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LAKE PLEASANT MILLERS FALLS MONTAGUE CENTER MONTAGUE CITY TURNERS FALLS

The Montague Reporter

YEAR 11 – NO. 22

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

MARCH 14, 2013

Village Post Office Opens



CHRIS SAWYER LAUCANNO PHOTO

L-R: Christine Brock, USPS Operations Manager; Ralph Semb, Weatherlands Convenience Store owner; Margaret Sullivan, Erving selectboard; Eric Semb; Shane Emerson, Postmaster; Tatiana Roy, USPS Marketing Manager.

By PATRICIA PRUITT

ERVING – The ribbon has been cut and the new Village Post office, the first in the state, is now open for business on Route 2 in Erving. The office is in the Weatherlands convenience store, which also includes a Dunkin Donuts and is owned and

operated by Ralph Semb and his family.

At the smaller version of a post office, customers will be able to mail letters and buy stamps. Packages and package services will continue to be offered at the regular U.S. Post Office across the street, which will be open Mondays through Fridays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., and Saturdays from 8:30 to 11 a.m.

Planning Board Adopts Limited Regionalization

By JEFF SINGLETON

AMHERST – On Saturday, March 9, after nearly four hours of discussion and months of study and public input, the Amherst, Leverett, Pelham and Shutesbury (ALPS) regional planning board voted to endorse a new elementary school district. The regional board must still create a district agreement to implement the proposal and send it to the potential member towns for approval.

The proposed district would include all the towns that participated in the process except Shutesbury. Thus Leverett would join Amherst and Pelham in a three-town elementary district, while Shutesbury would presumably remain in the current Superintendency Union 28. The four towns will continue to be members of the current regional middle/high school district.

The board rejected other

proposals for a broader regionalization despite strong support because of the fear that none would be approved by Shutesbury. Regionalization proposals must be supported by all town meetings in potential member towns.

The committee's decision to submit a more limited proposal reflects a desire to make "progress" after months of hard work, and years of failed attempts to create a regional district. According to a flyer describing the origins of the current planning process, "regionalization has been considered many times since our current secondary education region (middle and high school) was created in the mid-1950s. The four towns... have had discussions about regionalizing in 1968, 1976, 1992, 2009 and currently."

The three-town pre-K through 6 region was one of five proposals

see REGIONALIZE pg 5

Creative Economy Summit 4: Art and Business in Partnership

By SHIRA HILLEL

TURNERS FALLS – The Fostering Art and Culture Project, an organization working to grow the creative economy in Franklin County, will hold this year's annual Creative Economy Summit on Friday, March 22 and Saturday, March 23 in Turners Falls.

The arts are a powerful industry in New England that influences spending, has employment power, creates regional identity and generates interest and excitement. The Fostering Art and Culture Project aims to make "home" more vibrant and bring cultural dollars to towns that support creative minds as well as the economy in a range of levels and industries. They continue to be a source of networking opportunities, information and collaboration.

The Creative Economy Summit works to energize relationships between artists, businesses and municipal leaders to invigorate community cultural life. The two day professional development conference will be held in a multi-venue; the first full day at the Hallmark Institute of Photography and the second day at various sites within walking distance in downtown Turners Falls.

"This year's conference is geared toward helping people understand why its important for communities, especially rural communities, to embrace cultural life," said Summit Coordinator, Becky

George. It will stress the importance for communities to embrace cultural life and show how it benefits all parts of the community, both residents and businesses.

According to George, the summit provides "a partnership of organizations all around Franklin County. A layperson might look at the list and say, what do these people have to do with one another? But the truth is they have a lot in common. When it comes to the creative economy, cooperation is the way to go."

"A layperson might look at the list and say, what do these people have to do with one another? But the truth is they have a lot in common. When it comes to the creative economy, cooperation is the way to go."

— Becky George,
Creative Economy
Summit Coordinator

way to go."

The summit will include attendees and presenters from around the New England region and aims to give attendees wider networks, and illustrate examples of cultural activities that are working to improve communities and ways they could continue to improve.

Workshops and presentations will showcase the relationship between creativity and its application in the marketplace and will highlight the connectivity between arts and business,

application of media and social networking, collaboration and fund raising.

The Friday morning chamber of commerce breakfast kickoff at Hallmark will feature a presentation by Robert McBride, the founding director of the Rockingham Arts and Museum project, located in Bellows Falls, VT. He will discuss integrating the arts into revitalization efforts and long-term sustainability strategies.

Local communities of Pittsfield, Shelburne Falls and Turners Falls will each be represented in three separate sessions on Friday.

On Friday morning, Megan Whilden will present on the transformation of Pittsfield into a cultural gateway city.

On Friday afternoon, Turners Falls River Culture Director, Lisa Davol, together with the town administrator and town planner will discuss Montague's economic strategy. Montague is the only town in Franklin County to officially incorporate cultural development into its development strategy.

Also on Friday afternoon, Mary Vilbon, Craig Smith, Andrea Llamas, Terry Mosher will discuss the strong tourism industry of the small New England Village of Shelburne Falls.

