, Dave Gott and Suzanne Carlson sang off the entire expedition of around 80, as they left on two buses.

Once in Washington, nine cramped but good-spirited hours later, they settled in for the evening at Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ, an all-Black church on North Capitol Street with a social-activist history. The pastor greeted them. “The church was awesome – incredibly welcoming,” said Caron.

There appeared a “delicious,” all agreed, roasted root vegetable dinner provided by Andrew Kurkowski and Meredith Wecker, new owners of the Benson Place blueberry farm in Heath and parents of two young children. The couple had organized

Three Gallons of Fuel and Two Days To Join 40,000 in Key Climate Rally



On the Mall. From left to right: Jo, from Vermont, and Queen, MacMartin, and Thornley from Wendell.

the buses and made the church connection as well. As Kurkowski put it afterward, “It was a lot of work for us. It felt good – we’ll probably do something like that every 3 to 4 years.”

People had their choice of

padded pews or the church’s carpeted floor on which to spend the night in their sleeping bags. Sunday morning they awoke to an early breakfast of oatmeal and Benson Place blueberries. After that, a few of the group remained behind for

the church’s 8 o’clock service, while others went to the Mall, where they sat in coffee joints and toured the monuments in the almost-bitter winds until noon arrived, time for the big rally.

The event was set up in the shad-

ow of the Washington Monument. Bill McKibben of 350.org, Vermont writer and tireless global facilitator in climate change response, looked out over the crowd – at 35,000-50,000, it was the largest climate rally ever – and declared that what he’d long wanted had happened: the issue had finally “become a movement.”

It happened in cold, windy weather, not what’s thought of as global warming, and not conducive to attracting large crowds. But people traveled a day or several days to get there, and they were committed. “Frankly, though, the mall is so big, it swallowed up 40,000 people,” Queen remarked. “They get a hundred thousand to a football game,” MacMartin pointed out. “It’s got to get bigger.” Singh was accepting. “The mood there was so determined. People were really committed to this.” MacMartin agreed, calling the ambience “hopeful, somewhat celebratory.”

The rally’s emcee, Rev Lennox Yearwood of the Hip Hop Caucus, a civil and human rights organization, introduced the speakers. Several were native American chiefs and leaders from Canada, mainly women. MacMartin, a Canadian himself, said, “Their lands are being simply co-opted for the tar sands. They’ve made an encampment to try to block the project.”

Every Wendell attendee men-

see RALLY page 7

PET OF THE WEEK

Squeaky On The Inside



Squeaky

I know my name is Squeaky, but I do not have a voice to match! I am a rather reserved lady, and I am desperately wanting a home of my own again.

This ever-changing cast of characters has me a bit bewildered, and I would love to be able to settle into my own bed in a sunny spot. Won't you come meet me?

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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WENDELL FREE LIBRARY

Ding-in-Spring Hand Chime Orchestra

The Ding-in-Spring Hand Chime Orchestra for kids and families will be at the Wendell Free Library on Sunday, March 3 at 3:33 p.m.

Shake off the winter blues by participating in a hands-on Hand Chime Orchestra for an hour of fun!

Music conductor Steve Damon has 30 hand chimes of all different sizes and tones. He'll set us up and have us playing familiar tunes together in no time at all. Damon says that all participants will hear, see, and feel music in a new way with the help of the chimes. No previous experience with hand chimes is necessary but great listening skills sure help.

Damon holds advanced music education degrees and has taught PreK-12 music for 20 years. He started A Natural Music School, to work with home-schoolers, senior citizens, and other educators. More information about his school can be found at www.anaturalmusic-school.org.

This free program is best for kids ages 6 to 12, but 5-year-olds with good concentration might like to try it too. To register, call the Wendell Library at (978) 544-3559 or email rheidkam@cwmmars.org. This program is made possible by a grant from the Wendell Cultural Council.

Movie: Ice Pirates

Ice Pirates is coming to the big screen at the Wendell Free Library on Saturday, March 9 at 7:30 p.m. Admission is free.

Ice Pirates is a real science fiction movie – a space opera with sword fights, explosions, fighting robots, monsters, bar fights and time warps.

In the far future water is the most valuable substance. Two space pirates go after ice and are immediately captured, sold to a princess, and recruited to help her find her father who disappeared when he discovered information dangerous to the rulers.

An entertaining and funny small budget movie that doesn't take itself too seriously. The great cast includes: Ron Pearlman, Angelica Huston and even John Carradine in a small role.



Ice Pirates: Angelica Huston, John Matuszak, 1984

There will be a short (1/2 hour) film before the movie: "Rocky Jones, space ranger, Crash of Moons, Chapter 1", from the 50's *Rocky Jones* TV series.

This is another film in the monthly series of Science Fiction/Fantasy and Horror/Monster movies at the Wendell Free Library. For more information, contact Robert Heller at (978) 544-6933 or heller@deepsoft.com.

JESSICA LARKIN ILLUSTRATION

By FRED CICETTI

Q. What exactly is a medical family tree and is it worth doing?

A medical family tree is like the ones genealogists prepare, but it also includes all the maladies suffered by members of the family. A medical tree can reveal patterns and help everyone in a family choose medical tests.

Many causes of illnesses are inherited from ancestors. Almost a third of known diseases have family links. These include colon cancer, heart disease, alcoholism and high blood pressure.

The following is important information about each family member –

living and dead – that should be included in a health history.

1. Birth and death dates.
2. Cause of death.
3. All medical conditions with dates and outcomes. Include anything outside the norm, not just serious diseases as well as problems such as allergies, vision and hearing difficulties.
4. Birth defects.
5. Mental health problems.
6. Lifestyle description. Include information about smoking, drinking, diet, obesity and exercise.
7. Racial and ethnic background.

Some medical conditions are more common in certain groups of people.

Q. Is genetic testing dangerous?

I don't know if I would call it dangerous, but it can be upsetting if you find a medical problem in your DNA.

DNA, or deoxyribonucleic acid, is in the genes you get from your



Drivers entering Turners Falls via Montague City Road last week encountered this strange warning. What message was the DPW trying to convey? Perhaps they merely wanted to say that it's cold out!

Turners Juniors To Host Trivia Night Fundraiser At Elks

By FAITH KAEMMERLEN

help you out!

MONTAGUE – The Turners Falls High School Class of 2014, who brought you the wild and crazy night of Donkey Basketball a couple of years ago, is at it again.

This time it's a trivia night fundraiser Saturday, March 16th, at 7pm at the Montague Elks.

Are you as smart as a junior? Teams of 8 to 10 players will face off to prove who can boast the most.

Categories include *Sports & Games, Montague, Famous Figures, Politicks*, and a whole lot more. Don't know an answer? Well you can pay a fee and phone a junior! They will be waiting to

The generous Montague Elks are donating their space, and we will be providing the entertainment. Shawn Hubert will be MC-ing the experience with a very special assistant.

There will be a variety of prizes throughout the evening, and the winning team brings home \$100. Tickets are \$10 each.

Register your team by calling (413)863-7270 and leave a message with co-advisor Faith Kaemmerlen, or arrive March 16 at 7 p.m. and form one on the spot.

Come support the TFHS class of 2014 as they raise money for prom and their senior class trip through providing fun and entertainment to the community!

THE HEALTHY GEEZER:

Medical Trees, DNA Testing and Nail Color

parents. DNA guides the cells in your body.

A DNA test can reveal mutations that raise the risk of developing a disease. Positive results for certain diseases can induce people to take preventive action, such as surgical removal of endangered organs.

Genetic testing should be viewed as a fallible tool. A positive result for a mutation doesn't mean you'll get a disease. And a negative result doesn't mean you are immune.

Multiple mutations can cause a disease; multiple genes can be responsible for a single disease. There are gene changes that develop without any link to your ancestors; they happen because you smoke or get too much sun or sometimes for no known reason.

Q. Can you diagnose disease by looking at someone's nails?

The condition of finger nails can tell medical professionals a lot about health. Nail growth is affected

by disease, hormone imbalance, and the aging process, itself. Many seniors suffer from nail problems because nails thicken as we age. Seniors also have greater circulation difficulties, and we use more medications; both of these impact nails.

Most doctors include a nail examination during a physical checkup. Common problems that produce symptoms in the nails are the following:

- Liver disease: White nails
- Psoriasis: Thick, pitted nails
- Kidney disease: Nails that are half pink and half white
- Heart conditions: Red nail beds
- Lung diseases: Thick, yellow nails
- Anemia: Pale or concave nail beds
- Diabetes: Light yellow nails, with a slight blush at the base.

Send your questions to fred@healthygeezers.com.

SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES - MARCH 4TH TO MARCH 8TH

GILL - MONTAGUE

Gill/Montague Senior Center, 62 Fifth Street, Turners Falls, is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Congregate meals are served Tuesday through Thursday at Noon.

