



Annie To  
Open At  
TFHS

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Permanent  
Design for  
Food Systems

Page 7



Clocks Spring  
Forward This  
Sunday!

LAKE PLEASANT

MILLERS FALLS

MONTAGUE CENTER

MONTAGUE CITY

TURNERS FALLS

# The Montague Reporter

also serving Erving, Gill, Leverett and Wendell

YEAR 11 – NO. 21

EDITOR@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

75¢

MARCH 7, 2013

## No Consensus on School Regionalization

By DAVID DETMOLD

Over 80 people showed up to an informational forum on the possible regionalization of Leverett and Shutesbury elementary schools with the Amherst and Pelham regional school district on Thursday, Feb. 28, at the Leverett Elementary School. Judging by the questions and comments from the crowd, the proposal, which has the support of members of the selectboard, is still viewed skepti-

cally by some members of the general public, among them parents of children in the elementary school.

Tony Dinsmore, a father of elementary school students, who lives on Depot Road, said he was opposed to the regionalization plan, because, he said, “This strikes me as a plan that has been handed to us by the state, and already rejected by many parts of the state.” He said short term budget concerns may be leading the town of Leverett to trade away local control of its elementary school.

“I moved here from Amherst three years ago,” he added. “We’ll lose control if we join Amherst. I don’t believe our school will not be affected if we join Amherst. I don’t want to give up our local control for short term considerations.”

Julie Shively, a member of the selectboard and also of the regional school district planning board, said the board’s intent was to “protect the best of features of current schools and recognize their strengths,” in an era of declining student enrolment.

She said students entering grade 7 at the Amherst middle school would benefit from having a coordinated elementary curriculum aligned regionally with the upper school, and that the four towns would benefit from “economies of scale,” and from not having to file three voluminous sets of educational reports to the state each year, as they do now.

The current arrangement has Leverett and Shutesbury’s elementary schools organized under a centu-

ry old superintendency union with New Salem, Wendell and Erving, while Pelham and Amherst have an elementary school union of their own, and all four towns feed elementary students into the 7–12 Amherst-Pelham region.

Shively admitted the hard work of fashioning a regional agreement between the three smaller towns and Amherst still lies ahead, still she promised the audience, “We would not lose our small school. We would not lose our quality of education.”

And selectboard member Peter d’Errico said, “I think really what we’re talking about is our ability to control our school. It’s a myth. We’re part of a union now. To have such a complicated structure as we have now, we don’t really have a coherent administration.”

But Shutesbury school committee member Daniel Hayes challenged these assertions, saying, “Our elementary schools are unique,” and see REGIONALIZATION pg 5

**“We’ll lose control if we join Amherst... I don’t want to give up our local control for short-term considerations.”**  
—Tony Dinsmore

## Geologic View on Climate Science FOR OUR WARMING PLANET AND VALLEY



Julie Brigham-Grette of the UMass Department of Geosciences presented at GCC's Senior Symposium on Wednesday, Feb. 20.

By JONATHAN von RANSON

**GREENFIELD** – Two stick figures digitally projected on a screen last week humorously cleared up confusion about how science distinguishes weather from climate. A cartoon dog zigzagged on a leash ahead of its cartoon human, who, unlike the dog, was walking in a relatively straight line. The erratic dog represented weather, its less capricious

owner, climate.

“Climate,” said Julie Brigham-Grette of the University of Massachusetts Department of Geosciences, “is the statistical average of weather for three decades or more.”

Brigham-Grette is a climate-oriented researcher in arctic undersea sediments and a professor of geology with a specialty in Pioneer Valley’s geology. Her nearly two-hour pres-

entation, the latest in Greenfield Community College’s Senior Symposia, was fast-moving and at times global in perspective, at other times regional.

She touched on some lesser-known indicators of the planet’s rising temperature: glaciers now suddenly moving so fast they make the earth quake... and polar anomalies: “We have record colds being talked about” [often in the climate denial community], she said, “but what’s not reported is that the Arctic is running 10-15 degrees warmer in the winter.” More often mentioned: ice caps thinning... sea level rising about 3.1 mm per year... average global temperature up a little over 1°F... an increase of 4-11°F predicted for this century.

Brigham-Grette illustrated the predicted global warming consequences with computer models: Massachusetts with a climate by the middle of this century more like Delaware, South Carolina, or somewhere in between. Even with that warming, probably more total snow in winter and perhaps a little more summer rainfall.

She said carbon dioxide concentrations are the main cause of the shift. They’re up dramatically: 390 parts per million (ppm), versus 180-280 ppm over the last several hundred thousand years, which she called the climate’s normal “breathing range.”

Brigham-Grette teaches glacial-era geology at UMass. Much of it involves “varves,” layers of history in the form of lake sediment preserved in the ground beneath lakes, including ones like Lake Hitchcock, which is now completely dry land. That great body of water existed as

see CLIMATE page 4

## Grandfathers of Stone



EVA GIBAVIC PHOTO

Doug Harris, the Narragansett Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, refers to stone structures such as this one in Leverett as Prayers in Stone.

By DAVID DETMOLD

**LEVERETT** – The images flickered on the screen at the meeting room: stone chambers tucked away under tree roots or standing taller than a man in the deep woods, some with huge capstones that would not be easy for modern hydraulic equip-

ment to set in place. A crowd of nearly 50 gathered at the Leverett Library on Wednesday, Feb. 27 to hear Eva Gibavic talk about these mysterious stone formations that dot the landscape on Brushy Mountain, Dry Hill in Montague, and many other out-of-the-way locales in Franklin County.

As it turned out, Gibavic, a resident of Rattlesnake Gutter whose mother first introduced her to these formations when she was just a girl of eight, did little talking, preferring to let Smithsonian researcher Ted Timreck’s film, *Hidden Landscape: The Great Falls, Discovery, Destruction and Preservation in*

a Massachusetts Town do most of the talking for her.

Occasionally, locals interviewed in that hour and a half long feature would stand up in the audience and add salient details. Will Hunting talked briefly about the unusual stone wall, which begins on the flat land in back of his family’s home near the Wendell town line on East Chestnut Hill Road in Montague, and continues in a straight line at a higher elevation on an escarpment just above heading, seemingly, nowhere, and ending just as suddenly as it began. His family had always called this site the Indian Fort.

Hunting told the audience, “My grandmother told the story of how when she was little, a tribe traveling from east to west stopped at this stone structure and asked permission to camp for the night. One young woman put her baby on a board and hung it from a tree.”

But she accidentally hung the baby upside down, and the child died. The mother killed herself in grief. Hunting said mother and child are buried together in one grave in a far corner of

see STONE page 6

## Broadband High Speed Internet is Coming to Leverett

By PETER D’ERRICO

On March 5, the Leverett broadband committee recommended to the Leverett selectboard that G4S be awarded the contract to build and maintain a fiber optic network, as specified in the Information for Bid (IFB) issued by the town on Jan. 16. The selectboard approved the recommendation unanimously.

The Town received 8 IFB responses by the Feb. 22 deadline. The Committee proceeded to review the bids under Massachusetts law: MGL c.30, s.39M, as amended.

The statute requires the town to award the contract to the “lowest responsible and eligible bidder,” defined as “the bidder whose bid is the lowest of those bidders who, in the opinion of the Town, is ready, willing and able to comply with all requirements of the Invitation for Bid and demonstrably possesses the skill, ability and integrity necessary for the faithful performance of the work based on the determination of past performance and

financial soundness.”

The Committee started with the lowest bid and reviewed each bid in accordance with the statute. The first and second bids were both found to be incomplete in several respects. Most significant were the failure of these two bidders to supply past performance qualification documentation as required by the Invitation for Bid.

The committee found that the third-lowest bidder, G4S, did meet all requirements of the Invitation for Bid and the required documentation demonstrated the company’s past performance and financial soundness. The committee thus determined that G4S submitted the lowest bid that met the requirements for a responsible and eligible bidder.

The award of the construction contract marks a significant milestone in the Leverett Broadband project. Preparatory activity to construction is expected to start in April 2013 with completion and activation of the fiber network by the end of 2014.

PET OF THE WEEK

Queen of Your Heart



Isis

Hi, my name is Isis. Did you know that my name in Egyptian means “throne?” Can I be the queen of your heart? I love all people, and I enjoy being pet anywhere! If you pick me up, I will purr for you! Will you take me home and treat me like royalty?

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

NEW SALEM PUBLIC LIBRARY

Pajama Story Time

Heleen Cardinaux will present “Fine Feathered Friends” from 6 to 7 p.m. on Thursday, Mar. 14 at the New Salem Public Library, on 23 South Main Street in New Salem.

Enjoy stories and songs! Have a light snack. Make a craft project. Take home a free book. Spend time with family and friends. Most appropriate for children 1-8 years of age.

For info contact Community Network for Children at (978) 544-5157 or budine@erving.com.

This program is supported in part by a grant from the MA Department of Early Education and Care, Coordinated Family and Community Engagement Grant through the Union 28 Community Network for Children Program.

RECYCLE

PAPER!

Week of March 11th in Montague

more info? call: 863-2054

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Call us or contact subscriptions@montaguereporter.org with any questions.

ERVING PUBLIC LIBRARY FAIR Storytelling Program

On Saturdays, March 9, 23 and April 6 from 11 a.m. to 12:30, the Erving library will host Mass Humanities’ FAIR program. What better time than the dull days of March to spark your child’s imagination?

FAIR unites families through books, reflection, and time together. Each 90-minute session includes an engaging interactive presentation by a professional storyteller, followed by a brief, lively introduction to some aspect of library services, and concludes with socializing over light refreshments. John Porcino is the lead storyteller. Open to all children in grades 1 through 6 and an accompanying adult.

Recent studies show that contemplative time is important in forming thoughtful, empathic, and engaged individuals. Expressive storytelling introduces the rewards

of exploring ideas, encourages parents to read to children at home and to make regular library visits.

Mass Humanities selects the reading material in consultation with children’s book experts based on three criteria: artistic excellence and narrative appeal; cultural traditions; and stories that explore character-building concepts such as courage, fairness, and persistence.

Space is limited. Advance registration required. To pre-register, call Barbara Friedman at the Erving Public Library at (413) 423-3348 or ervinglibrary@cwmmars.org.