"The goal is not only to give people ideas, but to generate new ideas as well. When people come together in a room, people are inspired," said George.

"Annie" at T.F.H.S. a Great Success



ELLEN BLANCHETTE PHOTO

Oliver Warbucks (T.J. Meyer) tells Annie (Alyson Rose) he wants to adopt her as his daughter in the March 10 performance of Annie at Turners Falls High School.

BY ELLEN BLANCHETTE

TURNERS FALLS – If anyone had any doubt that students at Turners Falls High School could continue to perform up to the high standards set in previous years, the production of the musical *Annie* this past weekend makes it clear there is no shortage of talent in Turners Falls.

Under the direction of Michael Bradley, musical director for the Gill-Montague school district, the students put on a show that was as good as any before it. In the lead role of Annie, Alyson Rose portrayed the orphan as a kind and sensitive girl made willful by her determination to find her parents.

The acting of Rose and the other young girls who played fellow orphans displayed sincere caring and affection for each other. Equally believable was the lovely young Joanna Browning, playing the mean and matronly head mistress of the orphanage.

Browning played the mistress the way a real actress does; she seemed to accept the motives, loneliness and selfishness of this disagreeable character as if they were her own. She ranted at everyone who questioned her with such sincerity that you could not help but see she had become Miss Hannigan. With each increasing bit of outrageous behavior, her performance became that much more

believable and funny.

As for the music, each small group, whether the young orphan girls, or the rich man's maids and servants, the lead performers all sang beautifully. The entire cast approached music and dance with discipline; they had good sweet voices, were on key, in time and sang with meaning.

Annie opened with the best-known song of the show, "Tomorrow," sung with a wistful mixture of sadness and hope. The orphan girls joined her and sang a few numbers by themselves. In each case, the cast members remained aware of the parts they were playing and the meaning behind the songs.

see ANNIE page 5

Pet of the Week Macho Mutt



Macho

Hi! I'm a 6-year-old male Shih Tzu mix who weighs 12 pounds. I'm a sociable, snug-gly little guy who enjoys lots of attention and cuddles.

I prefer an adult only home as young kids make me very nervous. I'm friendly meeting other dogs but would need a home without cats - can't help myself; they are too fun to chase. I will need some help with housetraining too.

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

Turners Falls To Shut Off Water To Non-Paying Customers

Beginning Tuesday, March 19, the Turners Falls Water Department will begin shutting water off at properties with water usage bills that are more than 90 days over due.

The original semi-annual bills were mailed on Nov. 1 and were due within 30 days.

Payments can be made at the Water Department, 226 Millers Falls Road, or online at www.turners-fallswater.com.

To pay online, click on "Pay Water Bill" and follow the directions on the screen.

The department is open Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

A drop box is located at the offices to the left of the door. For questions, call the clerk's office at (413) 863-4542.

Upcoming Series Teaches Caregivers Essential Skills

Participants at "It Starts with Communication," a free workshop to be held at Franklin County Home Care this Tuesday, March 19, from 1 to 3 p.m., will learn ways to effectively communicate with, understand, and care for loved ones with dementia of any kind, including Alzheimer's disease.

If you are unable to attend this first workshop, entitled "Essential Skills for Family Caregivers," there's still time to sign up for the next two. All three classes will offer caregivers practical suggestions to help care for loved ones.

The second class in the series takes place on Tuesday, April 16, from 1 to 3 p.m. The workshop, "Understanding Behaviors," will focus on learning to interpret behaviors as a method of communication.

All classes are led by Melissa Grenier, LCSW, and will take place at Franklin County Home Care (FCHCC), 330 Montague City

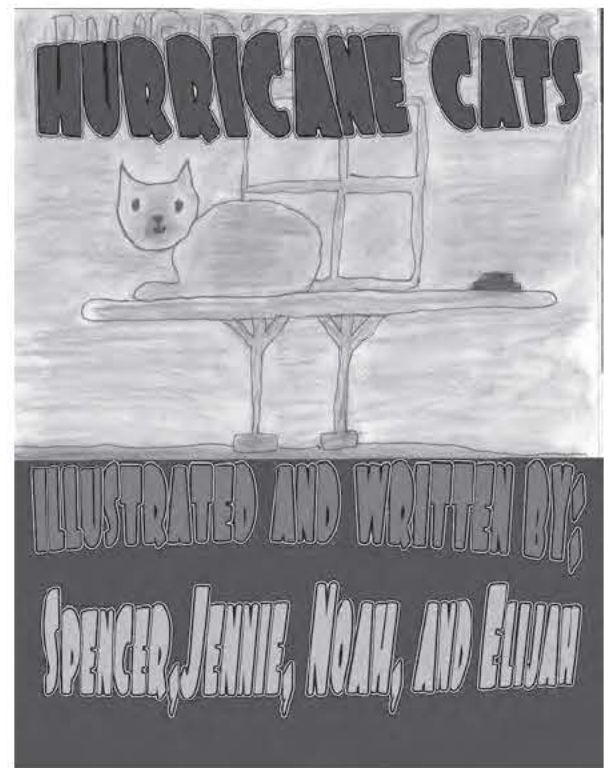
Road, Turners Falls, in the Conference Room.

