



LAKE PLEASANT MILLERS FALLS MONTAGUE CENTER MONTAGUE CITY TURNERS FALLS

The Montague Reporter

YEAR 10 - NO. 15 also serving Irving, Gill, Leverett and Wendell 75¢
REPORTER@MONTAGUEMA.NET THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES JANUARY 12, 2012

Leverett School Committee Cuts Budget in Anticipation of an Override

BY DAVID DETMOLD - The Leverett school committee engaged in a rigorous budget wrestling exercise on Monday, as members tried to reduce an expected hike in the \$1.7 million operating budget for the Leverett Elementary School for the coming fiscal year from \$96,311 (a 5.63% increase) to an increase closer to a 2½%.

By the end of the meeting, the committee had prioritized about \$46,904 in cuts, knocking the anticipated increase in the LES budget down to about \$50,000 (2.58%).

That number, when combined with an early estimate for an increase in Leverett's share of the regional school budget of about \$71,000, could still force the town to turn to an override of Proposition 2½ to fund operations for the schools and town departments in the coming fiscal year.

The town anticipates about \$100,000 in new growth to help cover increases in departmental budgets, which are driven in part by contractual raises for employees. The contract for the teachers' salaries at the elementary school and the U-28 superintendent's salary are still being negotiated; the hiring of three new

paraprofessionals in elementary classrooms have also driven up costs for health insurance on the town side of the budget in the middle of the current fiscal year by about \$30,000.

The town is also readying several big-ticket capital spending projects for consideration by town meeting in spring, including a financing package for last-mile internet fiber to town residences and businesses, as well as a possible \$2 million project to connect households on the eastern end of Teewaddle Hill Road to the Amherst water line, to cure the problem of private wells in that area of town exposed to a plume of groundwater pollution from the town's former landfill.

But school committee chair Farshid Hajir has made it clear to town meeting and the select-board that the town's elementary school cannot continue to operate year after year on level-funded budgets, without seriously impacting the quality of educational programs at the school. For three of the last four years, LES has turned in budgets with a 0% increase, except in the current fiscal year, when the school budget inched upward by .9%.

In trying to reach a 2.5% see CUTS pg 3

BACK TO THEIR ROOTS

Red Fire Farm Completes Move to Meadow Road



LEE WICKS PHOTOS

Ryan and Sarah Voiland have completed the move of Red Fire Farm to their new home on Meadow Road in Montague. The organic farm will employ between 30 and 50 people.

BY LEE WICKS
MONTAGUE CENTER - This is the year Ryan and Sarah Voiland have been talking about since 2009 when they bought two parcels of land on Meadow Road with the goal of moving Red Fire Farm from Granby to Montague. Now, just weeks into 2012, that dream has been realized.

Unpacked boxes are stacked in the office, a sign is hanging on

the barn, new food processing and storage areas are under construction or completed, and both Ryan and Sarah have somewhat dazed, exhausted, and delighted expressions when they talk about all they have done and what they hope to accomplish on the farm.

The Voilands have been farming intensively at the site of Red Fire Farm in Granby while waiting for the soil in Montague to

transition to the standards required for organic farming. Sun, rain and wind have done their job over the 36 months (the required time period), breaking down chemicals prohibited by organic farming practices. Ryan, Sarah and other farm workers have enriched that soil by adding compost and organic matter, and growing cover crops.

see FARM page 9

Leverett Town Hall Holds Many Treasures



Thurston Munson, of Greenfield, painted this mural at the Leverett Town Hall

BY JEFF SINGLETON - The recent renovations to the Leverett town hall are giving residents a chance to appreciate

the building's restored architectural charm. The new clapboards and fresh paint on the exterior invite a casual visitor to

also take a fresh look at the historical treasures housed inside.

Local town buildings can be examples of 'living history' if

you stop, take a breath and look around. The building at 9 Montague Road across from the Congregational Church is an excellent example. So let's head through the door, an old-fashioned entrance opened by a handicapped access button if you wish.

Straight through the foyer into the ground floor meeting room one finds 40 small pictures of houses lining the walls. "Boring," you might think at first, but please, think again. Twenty of these photographs were taken by the famous Howes Brothers, itinerant photographers from Ashfield, at the turn of the 20th century. The Howes' story, well known in the area, is retold on a plaque just before you enter the main room. The brothers traveled through the region with big, chunky photographic equipment. They made their living photographing local residents, their homes and their work places. In the process they left a unique record of local life at the turn of the last century.

The Leverett exhibition adds a creative twist to this familiar story. Twenty Howes Brothers photographs are paired with twenty pictures of the same locations taken by Stephen Schmidt, the town's administrative assessor, in the mid-1990s. So we get a kind of 'then and now' theme going on.

The comparisons are sometimes striking. A number of the original structures (along with their owners, who often pose out front) appear a bit dilapidated and down at the heels compared to their modern counterparts. This is perplexing because conventional wisdom holds that the Howes' photographs were probably only affordable to people with middle class incomes. Or perhaps the rural middle class circa 1905 was poor, or was comfortable looking poor, by our standards.

The other thing one notices is that a number of the older pictures are noticeably barren of see TREASURES page 12

PET OF THE WEEK

Sheep in Wolf's Clothing



Hugo Wolf

My name is Hugo Wolf. I'm an 11 year old short hair male cat. I'm a cutie patootie, if I may say so myself. You might think I look a little rough around the edges, but I've been told I'm really a sheep in wolf's clothing. I am truly an affectionate lap cat. I've become a favorite of the Dakin staff. I'm always looking up at people passing by, very politely waiting I might add, for someone to reach in and pet me! I would like to be your only cat as other cats can stress me out. (and I love to have people to myself!) I am FIV+. My adoption fee has been waived. The Feline Immunodeficiency Virus is a slow virus that is a cat-only disease. It can NOT be spread to humans or other non-felines. Please contact the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society at (413) 548-9898 or info@dpvhs.org to find out more about me.

RECYCLE PAPER!
Week of January 17th in Montague

more info? call: 863-2054

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The Montague Reporter

Published weekly on Thursday.
(Every other week in July and August. Wednesday paper fourth week of November. No paper last week of December.)
PHONE (413) 863-8666
reporter@montaguema.net
Postmaster: Send address changes to
The Montague Reporter
58 4th Street
Turners Falls, MA 01376
Advertising and copy deadline is Tuesday at NOON.

This newspaper shall not be liable for errors in advertisements, but will print without charge that part of the advertisement in which an error occurred. The publishers reserve the right to refuse advertising for any reason and to alter copy or graphics to conform to standards of the newspaper, such as they are.

Local Subscription Rates:
\$20 for 1/2 Year

UNION 28 SURVEY

Union 28 is encouraging community members, elected officials and parents in Wendell, Shutesbury, New Salem, Leverett, and Erving to complete a seven-question survey about the union's communication, programs, and direction.

Copies of the survey are online

CARNEGIE LIBRARY HIGHLIGHTS

Family Concert and Hands-on Science

BY LINDA HICKMAN

MONTAGUE - Winter is a busy season at the Montague Public Libraries. The homeschool series at the Carnegie Library resumed on Wednesday, January 11th. It meets on Wednesdays from 1:15 - 2:30 thru Feb. 15th. Local science teacher Jim Klaiber will be bringing fun, hands-on science experiments and equipment. The first month will focus on electro-magnetism. This program is free and is designed for homeschool children of all ages and their families.

Roger Tincknell will perform a Family Concert for children of all ages at the Carnegie Library on Saturday, January 21st at 10:30 a.m. Roger Tincknell has

been performing for children and adults throughout the U.S., Canada and Europe for over 30 years. Roger's repertoire includes original and contemporary material, as well as traditional folk styles. Ballads, swing, country blues, bluegrass, and cowboy yodeling are interspersed with Latin American and international folksongs. Roger accompanies himself on guitar, banjo, mandolin, Irish bazouki, Puerto Rican and Venezuelan cuatros, South American charango, Native American Flute, harmonica and piano and percussion.

For more information, call the Carnegie Library at 413-863-3214.

WENDELL FREE LIBRARY

Film Series Presents *The Piano*

The Wendell COA Film Series presents *The Piano* plus *Owl Movie*, a student video.

The Piano (1993, 121 mins, rated "R") stars Holly Hunter as a mute but strong-willed 19th-century Scottish expatriate who arrives in New Zealand with her daughter (Anna Paquin) and her beloved piano in tow. Although betrothed to a landowner (Sam Neill), she's pulled into an affair with a laborer (Harvey Keitel). Hunter and Paquin both won Oscars for their performances in

this haunting drama, as did writer-director Jane Campion.

Owl Movie, (6 mins) this month's short feature is a video by Streeter Elliot, a student of Amie Keddy's at Bement School. It is a delightful production about owls. Although quite young, Streeter shows great promise as a filmmaker with this production.

Sunday, January 22nd, 7 p.m., Wendell Free Library. Free! For more info, contact: Douglas Dawson at (978) 544-7762 or ddawson@post.harvard.edu

WENDELL SENIOR CENTER BENEFITS COUNSELING

A benefits counselor, trained by Franklin County Home Care Corporation (FCHCC), will be available at the Wendell Senior Center on Wednesdays from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The counselor can help townspeople

over 60, or who have a disability, find benefits to help them remain safely in their homes and save money. The counselor will help with applications for fuel assistance, S.N.A.P. (food stamps) benefits, weatherization, major

SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES - January 9th through 13th

GILL-MONTAGUE Senior Center, 62 Fifth Street, Turners Falls, is open Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Congregate meals are served Tuesday through Thursday at noon. Meal reservations must be made one day in advance by 11:00 a.m. Kerry Togneri is the meal site manager. Council on Aging director is Roberta Potter. All fitness classes are supported by a grant from the Executive Office of Elder Affairs. Voluntary donations are accepted. For information, meal reservations, or to sign up for programs, call (413) 863-9357. Messages can be left on our machine if the center is not open.

Monday, January 16th

10:00 a.m. Aerobics
10:45 a.m. Chair Exercise
NO Knitting Circle

Tuesday, January 17th

10:30 a.m. Seated Health Program

Wednesday, January 18th

10:00 a.m. Aerobics
12:45 p.m. Bingo

Thursday, January 19th

9:00 a.m. Tai Chi
1:00 p.m. Pitch

Friday, January 20th

10:00 a.m. Aerobics
10:45 a.m. Chair Exercise
1:00 p.m. Writing Group

ERVING Senior Center, 1 Care Drive, Erving, is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. for activities and congregate meals. For Center and program information, call Polly Kiely, Senior Center Director, at (413) 423-3649. Lunch is daily 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. Transportation can be provided for meals, shopping, or medical necessity. Please call the Senior Center to confirm activities, schedule and to find out when the next blood pressure clinic will be held.

Monday, January 16th

CLOSED MLK DAY

Tuesday, January 17th

8:45 a.m. Chair Aerobics



Have you ever wondered if your vote counted?

SHUTESBURY - In a second attempt to pass funding for a new library building for the town of Shutesbury, voters deadlocked Tuesday in a stunning tie: 522-522, with a 75% turnout. Eight votes were challenged over the residency of the voters; one provisional ballot remains in dispute - the board of registrars will rule on these challenges. At issue was whether the town would appropriate \$1.4 million for a new 5,800-square-foot, \$3.5 million building. The remaining \$2.1 million for the project would come from a building grant from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners. Supporters sought to raise \$400,000 to offset the cost to Shutesbury taxpayers. As of January 8th, they had raised a total of \$170,316 in pledges and donations. The library is currently housed in the M. N. Spear Memorial Library, above.

Great Falls Middle School Students of the Week

Grade 6
Javoni Williams
Grade 7
Dillon Rogers
Calley Hubert
Grade 8
Allison Cooke

Correction

In last week's issue, an incorrect email address was listed for the Third Place, the new after-school program for at risk youth at 56 Avenue A in Turners Falls. The correct address is: thethirdplaceinturners@gmail.com.

home repairs and more. Come to the Wendell senior center on Wednesdays, or call the FCHCC benefits counseling program directly at (413) 773-5555, x 2258. You can also email cbaronas@fchcc.org. The counselor can meet with you at the senior center or, if needed, in your home.