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

For 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 3/4
 10:10 a.m. Aerobics
 10:45 a.m. Chair Exercise
 1:00 p.m. Knitting Circle
Tuesday 3/5
 9:30 a.m. Chair Yoga
 12:00 p.m. Lunch
 12:45 p.m. COA Meeting
 1:00 p.m. Painting Class
Wednesday 3/6
 10:00 a.m. Aerobics
 12:00 p.m. Lunch
 12:45 p.m. Bingo

Thursday 3/7

9:00 NO Tai Chi
 10:30 a.m. to Noon Brown Mag
 12:00 p.m. Lunch
 1:00 p.m. Pitch
Friday: 3/8
 10:00 a.m. Aerobics
 10:45 a.m. Chair Exercise
 1:00 p.m. Writing Group

ERVING

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

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 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 3/4
 9 a.m. Tai Chi
 10 a.m. Osteo Exercise
 Noon Quilting
Tuesday 3/5
 8:45 a.m. Chair Aerobics
 9:30 a.m. C.O.A Meeting

12:30 p.m. Painting

Wednesday 3/6
 8:45 a.m. Line Dancing
 10 a.m. Chair Yoga
 Noon Bingo
Thursday 3/7
 8:30 a.m.-10:00 a.m. Foot Clinic. The cost is \$4 for Erving residents and \$8 for non-residents.
 8:45 a.m. Aerobics
 10 a.m. Posture Perfect
 Noon Cards
Friday: 3/8
 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.



JESSICA LARKIN ILLUSTRATION

Local Briefs

Compiled By DON CLEGG

The Small Towns Softball League is **looking for umpires**. If you are interested, call Jon at the Montague Park and Recreation office at (413) 863-3216.

The Executive Committee of The Gill/Montague Community School Partnership has decided they do not have the capacity to organize the annual **Turners Falls Summer Block Party**. The partnership hopes some other organization will fill that role. For more information, call (413) 863-3604 or visit www.gmpartnership.org.

Hope and Olive's monthly benefit event, Free Soup & Games Night, on Monday, March 4 from 5:30 to 7 p.m. will **benefit the Montague Public Libraries**. Local farms, restaurants and bakeries will donate tasty eats. Soup and Games Night proceeds will fund the following library programs, either wholly or in part: the popular Hands-on Science Program, a No Strings Marionette Company new puppet show, The Three Little Pigs, in July, Music and Movement with Tom Carroll and Laurie Davidson, and a bilingual children's concert with Mr. G on May 4 in Peskecompskut Park.

According to Hope and Olive's website, "Beneficiaries tend to be not for profit organizations, arts organizations and social services that have lost funding." The Montague Public Libraries have provided a wide variety and quantity of children's programs in the last fifteen years. Many of these programs were funded by outside sources, and this funding has greatly declined. The Library has to be creative to keep offering our well-attended, free programs (such as outdoor puppet shows for 150, and music and movement concerts for 60-90) that are open to all.

Game night is a chance to enjoy a free buffet of soups & breads, grab a drink from the bar, and sit down with friends to play games and chat. Those who wish can make a donation to the Children's Programs at the Montague Libraries by adding to the donation tip jar, buying baked goods and refreshments, or trying their luck at a coffee can raffle. Raffle prizes include gift certificates to area restaurants and businesses. For more information, to donate, or to volunteer, contact Linda Hickman at (413) 863-3214.

The **Happier Valley Comedy Show** on Saturday, March 9, at 7:30 p.m. brings laughter to their new home at The Arts Block Café where you can enjoy drinks as well as the show. Watch each troupe perform their show, plus all the players mix it up together in totally improvised games that will have you rolling in the aisles. This show is PG-13. For more details, visit www.happiervalley.com. The Arts Block Café is located at 289 Main Street in Greenfield.

On Sunday, March 10, from noon to 3 p.m. at the Leverett Town Hall, the Daniel Shays affinity group will host a screening of "**Lessons from Fukushima**," a recent talk by Arnie Gundersen on the threat of a Fukushima type nuclear event here in the Valley. Gundersen is chief engineer of energy consulting company Fairewinds Associates and a former nuclear power industry executive. He previously worked for Nuclear Energy Services in Danbury, a consulting firm where he was a senior vice president. Gundersen holds a master's degree in nuclear engineering and has been one of the key scientists following the ongoing nuclear disaster in Fukushima, Japan that began on March 11, 2011.

The event in Leverett is timed to commemorate that tragedy and to help prevent a similar event in our region. The screening will be followed by a discussion and possible planning for future efforts to

address the risks of Entergy's Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant. Refreshments will be available or bring your own. For more information, call (413) 367-9352.

The Friends of the Greenfield Public Library announces the **22nd Annual Poet's Seat Poetry Contest**. Open to all Franklin County residents, the competition is held in honor of poet Frederick Goddard Tuckerman who resided in Greenfield from 1847 until his death in 1873 and was a contemporary of Emerson, Thoreau, and Tennyson. A graduate of Harvard Law School, he shunned law in favor of botany and poetry. Although Tuckerman never achieved wide public acclaim, his poems are often included in anthologies of noted American poets.

Poet's Seat Poetry Awards will be given in three categories: first, second, and third place in the adult division, and the four top poems in the youth division, age 12-18 (divided into 12-14 and 15-18 for judging). Submit up to 3 poems; postmarked by March 11. Mail poems to Poet's Seat Poetry Contest, Greenfield Public Library, 402 Main St. Greenfield, MA 01301. Details are available at the library and at www.greenfieldpubliclibrary.org.

Send local briefs to editor@montaguereporter.org.

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Montague Community Television Update

By CINDY TARAIL

MCTV and Turners Falls RiverCulture Director Lisa Davol have revived the Montague Cultural Update show. Davol interviewed erotic literature writers Jeremy Edwards and Sacchi Green, who recently participated in an erotic literature reading in Turners Falls. Nina's Nook's current exhibition, *Sensual Sexual Smut*, inspired another episode, in which Davol talked to gallery owner Nina Rossi and artist Edite Cunha about their work. In the third episode, Pam Allan, founder of the Rotation Book Project described by MCTV Board member Anne Harding in last week's Reporter, talks about the Rotation Book exhibit at LOOT.

MCTV captured Moonlight and Morningstar at the Gill-Montague Senior Center, so if you could not get out for the show after the big snowstorm, tune in and watch it on Channel 17 or online.

Look for an MCTV-produced video about the Greenfield Winter Fare including footage from food preserving, gardening and maple sugaring workshops as well as interviews with local farmers vending at the market, held at Greenfield High School each winter.

A local teen is producing a concert video. Turners Falls High School sophomore Jess Gaines, a productive MCTV member, filmed seven bands that played at a benefit held in memory of Mitch Luckner, lead singer of the band Suicide Silence, to raise funds for the singer's daughter's education. MCTV encourages more teens to stop by and harness their passions to make local TV. Plan ahead for spring break and summer video production time.

Peruse the program listings at montaguev.org, and montague.net and locally produced video on demand at: <http://vimeo.com/mctvchannel17>. If you do not have access to the internet, contact the station at (413) 863-9200 for help finding programs or for more information about local video production.

Cabin Fever Potluck Dinner!

**Old Town Hall - Wendell
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About Face Computing

GUEST OP-ED

Why Use a Bludgeon When a Calculator Will Do?

By JO COMERFORD

Some lawmakers have an almost-mythical resistance to raising revenue at a moment when affluent individuals and big corporations have the lowest tax burden in more than half a century.

Sequestration is both ugly and hard to explain. As a budget wonk, I like to use this metaphor:

It's as if the American people are being squeezed into the back of a dilapidated Chevy pickup. Careening down a dirt road, we're headed for a brick wall. Try as we might to wake up from this nightmare, we can't stop the truck.

That sounds frightening, and it is. Once sequestration kicks in, we'll feel the impact of approximately \$85 billion in automatic, across-the-board federal cuts focused almost exclusively on discretionary spending.

Designed as the ultimate penalty – a bludgeon when what's called for is a calculator – sequestration was supposed to force members of Congress to work together within a deficit reduction paradigm. It failed as a disciplinary measure for our lawmakers and it's looking more likely to fail us all, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized Americans.

Discretionary budget cuts aren't equal. As legislated, sequestration slashes more or less evenly from what's known as defense and non-defense discretionary spending. That sounds fair on the surface but consider that – at 57 percent of all discretionary spending – Pentagon-related federal expenditures have risen 35 percent since 2002, 48 percent when you include war costs. At the same time, non-military discretionary spending increased only eight percent, with notable reductions in funding for key social programs between 2010 and 2013.

Unlike the audit-dodging Pentagon, which has drawn bipartisan criticism for waste and bad management, there's no excess to trim. Sequester cuts to depleted social initiatives will mean less money flowing into state and local budgets, job loss, and the termination of services in sectors where there are already aching gaps

between what's needed and what's offered. The needs won't evaporate. The costs will shift to cash-strapped state and local governments in the form of property tax hikes and budget overrides.

Consider the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter. While we've been splitting hairs over public dollars for food and roads, the F-35 has become the most costly weapons program in U.S. history due to setbacks and delays. The cost of just one of these jets (and 2,457 are on order this year) is nearly equal to the entire cut projected for Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program expected to take effect under sequestration.

Further, budgets are about revenue and spending. Many in Congress believe that the pot of money to be spent or saved is finite. It isn't. Yet, some members have an almost mythical resistance to raising revenue at a moment when affluent individuals and big corporations have the lowest tax burden in more than half a century.

Prior to Jan. 1, the top 1 percent of income earners got a bigger annual income-tax break than the bottom 99 percent earned on average each year. Members of Congress grudgingly let most of that benefit sunset at the end of 2012. As a result, we'll see approximately \$620 billion in additional revenue over the next decade.

There's more available. What about ending the Bush tax cuts for the second-richest one percent? And what about corporations? Officially, large U.S. companies are slated to pay a 35 percent tax on their profits. In practice, they pay nothing like that. In 2012, for example, corporate givebacks, loopholes, and overseas tax havens cost the Treasury \$165 billion.