The final class, "Safety at Home," is from 1 to 3 p.m. on Tuesday, May 14.

Pre-registration is required due to limited seating. To pre-register, call the Alzheimer's Association at 1-800-272-3900 or sign up online at www.alz.org/MANH. This program is not open to professional caregivers. Caregiver respite may be available. Contact Laurie Deskavich at (413) 773-5555 x.2211 or (978) 544-2259 x.2211 or ldeskavich@fchcc.org for more information.

The Family Caregiver Program at FCHCC provides elders and caregivers with free information and help with many issues, including memory disorders, caregiver respite, in-home care, assistance navigating the elder care system, and more. For consultation appointments, call (413) 773-5555 or (978) 544-2259 or write to info@fchcc.org.

FACES & PLACES



Leverett Elementary School Picture Book Project

Hurricane Cats is a book about hurricanes, written and illustrated by 6th grade students at Leverett Elementary School.

As part of their science curriculum, students in Ms. Alyson Bull's and Mr. Bill Stewart's classroom were presented a design challenge in November. Working in teams, the students needed to create interesting and engaging picture books appropriate for Grades 3 and up on earth science topics exploring the atmosphere, hydrosphere and geosphere. They needed to create

high quality, informative, non-fiction picture books about the planet Earth to meet the new 2012 Common Core Standards for Teaching and Learning. The illustrations, graphics and photographs had to be original. Lastly, the team had to be prepared to "pitch" their non-fiction picture book to an editing team of experts in the field by the Feb. 1 deadline.

It was a tremendous amount of work, but the students worked together and produced high quality publications. Above is an example of their beautiful completed works.

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JESSICA LARKIN ILLUSTRATION

By FRED CICETTI

*Q. I have friends in France who
take St. John's wort for depression.
Do you think this stuff works?*

St. John's wort (*Hypericum perforatum*, or Klamathweed) is one of the most commonly purchased herbal products in the United States. However, do not take this product unless you have consulted your physician.

The St. John's wort plant has been used medicinally for many centuries. It was popular in ancient Greece. The plant grows in Europe, Asia, Africa, and the western United States. The plant is often in full bloom around June 24, the

day traditionally celebrated as the birthday of St. John the Baptist.

Today in Europe, it is used widely to treat mild-to-moderate depression.

St. John's wort is a shrubby plant with clusters of yellow flowers. Both the flowers and leaves of the plant are used as medicine. St. John's wort can be obtained in capsules, tablets, tinctures, teas, and oil-based skin lotions. Chopped or powdered forms of the dried herb are also available.

St. John's wort has antibacterial and antiviral properties. It fights inflammation and has been used to treat wounds. St. John's wort may help relieve some types of depression but the evidence is *not definitive*.

There is some scientific data indicating that St. John's wort may be helpful in treating *minor* depression. However, two large studies showed that the herb was no more effective than placebo in treating major depression of moderate severity. One of these studies was sponsored by the National Center

THE HEALTHY GEEZER

Saint John's Wort: Does This Stuff Work?

for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM), which is part of the National Institutes of Health.

St. John's wort contains several chemicals, including hypericin, hyperforin, and flavonoids. Researchers aren't sure how St. John's wort works. Some have suggested that the herb acts like antidepressants by making more of the brain chemicals – known as neurotransmitters – serotonin, dopamine, and norepinephrine available. These chemicals work as mood elevators.

It should be stressed that the herb can cause serious side effects. In general, herbal therapies are not recommended for the elderly, pregnant women, children, or those taking certain medicines.

It is also important to note that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has not approved St. John's wort for use as an over-the-counter or prescription medicine for depression.

Combining St. John's wort with certain antidepressants can lead to a potentially life-threatening

increase of serotonin. St. John's wort can also limit the effectiveness of many prescription medicines such as antidepressants, some blood-pressure drugs, birth control pills, the heart medication Digoxin, some HIV drugs, blood thinners, antihistamines, cough medicines, sedatives, some cancer medications, and statins that lower cholesterol.

Other less threatening side effects of St. John's wort include stomach upset, hives or other skin rashes, fatigue, restlessness, headache, dry mouth, and feelings of dizziness or mental confusion. St. John's wort can also make the skin overly sensitive to sunlight.

Great Falls Middle School Students of the Week

Grade 6

Dylan Allen

Shawn Rivard

Grade 7

Maya Hancock-Pezzati

Grade 8

Tess Hunter

Senior Center Activities - March 18th to March 22nd

GILL MONTAGUE SENIOR CENTER

Gill/Montague Senior Center, located at 62 Fifth Street in 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. Meal reservations must be made one day in advance by 11 a.m. The Meal Site Manager is Kerry Togneri. All fitness classes are supported by a grant from the Executive Office of Elder Affairs. Voluntary donations are accepted. For 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, 3/18

10:10 a.m. Aerobics

10:45 a.m. Chair Exercise

12 p.m. Potluck & Bingo

1 p.m. No Knitting Circle

Tuesday, 3/19

9:30 a.m. Chair Yoga

1 p.m. Painting Class

Wednesday, 3/20

10 a.m. Aerobics

12:45 p.m. Bingo

Thursday, 3/21

9 a.m. Tai Chi

1 p.m. Pitch

Friday, 3/22

10 a.m. Aerobics

10:45 a.m. Chair Exercise

1 p.m. Writing Group

ERVING

Erving Senior Center, 1 Care Drive, Ervingside, is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. for activities and congregate meals. Lunch is at 11:30 a.m., with reservations required 24 hours in advance. Call Mealsite Manager Rebecca Meuse at (413) 423-3308, for meal information and reservations.