Mass Humanities promotes the understanding of contemporary issues, a sense of common purpose, and civic life. Mass Humanities is a private, non-profit, educational organization supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

Montague Commune History: Author Reading and Book Giveaway

Author Tom Fels will give a reading from his book, *Buying the Farm: Peace and War on a Sixties Commune*, at 2 p.m. on Sunday, March 10 at the Erving Public Library.

Recently published, *Buying the Farm: Peace and War on a Sixties Commune* by Tom Fels, is a history of the Montague Farm from its origins in 1968 to its transformation to a

Buddhist peace center in 2002.

A limited number of free copies of the book will be available at the Library. This free program is sponsored by the Friends of the Erving Public Library.

There will be a book discussion held at the Erving Senior Community Center on Thursday evening, April 4, at 7 p.m. Refreshments will be served.

JESSICA LARKIN ILLUSTRATION

By FRED CICETTI

Q. I’m 68. Should I get the shingles vaccine?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) says adults 60 and older with normal immune systems should get the shingles vaccine. Shingles is a painful skin disease caused by the chickenpox virus awakening from a dormant state to attack the body again. Anyone who has had chicken-pox can get shingles. The virus that causes chickenpox and shingles remains in the body for life. It stays inactive until a period when immunity is down. And, when you’re older, your defenses ain’t what they used to be. Half of all Americans will get shingles by the time they are 80. Shingles occurs in people of all ages, but it is most common in people between 60 and 80. Each year, about 600,000 Americans are diagnosed with shingles. Some people report fever and weakness when the disease starts.

THE HEALTHY GEEZER Advice on Getting the Shingles Vaccine

Within two to three days, a red, blotchy rash develops. The rash erupts into small blisters that look like chickenpox. It’s very painful.

The inactive virus rests in nerve cells near the spine. When it reactivates, it follows a single nerve path to the skin. The shingles rash helps with diagnosis; the rash erupts in a belt-like pattern on only one side of the body, or it appears on one side of the face. It usually begins as a patch of red dots that become blisters.

The disease’s name comes from the Latin word cingulum, which means ‘belt.’ The virus that causes shingles is varicella-zoster, which combines the Latin word for little pox with the Greek word for girdle. In Italy, shingles is often called St. Anthony’s Fire.

If you have had chickenpox, shingles is not contagious. If you have never had chickenpox, you can catch the virus from contact with the fluid in shingles blisters. However, you will not get shingles, but might get chickenpox.

The pain of shingles can be severe. If it is strong and lasts for months or years, it is called postherpetic neuralgia. Persistent pain is a common symptom in people over 60. However, most victims of shingles overcome their symptoms in about a month. And the odds are against



15 year old Franklin County Tech School sophomore Brandon Tarbox, of Wendell, finished in first place in a computer programming competition at the Business Professionals of America State Leadership Conference, held this weekend in Framingham. He had 90 minutes to create a computer program based on a payroll system that included weekly pay, bonuses, taxes, and insurance. As a result of his first-place finish, Tarbox will compete in the BPA finals at the 2013 National Leadership Conference in Orlando, Florida on May 8-12. Over 400 students from 16 schools around the Commonwealth participated in the event. Congrats Brandon!

MONTAGUE CENTER LIBRARY Music and Movement

The weekly Music and Movement series with Tom Carroll and Laurie Davidson is being held at the Montague Center Library on Thursdays at 10 a.m. during March - June.

Young children of all ages and

their parents or caregivers are invited to the free programs. Registration is not required.

The series is supported by special funding from the Town of Montague and the CFCE grant. For more information, call (413) 863-3214.

Great Falls Middle School

Students of the Week

Grade 6

Andy Craver

Hunter Sanders

Grade 8

Patrick Salls

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SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES - MARCH 11TH TO MARCH 15TH

GILL - MONTAGUE  
Gill/Montague Senior Center, 62 Fifth Street, Turners Falls, is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.  
Council on Aging Director is Roberta Potter.  
Congregate meals are served Tuesday through Thursday at Noon. The Meal Site Manager is Kerry Togneri. Meal reservations must be made one day in advance by 11 a.m.  
All fitness classes are supported by a grant from the Executive Office of Elder Affairs. Voluntary donations are accepted.  
For more information, to make meal reservations, or to sign up for programs, call (413) 863-9357. Leave a voice message if the center is not open.

Monday 3/11  
9 a.m. Foot Clinic by Appointment  
10:10 a.m. Aerobics  
10:45 a.m. Chair Exercise  
AARP Tax Prep by Appointment  
1 p.m. Knitting Circle  
Tuesday: 3/12  
9:30 a.m. Chair Yoga  
1 p.m. Painting Class  
Wednesday: 3/13  
9 a.m. Foot Clinic by Appointment  
10 a.m. Aerobics

11:15 a.m. Friends Meeting  
12:45 p.m. Bingo  
Thursday: 3/14  
9 a.m. Tai Chi  
10 a.m. Coffee & Conversation  
1 p.m. Pitch  
Friday: 3/15  
10 a.m. Aerobics  
10:45 a.m. Chair Exercise  
1 p.m. Writing Group

ERVING  
Erving Senior Center, 1 Care Drive, Erving, is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. for activities and congregate meals.  
Lunch is at 11:30 a.m., with reservations required 24 hours in advance. Call Mealsite Manager Rebecca Meuse at (413) 423-3308, for meal information and reservations.  
For information, call Polly Kiely, Senior Center Director, at (413) 423-3649. Transportation can be provided for meals, shopping, or medical necessity. Call the Center to confirm activities, schedule a ride, or find out when is the next blood pressure clinic.  
Monday, 3/11  
9 a.m. Tai Chi  
10 a.m. Osteo Exercise

12 p.m. Quilting  
Tuesday, 3/12  
8:45 a.m. Chair Aerobics  
9:30 a.m. C.O.A.Meeting  
12:30 p.m. Painting  
Wednesday, 3/13  
8:45 a.m. Line Dancing  
10 a.m. Chair Yoga  
12 p.m. Bingo  
Thursday, 3/14  
8:45 a.m. Aerobics  
10 a.m. Posture Perfect  
12 p.m. Cards  
Friday, 3/15  
9 a.m. Bowling  
9:30 a.m. Sit and knit  
11:30 a.m. St. Patrick’s Day Lunch

LEVERETT  
For information, contact the Leverett COA at (413) 548-1022, ext. 5, or coa@leverett.ma.us.  
Take-It-Easy Chair Yoga – Wednesdays at 10 a.m. at the Town Hall. Drop-in \$4 (first class free).  
Senior Lunch – Fridays at noon. Call (413) 367-2694 by Wednesday for a reservation.  
WENDELL  
Wendell Senior Center is at 2 Lockes Village Road. Call Nancy Spittle, (978) 544-6760, for hours and upcoming programs. Call the Center for a ride.



JESSICA LARKIN ILLUSTRATION

## Local Briefs

Compiled By DON CLEGG

Come see *Annie*, a production by Great Falls Middle School and Turners Falls High School. A great show with some wonderful singing, dancing and acting by TFHS and GFMS students, directed by Michael Bradley. Performances are on Friday & Saturday, Mar. 8 & 9 at 7 p.m., and Sunday, Mar. 10 at 1 p.m., in the TFHS auditorium.

Winterberry Farm, at 21 Teawaddle Hill Road in Leverett, is holding their annual wool harvest festival, “**Shearing Day**,” on Saturday, Mar. 9. Thirty sheep are to be sheared this year, since there have been no coyote losses. Enjoy great food, music, and gorgeous wool in many forms, along with fiber and herding demos. Visit the farm residents: sheep, angora rabbits, goats, poultry and even Sam the llama.

The event is free, though contributions to the farm scholarship fund will be cheerfully accepted.

Arrive before noon to see the actual shearing or anytime between 9:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. for food, fiber and general fun.

The Music Departments of Gill Elementary, Montague Elementary, Great Falls Middle School, and Turners Falls High School will be coming together for a **district-wide concert** on Thursday, Mar. 14, starting at 7 p.m. in the Turners Falls High School Auditorium. The free concert, *Cover the World with Love*, will include performances by the bands and choruses of those departments.

Works by “**The Painters of Greenfield Community College**” are on display through Mar. 31 at the Great Falls Discovery Center in Turners Falls. Who knew GCC had a core of such talented painters? This show of ten artists might just inspire you to visit the art department and enroll in a class for yourself.

Join an Artists’ Reception on Friday, Mar. 15, from 5 to 7 p.m.

Winter hours for the GFDC are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays.

The last 2013 **Greenfield Winter Farmers Market** is scheduled for Saturday, March 16, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Greenfield High School, 1 Lenox Avenue. Shop for fresh local produce, meat, cheese, eggs, pickles, honey, syrup, apples, and more. Stick around for a hot coffee and music from Co-op Jazz.

The **RISE AmeriCorps program** is looking for new partners interested in hosting a dedicated, inspired young leader for 10 months of service at a school or youth-serving agency. RISE is accepting applications now through April 5 for the 2014 term, which runs August 22, 2013 to June 23, 2014.

To request a site partner application or for more information, contact: Matt Ashby, RISE AmeriCorps Director at [ameri-corps@dialself.org](mailto:ameri-corps@dialself.org), or (413) 774-7054 x 106.

RISE AmeriCorps is a program of DIAL/SELF Youth & Community Services, which is funded, in part, by the Massachusetts Service Alliance and community stakeholders.

Send local briefs to [editor@montaguereporter.org](mailto:editor@montaguereporter.org).

## Una Jensen Tour Kickoff at Burrito Rojo

By OREN CLARK

**TURNERS FALLS** – Una Jensen has the “Wow Factor” going. Oh, yeah, she’s that good! Shelburne Falls native Jensen, a twice-crowned winner of the Valley Idol Jr. competitions, will be embarking on a Southern tour with her band. The tour will include a couple of nights performing on the coveted stages of The House Of Blues in Houston and Dallas, TX.

This Saturday night, Mar. 9 at 6 p.m., she and the band will perform a “kick off” show at Burrito Rojo in downtown Turners Falls.

In a recent interview with Una, I discovered that when she was eight her father, Enoch Jensen, gave her a guitar. In a very short period of time, she was writing, composing, and

singing her heart out. Teaming with family members and musician friends, Justin Fleuriel, Jeff Demers and Aaron Cappuci, a solid band evolved.