The National Spiritual Alliance
is sponsoring a **PSYCHIC FAIR** on Saturday, January 28, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Thompson Temple across from the Lake Pleasant post office.
For more information, contact the TNSA website, www.thenationalspiritualalliance.org

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JESSICA LARIN ILLUSTRATION

COMPILED BY DON CLEGG – The Knights of Columbus annual youth free throw championship will be held Saturday, January 14th at 1 p.m. at the Sheffield School gym, Crocker Avenue in Turners Falls. All boys and girls ages 10 to 14 are invited to participate. Last year more than 130,000 sharpshooters participated in over 3,000 local competitions, before the winners moved up to compete in district and state competitions. For more information, call Stephan Smith at (413) 863-9042.

National touring folk duos Charlie King and Karen Brandow and Rebel Voices will perform at the St. James Episcopal Church, 8 Church Street in Greenfield on Saturday, January 21st, at 7:30 p.m., in a benefit for the **Safe and Green Campaign**.

All profits from this special "Duopalooza!" concert will benefit the grassroots, people-powered effort to close the Vermont Yankee nuclear reactor on schedule on March 21st, 2012. Randy Kehler of Safe and Green will host the evening. Advance tickets are available for purchase at Boswells Books in Shelburne Falls, World Eye Books in Greenfield, Broadside Books in Northampton and in Brattleboro at Everyone's Books.

The **Mutton and Mead Medieval Festival**, a two-day theatrical event taking place this coming June in Montague, seeks actors, singers, musicians and other performers for auditions on January 21st through 23rd. The festival will create a medieval shire, populate it with characters, and tell the exciting tale of Robin Hood through stage and street performances. Those interested in auditioning for the shire cast or performing at Mutton and Mead are encouraged to visit www.MuttonandMead.com for more details, and to fill out the online audition form.

The Baystate Health Blood Donor Mobile will host a **community blood drive** in

Greenfield on Friday, January 20th, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. All blood types are needed. Eligible blood donors will receive a \$10 gas card and a free car wash good at any F. L. Roberts location, and will also be entered in a drawing for a \$50 gas card. One winner will be chosen at random from all donors during that week.

"January is National Blood Donor Month; it's also a month that sees a decline in blood donations, as bad weather and illness prevent many donors from presenting at blood drives," said Cheryl McGrath, coordinator of the Baystate Health blood donor program. "We need your help to maintain a safe and adequate blood supply this winter for you, your family and friends."

Donations take approximately one hour to complete, including the interview, donation, and refreshments. Appointments and pre-registration are recommended; walk-ins are also welcome. To make an appointment, contact: Ellen at (413) 773-2284.

The calendar may say January, but 5,500 cyclists from across the country have August on their minds. They are **gearing up to ride** up to 190 miles in the 33rd Annual Pan-Massachusetts Challenge (PMC) and raise money for cancer research. Online registration opens to the public January 17th, 2012. The Challenge, set for August 4th and 5th, is the most successful athletic fundraising event in the nation. It raises two to three times more money for charity than any other event and it contributes 100 percent of every rider dollar raised directly to the cause. Since 1980, the PMC has raised and contributed \$338 million to the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute.

The event offers 11 routes that range from 25 to 190 miles over one or two days. Cyclists come from 36 states and eight countries to ride in the annual event. The PMC is a well-supported and beautiful ride that takes cyclists through 46 cities and towns, pro-

vides food, water, medical and mechanical attention every 20 miles, serves full meals at lunch and dinner, supplies lodging, transportation, and luggage carriage for riders, and converts 5,500 cyclists and 3,000 volunteers from strangers to members of one big family, all working toward a unified goal. For more information about the PMC, or to register to ride, visit pmc.org.

The Montague parks and recreation department has a few spots left for the January American Red Cross Babysitting Course. The class will be held January 24th and 25th, from 5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. Course fee is \$40 for Montague residents and \$45 for non residents. Call 863-3216 for more details.

Alex King of Jesters, physical comedian and variety performer, is coming to Erving Elementary School on Friday, January 13th, at 1 p.m. He will be performing for all grades (preschool through 6th) in the school's gym. All Erving residents are welcome to attend. The Erving Elementary School play this year is set in a medieval castle, so Alex's performance serves as an introduction to the role of a jester for our students. For more information about the performance, contact Jane at urban@erving.com or 423-3326 ext. 103.

"Wood Comes from Trees!" and other fascinating revelations" is the Thursday evening program being offered at the Great Falls Discovery Center, 2 Avenue A in Turners Falls on January 19th starting at 7 p.m. How much wood do we use? Where does it come from? How do our local forests fit into the picture? Can wood be "better?"

Join outreach service forester Peter Grima from the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation to learn about the local and global consequences of our wood consumption, and take away some bits of knowledge that may enable you to make better wood purchases. Biomass advocates and opponents are welcome to attend.

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

CUTS from pg 1

budget increase for FY'13, the school committee approved the following cuts: eliminating the English language learner teacher for two students who recently came from Russia, since they have achieved fluency in English now, saving \$17,442; reducing special education services that will no longer be needed at the school, for a \$20,000 savings; eliminating a line item for homeless transportation, as the administration no longer anticipates having to pay for the transportation of a recently displaced or homeless student, and an adjustment to the line item for extraordinary maintenance to reflect recent history, for a \$3,221 savings. The committee added \$4,500 to the budget to pay for the anticipated replacement of furniture and other equipment maintenance at the school.

Principal Ann Ross noted the school washing machine, used by kitchen staff, had broken down that day.

The prospect of a slight increase in state aid (perhaps \$5,000, if a projected 2% increase in Chapter 70 funding comes through), and the fact that Leverett's percentage of students has dropped slightly in relation to other U-28 communities, reducing the town's share of central office expense, may brighten the budget picture somewhat.

But Hajir stressed, "This is a year when, in my personal view, we have to make cuts wherever we can, in order to pass an override for the school budget. I am not sanguine about the chances of an override passing."

Selectboard member Julie Shively, who attended the meeting, said, "Everyone in town saw a healthy increase in their taxes this year. An override will not be a slam dunk."

Still Dawn Sacks held the line at making a \$6,000 cut to eliminate the school's popular Adventure program. "What the school gets from that program is unbelievable," she said.

The committee discussed reducing the hours of a third custodian from 40 hours to 30 hours.

Superintendent Joan Wickman discussed the results of a survey she had conducted with all teach-

ers and staff at the elementary school, sounding them out on their opinions and concerns about their work environment. She received comments like, "The parents run the school," and a plea for adherence to a clear policy on dealing with parent complaints. Hajir noted a recurring instance of staff calling for a more consistent curriculum.

Discussion turned briefly to the moral and financial issue of continuing to rely on school choice funds, when Kip Fonsh said, "It is my firm belief, because we are unwilling or unable to fund programs, it is unconscionable to take money from other districts."

A number of his colleagues on the committee agree with this sentiment, but said when it came to the practical matter of budgeting, they would vote to continue to rely on school choice funds at both the elementary and regional level, regardless of the impact to neighboring districts.

Hearings will soon be held in Amherst on a proposal to advance the start time for high school students to 9:00 a.m., which would cause a change in start time at the elementary school as well.

Hajir said the regionalization study committees from the four towns in the Amherst region – Shutesbury, Leverett, Pelham and Amherst – have agreed to jointly apply for a \$110,000 state grant to study the possibility of combining central office administration for their elementary schools in some new regional configuration.



Benefit Concert and Bake Sale

for the Malia Children's Home for orphans in Kenya at the Leverett Elementary School gym

Saturday, January 14th
5:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Tony Vacca's World Rhythms, Bamidele Dancers and Drummers and much more. \$10 for adults. \$15 for couples. Teens \$5. Kids under 12 Free. Space is limited.

Tickets available at Leverett Elementary School (413) 548-9144.

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"The Voice of the Villages"

Circulation
Janel Nockleby

Founded by
Arthur Evans Harry Brandt David Detmold
August, 2002

Distribution Manager
Don Clegg
Technical Administrator
Michael Muller

South Carolina on my Mind

BY DONALD KAUL

ANN ARBOR, MI - Yet another Republican ABM (Anybody But Mitt) candidate has experienced failure to launch.

The Newt Gingrich rocket that seemed oh-so-formidable just a few weeks ago didn't survive an avalanche of negative ads financed by stealth Romney money in Iowa. It crashed and burned on takeoff.

Romney rolled to victory by a whopping eight-vote margin over — surprise, surprise! — Rick Santorum, yet another new candidate fresh out of the ABM design studio. Romney, whose support (as George Will observed) "has fluctuated wildly between 23 and 26 percent," got just under 25 percent of the vote.

The circus moved on to New Hampshire, which was all but irrelevant this year, only a pit stop on the way to South Carolina, home to the nation's most vicious domestic politics.

Romney may think he's campaigned before, but he ain't seen nothing yet. The Palmetto state will greet him with charges of keeping illegal immigrants in his basement and his illegitimate children in the attic. It may allege that he once drove to Maine with his wife strapped to the roof of the car, if it hasn't done that already.

(I've said before that the Iowa caucuses are a fraud. Let me take that back. Any process that can rid us of Michele Bachmann as a presidential candidate can't be all bad.)

Whether Santorum can cut it as a Romney alternative is questionable, however. He virtually won in Iowa largely because he all but lived in the state for a year. It's said that he not only shook hands with every potential Republican caucus-goer, he did their laundry and ran errands for them.

Conventional wisdom says

he lacks the money and organization for a national television campaign and that there are too many Republicans across the United States to depend on house calls to garner their votes.

Santorum's policy differences with Romney are negligible. The only big difference is that Santorum seems to mean all the crazy things he says. (Say what you will about Mitt, you can't accuse him of sincerity.) Santorum is really, really against abortion and same-sex marriage and authentically for guns and torture. That plays better in Iowa than it does in some other places.

Should Santorum's candidacy fail to find purchase in the rest of the nation, the Republicans still have Ron Paul available as an ABM weapon. He escaped Iowa with about a fifth of the vote, much of it coming, surprisingly, from young people.

I suppose I shouldn't be that surprised. Paul is another manifestation of the zeitgeist that has produced both the Tea Party and the Occupy Wall Street movements. Its adherents are fed up with the current system and want to tear it down and start over.

Paul, a libertarian, is as liberal as he is conservative. He wants to get out of Afghanistan, legalize drugs, and let people marry whomever they wish, regardless of their gender. He's also against taxes, Wall Street bailouts, and national health care. He's probably against traffic lights too. Nobody's asked him yet.

He's not a rocket, though. He's an open-cockpit biplane with a propeller that's not built for the long campaign.

Who's left then? Well, I suppose it's Newt Gingrich. He's been left for dead twice already in this campaign but, like Richard Nixon and Count Dracula, he keeps coming back. Who's to say he can't do



LETTERS TO



THE EDITOR

Saw Mills Came First

When Jonathan Glazier settled on Brushy Mountain in the 1790s, Asa Moore was already established at the saw mill at the foot of Brushy. There had been a saw mill along the river since 1716, two years before

Sunderland was incorporated.

So, Forest Briggs and Bill Fleming and Michael Hoberman are wrong in theorizing [MR X#14 Up on Brushy Mountain] why Glazier and others settled up the mountain. They were

hewers of trees into lumber, and it was easier to move the harvest downhill to the mills. Millers are typically the first settlers in them here hills.

-Dan Bennett
North Leverett

Praise from the Prairie

I am a 1960 graduate of Turners Falls High School who moved to Illinois after graduation and became an Illinois resident.

Recently I received, as a gift from my sister in Erving, a subscription to the *Montague Reporter*. I find your weekly paper refreshing to an old New Englander currently living on the prairie.