For information, call Polly Kiely, Senior Center Director, at (413) 423-3649. Transportation can be provided for meals, shopping, or medical necessity. Call the Center to confirm activities, schedule a ride, or find out when is the next blood pressure clinic.

Monday, 3/18

9 a.m. Tai Chi

10 a.m. Osteo-Exercise

12:30 p.m. Movie- TBA

Tuesday, 3/19

8:45 a.m. Chair Aerobics

10:15 a.m. Steve Damon- "Name that Tune"

12:30 p.m. Painting

Wednesday, 3/20

8:45 a.m. Aerobics

10 a.m. Chair Yoga

10:30 a.m. Greenfield Savings

Bank Craft project

12 p.m. Bingo

Thursday, 3/21

8:45 a.m. Aerobics

10 a.m. Posture Perfect

12 p.m. Cards

Friday, 3/22

9 a.m. Bowling

9:30 a.m. Sit and Knit

LEVERETT

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

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

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

WENDELL

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

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Local Briefs

Compiled By DON CLEGG

The Montague Public Libraries are very grateful to have been the beneficiary of the March Hope and Olive’s Soup and Games Night, which raises money for local non-profits. The event raised over \$1900 for children’s library programs, thanks to the generosity of local restaurants, businesses, and patrons.

Wonderful soups, breads, macaroni and cheese, and pizza were donated by 2nd St. Bakery, The Brass Buckle, Bread Euphoria, Diemand Farm, Franklin County Technical School, Gill Tavern, Green Fields Market, Hope and Olive, Susan Lowery, Magpie, Max Brody and Joanna Frankel, Mesa Verde, The People’s Pint, and The Rendezvous. Over forty raffle prizes were also donated.

The Libraries also wish to thank the many individuals who attended. More helpers than can name baked, planned, procured raffle items, set up, ran the coffee can raffle and bake sale, bused tables, greeted guests, and cleaned up. The Libraries could not have done it without everyone’s help.

Safe Kids of Western Massachusetts is now offering a monthly child car seat inspection station at the Greenfield Fire Department, located at 412 Main Street in Greenfield. Certified Child Passenger Safety Technicians will perform inspections. Parents and caregivers will be trained in the proper installation and setup of their own specific car seats in their own vehicles. The car seat safety checks are free and open to the public by

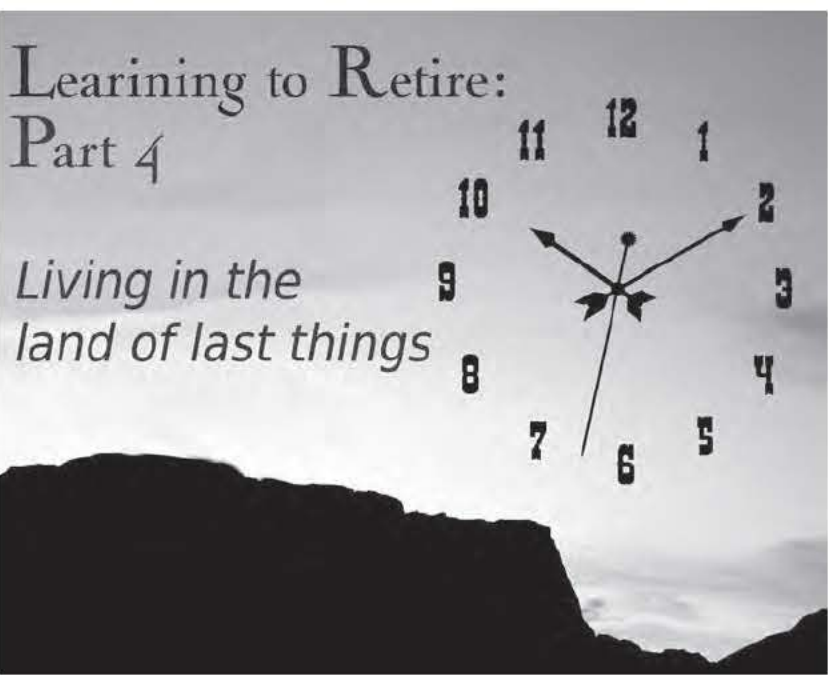
appointment. Inspections usually take 20 to 30 minutes to complete. The next safety check will take place on Tuesday, March 19 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. For an appointment, please call Baystate Health Link at (413) 773-2454.