In 2011, they went into a recording studio and produced the CD *This Is How You Play The Game*.

Upon receiving a copy, and listening to the first song “I Can Tell”, I uttered to myself, “you have got to be kidding me!” She’s that good. Their sound fuses pop, rock, blues and soul.

There will be two opening acts prior to the main event. This kick-off will be a fund raiser for food and gas for the tour. Come and enjoy the fun, enjoy the music, a burrito, or nachos, and the wide selection of beer, and drinks.

Visit [UnaJensen.com](http://UnaJensen.com) for info.

## 2013 Montague Dog Licenses

Montague dog licenses are now available at the Town Clerk’s Office. All dogs 6 months and older must be licensed and tagged each year.

A license for a neutered or spayed dog is \$5. A license for an unaltered dog is \$10.

A \$20 late fee will be applied after May 31.

The clerk’s office requires proof of rabies vaccination and also requires proof of spaying or neutering, unless already previously provided.

License renewals may be obtained through the town’s website, [www.montague.net](http://www.montague.net) (only if your dog’s rabies vaccination used for last year’s registration has not yet expired).

If you no longer have your dog, inform the town clerk by calling (413) 863-3200 ext. 203.

The Town Clerk’s Office is open Monday, Tuesday and Thursday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and Wednesdays to 6:30 p.m. Town Hall is closed on Fridays.

## Forum Held on Future of Baystate Franklin Medical Center

By GLORIA KEGELES

**GREENFIELD** – A public forum was held on Wednesday, March 6 at the Greenfield High School to discuss the impact of the erosion of services at Baystate Franklin Medical Center (BFMC), and to share ideas and strategies to ensure BFMC remains a community hospital able to provide a full range of services close to home.

In 1986 Baystate took over Franklin Medical Center, which was founded in 1895 and served tens of thousands of Franklin County residents as a stand-alone hospital. Initially, affiliation with a major health system, with a teaching hospital at its core, was a positive development for BFMC. But over the last decade, Baystate began cutting services at BFMC, and has intensified its outsourcing of patient care to Springfield, nearly 40 miles south of Greenfield. These cuts include the elimination of pediatric and home care services, reduced lab, urology and cardiovascular services, and cuts in the direct care staff.

Franklin County has been identified by the U.S. Department of

Health and Human Services as “Medically Underserved.” Factors contributing to such designation include significant numbers of elderly living below the poverty line, the infant mortality rate, the number of primary care physicians per 1,000 residents, and various barriers to accessing medical care.

Despite this designation and Baystate’s own acknowledgment that “persons die of cancer and cardiovascular disease prematurely in the community at a higher rate than the rest of the state,” it has cut cardiovascular services. Baystate has identified the elderly as a vulnerable population, but has reduced urology services and eliminated its visiting nurse program.

One of the most notable deficiencies is pediatric services. Baystate, in its 2011 *Community Benefits Report*, stated that the high poverty rate and low population make it challenging for residents to easily access “support services... like transportation, education and job training, child care, emergency services, and health and mental health care.”

One BFMC nurse in attendance spoke about a constant squeeze by management to provide patient care

as well as finish documentation within her allotted shift, and that Franklin is fortunate to have the power of the union behind the nurses to help with such issues.

A community member of the BFMC ethics service spoke about an article published in The Recorder just prior to this meeting, claiming that BFMC has a vascular lab. She felt such claim was disingenuous. She said she called about the lab and was told there was no lab, but only one staff person who works for a few hours once a week.

Attendees wanted to remind management that ‘we are people, not consumers,’ and that cost control shouldn’t be on the backs of working people. Some attendees said that we are the only industrialized country that incentivizes illness rather than health.

Dr. Bill Boyle, retired doctor and a member of the Greenfield Board of Health, pointed out that at the time of the merger, Baystate guaranteed that Franklin Medical Center would have at least three trustees on Baystate’s board, would always have an emergency room, a medical/surgical floor, and obstetrics. Other attendees rec-

ommended that the original contract be located to check which guarantees were included and that they are in place.

Franklin County Sheriff Chris Donelan recommended enlisting the help of legislators to ensure community health care, not corporate health care. He said communication between the nurses and Baystate should be greatly increased. He saw a great need for mental health and substance abuse care in this county because these services are in crisis.

Attendees suggested that towns served by BFMC present resolutions

to their selectboards stating a desire for a full-service community hospital. Local Boards of Health were urged to join the discussion.

It was suggested that all our representatives, local state and federal, be invited to a future community meeting.

Attendees saluted the community for standing up to the system, pointing out that our community could serve as a model across the country in this respect.

For more information, contact Jim Gander of the Massachusetts Nurses Association at [jgander@mnarn.org](mailto:jgander@mnarn.org).

The Montague Congregational Church

**Meatloaf Supper**

Saturday, March 16th 5:30 p.m.

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# The Montague Reporter

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GUEST OP-ED

Further Questions about School Regionalization

By RAY DIDONATO

Regarding recent discussions about the potential regionalization of Shutesbury and Leverett with Amherst Regional Public Schools, Jeff Singleton and Julia Shively have each offered pros and cons. Shively offered four major pros of regionalization: the formation of a magnet school; expansion of shared positions for "specials"; savings through streamlined services; and static administrative costs. She also responded to concerns raised by Singleton about the clarity of the school budget and that local programs unique to schools would be cut.

I offer a perspective based on Wendell's recent discussions of a hybrid region within the Mahar regional school district, which ultimately culminated in a decisive "Nay" at last year's Wendell Town Meeting.

From a financial point of view, regionalization may offer some immediate cost savings to Leverett, the most obvious being state transportation funding. These funds alone were a major impetus in Mahar discussions, since Orange and Petersham, in an elementary region, would receive similar funds.

However, the analysis of our local representatives showed that, while transportation funds and consolidation of some services offered a short term gain, savings would dwindle over the long term due partially to the need to raise teacher salaries across the district and to raise the various schools to level performance.

Shively brought up the "real possibility for the creation of a magnet school," where "innovative education techniques could be tried." This strikes me as code for an "innovation school." An innovation school is possible, either in the context of a region or even within Union 28 (U28), because it can be implemented in an existing school, such as Leverett Elementary. However, it requires significant planning and resource dedication.

The concept was brought up by a Leverett rep when U28 discussed Leverett's regionalization study. My impression was that the primary motivation was to find a way for Leverett to maintain its school's complete curricular autonomy, despite being in a region. In other words, Leverett officials want to have their cake and eat it too.

Leverett seems to desire autonomy in their education system, which they currently enjoy in U28, but with minimal shared costs with their education partner towns. This despite the fact that many of the innovative approaches Leverett has undertaken are enabled by its ability to determine its own budget, while sharing only administrative services with partner towns. How do Leverett officials plan to maintain an "innovation school" within the greater Amherst region? The term is tossed out with little analy-

sis.

I personally think it is an unlikely scenario, at least in the way I believe Leverett envisions it, which would be as its own independent island within the Amherst region.

And why would a region, over a union, facilitate a Leverett innovation school?

Imagine a regional school committee, consisting of Leverett, Shutesbury, Amherst and Pelham, with Leverett not in the majority, deciding to fund a Leverett innovation school in an environment where proposals are competing for dwindling dollars. Will Leverett decide the curriculum and dollars for the school? Probably not.

A conclusion Wendell found in its analysis, was that finite funds dispersed by a regional committee would not likely result in allocation of resources to fund the high level of academics we currently enjoy.

And why do we enjoy such academics? Within U28 we retain our own school committee, which sets the budget for Swift River. There is little way around the fact Amherst would have a large voice in setting budget priorities, and that Leverett would have a small voice in the other direction.

Leverett currently retains its own school committee, which brainstorms innovative new projects. The greenhouse and cafeteria in Leverett are examples. These programs were partially enabled by the U28 structure, where Leverett's own school committee undertook these projects. It is questionable whether such projects would emerge from a regional school committee, led by Amherst.

Shively also expresses the option to have shared "specials," such as art and music. She should visit the Swift River school. We have art and music programs. They are our own, and they are possible within the context of U28. It is simply a matter of budget priority for the community, and support from local boards like the selectboard.

Shively raised 'curriculum alignment.' If by that she means a single regional committee aligning the curriculum of all regional schools, Amherst regionalization will accomplish that. But we have found in our analysis locally of U28 student performance at the middle and high school levels that our students perform on par if not above their middle and high school peers.

Interesting note: the RSDPB studying Amherst regionalization did not examine student outcomes in middle and high school.

The regionalization push also denies important ties between U28 towns. Leverett and Shutesbury enjoy community ties with Amherst, but they also enjoy strong ties with their neighboring U28 towns. I am reminded of this when I see my Shutesbury or Leverett neighbors at Swift River Soccer, or when I think of the U28 Community Network for Children that sponsors programs where parents and their young children meet



Warm and Shining at Swift River School



The Swift River Elementary kindergarten class shows off Hunter's handmade scarves.

By KATIE NOLAN

WENDELL – Who doesn't love a handmade scarf? Swift River Elementary principal Sheila Hunter made scarves for each staff member and student at the school.

The idea for Hunter's "Be Warm" initiative began in mid-December when she was watching the Swift River School chorus practice for its winter concert. Hunter thought it would look great if the entire chorus wore matching scarves during the performance, and she decided to make a fleece scarf for each singer.

Several days later, on Dec. 14, came the news of the Sandy Hook Elementary School killings. "It felt

so personal, so close to home," Hunter said. Over the next weekend, Hunter made scarves by cutting fleece material in three designs (red with white dots, green with white dots, and a multi-color print on white) for the entire school staff. That Monday morning, each staff member's mailbox had a scarf, a flashlight – useful in case the school needed to go on lockdown – and a note from Hunter saying, "Be Warm. Shine your light." The phrase "Be Warm" was Hunter's playful addition to the Swift River School motto: "Be Safe. Be Kind. Be Responsible."

Teachers and staff wore their scarves that Monday, and students commented on how much they liked

them. This gave Hunter another idea – a scarf for each student. She made over 130 scarves in the three fleece designs. With the help of a second grade student, she distributed the scarves to each classroom on the day of the winter concert.

"Some of the students love their scarves – and still wear them," said school secretary Christine Heard. "For some of the kids, they were just delighted that the principal had given them a present."