I especially like the articles by David Brule entitled 'West along the River.'

I know that area well from my youth. My grandparents lived on River Street and I have fond memories of Brule's relative Abe Smith walking by and chatting cheerfully.

David Brule, in my opinion, is a very talented writer. He makes the flora and fauna on his

property come alive with his descriptive analysis of ecological systems. Even the descriptions of shadows cast by morning breaking is so vivid to the reader.

Keep up the excellent work covering as many towns and communities as you do!

-David Yez
Monmouth, IL

it again?

Surely there's no one on the planet who hates Mitt Romney more. Newt can be relied on to do everything in his power to see to it that Romney isn't the next presi-

dent of the United States.

If the Republican primaries are this mean this early, it bodes ill for the civility we can expect in the general election in the fall.

I confidently expect that by November, a third of the American people will believe that Barack Obama kidnapped the Lindbergh baby and Michelle drove the getaway car.

It's called democracy, baby. On with the show.

Donald Kaul is a syndicated columnist living in Ann Arbor, MI. This article first appeared in *Other Words*; www.otherwords.org.

U.S. Casualties in Afghanistan as of 1/11/12

Wounded:	Deaths:
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Power over Justice

Your editorial on indefinite detention [MR X #14] is most important, and excellent. Is it the ultimate triumph of power over justice, and why aren't the candidates concerned?

-Fran Hemond
Montague Center

We Welcome Your Letters!
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GUEST EDITORIALS

BY DAVID DEEN

SAXTON'S RIVER, VT - This past year there has been a lot of talk about the benefit of the multi-agency Connecticut River Atlantic Salmon Restoration Program. The discussions have focused almost solely on the mistaken notion that low numbers of salmon returns are the only test of the success or failure of the program.

For the Connecticut River Watershed Council (CRWC), the number of salmon returning is not the only issue. The main criterion the program should be judged on is the Connecticut River's capacity to support a range of aquatic life. The health of the river is the bigger and more important issue.

Just 60 years ago the Connecticut River was called "the best landscaped sewer in New England." The River did

It's the River, not the Fish

not support a thriving diversity of aquatic life, and people used it to boat, swim or fish at their own risk.

Since the passage of the Clean Water Act in 1974, the River has taken on a renewed life and major direct discharge sources of pollution have been reduced significantly.

But those successes are only part of the story; problems still abound in our watershed. Whether the issue is dams fracturing our waterways, pollution flowing into our rivers or erosion from cleared river banks, there is not a singular approach to the restoration of the Connecticut River. Likewise, judging the benefits of the Atlantic salmon restoration program only through the lens of the numbers of returning salmon loses sight of the bigger picture.

To CRWC, the benefits of the

Connecticut River Atlantic Salmon Restoration Program include: the increased knowledge to address ongoing problems; the growing populations of other anadromous fish; the infrastructure of hatcheries, fishways, labs and expert personnel; and the interstate, inter-governmental and international cooperation focused on the Connecticut River. These are vital contributions to the well-being of our watershed and its related coastal ecosystem.

Americans like to count numbers, but number counts of Atlantic salmon don't tell the restoration story of the Connecticut River, or even the restoration story of anadromous fish coming back to the River. If the fish numbers are important to some people then we should look at all of the anadromous fish coming into the River, not

just salmon.

Take, for example, the fact that in 2011 244,000 American shad passed over the first dam upstream from Long Island Sound in Holyoke, MA, or better yet, the 19,000 sea lampreys. While sea lampreys are perhaps most wrongly disrespected fish in our watershed, they add important nutrients back to the headwater areas of the River when they return to their natal river to spawn and die. These are not even total counts of these fish because many head to tributaries in Connecticut and Massachusetts before they swim upstream to the Holyoke dam. So, if we want numbers as the frame of reference for the success or failure of a program we need to look at all the numbers.

While shad and lamprey are not the namesake of the Connecticut River Atlantic Salmon Restoration Program, they, along with many other fish, benefit from its efforts and would likely be in worse shape if this program ceased to exist. The Connecticut River Watershed Council asks all of us to understand the important role the Atlantic Salmon Restoration Program plays in a healthy Connecticut and to stay the course on restoring the River and Atlantic salmon; the results will restore each of us.

David Deen is the Upper Valley River Steward for the Connecticut River Watershed Council.

It's the River, and the Fish

BY KARL MEYER

GREENFIELD - Upper Valley Connecticut River Watershed Council Steward David Deen, in his op-ed above, asks the public not to judge the 44-year-old Connecticut River Atlantic Salmon Commission's fisheries restoration by numbers of returning fish, after just 74 salmon reached the Connecticut's first dam at Holyoke in 2011. I found the piece well intentioned but short on fact.

After decades of million-dollar science, genetics, and hatcheries dedicated to a cold water salmon strain extinct for centuries on the southernmost river it ever briefly colonized, the public has right to a return on investment in this time of demonstrated climate warming. I agree that that return should be an improving river ecosystem. Useless dams should be eliminated; hydro operations damaging rivers and skirting regulations protecting fish should be prosecuted.

But Deen cites as salmon program benefits "growing populations of other anadromous fish," specifically shad and lamprey.

Science is, and should be, about measurable results. Yet in results coming back from a hatchery program dedicated to elite angling, salmon represented less than three-hundredths of 1% of this year's fish returns, while devouring 90% of funding for all migrants. As to the 244,000 American shad and 19,000 sea lamprey Deen touted as reaching Holyoke, that's a 66% plunge from the 720,000 shad counted at Holyoke two decades ago. And 19,000 lamprey? Only four years have seen lower sea lamprey numbers since the tallies began.

Personally, I'd note the 138 blueback herring returning in 2011, a might shy of the 410,000 blueback Holyoke counted in 1992.

It is time for an ecosystem restoration. Turn this upside-down species pyramid back on its base. Re-dedicate funds to

bedrock species of this ecosystem. River groups could contribute greatly by opening public discussion about desperate river conditions just below Turners Falls, the second dam on the Connecticut where migratory fish are funneled into an ecosystem death trap: the Turners Falls power canal. Meanwhile, the river next door is strangling on parching and pummeling flows, impacted greatly by pumping operations just upstream at Northfield Mountain.

Karl Meyer is an environmental journalist and award-winning non-fiction children's author who writes frequently about Connecticut River issues.

Editor's Note:

The next quarterly meeting of the Connecticut River Atlantic Salmon Commission will take place at 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday, January 24th, at the Conte Anadromous Fish Lab, 1 Migratory Way, Turners Falls. The public is welcome.

Farm to School Project Growing

GENEVIEVE FRASER

ORANGE - The Massachusetts Farm to School Project has been matching up schools and farmers since 2004, helping to create sustainable local foods purchasing relationships. Today, there are 217 school districts involved in the project, along with dozens of colleges.

This grassroots project has encouraged the growth of preferential local foods purchasing in schools and other institutions, which has resulted in profitable sales routes for local farmers and affordable purchasing for local schools.

According to Kelly Erwin, the project's director, "As the Massachusetts Farm to School Project developed we learned more about how to make this food system change possible. Educating school customers about ensuring local foods integrity when purchasing through a conventional distributor has also been important. It's inspiring that school systems as large as Lawrence and Worcester, or as small as Maynard and Plainville, have begun to serve fresh local foods in their cafeterias!"

Erwin continued, "We were unable to source enough product to meet institutional demand in

2011. Even without harsh weather, we don't believe there would have been enough fresh produce available to satisfy the needs of the schools, colleges, and hospitals with whom we work.

"During the 2010-2011 school year, 217 school districts and 81 colleges and private schools in Massachusetts preferentially purchased local foods. This translated to \$1.32 million in gross farm income for the 42 farms we surveyed.

"We have every reason to believe that the demand from schools, hospitals, colleges and other institutions will continue to grow and will continue to be profitable for Massachusetts farmers.

"At the Massachusetts Farm to School Project, we offer free technical assistance to farmers interested in exploring and expanding profitable institutional sales. We would be delighted to talk with you about the possibilities of growing for this expanding market and to share information with you about the most popular products, successful sales models that farms have created around the state, and customers who have expressed significant interest.

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GUEST EDITORIAL

Radioactive Pollution No Big Deal



The Connecticut River flows past Vermont Yankee in Vernon, VT

BY DEB KATZ

ROWE - Entergy says it's no big deal. But what's so great about having tritium leaking into the groundwater? What's so great about finding tritium in the Connecticut River, or a fish with strontium in it? What's so great about Vermont Yankee dumping hot water into the Connecticut River, undermining the shad population?

Entergy says it's no big deal again and again.

What's so great about having a rogue corporation suing Vermont to undermine the will of the people? Doesn't seem so great to the people of Vermont, or the tri-state community.

What's so great about having the state's radiological health officer say time and again that radiation leaks are nothing to worry about? According to experts there are no safe levels of radiation. Radiation leaking from any nuclear plant it is not a good thing. It's not supposed to happen. So what is the Nuclear Regulatory Commission doing? Nothing.

Currently 37 out of the 104 operating reactors in the country are leaking and the NRC is doing

nothing to ensure the remaining 67 reactors don't follow suit. It's not a safety issue. Not to the NRC; not to Entergy. And of course the state of Vermont and the people can't ever talk about safety, right? Entergy will take us to court. Meanwhile the NRC commissioners are attacking their chair, Greg Jasczko, because he's attempting to implement safety measures as a result of Fukushima.

Last week we learned the tritium leaking from the underground pipes Entergy officials testified repeatedly did not exist is now appearing in the Connecticut River. Entergy and Vermont state radiological health officer Bill Irwin say it's only a little tritium and it's not harmful, so it's no big deal, right?

Remember that Entergy's spokesman, Larry Smith, stated if those underground pipes that didn't exist leaked, tritium would never be detected in the river. Remember, radioactive tritium has the same characteristics as water and is very, very difficult to detect. The fact that it was found in the river is disturbing.

Whoever thought it

was a good idea to allow this corporation to dump 100-plus degree water into one of New England's most important waterways? It has compromised the shad population along with anything else that has a hard time living in heated water.

Why is Entergy heating the river? Money. If it couldn't use river water to cool Vermont Yankee, then Entergy would be forced to use its cooling towers year-round. Remember those towers? They are the structures that Entergy deferred maintenance on until one of them fell down, not once, but twice. It's understandable why Entergy wants to use our river to cut its operating costs. But why is it good public policy to allow this corporation to heat up our river?

Why is it good public policy to let this corporation contaminate groundwater, heat and contaminate the river, and assure us again and again that none of this matters?

Instead of Entergy, and some Vermont state officials, trying to convince us that this is all no big deal, shouldn't the real question be what's so good about the cumulative effect of all this? The answer is plain. It is a big deal, and it must be stopped.

Deb Katz is the director of the grassroots anti-nuclear group the Citizens Awareness Network (www.nukebusters.org).

NOTES FROM THE GILL SELECTBOARD

Finance Committee Backs Heating Upgrades at Safety Complex

BY DAVID DETMOLD -

In advance of the special town meeting scheduled for Tuesday, January 17th at 7 p.m., the Gill selectboard conferred with the finance committee about the warrant article that will seek to raise and appropriate the final \$10,125 needed to upgrade the heating system at the safety complex.

Replacing the balky 33-year-old furnace at the cinderblock building on Main Road that houses the town's police, fire and highway departments, and upgrading the system from steam to hot water will cost approximately \$55,000, according to one estimate the town has received from a licensed contractor who has examined the system. The final price tag will not be definitely known until bids on the project are opened later this winter.

The town had previously set aside \$20,000 to repair the boiler at the safety complex, and town administrative assistant Ray Purington said Entergy Vermont Yankee, which uses the safety complex for evacuation training drills for Gill emergency responders who may have to handle any emergency situation arising from an accident at the 40-year nuclear plant in Vernon, will kick in \$10,000 for the heating system upgrade. Additionally, when state revenues exceeded earlier projections, Massachusetts sent a check for \$14,875 as a late installment on state aid for the current fiscal year, which Purington said town meeting could also agree

to apply to the heating upgrade.