The Franklin County Technical School will present “Little Shop of Horrors” on Friday, March 22, at 7 p.m. and Saturday, March 23, at 2 p.m. at the Shea Theater in Turners Falls. The musical show is directed by teacher Dan Prasol and the music direction is by Dave Maloney. Tickets are available by calling (413) 863-9561 x 233; tickets are also available at the door.

Our Lady of Czestochowa Church Annual Easter Bazaar, located on 7th Street in Turners Falls, will be on Saturday, March 23, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Baked goods, spring gift ideas and communion gifts will be available along with a Spring Gaik raffle.

The Sports Medicine Program at Baystate Franklin Medical Center and Baystate Rehabilitation Care will sponsor a free sports clinic, Competitive & Recreational Sports: Maximizing Function & Results, on Sunday, March 24, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. in BFMC’s main conference rooms. The workshop is designed to help athletes of all ages and abilities prevent and manage injuries and enhance their overall performance. The clinic will include a light breakfast and lunch.

Send local briefs to editor@montaguereporter.org.



By LEE WICKS

Last week I bumped into a friend who is a house painter with particular regard for old houses. He told me about some new products he’s using now; he’s found an exterior paint that will last twenty years. He wondered if my house needs painting. That gave me pause since I don’t even know if I will last for twenty years. It caused me to think about living in the land of last things.

For instance; I am sure we have just purchased our last stove, refrigerator and dishwasher. They each failed within a few months of each other, which is too bad because we might have wrangled a bargain had we gone out for all three at once. We’re approaching the same condition in regards to the washer and dryer. They work, but there’s a lot of rust, some alarming noises, and they are not energy efficient at all.

So the question is this: if you’re shopping for the last washing machine you will ever buy or perhaps your last car, or painting your house or repairing a roof, how does the experience change by knowing you will not be doing it again? There’s an initial temptation

to splurge. If this isn’t the time to buy the special features you always wanted, then when will be the right time?

But, there’s also thrift and practicality. Will a new washing machine or stove with computerized settings and additional options really get the clothes any cleaner or make our food taste better? Why not save the money and go on a cruise? Assuming you can ignore reports of food poisoning or that awful story of the stranded cruise ship that lost its power and reeked of sewage and rotting food. In this light, the stove with all the bells and whistles seems like a bargain. And it comes in red. I say if you like to cook, go for the stove and forget the twenty-year paint job and the thirty- year roof. The next person who lives here can deal with those.

As I write this morning, both our dogs are sleeping on the sofa, which is probably not our last sofa, since it takes a lot of abuse. But Lola and Izzie may very well be our last dogs, and that makes me sad since dogs have been a part of our lives since 1986 when we adopted Dusty. There are people in the neighborhood who still remember him.

There is a problem with this last dog scenario, and that is that unless

they die together, the surviving dog will be painfully lonely. I can imagine us getting one to keep the survivor company, and then getting another to keep the new dog company when the survivor dies, and on and on in an infinite progression of dogs, each one smaller than the last, since we cannot grow old and frail with more than 100 pounds of dog to manage.

Also, in response to the dogs, I am sure we have bought our last vacuum cleaner. It’s a Miele upright, strong and heavy as a German tank with a light on the front that illuminates the true extent of the dog hair on our floors and rugs. I can barely lift it, but it does a great job of extracting dirt from the spaces between our wide pine floorboards. It’s a fact: old houses get dirtier than new ones. They just do, and periodically I start thinking about a newly built condo; the problem being that no condo association will have us with these two dogs.

So we will stay put for now with our new appliances, and the incredible vacuum cleaner, the dogs, and our friends and neighbors. In truth, this land of last things is actually a great place to be, with no huge budget-busting purchases on the horizon, unless we someday need long-term care, and I do not even want to think about that. This particular time of life is liberating. It eliminates the energy that gets applied when buying stuff, and makes me realize how much of my adult life has been spent pursuing the right college, car, house, job, spouse, professional wardrobe, aforementioned appliances, my child’s school, orthodontist, and on and on.

Free of all that there is time to turn attention away from the stores and the ads and look inward. If there’s nothing we need, then what do we want? That question evolves into a consideration of meaning and mission, and offers a chance to learn something brand new about yourself, or your spouse, even after all this time.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Wednesday, 2/27 5:44 a.m. Medical emergency at █ Avenue A. Removed to hospital. 3:08 p.m. Medical emergency at █ Turners Falls Road, Montague. Removed to hospital. 5:00 p.m. Theft at █ Emond Avenue, Turners Falls. Thursday, 2/28 12:08 a.m. Summons issued in the Turners Falls alley to a driver with a revoked drivers license. 3:31 p.m. Breaking, entering and burglary at █ Bridge Street, Millers Falls. 4:31 p.m. Vandalism at █ Avenue	Juvenile Arrested for Driving Without a License in Turners Falls B, Turners Falls. 4:53 p.m. Medical Emergency at Sheffield Elementary School in Turners Falls. Removed to hospital. 8:04 p.m. Medical emergency at Food City in Turners Falls. Removed to hospital. Friday, 3/1 12:28 p.m. Well-being check at █ Avenue A. Referred to another agency. 5:04 p.m. Theft at Food City in Turners Falls. 5:47 p.m. Medical emergency at █ 3rd Street, Turners Falls. Removed to hospital. 5:53 p.m. Hit and run on Canal	Arrested for Driving Without a License in Turners Falls Road on the bridge entering Greenfield. 6:38 p.m. Burglary alarm sounded at █ K Street. 10:20 p.m. Fire alarm investigated at █ Grand Avenue, Millers Falls. Saturday, 3/2 2:09 p.m. Person removed to hospital for mental health protection on Avenue C in Turners Falls. 10:16 p.m. Neighborhood disturbance at █ Avenue A, Turners Falls. 10:19 p.m. Domestic disturbance at █ Avenue A, Turners Falls.	Sunday, 3/3 2:29 a.m. Suspicious auto at Scotty’s Convenience Store in Turners Falls. 2:44 p.m. Annoying, harassing text to resident at █ 3rd Street. 6:17 p.m. Harassing threats at █ Laurel Lane, Montague. 10:26 p.m. Animal complaint at █ Green Pond Road, Millers Falls. 11:29 p.m. Juvenile arrested in the alley behind 3rd Street for driving without a license after being pulled over for a number plate violation and not having their lights on.
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The Rotary Club of Franklin County presents