We'd have a different national conversation right now if Congress would muster the political will to tackle tough questions like these.

The bottom line is that sequestration upends democracy. Americans deserve better than government by crisis. Through our taxes, we're the nation's major bill payers. Sequestration robs us – and our lawmakers – of our right and responsibility to make nuanced, thoughtful decisions about the fate of our nation. We need a federal budget by the people, for the people.

Jo Comerford is the executive director of the National Priorities Project. NPP is part of the Pentagon Budget Campaign, a broad national effort to rein in wasteful Pentagon spending. NationalPriorities.org. This op-ed first appeared on OtherWords.org.

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K. WILKINSON '13

KAREN WILKINSON ILLUSTRATION

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Virtually Speaking: Does the "virtual school" help or hurt student achievement?

It is very exciting to think that the Greenfield Public Schools can be a leader in state- and nation-wide initiatives related to innovation and online education. Greenfield is in an unusual position of having the first virtual online school in Massachusetts.

However, in the three years since Greenfield's virtual school was implemented, many concerned citizens have raised important questions that continue to go unanswered.

Many of these questions relate to this growing national trend: large for-profit corporations, identifying themselves as educational experts, are investing significant funds in lobbying for policies that support the sales of their products in public education settings.

Within the last year, numerous investigative reports – that have included mentions of Greenfield's virtual school – have pointed out that this model undermines the value of public education, and transfers both decision-making and stewardship of public dollars to private, for-profit groups.

There is no question that our school systems need to continue thinking about how to invest wisely and seek new opportunities for effective models that provide a solid foundation, leverage and infrastructure

for student achievement.

But we continue to have particular concerns about the involvement of K12 Inc., the large for-profit vendor running Greenfield's Massachusetts Virtual Academy.

A December 16, 2012 investigative piece in The Republican (Springfield) and Masslive.com reported that students in the K12-run online school ranked second lowest in the state on students' progress in the MCAS math and English exams. They also post an unusually high attrition rate.

The Maine Sunday Telegram also ran an investigative series which detailed how K12 Inc., the Jeb Bush organization Foundation for Excellence in Education, and the corporate-backed American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) were recently involved in crafting policies (later tabled) to create taxpayer-funded virtual schools in Maine.

Now, Greenfield's contract with K12 is up for renewal and the Greenfield School Committee will vote on it soon.

At the same time, Massachusetts has just passed legislation to provide accountability and avoid pitfalls for future virtual school efforts. In the 12/16/12 Republican article, Massachusetts commissioner of elementary and secondary education,

Mitchell Chester, noted that the 'performance of the Greenfield (virtual) academy "absolutely" demonstrates a need for state oversight.'

Our community deserves transparency and continuous feedback so we know and understand how our tax money is spent. Our society is best served when publicly-funded schools are accountable to the whole community and open to all children. We expect our schools to educate the whole child and to meet the needs of the families and community.

The next Greenfield School Committee meeting is scheduled for Feb. 28 at 6:30 p.m. at the Greenfield High School Library. All meetings are open to the public. Also, the public can contact the Superintendent and School Committee members to share opinions.

For links to the articles referenced above and other resources about K12 and public education, please go to <http://blog.helenepowers.com/2013/02/public-education-and-k12-inc-greenfield.html>

– **Francia Wisniewski, M.Ed**
Greenfield School Committee Member/ Greenfield Resident

– **Hélène J. Powers, M.Ed.**
Greenfield Resident

The Rogue Editor Sequester: A New Word for an Old Idea

BY NEIL SERVEN

Say what you will about our members of Congress: they sure are creative when it comes to naming their crises. First it was 'fiscal cliff' – an evocative metaphor that carried the image of peril, and the notion of a point of no return toward which we would be destined to careen unless drastic action were taken. Now, seemingly out of nowhere, we have 'sequester.'

'Sequester' is the name given to the short-term cut in government

spending – totaling \$85 billion, affecting both defense and discretionary expenditures – that is reported to kick in automatically on March 1 if a deal on the Congressional budget is not struck before then.

It's a dowdier word than 'fiscal cliff,' and one that does not hide its Latin roots. Generally, 'sequester' means 'to set apart,' and most people who know the word associate it with juries. When jurors are sequestered, they are essentially isolated – sometimes for a long time – so as not to be influenced by outside factors, such as media coverage of the trial. If you've ever been sequestered, you know it's not a pleasant experience – one that might make you wonder if you'll ever see your friends and family again.

But 'sequester' has other meanings, too. It can mean 'to seize property,' such as may be authorized by a court, particularly when possession of that property is in dispute among two or more parties. Often, such property is placed



KAREN WILKINSON ILLUSTRATION

in the care of a third party (e.g., the state). This sense hews closer to the word's etymology. 'Sequester' derives via Middle English from the Latin noun *sequester*, meaning "third party or agent to whom disputed property is entrusted," and ultimately from the adverb *seculus*, meaning "beside or otherwise."

The use of 'sequester' and 'sequestration' in the parlance of budgeteering is a recent phenomenon. Specifically, it can be traced back to the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings Deficit Reduction Act of 1985, according to Dr. Paul M. Johnson, professor of political science at Auburn University.

see NEW WORD page 5

U.S. Casualties in Afghanistan as of 2/26/13

Wounded: 17,674 Deaths: 2,178



HEARING from page 1

David Jensen suggested either striking the bylaw or modifying it, either by reducing the admittedly arbitrary figure to something like 500 square feet or allowing exceptions to be made by special permit, and specifying it applies to multiple-family buildings. Until now, the practice seems to have been to grant variances as if by special permit, but the current controversy and pre-trial appeal have proven that untenable.

Ramsey entered onto the record a written statement by Robin Sherman of the Housing & Redevelopment Authority in support of striking the text, saying it served "no legitimate public purpose," "constrains supply and drives up the cost of housing," and "runs directly counter to the Town's efforts to become a sustainable, green community."

Planning Board member Bruce Young was the first to acknowledge "the elephant in the room," the Montague Center School redevelopment project, but pointed out that the existing bylaw could also be used "to kill a project, if a neighborhood doesn't want senior or affordable housing."

But ten Montague Center residents in attendance made it clear that for them, the 22-unit condo project was the main issue. Roy Rosenblatt of Center St. challenged the timing of the proposed changes, arguing that they would create "if not a legal, a moral defect" in the request-for-proposal process for the school building. This sentiment was echoed throughout the hearing in calls for a reissued RFP, should the bylaw be changed.

Lee Wicks, also of Center St., spoke of the relationship between density in settlement and crime, suggesting that reducing population density "has reduced some social problems" in New York City, where she used to live. "I know that density changes things." And neighbor Elliot Tarry challenged the value of "infill," saying the minimum requirement was "put in place to prevent

slums. That's still a good idea."

Ramsey and Young defended the premise of "infill," the reuse of underutilized property within an already settled area. Ramsey explained that an 11 percent growth in town population has brought a corresponding 30 percent increase in residential land use. Young argued that new, larger single-family residences such as those being built on Old Sunderland Road, in affecting forest, agriculture and wildlife corridors, "change the character" of Montague Center more than the reuse of an existing building. But residents were unconvinced by these arguments, with Wicks adding that if people really want to move to the village, "they can have my house when I die."

Diana Allen, of Union St., spoke of planning and zoning aimed at maintaining the different character of Montague's five villages. "Those of us here, we moved to Montague Center because of the character of that town."

Spelling this out more fully, Sam Lovejoy of Main St. called for planners to focus on reforming the zoning map rather than the bylaws, and "not shove down the throats of a more rural community the tendencies of what goes on in downtown Turners Falls, or Millers." He added that, should the rule be changed to allow special permitting, "we should compare our special permit criteria to other towns," and tighten them up, because "ours are pretty wimpy."

"Whatever the market will bear' is a race to the bottom," argued Tarry, who described living conditions in Tokyo consisting of 8' cubes with plexiglass lids. "Property values have dropped since the school closed. A 22-unit apartment building - what do you think that's going to do to the reputation of Montague Center?" Said Rosenblatt, the current bylaw is "our little community's only protection against a huge development coming in. We have exercised that protection."

"Whatever we think about the

Montague Center School," offered Jensen, "it's fair to say the variance portion of that rule is not working for the town... A disagreeable development has been held hostage to a poor rule."

"Whatever the market will bear' is a race to the bottom," argued Montague Center resident Elliot Tarry.

"You can't change a zoning bylaw for one specific building," objected Rosenblatt. "People say 'what's rotten in Montague?' That feels wrong. The timing is a little... auspicious."

Jensen said he felt the rule should have been changed after being questioned in the past, adding "Mea culpa!"

"Namaste," Rosenblatt shot back with a grin.

"The reason this is happening is because the town is getting sued," said Richard Dingman, who lives on School St. Dingman said he wished officials had introduced the topic by admitting "we have a problem: we're getting sued." Board vice chair Fred Bowman replied that boards cannot discuss pending litigation. "We are listening to what you're saying, and will take it under advisement."

"In your case," said Young, the rule is "the golden child," but "everywhere else - in downtown Turners Falls - the variance is holding up progress." And he put forward a case that even renters of small apartments can integrate and contribute. "If you support the people who live there, there is a chance that they will become part of the community."

Developer Zaccheo took the floor at the end of the hearing and responded to points raised earlier. He suggested lowering the minimum to 500 square feet, acknowledging that much smaller units (250 to 300 square feet) can indeed "attract an element" due to

their low pricing, but reassured that some smaller units also allow "higher-end, green apartments, because I can put more money in per unit size," attracting retirees and younger professionals who can pay more for that value added. Zaccheo disputed characterizations that his plans would pave the entire property - the building, parking and driveways would take up 25 percent of the lot.