That would leave the town about \$10,125 short on the project's expected cost, and Purington said the finance committee ultimately decided to support a motion to borrow that amount for the remainder of the fiscal year, which ends on June 30th, pushing off the need to repay that four- to six-month loan until next year's budget.

Purington said the finance committee asked a number of questions, including, "Does the boiler need to be replaced or could it be repaired," and "how long would a repair last?" But, Purington said, the 5-0 vote of the finance committee to support the motion "reflected a recognition that this is functionally an important building for the town, and we need to have a reliable heating system there."

Earlier this month, fire chief Gene Beaubien and highway superintendent Mick LaClaire were called to repair a plugged valve in the old boiler at midnight in the middle of the workweek. Subsequently, the boiler's automatic fill chamber clogged with scale and debris, requiring a technician to come in to repair the system. Since then the system appears to be functioning normally, but town officials are keeping their fingers crossed the heating system will not experience further breakdowns before a replacement can be installed.

In other news, the selectboard remains "cautiously optimistic," according to Purington,

that a first year of funding for a scaled back regional public health program for Franklin County could be secured through an upcoming Community Innovation Challenge grant through the Executive Office of Administration and Finance. This would represent a 'Plan B' for a countywide regional public health program, after the hoped for 3-year, \$325,000 grant from the Mass Department of Public Health was turned down late last year.

The Innovation Challenge grant would allow for only one year of funding for a scaled-back program with reduced delivery of services, Purington said. The county public health working group will meet on January 12th to determine whether to go forward with the fallback plan.

Looking ahead to the town's FY'13 budget making cycle, Purington said the selectboard and finance committee agreed to follow the pattern set in recent years, by holding a two-part annual town meeting, with the first session devoted to non-monetary articles. The date for that meeting was fixed for Monday, May 7th.

The annual town meeting will then be continued to a Monday in June, date to be determined, to deliberate on money articles, Purington said.

He added that town departments are being asked to prepare two 'zero increase' budget scenarios for FY'13. The first scenario would have a zero increase from last year's

see GILL page 10

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NOTES FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD

Special Town Meeting Planned for February

JOSH HEINEMANN - At the first meeting after winter holidays the Wendell selectboard tentatively scheduled a special town meeting for Tuesday, February 28th to meet the request of the energy committee to have a meeting by the end of February, so the town can decide in a timely fashion whether to authorize funding for a second year of the local food coordinator's position.

Alistair MacMartin began the meeting by requesting use of the town hall on Monday, January 16th, Martin Luther King day, from 4:30 p.m. to 8 or 9 p.m. for Montague City resident and national Transition Towns trainer Tina Clark to discuss long-term local energy and food resilience with the Wendell Transition group.

MacMartin also said he and his partner Judy Hall are delighted with their new property, the former Marion Herrick homestead on Wickett Pond Road. They hope to host a town gathering there in warmer weather, possibly on the next solstice.

Town coordinator Nancy Aldrich said the new tax collector's software has been installed and assistant tax collector Katherine Soule-Regine is already familiar with it. Tax bills for the past five years were entered into the program, but it showed none of them as paid (which might be upsetting to town residents).

Selectboard member Dan Keller suggested Soule-Regine be hired as a consultant to train tax collector Penny Delorey on

the new system.

Aldrich said she had gotten a request for a step stool outside the building so citizens could reach and read notices on the posting boards.

Keller noted a step stool is not wheelchair accessible, and selectboard member Jeoffrey Pooser suggested the bulletin board be lowered.

Finance committee chair Michael Idoine reported the next meeting of the town's money managers (tax collector, treasurer, et al.) will be held January 19th, at 6 p.m., an hour before the selectboard meets. Accountant Tom Scanlon will be there with the results of the most recent town audit, and recommendations following from it.

He said the finance committee would like to place a survey in the next town newsletter to gauge residents' opinions on the succession of public safety chiefs: police chief Ed Chase, and fire chief Everett Ricketts. Both have served the town longer than memory, at a pay rate that has decreased dramatically as the state requires more paperwork, and more reporting. Surveys will also be available on the town website and the town list serve.

Idoine said finance committee members are of two minds on a proposal for Wendell to join the 148 (out of 351) Massachusetts cities and towns that have adopted the Community Preservation Act, which allows towns to institute a local option surcharge of up to 3% on property tax bills. Idoine said like other town officials, finance

committee members are hesitant to add to the tax rate, but the state match is valuable, and projects to protect open space, preserve historic sites, support affordable housing and the like are decided by townspeople in the form of a Community Preservation Committee.

Keller reported the assessors got preliminary approval on their new revaluations, meaning tax bills should be mailed on time.

He also said the conservation commission was "iffy" about the road crew using part of the town forest on Montague Road as a stump and brush dump. The parcel has some wet areas, but the part the road crew wants to use is relatively level, 110 feet square, and accessible by gravel road. The highway crew wants to store brush there until enough piles up to justify renting a chipper.

Keller said the highway commission would continue to search for alternative sites on town-owned land.

Keller said he called the company that assisted the town with remediation of mold in the town vault - ATI - to complain about the smell of mold still lingering in the boxes of documents the company had cleaned and returned. The company representative said documents sometimes keep their odor for a while, but then he called back, and came to Wendell and brought the documents back to ATI for further cleaning and odor removal.

Pooser said that the Massachusetts Broadband

see **WENDELL** pg 13

NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD

Legislature to Take Up U-28 Benefit Legislation

BY KATIE NOLAN - Eugene Klepadlo told fellow selectboard members he plans to attend the January 17th hearing on state senate bill 2092 at the state house in Boston. The bill, sponsored by senator Stanley Rosenberg and representative Steve Kulik, would allow the Union 28 joint school committee to "enter into agreements to fund benefits for employees and retirees in the superintendency union in amounts proportionate to the benefits offered by each town or regional school district to their municipal or regional school district employees."

Providing benefits to Union 28 employees and retirees has been a contentious issue recently for the towns of Erving, Leverett and Shutesbury, because the benefits package for shared Union 28 employees is set by the package for the town with the highest percentage of students in the union schools. At this point, that town is Erving, which offers more generous benefits for employees than do other towns in the union, leaving towns like Leverett and Shutesbury to protest that their own town employees are getting 50% benefits paid by the town on retirement, while at the same time they are being asked to contribute 79% to Union 28 retirement benefits.

The town of Leverett has lately been paying only 50% of one U-28 retiree's benefit package in protest, leaving the U-28 fiscal agent, which happens at this time to be the Swift River School, to pay those bills with insuf-

ficient funds. Leverett has withheld about \$2,000 in this protest action to date, and the Swift River school committee is considering handing the responsibility of bill paying off to the lead town, Erving, in consequence.

Klepadlo, the Erving selectboard's school committee liaison, is among the town officials who were instrumental in petitioning area legislators for help in permanently resolving the discrepancy in benefit pay for school union and town employees.

The selectboard and finance committee met jointly to set a schedule for developing the FY'13 budget. They agreed that department heads and committee chairs would present budget requests to the finance committee in February, and to the selectboard in March.

The selectboard approved a "bring your own bottle" liquor license for Christina's restaurant, with the condition that this license will expire when the restaurant receives a full state liquor license.

Owner Mindy Sullivan submitted the application for a full liquor license for selectboard review, and the selectboard set a date of January 23rd at 6:45 p.m. for the public hearing on the application.

Finance committee chair Stanley Gradowski took the opportunity to warmly commend the chef at Christina's.

The Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association informed the town there will be no rate increases for MIIA's coverage for the next two years.

Adult Entertainment Bylaw Approved

The Erving special town meeting, continued to January 9th from December 11th, 2011, unanimously approved an adult entertainment zoning bylaw after making several minor amendments.

Planning board chair William Morris told the 46 voters present at the January 9th meeting the bylaw would not outlaw establishments selling sexually oriented books, magazines, paraphernalia, or sex toys, "but it's better than having no restriction" on such establishments.

The bylaw proposed by the planning board specifies that adult entertainment establishments (adult bookstores, adult motion picture theaters, adult paraphernalia stores, adult video stores, or establishments displaying live nudity) will be allowed in the central village zoning district under special permit and after site plan review by the planning board.

Under the proposed bylaw, adult entertainment facilities would be not be able to locate within specified distances from certain land uses, such as residentially zoned districts, churches, public parks, day care centers, senior centers, or other entertainment establishments.

An amendment recommended by town counsel Donna MacNicol and an amendment proposed by selectboard chair Andrew Goodwin both added or clarified criteria for defining "adult use" under the bylaw. Both amendments were passed unanimously.

see **ERVING** pg 13

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ASANA Paintings by Christine Texiera at the Wendell Library



"On to Koundinyasana", oil on paper, by Christine Texiera

BY RICHARD BALDWIN - The Wendell Free Library begins the new year with "Asana," an exhibition of work by Christine Texiera of Wendell. This show consists of 21 oil on

paper paintings, presenting a series of yoga positions against simple, bold backgrounds.

Texiera has spent over ten years studying the figure in life drawing classes, and an equal

length of time studying yoga. She has been teaching yoga at the Wendell Library for the past three years. In this show she combines both interests while experimenting with painting

with oil on paper.

Texiera writes, "This body of work combines a love of the figure and love of yoga. There is something both solid and graceful about people in yoga poses (asanas).... A sense of peace that is pregnant with breath and indicative of the movement that has come before it, ready to birth not only a change in the body but also in the spirit of the practitioner."

She goes on to explain, "People's reaction to the paintings often are based on identification with their own possibility to be in that pose..." They think, "I can't do that" or "I think I can do that." This establishes a personal connection between the viewer and the work.

These paintings are principally about gesture, about action that is balanced literally in each yoga position and visually in each piece. The figures are presented full center against a simple, almost abstract background delineating a floor plane and background wall. Each yoga position has a specific name that describes the pose. Texiera combines her convincing rendition of the figures with bold areas of pure color, enhancing the drama of her work.

The color combinations are sensitively established. Colors in the figures are used descriptively, delineating muscle structure, and modeling the texture

and folds of fabric. In contrast the background areas are flat. The simple, yet dramatic, background provides a foil for the foreground gesture. For the most part the colors in the floor plane are darker than those in the wall. This treatment echoes our experience with landscape and serves to anchor the figures more firmly to the ground.

In the largest painting, "On to Koundinyasana," the warm flesh tones of the figure contrast sharply with the dark green ground, while the green in the pants does the same against the pink wall plane. While the diagonals formed by the legs are visually very dynamic, both the position of the torso and the color composition contain the activity. The resulting composition, like the others in this exhibition, present energy in equilibrium.

Texiera can be reached by phone at (978) 544-3060 and by email, ctexiera@gmail.com.

Reasonably priced prints are also available for sale at the library.

Visit her website at www.etsy.com/shop/ctexiera to see more of her work.

This exhibition runs until the end of February in the Herrick Room at the Wendell Free Library. Library hours are: Tuesday 3 to 6 p.m.; Wednesday 10 to 8 p.m.; and Saturday 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

NOTES FROM THE LEVERETT SELECTBOARD

Green Community Grant May Help Leverett Go Solar

BY DAVID DETMOLD - The selectboard met with the town energy committee on Tuesday to engage in the enviable task of determining how best to spend \$138,000 in grant money the

town is in line to receive from the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources as a result of Leverett's recent designation as a Green Community.

Under the Green Communi-

ties Act, the state awards grants to cities and towns that meet certain benchmarks - including developing a plan to reduce municipal energy use by 20% within five years - from a fund derived from

the auction of carbon emissions from large power producers throughout the Northeast through the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative.