The Annual Easter Egg Hunt

At Beacon Field in Greenfield

on Saturday, March 30

from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

This fun free event will have activities for three age groups and will include: a visit from the Easter Bunny, Face Painting, Cookie Decorating, Candy, D. J. Bobby C., and over 9,000 eggs to find!

Reminder from the Wendell Town Clerk


Tuesday, April 16 is the last day to register to vote in the annual town election, which will be held on Monday, May 6. Polls will be open from Noon to 8 p.m.

You must have returned your annual town census form to remain on the active voter list.

Call the Town Clerk for information at (978) 544-3395 x 102

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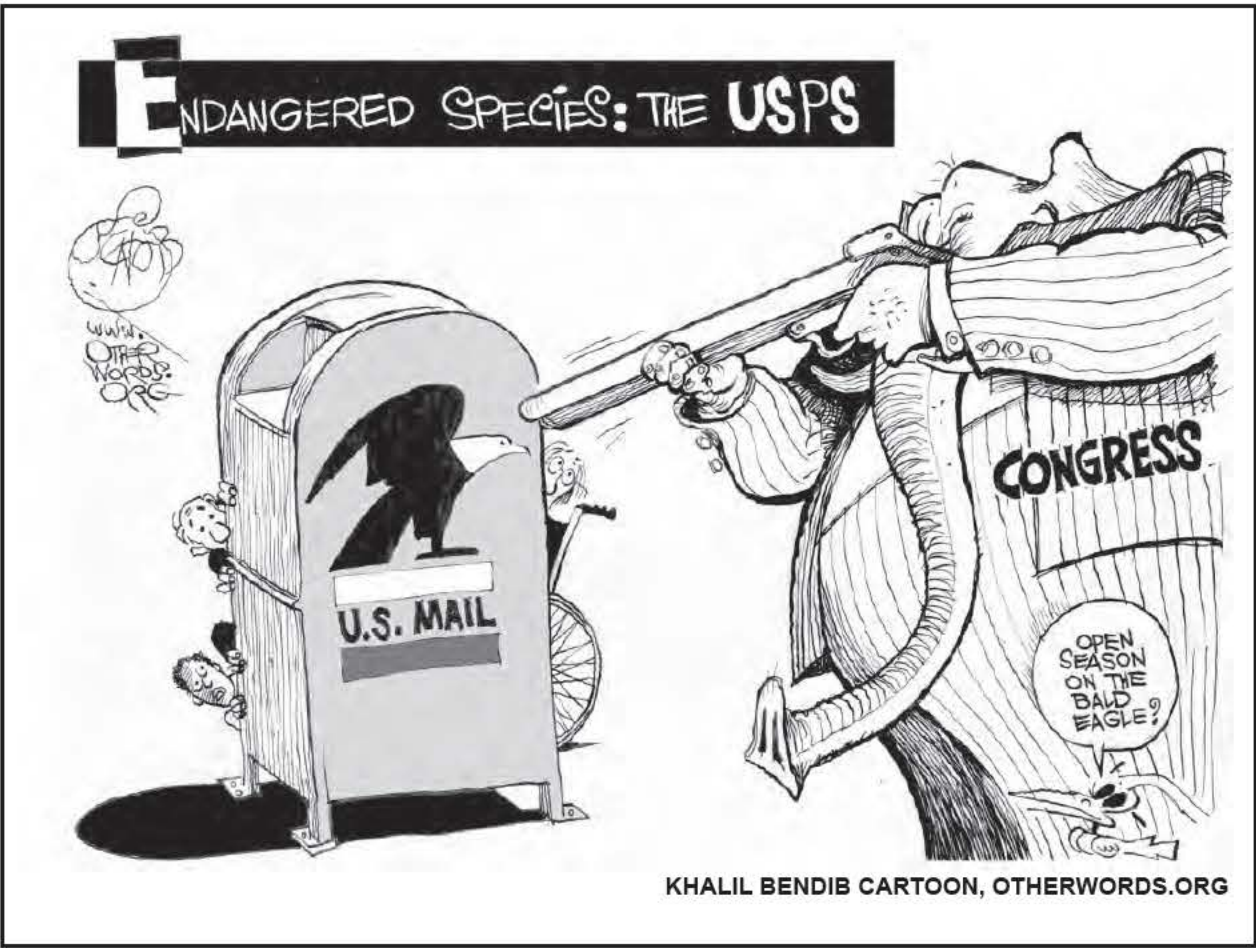
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True Colors are to Dye For

Americans should think twice before adding green food coloring to everything from bagels to beer on St. Patrick's Day.