He also objected to descriptions of the development as "doubling" the population of the three-block area around the school as being based on an unfairly small, "stones-throw" area.

A flurry of procedural discussion resulted in the hearing closing for verbal testimony, but remaining open for written comment until March 7. The hearing will continue at Town Hall on Tuesday, March 12 at 6:30 p.m. If a bylaw change is proposed, the new text will be posted, necessitating a further public hearing; though strik-

ing the text may not require one.

Officials believe there is enough time to send an article to town meeting in May.

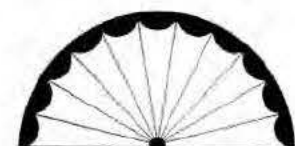


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Gill-Montague Regional School District ANNOUNCES ITS ANNUAL KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION



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**Wednesday, March 13, 2013
9:00 am -4:00 pm**

In case of school cancellation due to weather,
registration will be held Monday, March 18, 2013.

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- Birth certificate • Record of immunization • Proof of residence • Photo I.D.

For more information please call:

Montague Elementary School/Hillcrest Bldg 863-9526 Gill Elementary School 863- 3255

NEW WORD from page 4

That act, which aimed to balance the federal budget within six years, employed the term 'sequestration process' to refer to the similar automatic spending cuts that would go into effect if that objective was not reached.

According to linguist Ben Zimmer of Visual Thesaurus, the phrase played off the 'seizing property' sense of 'sequester,' "since it would take the power of making tough budgetary decisions away from Congress."

If the term sounds daunting, it is supposed to be. "The prospect of sequestration has thus come to seem so catastrophic that Congress so far has been unwilling actually to let it happen," Johnson writes.

Republicans, in particular, know that it carries a whiff of

threat, especially to those who value certain government-funded programs. Hence their use of the Twitter hashtag #obamaquester, displayed prominently at press conferences beneath the clock counting down to March 1.

Some media outlets aren't playing along, including CNN Money, which announced that it would eschew 'sequester' in its articles and headlines in favor of "forced budget cuts," calling the former esoteric jargon.

But so long as other media outlets keep using the term, it may jump from "esoteric" to "over-used" in record time.

Neil Serven is an Associate Editor for Merriam-Webster He lives in Greenfield.

**HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG****Animals Loose in Turners Falls**

Wednesday, 2/13

12:37 a.m. Suspicious person near railroad tracks on East Main Street in Millers Falls.

9:30 a.m. Medical emergency at Avenue A in Turners Falls. Removed to Hospital.

10:25 a.m. Narcotics violation at Hillside Plastics in Turners Falls.

11:19 a.m. Citation issued for narcotics violation at the Franklin County Technical School.

1:32 p.m. Theft at Lake Pleasant Road.

6:40 p.m. Animal missing from High Street.

Thursday, 2/14

2:46 a.m. Suspicious auto at Simon's Stamps in Turners Falls.

12:20 p.m. Arrest warrant issued at 4th Street in Turners Falls.

2:30 p.m. Theft reported at Montague Road in Turners Falls.

3:59 a.m. Abuse prevention restraining order issued at Randall Wood Drive.

Friday, 2/15

12:13 a.m. Domestic disturbance at Avenue A in Turners Falls.

11:33 a.m. Animal loose at Coolidge Avenue.

9:55 p.m. Police attempt to issue arrest warrant at Route 63 Road House in Miller Falls. Person not found.

Saturday, 2/16

5:14 a.m. Domestic disturbance on G Street in Turners Falls. Person taken to hospital for mental health protection.

1:28 p.m. Car pulled over for running a red light. Driver also cited for driving with a suspend-

ed license.

Sunday, 2/17

1:23 a.m.

arrested for failing to stop for police after running a red light and speeding and driving without a license.

4:30 p.m. Assault at 4th Street in Turners Falls.

6:16 p.m. Structural fire at the Montague Elks Lodge in Turners Falls. Police investigated.

10:16 p.m. arrested for assault and battery with a deadly weapon at his residence,

10:29 p.m. Breaking, entering and burglary at A Turners Falls Road in Turners Falls.

Monday, 2/18

2:14 p.m. Restraining order served in hand at 4th Street in Turners Falls

11:24 p.m. Person arrested north of Turnpike & Montague City Road for driving an uninsured vehicle with a revoked registration and no inspection.

11:46 p.m. Medical Emergency at James Avenue in Turners Falls. Removed to hospital.

Tuesday 2/19

6:03 p.m. Medical emergency at Avenue A. Removed to hospital.

6:57 p.m. Animal lost from 4th Street in Turners Falls.

8:53 p.m. Animal found area of Route 63, Montague.

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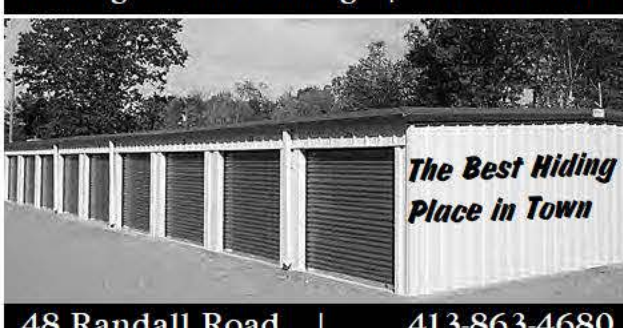
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Finding Alternatives



LEE WICKS PHOTO

Jenny Chapin

By LEE WICKS
and SHIRA HILLEL

A visitor to this part of Massachusetts could pick up a copy of *Many Hands*, or read the classifieds in the Greenfield Co-op newsletter, and either conclude that we are a sickly group of people constantly seeking wellness, or that we are an enlightened population willing to open our minds and hearts to some of the oldest traditional forms of healing.

The differences between traditional Western medicine and alternative approaches to wellness are fascinating. They involve different ways of looking at the human body.

Western doctors are primarily focused on addressing and trying to prevent disease, which they do by treating symptoms. Western medicine focuses on promoting health through diet, exercise, prescription drugs and surgical procedures. Disease is believed to be caused primarily by viruses, bacteria and nutrition imbalance — external influences. Western medicine excels at combating acute disease and saving people's lives.

The success of alternative treatments involves their ability to address the overall wellness of the people they work with and helping them to live healthier. These treatments vary in views of disease and health, sometimes offering a different paradigm of what it means to be healthy. For example, those who practice Traditional Chinese Medicine and acupuncture focus on the flow of life energy, known as *chi*, through the meridians of the body, and believe unhindered flow of *chi* is the force behind optimal health.

Many alternative practitioners focus on a more holistic, or all-encompassing, view of the person, including diet, lifestyle choices, spiritual pursuits, and emotional health. Some focus on a specific practice, such as chiropractic health, which looks at the alignment of the skeletal system. Naturopaths and herbal doctors focus on natural remedies, asserting the idea that everything the body needs for optimal health is available naturally.

Complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) is the popular term for health and wellness therapies that have typically not been part of conventional Western medicine. "Complementary" means treatments that are used along with conventional medicine.

CAM includes mind-body medicine (such as meditation, acupuncture and yoga), manipulative and body-based practices (such as massage therapy and spinal manipulation), and natural products (such as herbs and dietary supplements).

Many CAM practitioners take the time to listen and understand individual health issues and concerns. They tailor the treatment plan to personal health care needs. This approach helps address increased interest in wellness-promoting activities that have not typically been part of conventional medical care.

Most CAM studies in the U.S. show that few people forgo conventional medicine altogether. So the term "integrative medicine" is increasingly preferred.

Complementary therapies run from A, for acupuncture, to Z for zero balancing, a type of bodywork. There are Bach Flower remedies, Chinese herbs, homeopathy, massage, Chi Gong, T'ai Chi, and many more. The choices for wellness are confusing, especially because many overlap in their promises to reduce stress, decrease pain, and help the body and mind regain balance.

I went to see Jenny Chapin, of Montague, for some guidance in this matter. She practices acupuncture, teaches yoga, and offers Zero Balancing, a hands-on system that "aligns structure and energy to create clearer stronger energy fields within and outside the body." Chapin is also the founder of Community Yoga and Wellness in Greenfield, which she sold, but where she still teaches. Well acquainted with the extended family of healers, she offered advice for those seeking alternatives to Western medicine.

She said, "The saddest thing that I hear from people is that their doctor has said nothing can be done for many nagging but non life threatening conditions. I think that's damning advice. The probability is that there is something that can help."

But what? How does a person begin evaluating all that is offered?

Chapin's first piece of advice is to talk to people you know. "Word of mouth is the best way to find the right teacher and practice," she says. If your friend suffered from back pain for years and feels much better now, ask her what she did. It could be massage, yoga, the Alexander technique, Zero Balancing, meditation or a number of other therapies. It could be a combination of physical therapy, doctor's care and an ancient healing technique, but if it's a true solution to a long-term problem, it probably took a while to heal.

"People often come to alternative healing after years of struggle. It's a last resort, and then they want to see overnight results. It doesn't work that way," says Chapin. "With some exception, the length of time for the cure is in proportion to the amount of time a person has been suffering."