The town must inform the DOER later this month how it plans to use the grant award. The

selectboard and energy committee agreed to seek funding for the purchase of solar photovoltaic panels, and perhaps a vertical axis wind generator, to reduce the amount of carbon fuel generated electricity Leverett uses for town buildings, particularly the ele-

see SOLAR page 9

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FARM from page 1

"This is great soil, but we're trying to achieve four to five percent organic matter to make the soil perform and produce the yields we want," said Ryan.

The property consists of 109 acres from the former Tuvek Farm, and a smaller parcel that was once Blue Meadow Farm. Forty acres from the Tuvek Farm are now laid out as harvest beds, and the greenhouses from Blue Meadow Farm have been repaired and will supply 10,000 square feet of space for sowing plants.

The former Blue Meadow property also provides a home for Sarah and Ryan, and an office for the farm. The operation will employ 30 people year round, and that number will grow to 50 in the summer.

Red Fire serves more than 1,300 Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) shareholders and sells at farmers markets from Springfield to Cambridge.

The growing popularity of winter markets means there is no longer a down season. On a January afternoon, workers at Red Fire were washing and packing carrots, potatoes, beets, turnips and other root vegetables for distribution to winter CSA shareholders and farmers markets.

Though their poultry operation still remains at the Granby site, where Red Fire also maintains a farm stand and fields for pick-your-own produce, the move to Montague signals

Ryan's return to Franklin County, not far from the spot where he first set up a vegetable stand in front of his parents' house at the corner of Ferry and Turners Falls Road when he was just 12 years old.

Old Depot Market is still a picturesque location in Montague, a place where CSA members and non-members can buy produce, milk, cheese, butter, yogurt, honey, maple syrup and savory sauces.

For Ryan and Sarah, acquiring the Meadow Road property represented an opportunity to preserve some of the best agricultural land to be found anywhere in the world, but it has required a lot of collaboration. The Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust worked with the couple to place agricultural preservation restrictions (APR) on the land.

The Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust website reads, "A conservation easement ... guarantees that the land will remain in use for farming and that the development rights will be extinguished. In addition to preventing development of farm properties, APRs lower the price of the land, making it easier for young farmers to buy new farms."

But buying farmland in Massachusetts is still not easy. There's not a lot of it and it's some of the most expensive farmland in the nation, running as high as \$12,000 per acre. The trust is raising funds to purchase



Ryan Voiland shows off bins of winter vegetables at Red Fire Farm

the land from the Voilands and put it in permanent protection, thereby creating some budget relief for the couple while protecting the land. People interested in participating can learn more at the Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust website.

People who want to know more about winter and summer CSA shares or employment opportunities at Red Fire Farm may go to their website: www.redfirefarm.com.

The burgeoning interest in local organic food would be futile without farmers like Ryan and Sarah, who are willing to make an enormous commitment


to an ideal. When the property in Montague came up for sale, the Voilands considered it a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to preserve an exceptional parcel of farmland. This is land that can yield wholesome food, provide habitat for wildlife, and offer the simple gift of beauty and quiet for the community.

Sarah says, "There are more bikes and tractors than cars on Meadow Road."

Last winter the Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust hosted an owl walk on the property, and this week Canada geese squawked overhead during a tour of the barns and sheds.

Ryan and Sarah are looking forward to sharing the recreational resource of the land with members. "A good farm should be a community resource," Sarah said.

She added, "A lot of young farmers are leaving the area because the cost of land is so high. This collaboration with the land trust is a model for sustainability. It's the way we need to go to protect the land for the next generation."

And speaking of the next generation, Ryan and Sarah are expecting their first child in June. Talk about coming home to roost! 

SOLAR from page 8

mentary school, which uses more than 70% of the electricity used in town buildings.

Brooke Thomas and Peter d'Errico spoke of the possibility of placing photovoltaic panels on poles at intervals along a stretch of town-owned land between the elementary school and the library. By one back of the envelope estimate, the grant money could allow the town to supply about 60% of municipal electricity usage from the sun, if the DOER agrees this would be an appropriate use of the money. A program like this would allow

Leverett to reduce its carbon fuel use while at the same time freeing up funds now spent on electric bills for other town purposes.

Turning to one such need, the selectboard met with the school committee and finance committee for a preview of the draft FY'13 elementary school budget, which may come in about 2.58% higher than last year, about a \$50,000 increase. Finance committee member Tom Powers thanked U-28 budget director for a clear budget presentation, and the selectboard indicated a degree of accord with the cuts and increases presented in its draft

budget.

But selectboard member Peter d'Errico raised the issue of teacher step raises and cost of living increases, once again stressing the town is not in a position to afford raises on top of contractual steps, especially if the combination of the two result in higher salary increases for teachers than the town is able to afford for other departmental employees.

The three boards intend to meet in executive session to discuss this issue, as negotiations begin with the elementary school teachers for a new contract.


Board of health chair Fay

Zipkowitz met with the selectboard to discuss two deteriorating multi-family homes at 142-144 and 146-148 Montague Road.

While owner David Biddle may be willing to fix the immediate problems with the septic system at the property at 142-144, or face a pending housing court proceeding for criminal negligence, Zipkowitz said, "My real concern is long range. The properties are in very bad condition. They have been cited repeatedly for interior issues," including leaks, mold, broken windows and screens, electrical problems and other problems.

While Biddle did put a new roof on 142-144 recently, Zipkowitz said now it appears, "the septic system at 146-148 is probably in failure and should be replaced."

Zipkowitz said she fears most for "the tenants who are going to be displaced," when these two 30-year old structures, built on concrete slabs, are either condemned or required to be vacated for gut rehabs.

"They are caught in a box. In a perfect world, we would take those buildings and build affordable housing." 

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NOTES FROM THE GILL-MONTAGUE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Preliminary G-M Budget Below Target

BY ELLEN BLANCHETTE - The Gill-Montague regional school committee reviewed a preliminary FY'13 budget Tuesday that comes in with a 2.4% increase from FY'12, just under the 2.5% target agreed to by the member towns, representatives of the state education department, and the school committee in the five year fiscal compact of 2010.

Interim superintendent Nadine Ekstrom outlined a preliminary \$16,724,932 budget for FY'13, which includes at least \$90,000 for hiring a new SPED director, increases for elementary school substitutes, additional money for summer programs and field trips, new cameras and equipment for the TV studio, a 2% increase in SPED transportation, a 2% increase in heating oil, and hikes for Medicaid costs, workman's comp and the GIC health care.

On the latter point, Ekstrom explained there were grant offsets when the district first joined the GIC, but now those costs need to be put back in the budget.

Other changes include reducing the number of kindergarten teachers from five to four, and hiring two elementary reading specialists.

Ekstrom said she had reviewed all of the needs represented by each line item in the budget, by asking teachers and administrators to first detail their requirements, make lists, look at costs, evaluate priorities and then come together, so all the personnel involved got to hear each other's needs.

Ekstrom said the portion of the district's budget that comes from state Chapter 70 funding, which she said used to represent 50% of district revenues, now comes closer to 36%, causing the district to rely on town assessments now for 56% of the GMRSD's operating budget.

She broke down the district's costs, with salaries consuming the lion's share of expenditures at 77% of the budget. Aggregating step and possible cost of living increases for employees in four bargaining units, Ekstrom estimated a 4.6% increase for staff salaries in FY'13, and a 2.5% increase for administrators.

In FY'13 the cost of one pre-school teacher's salary will be moved into the general operating budget, because pre-K tuition is not keeping up with the costs of running that program, Ekstrom said.

The budget reflects a \$200,048 decrease in the cost of out-of-district special education placements. Ekstrom noted costs for SPED placements, and school choice numbers can change so much by the start of the next school year it is very difficult for the district to budget for them accurately. But she said the GMRSD has been able to meet the educational needs of some special needs students rather than placing them in educational programs outside the district, whereas other special needs students are graduating.

Ekstrom said one of the costs and stressors the district's budget has been caused by high turnover in administration and staff.

Therefore, Ekstrom is asking for three-year contracts going forward. High priority is being given to technology needs, including providing laptops for all teachers in the district and iPads for administrators. Ekstrom noted that teachers are now being asked to provide reports online, so it is only fair to provide them with the means to do so. Computers teachers have used in the classrooms will now be available for students to use. Ekstrom has also budgeted for ten smart boards for the classrooms.

Other priorities in FY'13, Ekstrom said, are professional development in data collection and analysis, after-school programs, home-to-school liaison for families of at-risk students utilizing the services of local agencies, and reinstating the position of educational technology coach.

Ekstrom would also like to see a late bus added for students who want to stay and participate in after-school programs and tutoring.

On a personal note, Ekstrom said, the phone system is outdated and needs replacing. Using the example of her own phone system, she said, "I'm very nice to my phone," but yet, "I'm on my fourth phone."

Ekstrom said she would also like the district to consider a later for high school students, because research has shown a later start time for older students can be significantly beneficial in educational outcomes.

A review of the interim superintendent's evaluation showed

positive results. A compilation of the comments and scores in several categories resulting in a score of 3.5 out of a possible 5 showed good support for Ekstrom's performance as superintendent. A vote was taken and unanimously agreed upon to accept the results of the evaluation form as presented.

Following a review of the evaluation of Ekstrom's performance to date, Jane Oakes of Gill then made a motion to offer interim superintendent Ekstrom a permanent superintendent's contract, contingent on successful negotiations with the school committee.

An objection to this motion was raised, based on the fact this was not on the agenda and several members felt they were not prepared for the discussion. The motion was withdrawn and replaced by a motion to put it on the agenda for the January 24th

meeting, which passed 6-2 with one abstention. Brown and Singleton voted no.

In a contentious conclusion to what had until then been an amicable and productive meeting, the school committee members attempted to discuss the need for an executive session without revealing the reasons why.

As feelings quickly ran high, chair Michael Langknecht struggled to control the meeting as some members spoke out revealing their limited knowledge of the matter at hand, over the strong objections of the chair, and the efforts of attorney Russell Dupere, urging restraint.

The brouhaha began when school committee member Marjorie Levenson of Montague asked politely, in a broadly worded request, for an executive session "as early as possible so everyone could attend." Dupere, who was in attendance and had knowledge of the issue involved, stepped in to make clear to the committee that Levenson was

see G-M SCHOOL page 11

GILL from page 6

salient fact remains clear. "It definitely is looking like it will be a tight year."

Maybe we'll hear some elementary budget prognosticating when Governor Patrick comes to town for a visit to the Gill Elementary School Thursday morning at 9:30 a.m. If he remains true to form, he should be found beforehand at the 2nd Street Bakery in Turners, picking up some treats for himself, his staff, and some fresh baked dog treats for his black lab, Tobey. Anything to keep the local economy afloat while bridge repairs are in progress.

Although Gill, like towns and cities across the state, awaits Governor Deval Patrick's state budget outline, which is expected later this week, in the absence of firm forecasts in state aid for towns and schools, Purington said one



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G-M School from page 10 being deliberately vague because there was not much she could say in a public meeting without disclosing more than was appropriate.

Seeking to balance the need to provide the chair with a reason for an executive session, as required under Massachusetts law, Levenson tried to find a way to word her request without giving out any actual information on the subject at hand.

In the escalating discussion that followed, a good deal of information was made public, even as attorney Dupere warned of the potential for litigation against the district and the importance of confidentiality on personnel issues. It became clear the matter at hand involved a complaint from a recently fired employee, an employee not covered by one of the contracts for teachers or other bargaining groups.

Dupere said the school committee has no role to play in this issue, unless or until a lawsuit is filed, in which case it becomes the business of the committee. He said in the recent education reform act passed by the legislature, school committees no longer have any role to play in resolving personnel disputes. Dupere said this change in state law was intended to be to the benefit of school committees, which historically had been spending a great deal of time hearing personnel complaints.

Still, some on the committee wanted to hear the particulars of the matter, because they had been hearing from people in the community and felt they needed to be better informed.