By JILL RICHARDSON

A friend and I once tricked his kids on St. Patrick's Day. Maybe "tricked" is too strong of a word for what we did: The festive green pasta we served was spinach fettuccine, but we didn't admit that it contained traces of the vegetable.

The pasta didn't taste at all of spinach. The kids, no doubt, assumed it contained a much more "acceptable" ingredient: artificial food dye. And the meal was eaten without complaints. Afterward, I 'fessed up, gleeful to prove to the kids that vegetables can sometimes taste good.

We pulled the same stunt at the little one's birthday party, using a few drops of beet juice to dye the cake frosting pink. That secret had to be kept under wraps because even some grown-ups at the party would have avoided the cake had they known. They were much happier assuming the frosting was made with a food dye derived from a petroleum product.

St. Patrick's Day is the day of green food — and I don't mean salad. Green food dyes are added to everything from bagels to beer. For years now, the Center for Science in the Public Interest has warned us that these dyes pose "a rainbow of risks." At the top of their list of concerns is cancer. Several commonly used and legal food dyes have been linked to it in tests on lab animals.

Even more commonly cited concerns are hyperactivity and behavioral problems in children. Years ago, one of my friends found that his stepson was extremely sensitive to these food dyes. After removing the dyes from his stepson's diet, the little boy's behavior improved. After that, every now and then, the little one would act up and his parents would find out he'd had a popsicle or other artificially colorful snack at a friend's house.

Of course, not all kids are so sensitive. But imagine your child attending school with someone else who is. How much attention will

your child receive if the teacher is trying to deal with an off-the-wall classmate who ate Froot Loops for breakfast?

Sometimes, the chemicals in our lives are there to serve a purpose. Sometimes, the chemicals we use might be harmful, but there are no safer alternatives. For example, I'm not sure what effects the pharmaceuticals I take every day for my migraines have on my body. But I'm positive that living with daily migraines is worse.

Artificial food dyes serve no purpose (although a 5-year-old who wants a birthday cake with pink frosting might disagree) and we have safe alternatives. A few years ago, the British banned artificial food dyes for these reasons. A McDonald's strawberry sundae in London is red because it contains strawberries. Imagine that! Over here, it's dyed red with artificial food coloring.

You know what that means? All of the world's largest food companies that sell the same products in both the UK and the United States already know how to make their products without food dyes. And, apparently, the cost of making the switch did not put them out of business or tank their profits.

Why must Americans continue to face risks from artificial food dyes while the British play it safe? Let's follow their lead on this one.

Columnist Jill Richardson is the author of Recipe for America: Why Our Food System Is Broken and What We Can Do to Fix It. This article was first published on OtherWords.org.

My first sled was a thick piece of well waxed cardboard. The total price was the time spent waxing, a bar of wax, which lasted the winter season, and a piece of hemp rope. I could move fast on cardboard, but couldn't steer it well. While launching, I had to pull up the front end and draw the rope tight, but not so tight that I tore out the rope holes. I usually sat upright as I cruised down the groove we had worn into the snow. There was a brook at the bottom of Robinson's Hill, but it was the steepest place we had for sliding.

One day, when I was about 9, wearing a warm, blue snowsuit, prepared for the weather, happy and carefree, one of the older boys jumped out in front of me as I was sliding down the hill. I didn't have time to assess the situation, so I slid off the cardboard to avoid hitting him. Unfortunately, I slid right into a sled that had straight runners and it punctured my right knee. That runner went in deep and I still carry the scar. I always think of that accident when I see the newer style

sleds with upturned safety runners.

I was having fun, so stayed out on the hill awhile longer. By the time I reached home, there was blood all over the inside of my snowsuit and I could feel something as my Mom pulled off my suit. What a mess. I didn't realize how badly I was hurt and hadn't checked my leg before returning home. Although the accident wasn't my fault, I was punished, not Jimmy Gleason. I was on cardboard, not a real sled. My mother's reaction led me to believe she cared more about the damage to my suit than what had happened to me.

Later, we owned a Flexible Flyer with metal runners and front steering. I rode that sled on the East trail runway, which was not as steep as Robinson's Hill. One winter, we had an ice storm, so we sailed down that trail. There was a T in the trail system, so we had to make a sharp right turn or bail out by flipping over. If I could make the turn, I would begin moving even faster, and then I would drop down onto the pond. If I was moving fast enough when I

hit the ice, I could glide out across towards the railroad tracks on the other side. What a ride!