However, repeated vis-see **HEALERS** page 10

PICKLES from page 1

Real Pickles' approach to business doesn't fit with many corporations' tunnel-vision drive for monetary profit. They wanted to find an alternative way to structure their business that would support its continued financial success, long-term viability without future dependence on its founders, and lasting contributions to healthy food and healthy food production.

Once they realized that becoming a worker co-op was the key to ensuring all of those things, the question was: how would they go about doing that?

Rosenberg and Holland began thinking about the transition to a worker co-op over a year ago. They worked out a financial value for their business and put together a plan to make a buy-out accessible to their workers. Together with Rosenberg and Holland, three other Real Pickles employees, Brendan Flannelly-King, Annie Winkler and Kristin Howard, have committed to signing on as the five founding worker-owners, each buying in with an investment of \$6,000.

But five worker-owners multiplied by \$6,000 would not be nearly enough. They knew they had to raise funds from outside their business to make it happen.

Michael Shuman, author of *Local Dollars, Local Sense*, was a major influence on Rosenberg's and Holland's thinking. When Shuman came to the area to speak a while back, Rosenberg and Holland were in the audience. Shuman began his presentation by asking how many people in the room buy locally because they believe in community prosperity. A majority of hands were raised. How many bank locally? Fewer hands were raised. How many have pension funds that are invested in local businesses? Not a single hand was raised.

Half of our national economy is made up of small businesses. But stocks, bonds and investment in Fortune 500 companies are where private individuals' long-term investments end up. Shuman is part of a movement to redefine investing. His message is that "the 99%" need to invest in the local economies of "Main Street," not just the one on Wall Street.

While there are other examples of successful worker co-ops in the region, such as Pioneer Valley PV, Simple Diaper and Linen Coop, and Equal Exchange Coffee of Western Mass, which pioneered worker co-ops in the 1980's, there are no local stock investment opportunities. "There is almost no infrastructure or opportunity for people to invest locally," said Rosenberg.

Real Pickles aims to raise \$500,000, which would finance the purchase of the business and provide extra operating capital. To do this, they have started a direct public offering of Real Pickles stock shares.

Real Pickles will have two separate classes of shareholders. At the higher level, there are the worker-owners who buy in and are able to vote on the business management decisions. There will also be shareholders who own non-voting stock.

These shares will be sold directly by Real Pickles and cannot be purchased through a broker. With a minimum investment of \$2,500, buyers will receive non-transferable stock that yields annual dividends. After five years, it can be sold back to the coop at its initial price.



Amber and Ona count carrots at Real Pickles' Greenfield facility.

"The United States enacted securities laws during the Great Depression to protect the least-wealthy 99 percent of the American public from being sold worthless securities by fraudsters. Grandma should not be snookered into buying swampland in Florida. But effectively, the law also forbade the 99 percent from putting their money into the local businesses we love, by imposing impossibly difficult and expensive legal hurdles," said Shuman.

Because such a structure is so out of the ordinary, Real Pickles had to wait a long time for approval from the security regulations of Massachusetts and Vermont. "Of course, we had to hire a lawyer to work all of this out," said Rosenberg. "In order to develop local investment, we had to enlist a non-local, local investment lawyer." Rosenberg was referring to Jenny Cassan, the CEO of Capital Investment Firm in California, who specializes in this niche of local investment. The vetting process of their financial records took months to be completed. "It was a really good process. They took a

close look at our business, because they are looking out for the public and trying to protect investors," said Rosenberg.

As a worker cooperative, Real Pickles will be governed by the worker-owners. The company's social mission and guiding principles will be inscribed in its articles of organization and bylaws, and will be difficult to change: The business will stay rooted in the community. Its owners will continue to be local residents who are directly involved in the day-to-day operations. Staff members will share in the decision-making and profits. They expect this opportunity will contribute to their success by incentivizing staff to remain on a long-term basis.

Real Pickles hopes additional staff members will join, following the transition. Staff become eligible for worker-ownership after a year of employment at Real Pickles. Once approved by the membership, a worker can purchase one share of common stock in the cooperative, entitling them to a single vote in coop affairs and to a share of its profits through annual dividends.

The day-to-day management will run much as it always has. Rosenberg will remain the general manager, Winkler the lead production manager, and so on. The business will continue to be managed in as participatory and inclusive a manner as possible, an approach that has contributed to a satisfying and productive Real Pickles workplace.

Workplace democracy and worker self-management are ideas with deep philosophical roots. They often come together with the advocacy of autonomy and self-control, the alleviation of alienation in the workplace, and the encouragement of participatory or direct democracy. "There are different ways to do democracy," said Rosenberg. When workers have a say in the management of the business they work for, that's living democracy.

The United Nations celebrated the International Year of Cooperatives in 2012, recognizing the contributions of coops around the world to community resilience, secure employment, and food security. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon stated: "Cooperatives are a reminder... that it is possible to pursue both economic viability and social responsibility."

Note: The Montague Reporter does not endorse this, or any, investment opportunity, as we are not in the business of analyzing investment risk.



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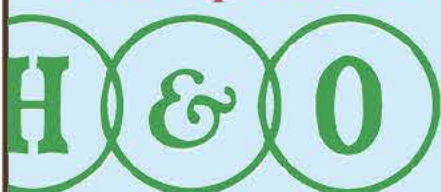
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Northfield Mountain offers Photography Hike



PHOTO BY THOM BURDEN

Photographer and educator Beth Reynolds will lead the hike.

NORTHFIELD – The winter landscape is rich in photographic opportunities. Join photographer and teacher Beth Reynolds on Saturday, March 9 from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. for “The Ebb and Flow of Winter,” a photography hike offered by the Northfield Mountain Recreation and Environmental Center.

Observe the ebb and flow of winter through the camera’s eye as Beth Reynolds coaches participants on shooting quality images while packing light. The group’s focus will be on learning to pay attention, reading the light and sharing in the observations of other group members to create better photos.

Northfield Naturalist Kim Noyes will share information on winter ecology, animal tracks, porcupine dens, and the natural history of the mountain. Wear wind pants or gaiters if you have them, dress in warm layers that can be shed as we get moving, wear warm footwear, and bring a water bottle and snack to take on the trail.

Bring only one camera, a

lightweight tripod and one or two lenses. This program is for anyone age 12 and older and costs \$10 (\$26 with snowshoe rental).

Pre-registration is required. Call Northfield Mountain at (800) 859-2960. Northfield Mountain Recreation and Environmental Center is owned and operated by FirstLight Power Resources.

Beth Reynolds, owner of Base Camp Photography in Greenfield, has a Masters of Fine Art in photography from the University of Hartford and teaches photography at Greenfield Community College.

She has also been a staff photographer for the Bristol Press Newspaper, a director of a photo program for youth and adults and a public affairs specialist for the US Coast Guard Reserves.

Reynolds has published four books, received numerous awards and taught photo-journalism at a number of colleges and universities. Beth’s students comment on her compelling teaching style and ability to make complex subjects understandable.

RALLY from page 1

tioned the deep chord struck by their remarks. “They expressed their thanks for the permission of the local tribe [the Piscataway] to be here,” MacMartin recalled. One woman, Singh recalled, looking out from the stage, “said, ‘I see my white relatives, I see my black relatives, I see my brown relatives, my relatives of the air, of the water.’ She spoke for me,” Singh said, “because what we’re working with is a vision that’s so much larger than our individual lives. One that includes all life on Earth. It was the most important statement there, because that’s what we’re dealing with.”

“They spoke about Mother Earth,” Thornley said, “and respect for the planet and integration of the planet with who we are, rather than exploitation of the resources of the planet. It was really eloquent and beautiful to hear.”

The gathering was diverse. Even on the bus from Franklin County it went “from kids to moms and dads

to plenty of gray-and-white-hairs,” reported Queen. In a message to townspeople on the Wendell e-mail list he wrote, “The parade of African American, Latino, First Nation, Asian and White brothers and sisters on stage and on the streets suggested that climate change is having at least one positive effect – making us realize our common humanity, interdependence, and responsibility for our common home.”

The rally drew participants from a broad array of environmental and energy concerns as well. Among those holding signs, “there were a lot of anti-fracking ones,” reported MacMartin. As he and the Wendell group looked around, “There weren’t a lot of signs in the crowd to use less energy,” MacMartin said. “I saw one that listed priorities, and on it conservation was #2. I think it’s #1.”

Caron is someone with a high level of resonance with the global wild, the heart of the planet life system. By the end of the rally and mass march to the White House, rather than feeling buoyed, she felt bereft. “I didn’t see what [the organizers] were offering people,” she said. “I know we show up and Obama feels our support, but it seemed like people felt overwhelmed, they didn’t know what to do... people need to go back home with more.”

On the native women speakers, though? “They were incredible,” Caron said. “It was deeply emotional for me. It’s hard, what we’re doing: a travesty? Abomination...? They spoke from their hearts. It’s worth re-hearing. Sadly, I felt it didn’t really sink in [with the crowd], but I also kind of think if we were to allow the full measure, the full



Native chiefs: First Nations women, whose remarks offered an Earth-centered cultural perspective on climate issues at the DC rally.

gravity, of the situation to sink in, I don’t think we could handle it.”

From the podium, Rev. Yearwood touched on the size of the challenge: “We marched here fifty years ago for justice. Now we’re back for survival!”

Still affected a week after the event, “I take it in different pieces,” Caron said. “I’ve had a hard week.”

Most were disappointed at how sparse the mass media press coverage was. “As far as the world’s reaction,” Thornley said, “I think it was minimal at best. But I think it’s really important that we keep doing these things,” he said. “The protest against the Vietnam War started with a few people on the street, get-

ting eggs thrown at them. A few years later, the whole country had swept over to that point of view.”