Music teacher Ed Hines said he had some apprehension about how the children, parents, and staff would react to an elementary school concert only a week after the Sandy Hook tragedy, but felt, "my job is to get people to a positive place through music."

On Dec. 21, during the winter concert, the chorus, staff, and other students were wearing their "Be Warm" scarves. For the national moment of silence for Sandy Hook victims observed on that day, rather than silence, the chorus sang a special song, "Circle of Peace" – "children's voices rising to the heavens" according to Hunter. As Hines said, with the music and the "Be Warm" scarves, it was possible to "take a moment like that and convert it to something positive."

CLIMATE from page 1

the Laurentide Ice Sheet – the one that covered New England and a number of states to our west – which melted and retreated. It covered the lowlands of the Connecticut River Valley all the way to the Canadian border.

A core sample of its silt and sand deposits drilled by Brigham-Grete and her students in a field at UMass Amherst led to a widely reported breakthrough: a graduate student of hers found that its varves correlated closely with El Ni o patterns in the southern Pacific.

El Ni o is a band of anomalously warm ocean water temperatures that occasionally develops off the western coast of South America and can cause climatic changes across the Pacific Ocean. "El Ni o has thus

been established to affect the warmth and wetness of New England weather," Brigham-Grete said. "It connects us to the South Pacific!"

These connections are a reminder of the fact of interrelatedness – not just geophysical but also social, in her view. "When things happen to other people," she said, "they happen to us, too."

She was asked about positive feedback loops – dangerous spirals, basically, where an effect becomes a cause of a worsening of the same effect. "Things are accelerating," she said. Ominously, though methane is being released now from melting permafrost, "You don't see methane in ice cores from the last interglacial period – though it's transient and might not show up – and you don't

see any carbon dioxide rise like this one anywhere."

A questioner asked whether we could have heat waves here like the three weeks of 109  temperatures that happened a few years ago in Europe, where tens of thousands of people died. "There's a high chance," she answered. "They had to create new maps with new colors for the heat experienced in Australia recently."

"But we're clever," she added. "My church put solar panels on its roof. Things like those get cheaper – my first calculator could add, subtract, divide... and it cost \$100!"

"This is no doomsday scenario," she reassured her large audience, "we just need to learn how we're going to build a more resilient world."



Ray DiDonato is a former member of the Wendell School Committee and a parent of school-aged children.

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up. Such programs knit our communities together.

At the end of the day, the fate of Leverett Elementary will be determined locally. Will Leverett invest dollars in education necessary to enable the programs it desires? Will Leverett, through its selectboard in particular, work collaboratively with its education partners, whether at the U28 or Amherst regional level?

Leverett is in a position now to chart its course, and exploration is an excellent exercise. I believe Leverett would be able to flourish best within the context of its own school committee, supported by U28. This, at least, is what Wendell found in our analysis of a Mahar region.

Shively asked "If this [regional-

ization] is such a bad idea, why do we repeatedly consider it?"

The bigger question is, if regionalization is such a good idea, why do towns across the county continually reject it?

## U.S. Casualties in Afghanistan as of 3/5/13

Wounded: 17,674

Deaths: 2,178

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### Montague Reporter

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## Montague Town Meeting Member Openings

Consider running for town meeting member and have a voice in how our town is run. It is very easy to become a town meeting member. Nomination papers can be obtained from the Town Clerk's Office. Only 10 signatures from registered voters that live in your "home" precinct are required to earn a place on the ballot and your own signature counts! The Annual Town Meeting meets every first Saturday in May. Usually, there is a Special Town Meeting in the spring and the fall. Open seats are available for

Montague Town Meeting Members for the May 20 annual town election. Seats available are as follows:

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- Precinct Two:*  
One 3-year seat open
- Precinct Three:*  
One 3-year seat open  
Three 1-year seats open
- Precinct Four:*  
One 3-year seat open
- Precinct Five:*  
Three 3-year seats open

*Precinct Six:*  
Five 3-year seats open  
Two 1-year seats open

The deadline to obtain papers is Thursday, March 28 by 5 p.m. and all nomination papers must be returned to the Town Clerk's Office by Monday, April 1 by 5 p.m. For more information, call the Town Clerk's Office at (413) 863-3200, (ext 203). Office hours are Monday, Tuesday and Thursday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and on Wednesday to 6:30 p.m. Town Hall is closed on Fridays.

**REGIONALIZATION** from pg 1 through local school committees, which set both policy and budgets, the towns are able to insure they remain that way.

But, if Shutesbury and Leverett cast their lot with Amherst, which is experiencing such a deficit in their school budget even after the recent closing of one of their elementary schools that plans are in the works to eliminate 21 elementary staff positions, and 21 upper school positions in the Amherst region's FY'14 budget, Hayes said, "Parity will be demanded. And parity means all elementary schools will be the same."

He added, "My concern is Amherst is not a sustainable system. Their next decision will be closing a school. Let that decision be up to the townspeople, not a regional committee, where input will be minimal for each of the smaller towns."

Shively countered by saying Amherst-Pelham superintendent Maria Geryk is committed to maintaining programs that work in the local schools, like Leverett's parent initiated greenhouse program, and the popular Adventure program.

Hayes interrupted her by pointing to the history of turnover among recent superintendents at Amherst-Pelham, and asked whether the next regional superintendent would be as committed to maintaining the unique quality of Leverett's elementary school education.

Wesley Goscenski, who said he was a fifth-generation resident of Leverett, said more than just the sustainability of the town's elementary school is at issue. "There is a reason why our population is aging. We make it really hard for people to build here."

He suggested the absence of affordable housing was having a direct impact on the decline of the school age population in Leverett, and he said if the town cedes local control to a region dominated by Amherst, the larger town could make a decision to bus Leverett's students and close the Leverett school.

Based on FY'13 numbers, consultants hired by the regional planning board reported in February that the four towns stood to realize savings in a consolidated region, with Leverett likely to save the most, up to \$487,446 in the first year.

The savings would be realized mainly through one time regionalization incentive grants from the state, and from ongoing regional

transportation aid. The elimination of Union 28 (U28) administrative costs would be more than offset by the increases needed to bring teacher salaries in Leverett and Shutesbury up to par with salaries and benefits in Amherst-Pelham.

But Shively said, "We would try to spread the savings more evenly," among the four towns, "so we don't have winners and losers," meaning Leverett would see reduced savings from what the consultant forecast.

And Swift River School principal Sheila Hunter, a former principal of Leverett Elementary School, said in her experience, the state had never made good on its commitment to fully fund regional transportation aid.

**“Really what we’re talking about is our ability to control our school. It's a myth. We’re part of a union now.”**

**– Peter d’Errico, Leverett Selectboard**

She added she was confident that LES principal Anne Ross "knows where every single penny goes in Leverett Elementary."

She did not express the same confidence in the ability of the Amherst-Pelham superintendent to manage the revenues for the smaller town schools equitably within a larger Amherst region.

Ross, while allowing that the educational benefits of regionalization "speak for themselves," also said, "It is interesting to me that the taxpayers of this town pay 83 percent of the cost of running this elementary school. Where will you get the most value for your money?"

"It is important to remember that in being the taxpayers who support the school, you do have some influence on running the school. But once you give your money in a lump sum to the region, you lose the ability to influence your own school."

Shively insisted, "What we are looking for is streamlined administration. No one is looking to change anything about the quality of education."

She and other planning board members spoke about the ability of a consolidated region to smooth out revenue shortfalls in any member town, by drawing on the united fiscal strength of a four town region.

Former school committee chair Farshid Hajir said, "When you think about what you want for your child's education, you think about a K-12 system, not just through the sixth grade. Right now, [in the Amherst-Pelham region] we have one member on a nine member regional committee, and I don't think we feel that our educational and financial needs are being respected."

He said the money that the town currently spends on elementary administration with U28 would in all likelihood go to higher teacher salaries in a consolidated region, since the Amherst-Pelham superintendent has said she could administer the small town elementary schools without adding any additional staff. Hajir said it would be better for Leverett students if that money went to Leverett teachers instead of central office staff.

Hajir cautioned, "We are not going to save money through regionalization. We may have more capacity to withstand storms that come our way." And he added, "We should think very carefully about what's happening in Amherst," because "Amherst's problems are our problems."

Hajir called on the regional planning board to go on to draft regional agreement for all the towns to vote on in the fall.

But Hans Herda, speaking as a property owner, said Leverett's property values are tied to the quality of the local school. He said, "I'm not sure if we vote for the regional agreement we'll continue to have that kind of quality school."

And a mother of a Leverett school student who gave only her first name, Holly, said, "When I moved to this town we started talking about regionalizing with Franklin County, and that was horrifying to me since I'd just spent a lot of money on my home. When I moved here, the kids in Leverett were taught Spanish. Now they aren't. If we have very little say in what's decided in regionalization, it's hard for me to grab onto what we're voting for."

More information can be found at [www.regional-schoolplanning.com](http://www.regional-schoolplanning.com).

The regional school planning board will decide at a meeting on March 9, at 9 a.m. at the Amherst Regional High School, whether to go forward and draft a four town regional agreement to submit to town meetings in the fall.



## NOTES FROM THE G-MREGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT SCHOOL MEETING Exciting Programs at TFHS for 2014

By ELLEN BLANCHETTE

Patricia Gardner, Principal of Turners Falls High School, presented her final revision of the Program of Study, a printed catalog of class offerings for the coming 2013-2014 school year to the Gill-Montague school committee on Tuesday, Feb. 26.

A review of the Program of Study reveals a program rich in academics, with Honors or Advanced Placement classes in all major academic areas including science, math, history and language arts, and psychology.

Course offerings provide a wide variety of programs in the arts for credit towards a diploma, including several music and art classes and theater arts. Physical education is offered with an eye towards including everyone, whatever their ability, with an emphasis on physical fitness and health. Students are offered classes in health and well being that will guide them to living healthier lives. A class in child development will give students knowledge that will help them be better parents.

Jane Oakes, school committee member from Gill, said it "looks exciting and thorough, you're taking what we have and making the best of it."

In keeping with the discussions at the last meeting, Gardner said they've decided not to offer CAD 3D drafting this year but it may be included in architectural design, which is being offered. Web design was also removed from course offerings but may be included as part of the graphics design program and added as an extra-curricular program.