Jeff Singleton became frustrated with the caution of other members and spoke out in clearer terms regarding the facts of the matter, and began to express a request for balanced information so a fair opinion of the firing could be arrived at, at which point the chair shouted at him to stop talking. With Singleton continuing to try to make his point, Langknecht became livid, demanding that Singleton stop

speaking and let the lawyer talk.

After some more back and forth, at the chair's prompting, a vote was taken on whether to continue the discussion in executive session. The vote was defeated 3 to 4 with 2 abstentions. Voting in favor were Levenson, Singleton and Brown. Voting against were Waldron, Joyce Phillips, Kristin Boyle and Joyce Oaks. Langknecht and Emily Monosson abstained.

Levenson then asked if Dupere could explain the different types of employee contracts and the process required to discharge an employee.

Dupere answered that staff members who are hired under

union contracts have significant job protections, that there are specific procedures that must be followed before an employee covered by a union contract can be fired.

He said some employees in the district are hired under what is called an at-will contract, which means those employees can be fired at the discretion of the employer.

Levenson said she questioned the wisdom of having a two-tier employee structure, where some are just "second-class employees."

Dupere said that was a discussion the school committee could have.

In other business, a new attorney retainer agreement between the school district and attorney Dupere was approved unanimously. The agreement sets a monthly retainer of \$1,100, an increase of \$50 a month. The agreement is effective as of July 1st, 2012.

Dupere then presented a request that the school committee agree to an addendum to the contract for Schedule B employment. This was to allow for work performed in addition to their regular duties by teachers and staff that falls under the Schedule B contract, to be included in the calculations of their retirement benefits. The

approval of the addendum passed 8-1, with Brown voting no.

A vote on the new concussion policy was postponed until the next regular meeting because of errors and inconsistency in the document. The next regular school committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 24th, at 7 p.m. at Turners Falls High School in the TV studio. A school committee meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 18th at 6 p.m. at Turners Falls High School in the conference room. The development of a long-term plan by the school committee will be the focus of that meeting.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GILL POLICE LOG

Breaking and Entering and Larceny

Wednesday, 12/28

5:25 a.m. Reported party on the French King Bridge wrapped in a blanket, no one located on arrival and no motor vehicle in area.

7:55 a.m. Harassing phone calls reported from South Cross Road resident.

Friday, 12/30

2:20 p.m. Suspicious motor vehicle behind the Wagon Wheel

on Route 2. Checked and moved along.

4:20 p.m. Erratic operator on French King Highway. Stopped along with Erving police.

Saturday, 12/31

4:35 p.m. Assisted Fire Department on West Gill Road.

Monday, 1/2

7:20 a.m. Suspicious motor vehicle on Grist Mill Road. Checked okay.

11:10 a.m. Vandalism reported at Mobil Station.

12:30 p.m. Resident of Main Road reported his wallet stolen.

3:30 p.m. Summons issued to party on Boyle Road.

Tuesday, 1/3

6:15 a.m. Assistance rendered to Erving police regarding a past arrest.

7:30 a.m. Suspicious motor vehicle on Franklin Road. All okay

Wednesday, 1/4

6:05 a.m. Reported runaway with warrants on Boyle Road. Subject not at reported residence

Thursday, 1/5

11:00 a.m. Assisted resident of Center Road with firearms issue and the FBI.

Friday, 1/6

10:15 a.m. Resident of South Cross Road dealt with regarding an expired license and revoked license plate.

1:22 p.m. Further investigation into civil matter regarding a lar-

ceny of a John Deere Bob Cat.

8:10 p.m. Assisted Montague

police with a fight on Avenue A.

Saturday, 1/7

9:20 p.m. Assisted Northfield police with fingerprinting of item from breaking and entering.

Sunday, 1/8

1:20 p.m. Larceny from resident at Stoughton Place. Under investigation.

3:07 p.m. Motor vehicle accident on Hoe Shop Road. No injuries reported.



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Blacksmithing Instructor John Passiglia, left, teaches GCC President Bob Pura, right, in the art of bending iron.

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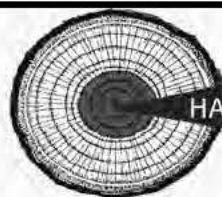
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TREASURES from pg 1

vegetation. That is to say there were many fewer trees back in the day. Of course we know Leverett was a hill town with many more farms and much less wooded land at the turn of the last century. But the Leverett town hall exhibit brings this historical reality home.

Heading up the stairs past the venerated town flag to the second floor, which houses most of the town offices, you will soon discover that in the early 20th century this was a meeting room with a small stage. Covering the stage today is a very unusual curtain with painted advertisements from local businesses, circa 1933.

Here we find advertisements for the Leverett General Store, formerly in the town center, the Montague Inn, which once had pride of place in Montague Center where the post office now stands, and W.D. Cows and Company of North Amherst, where one could purchase "native lumber and wood," still a good address. In the middle is a rather dramatic painting of Leverett Pond.

The artist was Thurston Munson, sometimes confused with Thurman Munson, former catcher for the New York Yankees. Although born in Greenfield, Thurston Munson became quite the cosmopolitan world traveler. According to the information posted next to the curtain, he received a nice \$2,000 prize in 1928 which allowed him to paint in "Paris, Africa [and] Tunisia." During the Depression he and his brother "eked out a living" painting curtains and murals in hotel cocktail lounges. Eventually he worked his way up to become the Commissioner of Art for the city of Boston. He

also apparently designed the tower on Mt. Greylock, a chapel at West Point and, believe or not, the Basketball Hall of Fame.

Not bad for a local guy who started painting curtains in town halls. But there is still more here on the second floor if you are willing to look around a bit.

To the right of the curtain is a lovely water color of the Leverett coke kilns as they may have appeared during the 1940s, when the manufacture of charcoal was a major industry in North Leverett. The painting itself was executed by one William Rathbun in 1968. It is perhaps a bit idealized, but that is certainly how we would like to view the making of charcoal in the good old days before biomass.

Then there are the two portraits of "Mr. and Mrs. Perce" by none other than Erastus Salisbury Field, a scion of the ubiquitous Field family. The works are very flat and very simple – strong on design and short on technique. But they capture for me the stern simplicity of the nineteenth century Yankee farmer. Mr. Field, the artist, was another interesting fellow who eventually moved to New York City and, when the portrait business went south, began painting

scenes like "The Embarkation of Ulysses."

Not bad for a guy who got his start painting stern Yankees. But the real treasure for me is the painting on the opposite wall. This is a portrait of none other than Sir John Leverett himself. That portrait is perhaps the subject for another article, in part because no one at town hall seemed to know where it came from or whether it is an actual painting or a print.

Suffice it to say that whatever it is, it looks very 17th century. Leverett himself apparently fought in Oliver Cromwell's "New Model" Puritan Army during the English Civil War (1640s). He ran Nova Scotia briefly after it was seized from the French, and apparently monopolized for himself all the trade from that province. Later he became governor of the colony of Massachusetts during King Phillip's War. In 1774 the town of Leverett was named after him, and here his portrait now appears.

Not a bad collection of historical photographs and works of art for a recently renovated rural town hall.



Montague Business Association Showcases Plans for 2012

BY DAVID DETMOLD

TURNERS FALLS – The Montague Business Association previewed plans for special events in town in 2012, and talked of fundraising and marketing ideas over chips and salsa at Burrito Rojo, 50 3rd Street, on Tuesday, January 10th, with about 16 business owners and members in attendance.

Rist Insurance Company's Stephan Smith welcomed attendees with best wishes for a prosperous 2012, and introduced the speakers.

Michael Nelson, who organized the Spring parade on the Hill in 2011, along with two wildly successful Pumpkinfests on the Avenue in 2010 and 2011, told the MBA he would be back with another Pumpkinfest in 2012, only this time with more pumpkins!

Last year, the festival took place two weeks after tropical storm Irene wreaked quite a bit of havoc with local pumpkin patches. The total number of jack-o-lanterns was reduced by about half in consequence, from about 1400 the first year to about 700 in the second event.

Even so, the crowd swelled along Avenue A in 2011, up from about 8000 the first time around to somewhere between 12,000 and 15,000! Who can count that high, especially after they've been sampling the local brews in the beer tent and digging the tunes at the bandshell in Peskeompskut Park?

Nelson said he did not foresee a bigger crowd at the pumpkinfest in 2012, (unless Montague wants to build a parking garage) but he said he would be working with the Franklin County Tech School to build platforms to elevate the jack-o-lanterns for easier viewing in the crowd.

Will there be a second annual Spring Parade as well?

"Oh, absolutely, and hopefully for many years after."

The date for that parade will be Saturday, April 14th, with a fallback in the event of severe weather to the following Saturday, April 21st. The route will remain the same, from Sheffield School parking lot up to Montague Street, left onto Montague Street, left again on Turnpike Road to Millers Falls

see BUSINESS pg 16

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Domestic Disturbances; Threatening Harassments

Tuesday, 1/3

7:48 a.m. Vehicle fire at Town of Montague highway garage. Referred to other agency.

10:13 p.m. Domestic disturbance on Third Street. Investigated.

Wednesday, 1/4

12:38 a.m. Carbon monoxide alarm on North Leverett Road. Referred to other agency.

1:23 p.m. Hit and run accident in alley between 5th and 6th Street. Investigated.

9:07 p.m. Warrant arrest of

[redacted], on Avenue A.

10:45 p.m. Domestic disturbance on G Street. Investigated.

Thursday, 1/5

8:56 a.m. Threatening, harassment on Chestnut Street. Advised of options.

9:51 a.m. Officer wanted at Sheffield Elementary School. Peace restored.

5:16 p.m. Assault at Grout Circle. Services rendered.

Friday, 1/6

10:09 a.m. Animal bite information provided. Referred to an officer.

12 p.m. Burglary, breaking and entering on Central Street. Services rendered.

12 p.m. Fight on Fourth Street. Services rendered.

4:33 p.m. Domestic disturbance on O Street. Investigated.

4:45 p.m. Structure fire on Randall Wood Drive. Services rendered.

5:39 p.m. Disorderly conduct at Turners Falls High School. Summons issued.

Saturday, 1/7

3:31 a.m. Burglary, breaking and entering at Salvation Army Thrift Store on Avenue A. Investigated.

2:01 p.m. Lost cat on Bulkley Street. Services rendered.

3:04 p.m. Threatening, harassment on Second Street. Advised of options.

7:24 p.m. Threatening, harassment on Avenue A. Advised of options.

11:25 p.m. General disturbance on Stevens Street. Report taken.

Sunday, 1/8

3:05 p.m. Missing person on

Dry Hill Road. Services rendered.

3:44 p.m. Domestic disturbance on Second Street. Investigated.

Monday, 1/9

8:53 a.m. Threatening, harassment on Park Street. Report taken.

3:52 p.m. Domestic disturbance on Woodland Drive. Investigated.

5:13 p.m. Brush fire on Newton Street. Investigated.

Tuesday, 1/10

Arrest of [redacted] on a straight warrant.

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JESSICA LARKIN ILLUSTRATION

BY FRED CICETTI

LEONIA, NJ - [This is the second of two columns about memory and aging.]

The difference between normal and abnormal memory difficulties comes down to this: If you forget a name or where you left your keys, you're probably OK. If you can't remember how to brush your teeth, you need medical attention.

Here are more memory problems that aren't part of normal aging:

- Noticeable deterioration of

Can You Remember what this Column was Supposed to be About?

memory over several months.

- Repeating stories you told only minutes before, or asking the same questions over and over
- Inability to keep track of what you did earlier in the day
- Forgetting how to do things you've done many times
- Getting lost in a familiar place
- Unexplained mood changes
- Forgetting common words when speaking or using the wrong words, such as "phone" for "TV remote."
- Difficulty following directions
- Trouble deciding
- Difficulty handling money

That old saw about staying young at heart apparently works to improve your memory.

According to one study, older people who believe their age diminished their memory may be undermining their mental abilities. The study was done at North Carolina State University.