(In the Vietnam era, bus organizers didn’t do what they did for this one: calculate how much gasoline each participant on a full bus would use. For this rally, “2.5-3.5 gallons of fuel to get down there and back.”)

Thornley had an epiphany on the return bus ride. “Late at night, walking to the back with a lot of people just asleep, or sitting there absorbed, I just suddenly felt this solidarity of purpose. All these strange people I’d never met before... What was really cool to think was how this busload of peo-

ple were really for the same cause, the same understanding, that it’s really the planet that we’re trying to save.”

Queen loved “being able to come together with people from my own town and area, muster two buses organized by a wonderful couple, and find there was a groundswell of support and commitment to these climate change related issues.” And once there, “we discovered like-minded people from all over country.

“It was very encouraging,” he said, “whatever the outcome, in terms of political decisions in Washington, or even the fate of the Earth.”

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NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD MEETING

Contemplating the FY'14 Budget

By KATIE NOLAN

The Erving selectboard and finance committee began the fiscal year 2014 (FY'14) budget process at a joint meeting on Feb. 26. Together, the board and fincom reviewed available funds estimates for FY'14, and preliminary estimates of capital expenditure items, suggested possible budget item consolidations to reduce town meeting articles, and finally packed up their three-ring binders with departmental budget requests to bring home to study as the budget-setting season gets underway.

Looking at the draft bottom line for expenditures (over \$8 million), selectboard member Andrew Goodwin said, "It would be awesome if this number were less than last year."

Afterwards, the fincom left the selectboard meeting and moved to town hall's basement meeting room, where school committee members presented a draft budget of \$2.5 million for Erving Elementary School (EES) and approximately \$575,000 for secondary education.

According to school committee member Jarod Boissonneault, this represents a 3.5 percent increase

over FY'13, but exclusive of mandated special education expenses, the increase is 0.19 percent.

Boissonneault told the fincom that the school committee "worked from the ground up," identifying what was needed to run EES and building the budget on those needs. Fincom chair Daniel Hammock said, "I'd like to thank you guys" for holding down costs for FY'14, and he proposed a "standing ovation" for the school committee's work.

The fincom and school committee discussed the costs of children choosing out of EES, and both committees agreed there should be more effort to educate families about the benefits of attending EES.

A hearing on the draft school budget will be scheduled in March. The fincom will be meeting with five other departments to review the FY'14 budget on Thursday, Feb. 28 at 6 p.m.

Back at the selectboard meeting, the board considered a letter from the Franklin Land Trust on behalf of the estate of Ruth Toas, asking about the town's interest in receiving three approximately quarter-acre parcels on Prospect Street with a conservation restriction.

Selectboard chair Eugene Klepadlo recused himself from the decision, because his brother owns abutting land. However, speaking as a citizen, he said the properties can't be built on, because of slope and access

issues, and that they are not contiguous.

"The town doesn't want them," said selectboard member Margaret Sullivan. She said that the properties are subject to tax-taking for unpaid taxes and suggested that the estate contact abutters and sell the properties to them for the back taxes.

The board reviewed draft employee performance evaluation forms. Klepadlo said that department heads would be asked to develop methods for evaluating their employees. Sullivan recommended that department heads bring examples of employee evaluation forms specific to their departments to the next department head meeting.

The board considered an estimate of \$25,000 to \$30,000 for email system hardware, or \$5,000 to \$6,000 per year, based on the numbers of users in town offices, committees and boards. The board asked town administrator Tom Sharp to research additional options for instituting the town hall email system.

The board unanimously approved a contract worth \$11,525 with Franklin Regional Transit Authority for the council on aging van.

The board declared the highway department's 1999 Freightliner truck with a plow as surplus, thus allowing the truck to be sold.

The selectboard's annual goal setting meeting was postponed until after annual town meeting this Spring.

NOTES FROM THE GILL SELECTBOARD MEETING

Gill Backs Study of Closed Loop for Northfield Mountain

By DAVID DETMOLD

The Gill selectboard and the Gill conservation commission have combined forces to weigh in on the relicensing of the Northfield Pumped Hydro Facility and the Turners Falls Dam.

This week, the two boards put the final touches on a letter to Kimberly Bose, Secretary of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), requesting numerous studies be completed on the impacts of the pumped storage facility and the dam on riverbank erosion, sediment transport, fish spawning, fish passage and habitat, and other issues before FERC decides whether, and on what conditions, to issue new 30- to 40-year licenses for the massive hydro projects in 2018. The studies, if FERC approves, would be paid for by the licensee.

Among the studies the town requested is a feasibility study of converting the 1,120 MW Northfield Pumped Hydro Facility to a "closed loop" or "partially closed loop" system, which would require First Light Power and its owner, GFD-Suez (arguably the world's largest utility company) to invest in the construction of a lower reservoir for Northfield Mountain.

Northfield Mountain station manager John Howard has been quoted recently saying there is not enough land available for the company to build a lower reservoir on its property. The preliminary application for license modifications First Light has prepared include no mention of a new lower reservoir, although an increase in the storage capacity of the upper reservoir and the power generating capability of Northfield Mountain are anticipated.

Northfield Mountain currently uses the 21-mile stretch of the Connecticut River between the Vernon, VT and Turners Falls dams as its "lower reservoir," pumping 5.6 billion gallons

of water from the river up the mountain to the man-made 286-acre upper reservoir at the rate of 20,000 gallons a second, causing the river to flow backwards during pumping.

Landowners along the river contend the daily fluctuations in river volume and flows has a direct impact on riverbank erosion of their property, and environmental critics say the fluctuating currents have adverse impacts on fish passage during spawning season.

"A closed loop system wouldn't pull water each day directly from the river, and it would allow the river to revert closer to its normal flows."

— John Ward,
Gill Selectboard

The town of Gill, which has 12 miles of riverbank on the Connecticut River, maintains in its letter to FERC that "investigating a full-closed loop system to any number of partial-loop systems," could, if implemented, have the effect of "eliminating some of the negative consequences," to the river and its abutting landowners from the continued operation of Northfield Mountain.

Gill selectboard member John Ward said, "The town of Gill, and Gill residents, have a lot of land along the river. We believe the study of a closed loop system is important because one of the major detriments to the way Northfield Mountain operates now is the erosion and the impact to fish passage and spawning as a result of changes in river flows. A closed loop system wouldn't pull water each day directly from the river, and it would allow the river to revert closer to its normal flows."

The letter to Bose closes by saying, "Heal-All-Brook is the name of the stream

that runs through the southern part of Gill into the Connecticut River. The Native Americans, inhabitants of this area for thousands of years, named it, believing that the springs which supply its water possessed medicinal properties.

"In this spirit, we are reminded that the River confers on us gifts far beyond its power to create power — we benefit from its beauty, its rich flora and fauna, its recreational opportunities. We should remember the

River flows through all our lives and is not just a commodity but a living thing. The Connecticut River belongs to the citizens of the Commonwealth and its use for commercial purposes must be carefully examined and weighed."

In other news, the Gill fire department, represented by chief Gene Beaubien and three young firefighters, Nire Ragoza, Billy Kimball, and Kyle Kendall, came to the selectboard to urge the approval of a new "smart board" for the emergency operations center at the safety complex, to be purchased with \$2500 in grant funding from the pre-sequestration federal government, through FEMA.

Kendall called the smart board "a useful training tool," and pointed out that all classrooms at the Gill-Montague schools now use them. He said notes taken at the emergency operations center on the smart board could be instantly transferred electronically to other departments and town hall, a useful shortcut during an emergency with rapidly changing conditions, such as road closures in a severe storm.

Acting selectboard chair Randy Crochier said he wanted to make sure the town was not "buying an expense" with the new smart board, but Kendall assured him software upgrades for the smart board would be free, although he did men-

see GILL page 9

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HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GILL POLICE LOG

Malfunctioning Traffic Lights, Physical Altercation, Car Slide

Sunday, 2/17

4:45 p.m. Officer assisted at the Route 2 / Main Road intersection, as the traffic lights were malfunctioning.

Monday, 2/18

3:11 p.m. Physical altercation at the Gill Mobil Station.

7:20 p.m. Medical assist on North Cross Road; resident transported.

Tuesday, 2/19

6:00 a.m. Assisted resident with Firearms issue on Center Road.

Wednesday, 2/20

3:15 p.m. Suspicious person on the French King Bridge; checked OK and moved along.

Thursday, 2/21

6:25 a.m. Fire Alarm at Mount Hermon; officer checked same with security.

9:45 a.m. Firearms issue on Walnut Street.

Saturday, 2/23

12:00 p.m. Assisted Erving police with drug interdiction and motor vehicle stop on Route 2.

5:00 p.m. Court process served to

resident on Riverview Drive.

10:30 p.m. Assisted Bernardston police with emergency restraining order.

Sunday, 2/24

10:50 a.m. Car slide off roadway on Route 2; assisted same in getting out, no damage.

2:45 p.m. Family dispute of property on Main Road.

5:25 p.m. Medical assist for resident on West Gill Road; transported same.

6:30 p.m. Wires down due to storm on Pisgah Mt. Road.

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from **STUDY** page 8
tion that replacement bulbs would cost the town about \$100 to \$200. The board approved the purchase.