The issue at hand is that the graphics design teacher who would teach web design is not certified in the program and it is unclear who would pay for the training required to attain certification. Joyce Phillips, school committee chair and member from Montague, said the district has spent a lot of money training staff to obtain qualifications that they then took to other school districts, and so hesitates to continue that process. It is not clear if the teacher would be willing to pay for training herself.

Gardner said they discovered that by changing the name of certain classes, they could draw more

students. So a class listing in physical education is now presented as "recreational sports" instead of "competitive sports." She said the teacher of a carpentry class found when he named the class "wood-working" instead, more girls signed up.

The school committee approved the Program of Study unanimously, with the condition that CAD be removed and web design be moved to the extra-curricular programs list.

This is Gardner's first year as principal. Her previous experience was as a principal in South Carolina.

Phillips raised a concern over the inequities in grades 3, 4 and 5 in technology. She said she wanted to see the elementary schools get the technology they need. Mark Prince, interim superintendent, said the administration has an inventory rotation plan to resolve this. He said they've been concerned over the inequity in the elementary schools and are working on a program where older computers will be "rotated down" to the elementary schools as new technology is provided to the students in higher grades.

Prince reported that the principals and central administration were developing their budgets but offered no changes to the previously presented preliminary district budget.

Phillips said the school committee needs to show in their budget that they will be able to maintain the goals listed in their Accelerated Improvement Plan (AIP). She said, "This is not an unrealistic budget."

Sandra Brown said in the past, the towns and school district worked together and both paid more than they thought they would. Towns paid more; the school district reduced their budget. Her point was that all parties needed to work together on a compromise where each gives a little. She questioned an increase of 11 percent in special education salaries, some of which has to do with shifting money from grants to a line item in the budget. She asked that Prince provide the school committee with a breakdown of these expenses.

The next Gill-Montague school committee meeting will be held on March 12 at Turners Falls High School at 7 p.m.

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## Annie at TFHS



ELLEN BLANCHETTE PHOTO

*Annie (Alyson Rose) is stuck in the orphanage waiting for her parents to return. She's in trouble for running away, brought back by the police. Miss Harrington (Joanna Browning) is scolding her in the office while the other orphans crowd in to see what's happening. Annie's luck is about to change when a rich man offers her a chance to spend the holidays with him in New York City. Based on the comic strip Little Orphan Annie, the musical production of Annie is being presented at Turners Falls High School under the direction of Michael Bradley. Performances are this weekend. Show times are Friday and Saturday, March 8-9, at 7 p.m., and Sunday March 10, at 1 p.m. Tickets are \$9 for adults, \$7 for students and seniors.*

### STONE from page 1

the inaccessible Dry Hill Cemetery.

Stories like these form an indelible part of our local landscape, just as stories of Vikings coming to build beehive chambers of rock by the modern day retreat called Temenos, near Lockes Pond in Shutesbury, have excited the imagination of newcomers to these hills, as each successive generation stumbles upon and puzzles over the unusual stone structures of our region.

The standing stones set in a circle way up on Burnt Hill in Heath are another such oddity of the Franklin County landscape – bearing more resemblance to the upright standing stone *menhirs* of Wales or Brittany than anything one would normally encounter in North America. And so tales of the provenance of these structures and stone formations have been wound about with fable, with some telling of wandering Irish monks coming to these shores in ages past to build these cells, or enterprising Colonial farmers erecting outsized stone root cellars to outlast the centuries.

But Timreck, and Gibavic, and many of the East County residents gathered at the Leverett Library last week tell a different tale, as heretical to our American creation myths as anything found in the Norse Edda. They say that these unusual stone formations – the megalithic chambers with openings aligned toward the setting sun on the evening of the solstice or on dates of other significant celestial events like the Perseid showers, stone formations found in woods and mountains throughout the Northeast – were placed there

and constructed purposefully by Native Americans before any white man wandered across the Atlantic. And a growing cohort of New England archaeologists support their theory.

Yet if it was not the Pilgrim's Progress, the White Man's Burden, to subdue savage and benighted tribes that roamed these shores, then how can the genocide that followed hard on the heels of the smallpox-infested subjugation of New England, spreading in a stain all the way to the Pacific Coast, ever be accounted for in the Land of the Free and the Home of the Brave?

Timreck's film referred to the old stone formations of this region as "one of the most controversial questions in American archaeology for the last 50 years." Although no one in academia doubts the Native origin of the Ohio Valley mounds, the Anasazi cliff dwellings of the Southwest, the Mayan temples of Chichen Itza or the cyclopean Incan walls of Cuzco, somehow the idea that the tribal people of New England possessed a sophisticated cosmology, and the technology to create a sacred architecture of stone across the Northeast landscape, has been anathema to white anthropologists and archaeologists until quite recently.

Indeed, when the Narragansett and Wampanoag Indian tribes combined forces to persuade the Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places in December of 2008 to find the sacred ceremonial hill located at the Turners Falls Airport eligible for inclusion in the federal Register of Historic Places, it was the first time

such a finding had been made east of the Mississippi.

And that finding was achieved despite the contrary opinion of Massachusetts state historic preservation officer Brona Simon, who had determined that the worked stone formations on the airport hill were merely the remnants of old colonial farm walls, although the hill is on a sandplain of dubious agricultural value.

That ceremonial hill, according to Native and local researchers, is associated with many other stone sites in an 18-mile circumference of the Great Falls, including numerous formations in Leverett. Gibavic said she has created a data spreadsheet documenting about 300 of these stone formations in the immediate area.

For those interested, Gibavic, in association with the Leverett Historical Society, will lead a tour this spring of many of the stone formations in Leverett, on a date to be determined. The Timreck film, which has made the rounds of local Discovery Centers and libraries in various rough cuts, is now complete. More information on the film can be found at [www.hiddenlandscape.com](http://www.hiddenlandscape.com).

It may be, as Gibavic said, that until the 2008 finding of eligibility in the National Register, no official had acknowledged "that we live among these ceremonial stone landscapes before."

Or it may be that this knowledge has been available to non-Natives as far back as the 1794 diary of Ezra Stiles, early president of Yale College, who wrote of "a carved or

## Tech School Shows Area Eighth Graders Its Stuff



*Landscaping and horticulture students show prospective freshmen the tricks of the tree trade at last Friday's open house.*

**TURNERS FALLS** – In the landscaping and horticulture vocational program, students were hanging from ropes from the ceiling.

This bit of theater was to demonstrate the art of scaling tall trees. It was all part of a tour of the program that covered different aspects of landscaping and horticulture, including bedding plant production, soil science, pest control, and other parts of the curriculum.

The shop also had on display tools of the trade used in the program, including heavy equipment like a John Deere backhoe.

Friday, March 1, was open house at Franklin County Technical School, when 494 students from Great Falls Middle School in Montague, Pioneer Valley Regional School in Northfield, 8th Grade Academy in Greenfield, Mahar Middle School in Orange, and Mohawk Trail Middle School in Shelburne

Falls, explored the wide variety of vocational and technical programs offered at the school.

Principal Richard Martin said the FCTS community and visiting students were enthusiastic about the visit. He said his students are proud of their school and were looking forward to showing potential FCTS students what the school had to offer.

"There's a lot of positive energy and excitement in the building when you give close to 500 eighth graders the opportunity to explore 13 vocational technical programs," Martin said.

"We're looking forward to having many of the students here today and their parents when we have our Open House on March 7 to continue the excitement that began during the eighth grade visits."

For Chloe O'Malley, 13, of Greenfield, the tour was an eye-opening experience that showed

see FCTS page 7

wrought stone" on top of West Rock in New Haven, "which I know to be one of the Indian Gods, of which I have found about or above twenty in different places from Boston to Hudson River."

According to Gibavic, in the Native cultures of the region, stones are considered sacred as grandfathers, not gods, and the oral history of Native tribes holds many of the stone groupings to be markers of the path the souls of departed ancestors must take when they return to Cautantowwit's house, located in the stars to the southwest, and most available during the time of the

Perseid showers in mid August.

From the airport hill in Turners Falls, a southwest line to the setting sun during this period in August points to Burnt Hill, in Heath, where landowner Jack Cable, interviewed in Timreck's film, talked of allowing tribal elders from near and far to return to hold ceremony among the standing stones.

Perhaps there is much we could still learn from the local landscape, and the tribal people who have long inhabited, revered and shaped it, if we care to try.



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# Permaculture Offers Agricultural Alternatives

By MARK HUDYMA

On the surface, permaculture is deceptively simple: permanent agriculture. It consists of a host of farming techniques that are reportedly more sustainable and ecologically friendly than other practices.

It is described as “beyond organic” by Sue Bridge, a local permaculture enthusiast.

Matt Deleppo, a member of the Greenfield Community College Permaculture Club, sees permaculture as a solution to global food crises and ecological harm: “I see systems that are unsustainable; we need to care for the earth, for people, and to share our resources. This knowledge is nothing new. It’s been around for thousands of years, we’re just utilizing it.”

Our region is also home to the Conway School of Design, a graduate institution that provides education about permaculture and sustainable design. The school was started by Walter Cudnohufsky, with the intention to create a student-driven learning environment.

Today, students work with the school to embark on large scale projects, such as a “Foodshed” analysis of Franklin County, a determination of whether the county could feed itself with purely local food.

The answer was “not yet,” but the students learned the skills involved with making such a determination, as well as techniques for making it a viable goal.

Interest in permaculture has skyrocketed in recent years. “There was always an interest here, but in 2005 we founded the Western Massachusetts Permaculture Guild,” says Jono Neiger, a teacher at The Conway School of Design, and partner at The Regenerative Design Group. They have held yearly convergences since then, creating an expanding network of local permaculture supporters, leading to more projects and interest every year.

When he is not teaching at the Conway School, Neiger is focused on creating “productive landscapes”, and designing permaculture based alternatives to tradition-

al landscape.

The Regenerative Design Group has worked on a number of local projects, including a forest garden at the Village Coop in Leverett. The garden utilized unused space by creating a place where food is now grown.

Neiger also worked with Grow Food Northampton to create a plan for 120 acres of farmland. The result was a plan that included four hundred community garden plots and a barrier forest garden to shield the adjacent river. The plan has something for everyone, as well as being sustainable and ecologically friendly.