The researchers worked with about 100 adults in two groups in their 60s and over-70. Participants were asked to do a series of tasks involving arithmetic and memorization. The researchers told some of those tested that their age might affect the test results. The study found that members of this group did worse than those who weren't influenced by the testers.

What does aging really do to your brain?

We begin to lose brain cells slowly in our 20s. The body

also starts to make less brain chemicals. Aging may affect memory by changing the way the brain stores and retrieves information.

Your short-term and remote memories aren't usually affected by aging. But your recent memory may be affected. That's why you forget where you put your keys two hours ago.

The following are some techniques you can use to help you remember things:

- I'm listing this one first because it works every time for me. Put important items, such as your keys, in the same place every time. When I've lost my car keys, I've found them in the weirdest places.
- When you can't think of a word, go through the alphabet in your mind. When you get to

the first letter of the word, you might recall it.

- Jotting appointments and reminders on a calendar helps. Most cell phones have a calendar in them. I put everything I have to remember in my cell.

- Make lists for everything - shopping, chores, items to take when traveling.

- Rely on routines. If you associate lunch with taking your medicine, it will help you remember. Associations are important for remembering other things such as a route to a friend's house.

- When you are introduced to someone, repeat the person's name to yourself several times.

If you have questions, write to fred@healthygeezer.com.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE LEVERETT POLICE LOG Illegal Operations of Motor Vehicles

Thursday, 12/8

5:55 p.m. Assisted Sunderland police with a four car accident. MVA. Officer cleared at 7:10 p.m.

Monday, 12/19

10:30 a.m. Reported

restraining order violation.

Report unfounded; no violation.

Monday, 12/26

4 p.m.

sum-

monsed for operating a

unregistered vehicle. Vehicle towed, subject issued criminal motor vehicle summons for court.

Wednesday, 12/28

5:40 p.m. Alarm at a

Juggler Meadow Road.

motor vehicle with a suspended license, and operating an

unregistered vehicle.

Vehicle towed, subject issued criminal motor vehicle summons for court.

Wednesday, 12/28

5:40 p.m. Alarm at a

Juggler Meadow Road.

residence. All secure; alarm reset.

Thursday, 12/29

1:02 a.m. Arrested

for driving while intoxicated and speeding. Vehicle towed. held for bail.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ERVING POLICE LOG Criminal Applications; Illegal Possessions

Monday, 1/2

5:45 p.m. Criminal application issued to

for operating a motor vehicle with a suspended license or inspection sticker, and with an obscured number plate on Route 2.

Tuesday, 1/3

1:30 a.m. Arrest of

for marked lanes violations, minor in possession of alcohol, open container of alcohol, possession of class B drug,

cocaine, possession of class B prescription, and possession of fireworks. Civil citation also issued.

1:30 a.m. Criminal application issued to

for minor in possession and open container of alcohol.

1:50 p.m. Domestic disturbance reported at Pratt Street residence. Verbal only. Report taken.

2 p.m. Loose dog brought to station. Found on Route 2. Owner contacted and picked up same.

8:20 p.m. Arrested

for speeding, operating a vehicle with a revoked license, subsequent offense, and second offense of operating a vehicle under the influence of liquor, and driving to endanger on Route 2.

Wednesday, 1/4

4:10 p.m. Report of phone scam, fraud on Lillian's Way. Spoke with resident and confirmed it was a scam.

Thursday, 1/5

5:15 p.m. Report of suspicious male sitting in vehicle at West Main Street.

Searched area. Unable to locate same.

Friday, 1/6

6:30 a.m. Two car motor vehicle crash on Route 2 in Farley. No personal injury. Under investigation.

Saturday, 1/7

4:45 p.m. Arrested

for operating a motor vehicle with a suspended license and no inspection sticker on Route 2.

Sunday, 1/8

12:30 a.m. Report of unwanted subject at West Main Street. Subject transported to Franklin Medical Center.

WENDELL from page 7

Massachusetts Broadband Initiative is looking for a dry, out of the weather place in town where they can install a switching system as part of the effort to bring middle-mile high-speed fiber for internet connectivity to town. MBI needs an area about six feet square. He suggested an upstairs room at the fire station and highway garage.

Aldrich reported that an Orange Oil worker went to

clean the town hall furnaces, found a skunk curled up under the oil tank. and left the job unfinished.

Assessor Stephen Broll came in to report the assessors' office had no heat. When someone comes in and turns the heat up to work for the day, the heat comes on, brings the temperature up, then shuts off and will not come on again for the rest of the day.

ERVING from page 7

When the meeting was first convened on December 11th, French King Bowling Center operator Ralph Semb had asked whether the bylaw would affect his business, since the bowling center has occasionally rented its function room for private bachelor or bachelorette parties that sometimes include nude or nearly-nude dancers. At the earlier meeting, Semb said he has a general entertainment license and wondered whether it would be necessary to apply for another license under the

bylaw. Because this and other questions remained unanswered, the special town meeting was suspended until Monday night.

On January 9th, Semb was accompanied by his lawyer. After about an hour of debate, Semb said, "I move the question and I say, 'Yes' to the bylaw."

He added, "There's a football game on..." The meeting quickly agreed to take a vote and pass the amended bylaw.

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Ferry Meadow Farm - part XXII

San Jose, CA & Turners Falls 2017

BY ELOISE MICHAEL - I walk out into the hall and down the carpeted stairs to Kayley's sunny living room. Jason looks up at me from the couch. "Hey," he says. "Nice work. Thanks."

"It was no big deal," I say. Then I realize that's a lie. If I had not had to concentrate so hard just to keep awake in two places, I would have been scared to death.

"What do you think would've happened to me if I had gotten caught?" I ask as casually as I can.

He shrugs. "I try not to think about that kind of thing."

"Oh."

"I want us to leave now," he says.

"Right now?"

"Yeah. No one should notice anything at the bank. Not yet. But, just in case, if anyone is looking for you, the only place they should find you is at home in Massachusetts."

We get in the car as soon as I have showered and dressed. Jason has food for me to eat on the road. I am still surprised by how quickly he does things.

He stays in Turners Falls about ten minutes after dropping me off.

"I have to be somewhere," is all he says.

And then life goes back to normal. I do my work, and nothing seems to happen.

Now that it is summer, I dis-

cover a problem. One of the bodies is getting suntanned while the other, up only at night, is not.

I try to be really good about sunscreen.

The nighttime body is stronger and in better shape, since I have time at night to exercise. I am becoming two different people in subtle ways.

In summer, Turners Falls turns into one big garden. People grow vegetables every place that is not paved and gets some sunlight.

I pass tomatoes growing in the strip of land between the road and the sidewalk when I walk to town. For half of the year, at least, people have enough to eat.

Now I discover the vegetables I buy at the Farmers Market also come from Turners Falls. My favorite farm stand is Ferry Meadow Farm, mostly because one of the vendors at that booth

always talks to me.

Her name is Leah, and she tells me that Ferry Meadow, which is an actual farm, is where they raise the animals.

"It's easier to grow the vegetables here," she says, gesturing toward the many beds behind her. "Uses less gas. And we can save the farmland for animals and grains. They need the space."

Along with vegetables, they grow corn in town, for corn stoves, Leah tells me.

"We can grow it in the places you wouldn't want to use for food," she says, wrinkling her nose. "I think Dave and I," she points to a man across the market, "converted half the stoves in Turners to corn stoves."

The Day of Action happens on a Monday. It's the biggest one yet in the U.S., but the strikes in Europe are even bigger. It seems

like no one goes to work across the entire continent of Europe.

Here they have to cancel flights because there are no pilots or flight attendants. No one will unload the ships at the major ports. Protesters shut down the New York Stock Exchange, and that same day three of the banks, including Case Pearman, close down entirely for the morning while they scramble to get their computers back on line.

I get a three-hour paid vacation and spend the morning reading in my back yard, checking my phone frequently to see whether CP needs me back at work.

There are demonstrations happening in town. I think of joining them, but feel awkward about it, since I have a good job, and a car. I still have my house.

— Continued Next Issue

NEWS FROM FCHCC

Recent Scams Targeting Senior Citizens

BY ANNA VIADERO

MONTAGUE CITY - Scams targeting senior citizens and their finances are so prevalent they are being called "the crime of the 21st century." Seniors are prime targets because they have funds in their accounts, are often socially isolated, and usually are unwilling to report these crimes.

When someone calls or comes to your door asking for personal information, do not share it! Never give out personal information over the phone or in person to someone you do not know.

Get a phone number and say you will call back at a later date with a friend or family member at your side.

If someone you don't know calls and says there's been an emergency with a family member or if someone calls saying they are a family member in an emergency hang up and call another family member to verify the call.

Report any suspicious calls or home visits to your local police department.

The following scams are top on the list currently being perpetrated. Don't become a victim:

Circuit Breaker Tax Scam: You are not eligible for the Massachusetts Circuit Breaker Tax Credit if you are receiving a federal or state rent subsidy (like Section 8). You are also ineligible if your landlord does not pay property tax.

The unscrupulous tax preparers who participated in this scam asked for a payment to submit the fraudulent application, and some seniors received the credit without actually qualifying for it. Then the Department of Revenue notified those senior residents that the refund was obtained fraudulently and must be paid back.

Health Care/Health Insurance Fraud: Criminals pose as Medicare reps to get you to reveal personal info. This can happen on the phone, at your door or in a mobile clinic made to look legitimate.

Counterfeit Prescription Drugs: Mostly found on the internet. You may not be getting a medication at all. Use a trusted pharmacy or medication distributor.

Funeral and Cemetery Scams: Criminals will check obituaries

then contact and scam grieving family members saying the deceased had a debt that is due. Sometimes they claim to be the mortuary and create fake charges and bills. Funeral directors will insist a casket is needed for direct cremation, which is usually done with a cardboard casket.

Telemarketing: Calls for donations to charities, calls about a sick relative and calls saying a prize winning is waiting are frequent telemarketing scams. Put your phone number (cell and home) on the Do Not Call list www.donotcall.gov or 1 (888) 382-1222 from the phone which you'd like to add to the Do Not Call list.

Scammers have been calling people saying they'd like to help you sign up for the do not call list. This is also a scam: the Do Not Call list does not solicit people; you must call or go to the website to put yourself on the Do Not Call list.

Internet Fraud: Pop-up windows claiming to be fraud protection or the IRS are bogus. If you click on them you may download a virus or fake protection or in the case of the IRS, you

may give away personal info to a criminal.

Investment Schemes: Only work with a trusted investment professional. Do not fall into the trap of an online investment scheme.

Homeowners/Reverse Mortgage Scams: Reverse Mortgages are legitimate ways for seniors to stretch their fixed income, but only if you work with a trusted professional. Do your homework and consult with people you trust if you'd like to learn more about reverse mortgages.

Sweepstakes and Lottery Scams: Do not sign and deposit checks you receive from strangers in the mail. People can gain access to your account and remove funds.

If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is!

Grandparent Scam: Criminals posing as grandchildren will try to tug at your heartstrings. They will say they are in need of funds immediately. They may ask you to send money via Western Union or Moneygram which do not require IDs to collect. They will say "if you tell my parents I will get in a load of trouble." Hang up and check with other family members.

Unfortunately, many times

senior citizens are scammed by relatives and friends. If you or someone you know is being exploited, abused, or neglected contact Elder Protective Services at Franklin County Home Care: (413) 773-5555 or (978) 544-2259. After hours the Elder Abuse Hotline can be reached at 1 (800) 922-2275. For more information, go to: www.fchcc.org.

Anna Viadero is the publicity coordinator for the Franklin County Home Care Corporation.

TOWN OF ERVING Legal Notice

The Erving Board of Selectmen, as the Local Licensing Authority, will hold a Public Hearing on an application for a restaurant "consumed on the premises" liquor license for Wildcat Inn d/b/a Christina's Pizzeria & Tavern located at 20 French King Highway in Erving.

Monday, January 23rd, 2012
6:45 p.m.