Beaubien said the fire department's board of engineers has backed the idea of the Franklin Regional Council of Governments conducting a study on the potential for regionalizing fire protection services in the county, because, he said, that would be the best way to answer all the questions the possibility of regionalized fire protection service raises.

"We don't want to wind up paying more for fire service," said Beaubien, who added, "I can almost guarantee you I will be retired as fire chief before it happens. But there definitely is a need for regionalizing fire service," he said.

The regionalization of public health service in Franklin County got a boost from the addition of two more towns – Leyden and Shelburne – joining with the seven towns that started the program last year, Gill among them. And it got a boost from another state Community Innovation Challenge, in the amount of \$68,317, to help defray the cost of professional septic, food inspection and public health nursing services for those towns that have chosen to join up. But the cost to Gill would still rise, even with the grant, from \$6,800 to be part of the regional program this year, to \$10,200 for FY '14.

Crochier said the rising assessment represents the true cost of public health for Gill, which he said had been masked by the hard work of volunteers on the board of

health over the years. Crochier is co-chair of the Franklin County public health oversight board.

Via speakerphone from her Florida vacation home, Ann Banash said the 50 percent increase in the assessment fee would have to go before town meeting this year as a separate article, for voter approval.

On the subject of rising costs, Banash said she would oppose, at town meeting if it came to that, the preliminary 4.8 percent budget increase request from the Gill-Montague Regional School

Crochier said the rising assessment represents the true cost of public health for Gill, which he said had been masked by the hard work of volunteers on the board of health over the years.

District.

"A 4.8 percent increase means we will do nothing else," said Banash, predicting a hike of that magnitude in the town's regional school assessment (which last year totaled \$1,408,058) would wipe out all the town's new revenue in FY'14. Containing increases in the regional budget to a standard of affordability for the towns, "is what the compact and everything else we've talked about for the last three years is all about," she added.

After the meeting, finance committee member Tupper Brown said the regional school had revised its preliminary budget increase downward to 4.5 percent over last year's total, which would call for Gill to contribute approximately \$63,000 more than last year to the GMRSD. Montague's assessment would rise by \$340,000 over last year's figure, Brown said.

Brown noted that the towns had contributed more each year than the technical advisory committee's compact had called for, and though the regional school system had for the last three years outperformed the compact targets, state aid

has fallen consistently short, and in that respect, the coming year looks like another disappointment for state aid to the G-M schools.

Crochier and Ward will attend the upcoming meeting with the Montague selectboard and finance committee, at town hall in Montague on March 6 at 6 p.m., for further discussion of the regional school budget.

Ward balked at the idea of spending town of Gill tax dollars to buy a new police cruiser that may wind up being unmarked. Administrative assistant Ray Purington said police departments typically try to maintain one unmarked vehicle or cruiser to transport minors, or domestic violence victims. The selectboard will invite chief David Hastings to a meeting in March to discuss the matter.

The board approved spending \$2,500 from a town controlled cable access fund that currently has over \$25,000 in it to pay for production and training services from Montague Community Television, for town of Gill videos. The board said a cable advisory committee will help determine how the rest of the money, which is replenished annually with fees from cable subscribers, should best be spent to provide better cable access service for Gill.

The board declined to endorse, or take any other action, on a request from the Franklin Regional Retirement System to provide a 3 percent cost of living increase on the first \$14,000 of retirement income for enrollees in FY'14. The town of Gill hopes to provide 1.7 percent cost of living increases for town employees, based on what Social Security is proposing.

Town elections are coming up on May 20. Nominating papers are available from the town clerk. Randy Crochier said he would be on the ballot for another three-year term on the selectboard.



NOTES FROM THE MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD MEETING

Montague Submits its Concerns to FERC Relicensing of First Light

By PATRICIA PRUITT

On Monday, Feb. 25, Montague town planner Walter Ramsey and MEDIC member Lyn Reynolds presented the Montague board of selectmen with a landscape maintenance plan regarding the lawn surrounding two sides of the former Cumberland Farms building at 38 Avenue A. The site is in the process of being offered to MCCI for the local cable station in return for rehab work on the structure and for use as a visitor center.

The idea presented was to create a quasi-park area with trees along the 2nd Street side, walkway access, and open space to hold the current Farmers' Market and other future outdoor events. MEDIC would like to transfer the conservation restriction to the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), which administers the Discovery Center on a narrow strip of land.

Next the board was asked to support the planning board's petition for a change to zoning regulation Sec. 5.45, which set minimum dwelling size at 700 square feet. Ramsey said that over the past few years there have been six appeals seeking special permits to build a smaller size single family dwelling.

He acknowledged that Montague's 700 square foot minimum flies in the face of another state regulation that states that the minimum size for a single family dwelling cannot be regulated and also that Montague is the only town in western Massachusetts to set such a high minimum. Some Montague Center residents may oppose such a change as it would affect the Montague Center school redevelopment project into condos.

The proposed bylaw change was the subject of a town hall public hearing on Tuesday (see page 1).

As part of the Federal Energy Regulatory

Commission's (FERC) relicensing for First Light in 2018, the town is supporting study requests of the Turners Falls Historical Industrial district established in 1982 that includes both buildings and two bridges across the canal owned by First Light. The study seeks to determine the effects on cultural and historical resources including changes in value due to lack of pedestrian and vehicular traffic to former mill sites, and the need for a management plan. Previous bridge studies will be included.

Ramsey and town administrator Frank Abbondanzio stressed the importance of the hearings being held, since FERC can set the conditions for relicensing.

Finally, Ramsey nominated David Brule for appointment as Montague's liaison for the Battlefield Mapping grant. Select member Mark Fairbrother voted nay, not, he said, because of Brule, "who is a fine man," but rather because Fairbrother will vote nay on anything to do with the Battlefield Mapping grant.

As for Brule, he accepted and said he has the time, and interest in the historical background of his town and surrounding area where he was born and raised. Select member Pat Allen (on the telephone) said Brule has been "a great help up at the airport site, and he was being too modest." Brule was appointed by majority vote.

Abbondanzio next added his package of interests to those going to FERC for consideration. He is recommending a cultural resources survey to study the impacts on cultural values within the power generating area. He explained that First Light's license will only be granted after concerns of all parties have been considered.

Forty years ago, the granting of the license resulted in the buildings and staffing of facilities becoming part of the licensing.

Abbondanzio feels it is in

the town's interest to make FERC aware of the Native American Heritage and Resources. The town's commitment began in 2004 with the reconciliation ceremony between the tribes and the town, in which they mutually agreed to "promote understanding about and between the cultures, increase mutual vigilance for historic preservation," and to "deepen our appreciation for the rich heritage of indigenous peoples."

To these ends, Abbondanzio is proposing a study to evaluate project construction, operation and maintenance on Native American cultural and historic resources. The goal would be to build on the 12,000-year presence of native peoples culminating in a Native American Cultural Park and to secure commitment from the utilities to maintain and develop the park as an environmental and cultural resource.

Fairbrother asked "What else is the town putting before FERC?"

The answer was: the Strathmore mill complex, the canal, the two bridges, and management and development of a Native American Park.

Fairbrother strongly suggested the town make a statement of support for the environmental concerns raised by other agencies in the course of the hearings recently held. These included riverbank stabilization, a new fish lift, and stabilization of what he called "the dead area" of the river between the dam and Cabot Station, an area where many endangered species perish during low water periods.

Last, but not least in terms of the time it has taken, the town is advised to begin the title work on permanent and temporary easements in preparation for construction work on Greenfield Road, scheduled to begin in May or June 2014, with a public hearing in June 2013.

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from **HEALERS** page 6

The cost of repeated visits for services not covered by health insurance present a problem for many people. Chapin said there are practitioners offering services on a sliding fee scale. There's also community acupuncture in Northampton and Greenfield, where services are offered in a group setting, and patients trade some privacy for affordability. In addition, many teachers offer a first class for free, and this allows a person to see if they like the teacher's style and approach.

Chapin also advises people to call a practitioner with a list of questions. After describing the problem, it is

appropriate to ask if he or she has experience in this area; if not, does he know someone who does? How often has she dealt with this issue? Sometimes a phone conversation can indicate whether or not you will connect with this person and form a bond of trust and confidence.

If the recommendation and the conversation feel right, Chapin would advise three appointments before evaluating the process. In three sessions there should be a feeling of connection and possibility. She emphasizes the value in this connection: it is often more important than the modality that is chosen.

Taking this path as opposed to a

cortisone shot or some pill that provides immediate relief from symptoms but does not address underlying causes of distress, is an investment. It will cost money, and time, and may force a reevaluation of one's lifestyle choices. The underlying problem could be a job or a relationship that is causing stress and wearing down the body's immune system. People fall into old patterns of behavior that no longer serve. Chapin says, "Wise people do what makes them feel good, but it isn't easy. Life pummels us a lot; when we experience something gentle, we settle, we breathe, we soften."

In addition to bodywork Chapin is

a strong advocate for the healing power of herbs. This comes from her personal experience with poison ivy and eczema. The two afflicted her throughout her childhood. Then she went to see Chris Marano, an herbalist who lives in Montague. Chapin no longer gets poison ivy; she hasn't had it for years, and Marano's treatment consisted of two vials of an herbal mixture he made for her. It was pretty miraculous.

Chapin cautions people not to run to the Internet or the store and start self-medicating. No one thing works the same way on everyone, she says, and some herbs should not be mixed. Citing Echinacea, recognized for

treating cold symptoms, she explains that the medicinal qualities of the root are better released in alcohol than water, so the teas that people buy are really not that effective. Herbal remedies are ancient and powerful. Chapin believes they are essential in helping us find balance, but someone with training should administer them.