Last fall, the Greenfield Community College Permaculture Club began the process of planting a 1/8-acre demonstration permaculture garden on the campus. The intention of the garden is to demonstrate what permaculture looks like. The garden will be fed by a compost system installed by the permaculture club.

“I see this as a challenge,” said Abrah Dresdale, a graduate of the Conway School and the advisor for the permaculture club, in reference to the steep hill and poor soil of the prospective garden. The students are eager to begin planting in the spring.

The permaculture garden at GCC was modeled after a similar project at The University of Massachusetts. Students from UMass led the effort to implement a permaculture garden adjacent to the Franklin Dining Commons. The project has been a success, bringing thousands of pounds of produce to the dining commons, as well as serving as a demonstration of the success of permaculture to students and passersby.

Permaculture appears to be overtaking the value in a quiet revolution, one that may be a sustainable alternative to monoculture and industrial food. It provides individuals with an opportunity to utilize concrete solutions to large problems.

Those interested in working on the Village Coop forest garden can contact Jono Neiger at: [jono@regenerativedesign.com](mailto:jono@regenerativedesign.com).



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from FCTS page 6

things here I never thought they would have, and a lot of workshops,” she said. “I’m thinking of coming here.”

Eli Nicolson, 14, of Northfield, a student at Pioneer Valley Regional, also said he was impressed with the programs, including culinary arts and landscaping and horticulture. “If I applied to Franklin County Tech, landscaping is something I would like to do,” he said. “There is a lot to do in landscaping.”

Mark Amstein, FCTS landscaping and horticulture instructor, said “If the students can get some images of the big picture, that’s what we’re shooting for.”

In the machine technology program, Hailey Lowell, a 14-year-old freshman from Wendell, was explain-

ing to students about the Electronathon Race Car, the student-built electric car that competes in regional races against other schools.

“It’s fun to see the kids who may want to join the tech school,” she said. “They’re asking good questions about how the car runs.”

In the school’s plumbing and heating shop, Kyle Taylor, 18, a senior from Ashfield, said he was surprised that a lot of the eighth graders were asking about the school’s solar energy curriculum.

“I haven’t had that happen before,” he said. “But, I guess it makes sense, since a lot of houses are going solar. We learn a lot about solar in this shop.”

In the health technology room, seniors Casey Bolduc of Montague, Dawna Gorman of Sunderland, both

18-years-old; seniors Gina Lingwall of Sunderland, and Haylee Keene of Lake Pleasant, both 17, and freshman Mallory Willis, 14, of Charlemont, were demonstrating how to stabilize an accident victim’s neck and head or on a stretcher.

“Everybody seems to be interested in the EMT part of the program,” Keene said. “I think they’re interested because they might know people who have gone to hospitals and they’ve seen ambulances around, and they want to know what goes on inside of them.”

Added Lingwall, “I like demonstrating what we actually do here, what we’re trained to do. I had a couple of guys say they wanted to come here to the health tech program to become EMTs.”



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NOTES FROM THE MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

Broadband and High Speed Internet Coming

By PATRICIA PRUITT

This week’s big news is very exciting for those in Montague still without internet and broadband, due mainly to Comcast’s unwillingness to serve neighborhoods with low residential density because of the cost of establishing the necessary infrastructure. The neighboring town of Leverett has faced the same challenge and has found a way to solve the problem.

Jason Burbank, resident of Montague’s Chestnut Hill neighborhood and a member of the Chestnut Hill broadband committee that has been searching for a way to improve access, introduced his colleagues: Kevin Hart, from Montague, and Richard Nathhorst from the Leverett planning board and broadband committee.

The solution presented requires establishment of a Town municipal lighting district that would be able to install the necessary connections for roughly \$3,500 to \$5,000 per household. Establishing such a lighting district requires two town meeting votes.

Nathhorst explained that a municipal lighting district serves as a town corporation and allows the town to operate as a public utility and, interestingly, is authorized by legislation dating back to 1905. In rural areas such as much of western Massachusetts, it is the only avenue available to make

infrastructure improvements. Nathhorst emphasized that this approach is being taken by towns all over the country, except where AT&T has lobbied state legislatures to deem it illegal.

Leverett has gone through the process and has just selected the contractor to do the installations. In Leverett with 800 residences participating, the monthly cost will be \$60 per household, less than Comcast or Verizon’s present service fee. Construction in Leverett will begin in April.

As it turns out, Montague Center is a municipal light district. The selectboard members were, to a person, enthusiastic and supportive of the committee’s continued efforts.

In other business, town assessor Barbara Miller asked the board to sign three copies of a shared contract between Montague and Gill for the appraisal services of Mainstream Appraisal Assoc. LLC. The company will conduct appraisals of the hydro electric facilities and properties along the river. Voted on and approved.

Miller also asked the personnel board to appoint Laura Arruda to the Assessor Clerk Position at Grade 2, step 1, to be paid \$13.50 per hour. Arruda will begin her new position on March 18. The appointment was voted on and approved.

Next, Police Chief Charles “Chip” Dodge asked

the personnel board to extend Sergeant Suchanek’s 111F leave to April 1. Voted on and approved.

Dodge then asked to make public announcements concerning parking along 7th and L Streets during church services. Specifically, he is receiving complaints that parking issues are creating traffic hazards. People are parking and disregarding ‘No Parking’ signs. He suggests people park behind Our Lady of Peace in the usually half-full church parking lot.

In another parking situation, the Chief asked that parents at the Turners Falls High School wait in single file along the curb for drop off or pick up of their students. If the problems continue, police may have to start issuing tickets.

Wendy Bogusz gave the administrator’s report. The chief item was the reschedule of the special town meeting cancelled last week due to lack of a quorum. It has been rescheduled for Wednesday, March 13 at 6:30 p.m. in the Sheffield School Auditorium, at 35 Crocker Avenue.

The board adjourned for Executive Session #1 to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining, and implementing the Pay and Classification Study.

Executive Session #2 was to discuss strategy with respect to litigation over First Light’s pedestrian bridge and easement.

NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD

Departments Present FY’14 Budget Requests To Board

By KATIE NOLAN

Department heads for the senior center/council on aging, police department, fire department, emergency management, and the tree warden presented their fiscal year 2014 (FY’14) budget requests to the selectboard at the Monday, March 4 meeting.

The selectboard generally supported the budgets presented, but asked fire chief Almon “Bud” Meattey to return to the March 11 meeting to further discuss a proposed new fire engine.

Senior center/council on aging director Polly Keily presented a FY’14 budget of \$56,126. She told the selectboard that one problem for the senior and community center was the increase in cost of electricity when the town switched from WMECO as electricity supplier to Hampshire Council of Governments (HCOG). Keily said last month’s electric bill was above \$2,750, over \$1,000 higher than last year’s February bill. “If that keeps up, it could blow my budget,” she said. The center’s annual budget for electricity is \$15,000.

Town administrator Tom Sharp said that HCOG’s electricity rates vary up and down, and over the course of a year, the town saves money with their rates. Keily said it was unfortunate that HCOG’s higher rate cycle kicked in during the heating season when the center’s geothermal system requires the most electricity.

Selectboard member Margaret Sullivan said she would like to see a written explanation from HCOG as to why their rates are higher than WMECO’s.

The board asked Sharp to prepare a comparison of HCOG and WMECO rates for the senior and community center for the March 11 meeting, when they will decide whether or not to return to WMECO as electricity supplier.

Police chief Chris Blair presented a budget of \$350,730, an increase of

\$19,000 over FY’13. Blair told the board the state requires 40 hours of documented training for each police officer. In the past, officers took training on their own time, but Blair said that at 40 hours per year “it’s hard to ask them to volunteer.”

Emergency management director Philip Wonkka presented a budget of \$11,307, slightly higher than FY’13.

Fire chief Almon “Bud” Meattey presented a budget of \$137,700, an increase of \$5,580 over FY’13. Sullivan questioned him about the process for putting fire department employees into the town’s new pay scale chart. Meattey said he had estimated the number of hours per year used by firefighters and officers and used an average hourly wage from the pay scale to develop the FY’14 wages request.

The selectboard asked Meattey to fine-tune the wages estimate and to include recurring expenses such as replacing turnout gear and self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) in the regular fire department budget, rather than as a separate town meeting warrant article and to return to the March 11 meeting.

The board also asked Meattey to come to the March 11 meeting ready to discuss the proposed purchase of a 450 to 500 thousand dollar pumper rescue truck to replace two older trucks. One of the older trucks is the 1977 Engine #9. Meattey said because it has a standard transmission, it is hard for many of the firefighters to drive.

Tree warden Chris Stacy presented a budget of \$8,500, unchanged from FY’13.

Jacqueline Boyden gave the board an update on the \$29,000 proposal from AKUITY, to set up a new email system for town offices and committees. Boyden said that AKUITY recommended an in-house server at town hall, rather than a cloud-based system.

Selectboard member Andrew Goodwin said, “I am absolutely in favor of a cloud-based system.” He cited ongoing maintenance costs and the need for a firewall if the email server is physically located at town hall.

Boyden said she would investigate a cloud system and ask for another quote from AKUITY and from several other contractors. She recommended that Jacob Smith of High Street, who attended the meeting at Boyden’s request because of his technical expertise, help her with finding a contractor and reviewing estimates.

“Wait, what am I volunteering for?” asked Smith.

The selectboard approved payment of \$143,000 to J.R. Vinagro, Inc., the former Usher Plant cleanup contractor. The board also extended the completion date from Feb. 28 to March 28.

The board received a letter from library trustee Robert Fletcher regarding moving the collection of newspapers and postcards currently housed at the library to make more space for library activities. Sharp suggested that the display cases could be relocated to the historical museum. He said he would follow up with Carol Lyman of the town historical committee.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GILL POLICE LOG

Mailboxes In Peril on Hoe Shop Road

Monday, 2/25

6:35 a.m. Domestic situation on Chapple Drive.

12:15 p.m. Tractor trailer unit created hazard at the Route 2 and Main Road intersection.

Tuesday, 2/26

10:00 a.m. Restraining order issued to party on Main Road.

Wednesday, 2/27

8:35 a.m. Firearms issue for resident on Hoe Shop Road.

9:15 a.m. Suspicious activity at residence on Franklin Road; checked out OK per the home owners.

Thursday, 2/28

11:35 a.m. Restraining Order

issued to party on Main Road.