Erving Town Hall
12 E. Main Street

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EVERY TUESDAY

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Craft Night*, 7 p.m.

EVERY THURSDAY

Between the Uprights, Turners Falls: *Acoustic open mic*, with Dan, Kip and Shultz from *Curly Fingers DuPree* host. 8:30 - 11:30 p.m.

NOW until JANUARY 29th

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: Artwork by Leonore Alaniz.

NOW until January 31st

Ursa Major Gallery, Shelburne Falls: *Paintings by Michael Katz*.

NOW until January 29th

Green Fields Market: Photography exhibition, *All Five Senses: The Open Air Market* by Daniel A. Brown.

NOW until February 29th

Wendell Free Library: Wendell resident *Christine Texiera*, presents *Asana*, oil on paper drawings, library hours: Tuesday 3 to 6 p.m.; Wednesday 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Saturday 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 13th to APRIL 1st
Gallery at Hallmark, Turners Falls: *Imitating Art*, a student photographic exhibition featuring attempts to photographically reproduce an original work of art. Open Friday thru Sunday, 1 to 5 p.m.



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THURSDAY, JANUARY 12th

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Larry Klein & Friends*, jazz, 7 p.m. Free.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Jay Snyder & Tilth*, Funky, Rock, Reggae, 8 - 10 p.m.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 13th and SATURDAY, JANUARY 14th

Memorial Hall Theater, Shelburne Falls: Pothole Pictures presents Werner Herzog's *Cave of Forgotten Dreams*, a documentary. We follow an expedition into the nearly inaccessible Chauvet Cave in France, home to some of the most ancient visual art. 7:30 p.m.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 13th

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Coffeehouse featuring Ray Mason*, 7 to 9 p.m.

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: *Glenn Roth*, fingerstyle guitarist, 8 p.m.

Arts Block Cafe, Greenfield: *Patty Carpenter*, with the Dysfunctional Family Jazz Band, 8 p.m.

Leverett Town Hall: The Leverett Peace Commission presents *Chris Hellman*, Senior Research Analyst at the National Priorities Project on *What Pentagon Spending Means to Your Community: What is Behind the Numbers?* The talk will be followed by a community discussion led by Chris & the Leverett Peace Commission on: *Building a Community Peace Budget in Leverett*. 7 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Nexus*, Eclectic Harmonic Rock, 9 to 11 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *48 Solutions*, John Murphy, Michael Graffius, rock, acoustic, 9:30 p.m.

Rt. 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: *Rock 201*, Classic Rock, 9:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 14th

Leverett Elementary School: *Malia Children's Home Fundraising Concert*. African song and dance to help two LES alumni raise funds for the Malia Children's Home, 5 to 9 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Lenny's Lounge*, 7 p.m. Free.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Richard Chase Group*, Acoustic originals, 9 to 11 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *The Equalites*, reggae, 9:30 p.m.

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: *M.R. Pouloupoulos*, 8 p.m.

Rt. 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: *Roogaroos*, Classic Rock, 9:30 p.m.

Wendell Town Hall: Full Moon Coffeehouse presents *Trailer Park*, 7:30 p.m.

Montague Bookmill: *TinyRadar's Bookmill Residency Series*, featuring, *Doolittle and the Raiders*, *Donny Dinero*, *Mail the Horse*, and *Graph*, 8 p.m.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 15th

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Sunday Locals Matinee with *Marlene Lavelle & Friends*, indie, folk, 6 p.m. Free.



Luke Mulholland Band will be at Mocha Maya's in Shelburne Falls on Saturday January 28th, 8 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Le Cheile*, an Irish session, 8 to 10 p.m.

Montague Bookmill: Free Films for the Frozen, *Hud*, 7 p.m.

MONDAY, JANUARY 16th
Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Bingo*, 8 p.m. Free.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 17th
Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Smith & Weeden*, *Last Good Tooth*, Moga, blues, rock and roll, 9 p.m. Free.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 18th
Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Quiz Nite with Quizmaster Alex*, 8 p.m.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 19th
Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Wood Comes from Trees and other fascinating revelations*. How much wood do we use? How do our local forests fit into the picture? Join Forester *Peter Grima* from DCR to learn about the consequences of our wood consumption, 7 - 8:30 p.m. Free.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Tommy Filiault & Friends*, Acoustic Rock, 8 to 10 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Peter Siegel and Friends*, blues/roots, 9 p.m.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 20th and 27th
SATURDAY, JANUARY 21st & 28th
Shea Theater, Turners Falls: Country

Players presents *Play On!* Matinee also on Sunday, January 29th.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 20th
Burrito Rojo, Turners Falls: *Chandler Travis*, *Three-O*, 8 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Josh Levangie & The Mud, Blood & Beer Band*, Singing Johnny Cash favorites, 9 to 11 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Diamond Stones*, *Mountain Interval*, indie, jam, rock, 9:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 21st
Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: *Marc Pinansky*, country, folk, melodramatic pop, 8 p.m.

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

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Rockit Queer with DJ Greg2000*, 9:30 p.m.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 22nd
Montague Bookmill: Free Films for the Frozen, *The Gleaners and I*, 7 p.m.

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

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

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 25th
Deja Brew, Wendell: *Harmaniac Brothers*, 8 to 10 p.m.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 26th
Deja Brew, Wendell: *The Side Street Band*, blues and rock, 8 to 10 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Ray Mason*, solo, 8 p.m. Free.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 27th
Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: *Ray Mason*, indie rock, 8 p.m.

Montague Grange: *Sam & Joe Concert*, 7 to 10 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *The Reprobate Blues Band*, 9 to 11 p.m.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 28th
Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: *Luke Mulholland Band*, classic blues rock. 8 p.m.

Montague Grange: *Gender free Contra Dance*, 6:30 to 10 p.m.

Memorial Hall Theater

POTHOLE PICTURES

Friday and Saturday
January 13th and 14th 7:30 p.m.
Cave of Forgotten Dreams
a documentary on the Chavet Cave in France. Directed by Werner Herzog. 2010. Color. G. 95 min.

Music 1/2 hour before movie:
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51 Bridge St., Shelburne Falls 625-2896

Wendell Free Library: Free movie, *Silent Running*, 7 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: The Larry Berger Band, Original, local, folk, country-rock, 9 to 11 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: John Grand and Grant Wicks, 9:30 p.m.



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FRI 1/13 9:30 FREE
48 Solutions / John Murphy / Michael Graffius (rock/acoustic)

SAT 1/14
7pm LENNY'S LOUNGE FREE
9:30 The Equalites (reggae) \$5

SUN 1/15 6pm FREE
SUNDAY LOCALS:
Marlene Lavelle & friends
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BUSINESS from page 12

Road and then back to Sheffield. For more information about how to participate, email to: michael-nelsonmba@aol.com or call: (413) 522-0712.

Lisa Davol, director of RiverCulture, previewed her plans for arts-related activity around the downtown in 2012, including, a Quick Response (QR) Code Project (for smart phone sophisticates) she described as “sort of a treasure hunt” for tourists and locals to explore interactive web-based photo galleries and descriptions of Turners Falls history and contemporary attractions. “QR codes will be placed around town in strategic locations,” such as plaques, bulletin boards, or incorporated into art or sculpture, and each code will lead the smart phone scanner to a web-based feature on the past or present of the village, putting the power of the internet behind the promotion of Power Town.

Davol said RiverCulture will also be working to transform the presently vacant former Greenfield Savings Bank building at 195 Avenue A into a haunted house for the month of October (will there be black cats curled up in the windows?) and then into a holiday artisan shop for November and December.

Other downtown storefront windows will be transformed by local artists in a holiday window decorating contest, to a lend a

more festive air to events like last year’s successful first run of “A Wonderful, Wonderful Night” discount shopping and extended hours on a weekend night in December.

RiverCulture will reprise the River of Lights Lantern Parade along the river at night, perhaps as the finale to the August block party. The Producers’ Series will continue with a call for artists to reimagine a downtown space, such as the live theater that took place last year in Food City supermarket. And artists will also be bidding to reimagine certain downtown crosswalks, in the contest portion of this year’s Feast for the Arts RiverCulture fundraiser, Davol said.

Former MBA president Michael ‘Mik’ Muller, of Montague Webworks, was not able to attend Tuesday’s meeting, but he promised the upcoming Mutton and Mead Medieval Festival at the Millers Falls Longbow and Pikestaff Club on Turners Falls Road in June will bring another huge crowd of Robin Hood buffs and re-enactors to town. The festival will be extended to two days this year, on June 23rd and 24th, to meet demand, and auditions will be held on the weekend of January 21st to the 23rd for actors interested in playing a part in the festival (go to: muttonandmead.com). Once again the festival will be a fundraiser for the Food Bank of

Western Massachusetts and the Montague Grange.

Local vendors who might want to be part of the shire’s marketplace should go to the website also; the deadline for vendor applications is February 1st.

Like a gravitational force, the Third Annual Soapbox Derby will be rolling into town on High Noon, on Sunday, September 16th, so dust off your blueprints and get your soapbox racers ready. Muller promised to make the event shorter this year, and to broadcast it live throughout the county on MCTV, Channel 17.

On that note, Muller said MCTV is waiting for the final go-ahead from the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation for the building formerly known as Cumberland Farms, on the corner of Avenue A and 2nd Street, to be turned over to the town. Once that happens, Muller said MCTV has the support of the Montague EDIC and town hall to move the cable access television station into that building, which will require large-scale renovations.

He hoped that could happen by spring, and that RiverCulture and the Montague Business Association could both find office space there. Then the building could function as more than just a cable access studio, but also as a welcome center for the town.



A River Runs Through It



Artist's rendering from Terry Marashlian of what the mill building will look like once the highly reflective recycled aluminum panels are installed this spring. The wind moving past the mounted panels will cause them to move and shimmer in a manner suggestive of the river flowing, Marashlian said.

BY DAVID DETMOLD TURNERS FALLS -

Northfield artist Terry Marashlian and his team of artists, Dan Trenholm, Paul Duga, and Heidi Schmidt, have been awarded a \$7,500 grant from the RiverScaping Project, a joint program of the European Union and the Five Colleges, exploring the relationship of towns and cities in the Valley to the Connecticut River. The grant will be used to mount an art installation dubbed “A River Runs Through It” on the canal side of Building #11 at the former Strathmore Paper Mill in Turners Falls.

The grant funding comes from the European Union and the Five Colleges; the site was selected with the assistance of the Turners Falls RiverCulture project and the town of Montague, which owns the empty mill complex.

Marashlian said, “The installation will consist of wind driven reflective panels that will be placed on the side of the building to form a ribbon that will reflect the river. The wind will move through them and create an idea of motion. The panels will be made out of salvaged lithograph plates of highly polished aluminum, recycled from salvage yards.”

Marashlian said he planned

to have the installation mounted by spring, and it would stay up for a couple of years, unless a buyer is found for the building in the meantime, in which case he would be willing to take the installation down early. He added that the installation would be mounted using rubber tipped compression clamps braced between the building’s vertical buttresses in such a way that no damage would be done to the structure’s brickwork.

Marashlian may be known to local residents for his Shadow Series installation of black netting along North Leverett Road in recent years, which referenced the former Joe Eberline place, one of the oldest buildings in that part of town, which burned in 1978, taking the life of Pierre Benoit.

“Sometimes we have memories of the past and then they become vague — is that a memory of a real event or a dream? The idealism of the 60s and youth are very fleeting,” the artist said, describing the theory behind this work.

In a similar way, the Connecticut River that once united towns up and down the Valley, and formed their engine of commerce, still connects us, more than as just a memory of the past, he said.



Michael Nelson talked about the 2012 Pumpkinfest at Tuesday’s meeting of the Montague Business Association at Burrito Rojo, as MBA coordinator Holly Givens, graphic designer Lynne Rudie, Stephan Smith of Rist Insurance and RiverCulture director Lisa Davol took note. More pumpkins, more opportunity for local vendors are in the offing.

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