Chapin had one last piece of advice. It sounds simple, but might be the most complicated message of all. "Take care of yourself. Find something that you like and do it every day; it could be as simple as a walk. Pay attention. Slow down. Breathe."



Help Preserve Health Care Services in Franklin County



Attend a Community Forum on The Future of Baystate Franklin Medical Center

When: Wednesday, March 6 from 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. • Where: Greenfield High School

The health of Franklin County residents depends on having local access to a full-service community hospital—one that offers a full range of services right here in Franklin County.

Over the last few years, we have witnessed a steady decrease in services at BFMC, resulting in fewer resources and staff available to meet our needs here in Franklin County. These include basic pediatric care and some medical and surgical care that used to be provided close to home in our community hospital.

The care provided at Franklin Medical Center remains high quality. However, we need more services not less. Too many of our friends and neighbors, many of them elderly, are traveling long distances for care they could and should receive here in Franklin County.

Please invite your family, friends and neighbors to join us on March 6 to share your concerns and discuss actions we can all take to ensure a healthy future for Baystate Franklin Medical Center.

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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. Friday Night Karaoke begins on March 1. Free.

EVERY THURSDAY

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

Between the Uprights, Turners Falls: *Open Mic with Dan, Kip, and*

Schultzzy 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.

ART SHOWS:

Great Falls Discovery Center, *The Painters at GCC*. 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 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

Leverett Elementary School: *Mid-Winter Luau!* Music, dancing, crafts, snacks, smoothies, musical chairs. Fundaiser (\$1 to \$5 per entry). 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.



BRIAN DAIGLE PHOTO

Dan Kennedy plays new age music, with jazz and blues influences, for solo piano. At the Arts Block Café in Greenfield, Friday March 1, 8 p.m.

Ja'Duke Performing Arts Center, Turners Falls: Alfred Hitchcock's *Rope*. 8 p.m., \$

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

Deja Brew Pub, Wendell: *The Equalites*, reggae fantástico!, 9:30 to 11:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, MARCH 2

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

Old Town Hall, Wendell: *Cabin Fever Potluck Dinner* to benefit Good Neighbors. Donations of non-perishable goods or money welcomed. 6 p.m.

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: Live music "in the round," with *Ashley Jordan, Christie Leigh, and Joe Young*. 7:30 p.m., free.

Ja'Duke Performing Arts Center, Turners Falls: Alfred Hitchcock's *Rope*. 8 p.m., \$

Arts Block Café, Greenfield: *Mardi Gras Party* featuring *Samirah Evans and her Handsome Devils*, jazz/blues, with special guests *Evelyn Harris, John Sheldon, and Becca Byram*. Benefit for Samirah & Chris after a house fire. New Orleans cuisine. 8 p.m., \$

Deja Brew Pub, Wendell: *Steve Kurtz Jazz Quartet*, all that jazz, 9 to 11:30 p.m.

Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: *Groove Prophet*, classic rock. 9:30 p.m.

SUNDAY, MARCH 3

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: *Carolyn Walker*, singer-songwriter. 2:30 p.m., free.

Ja'Duke Performing Arts Center, Turners Falls: Alfred Hitchcock's *Rope*. 3 p.m., \$

Montague Bookmill, Montague Center: *Dead of Winter Film Series, Play it Again, Sam* (1972, dir. Woody Allen). 7 p.m., free.

Deja Brew Pub, Wendell: *Katie Sachs*, jazz-influenced indie rock, 8 to 10 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Marlenapalooza*. 4. 9:30 p.m.

THURSDAY, MARCH 7

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Falltown String Band*. 7:30 to 10:30, free.

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

FRIDAY, MARCH 8

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *The Doug Hewitt Group* plays the Great Falls Coffeehouse. Original rock and jazz. Doors at 6:30 p.m., bakesale, sliding scale entry fee.

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: *Randy Smith*, alternative Americana rock, with special guest *Keeghan Nolan*, country rock. 7:30 p.m., \$

Arts Block Café, Greenfield: *Trailer Park*, "barbecue music" with saxophones. 8 p.m., \$

Deja Brew Pub, Wendell: *Hobson's Razor*, rock, reggae & funk, 9 to 11:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, MARCH 9

Arts Block Café, Greenfield: *Happier Valley Comedy Show with the Ha-Ha's*, 7:30 p.m., \$

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: *Zydeco Connection*, zydeco blues. 8 p.m.



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By LESLIE BROWN

Part 5

We are slowly becoming a part of our little neighborhood. The water man stops regularly at the gate. We have made the acquaintance of the painter who is re-doing the outside of the Casa Del Sol. The woman at the *levanderia* has not only taken great care of our clothes but has complimented me on the mixtures of gray in my hair and shown me her white roots below the reddish brown color she has chosen.

An elderly man up the street has died. First, came the silent arrival of the ambulance. The next day a large tent covered that section of the street and traffic is barred. Beneath the tent, visitors sit and talk quietly, taking their turns to step into the house of the family. Food and drink are consumed. More of the same the following day, and then that night, the sound of a band and joyous male and female voices singing. A grand musical send off for the deceased. The next day, the gathering of friends for the saying of El Rosario. After that the tent and chairs are removed and traffic on the street resumes.

A few evenings later in search of a new place for our evening meal, we wander into a new area and stumble upon a restaurant right on the

beach down a narrow winding street. We are seated at a table outside and are served a delicious, cooked to order meal. There is freshly baked bread, more like a square of multi-layered cracker with butter wrapped in corn leaves, fresh white fish with chopped almonds and raisins and of all things a beautiful Cordon Bleu.

After dinner we move inside following the sound of a guitar and are treated to a concert of classical music well worthy of Segovia. Retracing what seemed a long and circuitous route, we find we are but a few blocks from our *casita*, which is well lit by the nearly full moon.

Our days in Mexico now measure less than a week and we begin to list the things we most want to do before flying home.

Epilogue

While on vacation, if you are lucky, you become a part of the place.

You enjoy certain walks, certain views; there are stores you like to frequent, restaurants that become favorites. If you are especially lucky, you become acquainted with some locals, maybe even become friendly enough to stay in touch long afterwards. You also develop a routine in your new place, habits that become comfortable and help you feel more settled.

Most days in Mexico we were drawn to the lake and walked there during evenings to watch the sun set in many shades upon the surrounding mountains. When we heard the sound of live music, we went out to find it. We joined the Mexicans in

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"Mexican Time" Draws to an End



PHOTO COURTESY OF ADVANTAGEMEXICO.COM

Ajijic's streets boast a variety of colorful shops, art galleries and restaurants.

their many celebrations. We became friendly with the woman who wove the rugs daily by the lakeside, with the burro, El Blanco and the woman at the *levanderia* who washed our clothes. We had a favorite store where we bought fruit and vegetables and were recognized by the owners. Our Spanish was limited but as they say, we all smile in the same language.

We tried to enter into the Mexican life around us, sat in the plaza and admired the children, walked the streets and spoke to everyone we

met, lived by the rhythm of their days.

Then as always on vacation, there came a time when we saw the end of it and were suddenly aware of how few days were left. Our former lives intruded and we began to remember appointments and commitments made at home. While the remaining time was precious, we began to pull away.

We had our tangible souvenirs: a Mayan mask, a small painting, a Mexican flag, a rug, a belt, a gecko made of delicately curved metal, a

coffee mug. We also had vivid memories of a ride on the lake, of the constant peal of church bells, of the wonderful way of making any day a festival, of the endless sun and the slow pace of Mexican time.

We remembered that Arturo said, "Lakeside is good for the old. When I am worried, I sit by the lake and become calm and before long I realize we are only a small part of the sun."

Hasta Luego, Mexico! We shall return again.

Sweet-sounding Czech String Quartet Returns to the Pioneer Valley

Music In Deerfield and the Smith College Music Department are pleased to announce that one of the finest ensembles in Czech classical music, the Talich String Quartet, will again bring their sweet sound and unmatched blend to Sweeney Concert Hall, Smith College in Northampton on Saturday, March 2 at 8 p.m. "Concert Conversations," with

Quartet members speaking with WFCR's John Montanari, will precede the performance, at 7 p.m. in Earle Recital Hall.

The Talich's colorful program, with works from Spain, France and Norway, will showcase the Quartet's musical range and virtuosity. Opening is "La Oración del Torero" ("The Bullfighter's Prayer"), by the Spanish impres-

sionist Joaquín Turina. Then the String Quartet in F Major by Maurice Ravel, a masterwork of French chamber music. The final work on the program is the String Quartet in G Minor by Edvard Grieg, written when the Norwegian composer was temporarily separated from his wife, and based in part on Grieg's setting of a poem by Henrik Ibsen dealing with the artist's yearning for his absent beloved.

The name Talich has represented the finest in Czech musicianship for almost a century, starting with the quartet's namesake, celebrated Czech Philharmonic conductor Vaclav Talich. His nephew, Jan Talich, founded the quartet in 1964. Now into a second generation, including the founder's son Jan Talich Jr. on first violin and Roman Patocka, violin, Vladimir Bukac, viola, and Petr Prause, cello.

Future concerts in the Music In Deerfield Series are: cellist Zuill Bailey with guest pianist on March 30, and Trio Latitude 41 closing

out the season on May 11, 2013.

Tickets may be ordered at (413) 774-4200 or at www.musicindeerfield.org.



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