5:40 p.m. Assisted resident with locked motor vehicle in their yard in the Riverside area.

9:50 p.m. Assisted Erving police with domestic disturbance.

Friday, 3/1

11:30 a.m. Trespassing issue on Riverview Drive.

9:20 p.m. Assisted Bernardston police with arrest of subject.

Saturday, 3/2

11:15 a.m. Domestic situation on Main Road.

Sunday, 3/3

1:55 p.m. Hoe Shop Road resident reported their mailbox vandalized

overnight.

2:15 p.m. Hoe Shop Road resident reported their mailbox vandalized overnight, 2nd incident.

2:30 p.m. Hoe Shop Road resident reported their mailbox vandalized overnight, 3rd incident.

2:50 p.m. Reporting a domestic dispute over property on French King Highway.

3:30 p.m. Hoe Shop Road resident reported their mailbox vandalized overnight, 4th incident.

5:50 p.m. Assisted Bernardston police with arrest and deceased body at Route 10 business.

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NOTES FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD MEETING

The Future of Firefighting in Wendell

By JOSH HEINEMANN

At its Feb. 27 meeting, Finance Committee chair Michael Idoine gave the Wendell selectboard some information about what the town may do when the present police and fire chiefs retire.

State law requires emergency responders to retire at 65, although small towns in Franklin and Berkshire counties have said that call and volunteer firefighters, as part time workers, may continue to stay on in their departments and respond to calls past that age. But there is no insurance available for responders over 70, and, under the McNamara law, their towns are liable for injuries or death that occur at a fire or police response.

Recently, and separate from this selectboard meeting, fire chief Everett Ricketts said there is no way he could hold himself back from responding to a call. He has been a Wendell firefighter for 50 years. He said he would hold the town harmless because he has his own insurance. Whether that is legal is a question that selectboard member Dan Keller said the town should ask town counsel.

Michael Idoine met with Dennis Annear, the Orange fire chief, and as a member of that committee, Idoine met the selectboard to report. Annear told about possibilities for the Franklin County fire services as state requirements for documentation continue to grow and towns have a harder time finding volunteers who stay in town during the day and as the money required to maintain individual town departments increases even as towns have less to spend.

Far in the future, Annear envisions a regional Franklin County fire department with local substations in Shelburne, Greenfield, Sunderland, Deerfield, Orange, and apparatus and firefighters local, but coordinated among the towns: following the initial attack truck, different backups

would come from different towns.

A second option is independent fire districts that act like water districts, raising their funds independently through taxes, as water districts do now. A fire district may cover only part of a large city, but in Franklin County a fire district would include several towns.

A third possibility for Wendell would be to share the chief's administrative work with New Salem, where he is now a part-time town employee.

Special legislation might allow someone over 65 to serve with a volunteer or call fire department.

The finance committee came into the room with Idoine, a full committee again including new member, Chris Fontaine. Idoine said that their intention was to set the cost of living allowance (COLA) for town workers, which will be suggested at the annual town meeting by using a three-year rolling average of the official cost of living. This year COLA will be 2.3 percent.

The FinCom also hopes to set the town's payment to Swift River School using a 5-year rolling average to set the per-pupil cost for each town. This would smooth changes in the town's assessment without an effect on the total bill paid over time. Wendell and New Salem pay equal shares of Swift River School's capital expenses, to which a per student assessment is added every year.

FinCom member Jim Slavas said they had written a letter supporting Joan Wickman and her arguments for keeping school Union 28 (U28) together, a view contrary to that expressed by the report of the Leverett and Shutesbury regionalization study. There are people on the school committees of those two towns who want to leave the U28 elementary school union and join the Amherst-Pelham K-12 region.

The regionalization study group report showed advan-

tages to forming that region. Wickman's response contested some aspects of that report, and outlined accomplishments and advantages of U28.

Slavas said the first report was "a whitewashed hatchet job" that emphasized the state reimbursement for regional transportation, and downplayed the potential loss to the two towns if they joined the Amherst-Pelham region. A major loss would be local control.

Slavas contrasted that report with independent consultant Ken Rocke's report on the regionalization proposal Wendell faced with Orange and Mahar. That report showed no financial or educational gain, and possible loss, for Wendell and New Salem following regionalization. He suggested that U28 might be changed to region 28; Leverett and Shutesbury would get some transportation reimbursement from the state, although the state seldom pays as much as promised.

Selectboard chair Christine Heard said the proposed region, Leverett, Shutesbury, Pelham, and Amherst would be similar to the region with Orange that was rejected by Wendell and Petersham voters in that the small towns would be overwhelmed by the one large town and both Orange and Amherst have financial problems.

Fin Com member Doug Tanner said that the U28 schools are all top tier elementary schools.

Changing the subject, Tanner went on to say that the green repairs on Swift River School are almost signed off and paid for. Reimbursement from the state is less than was hoped and the hazardous material abatement money is all used up, but the town will not have to add any more money to pay for the work. Heard said that the building custodian, Larry Ramsdell, is amazed by how much less heating oil the building uses now.

NOTES FROM THE LEVERETT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Committee Approves FY'14 Budget

By JEFF SINGLETON

At the March 4 meeting, the Leverett School Committee approved a budget for the upcoming fiscal year of \$1,700,777, a reduction of \$31,222 over the current year.

According to a "Budget Drivers" spreadsheet handed out at the meeting, the cut reflected "changes in staffing classification and a position vacated by retirement and the replacement hired at a lower step." Also, "the addition of a reclassified position was offset by increase in grant funding applied to the account;" there was a reduction of one special education aide; and the school committee control account was reduced by over \$19,000.

The reductions, which totaled over \$85,000, were somewhat offset by increases in "instructional hardware and software," negotiated pay increases (these were based on 2013 since the committee is currently in contract negotiations) and other small items.

The budget approved by the committee does not include health insurance expenses, which are covered in the regular town operating budget.

The elementary school budget also does not include an appropriation for shared facilities maintenance with the town. This has been proposed by the selectboard, but the school committee believed it did not have

enough information about a proposed change, including specific estimate of cost and a management protocol that gave the district adequate control over maintenance at the elementary school.

"I am willing to let this go to town meeting," stated committee member Kip Fonsh, apparently in response to the selectboard's suggestion that the issue might be brought before the annual town meeting.

The budget also included a teaching position that the selectboard, on the assumption that leaving or retiring teachers would be replaced at a lower pay rate, complained at a February meeting had been filled at an excessively high rate. School committee members felt the complaint was unreasonable, perhaps even "micromanaging."

"I think we would have done the students and the town an injustice if we had not hired the most qualified person," stated one member. Fonsh called for future discussions about budget and revenue guidelines to be held earlier in the process.

The committee approved the 2013-2014 academic calendar, which continues to include a weekly Wednesday "half day" (with classes ending two hours early). Amherst has had to eliminate the half day, because it left the district short of the number of annual "time on learning" hours required by the state. Leverett's projected hours keep the district well

above the 900 hour state minimum, even with the early dismissal.

Elementary School Principal Anne Ross discussed school security, particularly the policy that has been in place since Feb. 11 of locking the front door. She stated that the new policy has not had an impact on school operations. State police will conduct a walk through and security audit on March 6.

There was a short discussion of a proposal for the school committee to periodically combine meetings with those of other towns in Union 28 (U28). The goal of combined meetings would be to reduce the number of meetings that superintendent Joan Wickman is required to attend. The committee will need to come up with a recommendation by the May U28 committee meeting.

Fonsh, of the regional school district planning committee, reported on the progress of the regionalization process. This involves consideration of consolidating Leverett, Shutesbury, Pelham and Amherst into a new regional elementary district (or into an even larger district with the Amherst middle and high schools). Public meetings were held in all the key towns over the previous week.

The Regional Planning Board will make a decision whether to move forward with the process on Saturday at the Amherst High School Library at 9 a.m.

public hearing with abutters notified, an analysis of the soil type and high water table, and a note on the deed giving GPS coordinates. As one selectboard member said, they did not want to be the special permit-granting authority.

Building inspector Phil Delorey made a list of recommendations concerning the town hall's occupancy limit. He said none of them were legally binding, but selectboard members considered two at this meeting. They decided to hire an electrician to install two illuminated exit signs, both with emergency lights built in, one over the main entrance and one over the stage staircase that leads to an outside door on the stage.

Delorey also recommended a floor-level exit door on the police station side of the hall, leading to a wheelchair ramp between the station and town hall. Cutting a new hole for a door in that wall is serious structural work, and board members thought it

might be worthwhile to delay that project. Board member Geoffrey Pooser said it would make sense to incorporate that job with that of insulating the building's side walls.

Morgan Mead offered to donate one of the pictures now displayed in the library's Marion Herrick room: a world map, with all countries packed onto one continent in which Wendell is the only real place. As they were wondering where it could hang, treasurer and member of the now-inactive town office interior decorating committee, Carolyn Manley came in to collect the warrants so she can make payments.

Manley suggested the outside wall at the back of her office was the only place in the building large enough for the painting, and a place her committee had considered for a rotating art collection that never materialized. Selectboard members agreed with her.

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the poetry page

Poem for my Mother

(In Memoriam: Anne Garcia)

Your voice this afternoon over the telephone wire  
was clear and strong and forthright.

You didn't say "Just roll your troubles into a little ball and throw them away"  
And I didn't say "turn your frown upside down."  
These phrases from childhood  
still hang somewhere in the air,  
my air and your air shared.

You did say "Don't worry about me. I'll be all right. But call your sister."

Immobility does not mean being fixed.

The present is not the starting point  
you are hoping to find

nor is cause effect.

You want to be with the geese flying south  
or at least as steadfast  
as the cormorants perching on buoys.

The morning sun  
conceals itself behind the mountain.

Sky and river bleed blue  
into gray, gray into blue.

—Christopher Sawyer-Lauçanno  
Turners Falls

Poetry Page edited by Patricia Pruitt  
design by Claudia Wells

The editors would like to  
thank the following for  
their generous financial  
underwriting of The  
Poetry Page:

Klondike Sound,  
Green Fields Market,  
Michael Muller, and Dr. Robert  
Koolkin of Montague Dental Arts

Readers are invited to send poems to the Montague Reporter at 58 4th Street, Turners Falls, MA 01376;  
or email us your poetry at poetry@montaguereporter.org.

FOOD CITY FOSSIL

Whispering, clanking carts shimmy down the avenue  
Rolling empty, rolling free  
Sick of the same old asphalt currency...going for broke  
Longing for swift water, deep immersion, final descent  
Longing to lay in the silt and wait  
Wait for the bone-kissing fish to come  
Kissing their bashed up chrome  
Giving it all up in the turbulent spring  
Loosing welds with the current  
Splayed open and merged with shale  
Silt, time, pressure, the powerful spun magnet of earth  
Locks the ferrous oxide ghost in layers of rock  
Just another story in the river

— Nina Rossi  
Turners Falls

Saint Anthony of Padua: Patron Saint of Lost Articles

Match the Columns!

LOST

keys  
his phone number  
wallet  
expensive sunglasses  
the cat  
favorite earrings  
love  
my way  
one sock

—Pam Allan  
Turners Falls

FOUND

under the bed  
behind the fridge  
in the washer  
under the rose bush  
with the junk mail  
under the driver's seat  
on the closet floor  
behind the chair  
in the suitcase you gave away

Transformation

The sun is coming back,  
Back from its sleep.  
The sleep of winter.  
The wind howls, screams, shrieks,  
It blows, whooshes, pushes.  
The sun rises up,  
Up into the sky.  
Ever since the winter solstice light  
Has been shining more brightly  
Down on the world.  
A bird here and there starts to cheep,  
Cheeping their little songs and tunes.  
I,  
An old oak tree,  
Watch all of this transformation  
Happening.  
Happening throughout the world.

— Ella Bathory-Peeler, age 11  
Gill

Poem for Lorraine Algozer's book: Solitude

Solitude can be hard to spot in  
a crowded room, but you might  
run into her anywhere, even  
someplace where you think you're  
alone. Solitude hangs out where  
nobody knows you.

Solitude may choose to visit you at  
home. She drops by when you  
weren't expecting to have company.  
She's a bit disheveled. She doesn't  
own a full-length mirror.  
Solitude doesn't like to take her  
shoes off. She never stays long  
and makes flimsy excuses for  
leaving: "That sound reminded me,"  
"I have to feed the cat."

No one has ever been invited to  
Solitude's home.

— Jen Audley  
Turners Falls

Contributors' Notes:

When not making books, **Pam Allan** is a librarian. Her book, *Lost (Found)*, is on display at LOOT as part of the Rotation exhibit.

**Jen Audley** works at the Northeast Foundation for Children. Her book on display at LOOT as part of the Rotation exhibit is entitled *Home*.

**Ella Bathory-Peeler** is a student who enjoys writing poetry twelve months a year.

**Nina Rossi**, a multifaceted artist, is the creator of the book *SHOES*. Her poem was written for Kim Spranger of Northfield's book *WATER*. Rossi lives in Turners Falls.


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## ALL THE TIME:

### EVERY SUNDAY

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

### EVERY TUESDAY

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

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

### EVERY WEDNESDAY

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

Between the Uprights, Turners Falls: Karaoke with Dirty Johnny. 9 p.m. to midnight. Friday Night Karaoke begins on March 1Free.

### EVERY THURSDAY

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

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

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

## ART SHOWS:

Great Falls Discovery Center, The Painters at GCC. Open 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.



OREN CLARK PHOTO

Valley Idol Jr. winner Una Jensen, of Shelburne Falls, launches a Southern tour this Saturday, March 9, at Burrito Rojo in Turners Falls. Show your support! 6 p.m.

Nina's Nook, Avenue A, Turners Falls: Sensual>Sexual>Smut. Erotic art by local artists. Through March 31.

## LOCAL EVENTS:

### THURSDAY, MARCH 7

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

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

### FRIDAY, MARCH 8

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

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

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

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

The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Masters of the Groovaverse, jam/funk. 9:30 p.m., \$

### SATURDAY, MARCH 9

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

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

involving members of the Missoula Oblongata and Less Miserable. Opening act by the Royal Frog Ballet. 8 p.m. sharp.

The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Wooden Wand, deep folky weirdness, with more-locals Frozen Corn opening. 8:30 p.m., \$

### TUESDAY, MARCH 12

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

### WEDNESDAY, MARCH 13

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

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

### THURSDAY, MARCH 14

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: Collected Poets Series, featuring poets Heather Christle & Wendy Xu. 7 p.m.

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

### FRIDAY, MARCH 15

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: Zak Trojano, singer-songwriter, of Rusty Belle. 8 p.m.

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

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

The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Uncle Hals's Crabgrass Band, with Tawdry. Old-timey. 9:30 p.m., free.

### SATURDAY, MARCH 16

Memorial Hall, Shelburne Falls: Live from the Metropolitan Opera in HD: Zandonai's Francesca Da Rimini. 12 p.m. \$

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

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: Kristin Hoffman, singer-songwriter, with special guest Alan Williams of Birdsong at Morning. 7 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: Heather Maloney, CD release show, with Poor Old Shine opening. 8 p.m., \$

Flywheel, Easthampton: Blanche

Blanche Blanche, Ryan Power Band, Son of Salami, Kurt Weisman / Patricia Hartland Duo. All ages, 8 p.m., \$

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

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

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By **LESLIE BROWN**

Leaving Mexico, we mourn the loss of sun and warmth. Back at home we are surprised to find that spring has begun without us: sap buckets hang from the maples, some sugar houses are already boiling, and the red-winged black-birds sing over the marsh. While there is still snow stubbornly sticking, it is soft and sinks daily. The days are noticeably longer. Although the days are quite gray, it's time to start the tomato and pepper seeds in the sunroom. We'll be using a light starting mix of sphagnum and perlite, which will allow the tiny seedlings plenty of easily accessed root room. We have two small British greenhouses of Styrofoam with holes, room for forty seedlings each. Their construction is quite ingenious: after the planting holes are filled with dampened seed starting mix, another piece of Styrofoam has dibbles on one side to press down the dirt and then the reverse flat side on which to set the tray of plantings while the dibble side elevates the tray. A simple

piece of blotting paper draws water up from the watering pan so that everything is kept damp but not overly wet. Lastly, a plastic cover allows the sun while preserving the moisture. We'll set the trays over a heating mat so that the dirt stays warm to encourage germination whether Mother Nature provides sun or not. What a pleasure to press the tiny seeds into the soil and cover them gently! We are starting nine tomato varieties. Our favorite cherry remains the Sungold, but we are also experimenting with another called Sugar Lump. Sungold's color is true to its name and a heavy producer of tangy grape-sized tomatoes that ripen early and last the full season. We hope Sugar Lump also lives up to its name. Heirlooms are also a favorite and this season we are growing Rose, Brandywine and Pineapple again. These old varieties remain popular because they produce large, flavorful, meaty fruit. Two reliable hybrids, Celebrity and Jet Star produce a medium mild to acidic tomato that matures early, about seventy days from germination. We have also added one new variety, Caspian Pink, an indeterminate that will take longer to produce fruit but which will grow until the weather season ends its life.

one yellow, one orange and a brown called Chocolate Beauty. While all of these can be harvested when green, the patient gardener who waits for the colors to show will be rewarded with a much sweeter product that can be enjoyed raw or roasted over the grill. Later harvests can be frozen, chopped or sliced while still icy and then cooked throughout the winter season. Don't be discouraged from starting seeds just because you lack elaborate equipment. You can make a simple flat of any plastic container and keep it warm on the top of your refrigerator until the seeds germinate. As long as you have a southerly window, your plants should come along nicely. Thin the new plants well, feed them watered-down plant food now and again and keep moist. However, do not overwater. Too much water brings on root rot and damping off of the stems. Since a tomato plant will continue to absorb water whether it needs it or not, more plants are lost to overwatering than drought whether they are tiny seedlings or

full grown garden plants. Start your plants six to eight weeks before the temperature in your yard makes it possible to set them out. Most gardeners plan to plant somewhere around mid-May to Memorial Day when the ground is well warmed and there is no danger of frost. Starting plants too early only results in leggy plants that will struggle to do well. In the meantime, while we wait impatiently for warmer temperatures and for flowering bulbs and plants to show in the yard and garden, get yourself to at least one of the local bulb shows for a feast for all your senses.

The Lyman Conservatory greenhouse at Smith College produces a huge display annually of bulbs, flowering plants and forced bush cuttings decorated lavishly with stone ware and statuary. While you are there, also treat yourself to a tour of the tropical room full of orchids and other exotic plants like banana and cacao. The warmth and humidity will refresh you as much as the growing plants. The exhibit is open daily from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. until Mar. 17. Weekdays tend to be a little less crowded with visitors and their cameras. Although much smaller, the display at Mount Holyoke College is still worth the trip. The days and hours are the same and you will perhaps have more leisure to admire the plantings and the water pool as this smaller setting tends to be less crowded than the huge display at Smith. If you are winter weary, try to attend one of these shows whenever you are able. You will find it as much of a spring tonic as the first rhubarb pie or your grandmother's dose of salts. Welcome spring and happy gardening!



*Sungold tomatoes ripen early and last the full season.*

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## By Their Bark Ye Shall Know Them

Why do some trees have smooth bark, while on others it peels, and on still others it is thick and broken? Can bark be used to identify winter trees? These questions will be explored on Wednesday, March 13, at 7 p.m., when naturalist Michael Wojtech will present "Know Your Trees," a joint program offered by the Athol Bird & Nature Club and Northfield Mountain Recreation Center at Liberty Hall in Athol Town Hall (584 Main St.). Wojtech's newly released book, *Bark: A Field Guide to Trees of the Northeast*, will be available for purchase. The program will then go live with

a field trip at Northfield Mountain on March 16 from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. This outing is for naturalists aged 12 and older and at all levels of experience; it is free for ABNC members. Pre-registration is required; call (800) 859-2960. Wojtech is a freelance writer, teacher, illustrator, and photographer who spent his childhood roaming the pine barrens of southern New Jersey. He currently lives in the woods of western Massachusetts. The Athol Bird & Nature Club is a group of people sharing an appreciation of nature's many forms. More information about the ABNC is available at [www.millersriver.net](http://www.millersriver.net).



PHOTO COURTESY OF EARTHWORKPROGRAMS.COM

*Shagbark hickory is a common hickory in the eastern United States and southeast Canada.*

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