Today, the pond called Lake Pleasant is protected as part of the water supply, so the children living there are forbidden from experiencing the joyous adventures I found so pleasant and entertaining.

Like most of my friends, I didn't have skis or skates. As I recall, Mr. Walsh built an ice skating rink in their side yard. Because we didn't have skates, we usually went over to the riding club to slide on the ice that froze into the long narrow track left by the horses. That was great exercise: run, slide, run, slide, and run, slide again.

I was three years old when my family bought a house in Lake Pleasant and 11 when we moved to Montague Center in 1955, so I only lived there for eight years. Nevertheless, I have great memories of being free to enjoy the great outdoors, no matter the season.

— Muriel E. Russell Colrain

Dear Clio . . .

Dear Clio,

Most of my adult life, I have always been slightly worried that I would never find work that I loved. I have worked at many different jobs over the years, and have found most to be tolerably interesting for a while until I get too bored and antsy and need to move on. Several years ago, that all changed. I finally found a job that I find very rewarding.

I work for an organization that challenges me to learn new things all the time. I've never felt so engaged and excited by a job and some days I think I'm truly one of the lucky ones.

However, my work is so busy that it takes its toll on my personal life. I have had to give up on nearly all of the things I used to enjoy regularly and that helped keep me sane: exercise, cooking, spending

time with friends, sleeping 8 hours, reading novels and watching movies. The stressful juggling act of professional and personal demands is starting to show its effects — anxiety, disturbed sleep, and mild depression.

We live in a culture that doesn't seem to value reducing things in our lives, only adding things on. But choosing what you want involves not choosing something that you also want.

How do I choose what will make me feel I'm living a fulfilled life?

— Sincerely,
Work Life Imbalanced

Dear WLI,

Congratulations on finding a great job! If you are working too hard to sleep 8 hours a night and still count

yourself as lucky, then you must be doing something right!

I agree that we live in a culture that does not value socializing, resting, or introspection. You asked about choosing among the many activities that compete for your time. My guess is that you have commitments like earning money, doing housework, and caring for others that you must do. Adding activities like exercise and socializing pulls you in too many directions. You are constantly running on adrenaline, trying to push through that last mile, only the final stretch never comes.

I would argue that having too much time on our hands does not make us happy either. Joy lies somewhere in our tangle of commitments. The trick is creating enough order and balance that we may find it.

Many of us have lives that are like a cluttered room. What do you do with clutter in your house? Get rid of what you don't need, and organize what you have left. Can you do this with your time as well? For each activity in your life, consider the ratio of what you get out of it to the amount of stress it is causing you. If the benefits balance the effort, that is about right. If the benefits outweigh the energy you put in, even better. For most people, exercise falls into this category. Time with family and friends may also. These activities are worth the time they take. They recharge us

and balance the responsibilities that exact a toll.

Most of us have a few commitments in our lives that fall into this third category; the stress that goes in is more than the gain. We do these things because we feel obligated or because we are not good at saying no. We think, 'If I don't do this, no one else will.'

Take a minute to catalog the energy-draining commitments in your life, the ones where the stress outweighs the benefits. Chances are you cannot just quit doing them today, but you can bring them into your consciousness as areas that are up for review. Flag them as places where change could happen in the future. For now, is there a way to give yourself a little distance from a task in order to gain perspective on it? Can you take a day off once a month, extend a deadline, ask for help?

Let's be realistic; this is not going to free up hours of time. So, assuming life will be busy, are there ways that you can continue to work just as hard while giving your anxious mind a rest? I guarantee you will feel less tired if you can.

There are two techniques that can help on this front—routines and lists. You may be thinking, "But I'm not the routine type." I would say that most of us are not, but we can learn. The reason to build routines into your life is that they allow you to switch on the autopilot and let your brain relax. For example, I pack my kids' lunch boxes in the

see **WORK LIFE** page 5

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

Wounded	Deaths
17,674	2,187

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Montague Schools Provide an Hour of Reading Delight



Jill Krysil, a Hillcrest first grade teacher, reads *Oh the Places You'll Go* to children at the Sheffield school on Tuesday evening in celebration of Dr. Seuss' birthday. Photo by Rebecca Zimmerman.

ANNIE from page 1

T.J. Meyer, playing Oliver Warbucks, the rich man who takes an interest in Annie, was charming in his honest approach of a man just discovering that there is more to life than making money. Brooke Martineau, played Grace Farrell, Mr. Warbucks assistant, statuesque and elegant in demeanor as well as style, was delightful as a smart caring woman with a quick wit and direct manner. Ken Leng clearly enjoyed the part of Rooster, one of several he played, showing his versatility and talent for entertainment. He and Lauren Grimard, who played Lily St. Regis, provided a bit of comic relief as two unscrupulous grifters.

Many cast members played more than one part. Andrew LaPenta played President Roosevelt. Sophie Letcher, Emma Johnson, and Serena

Smith performed as the Boylan Sisters. Playing the orphans, maids, servants, and other parts were Jenna Jacobson, Keltyn Socquer, Julia Massey, Hannah Bogusz, Lexi Wickline, Danielle Lively, Mereya Ortiz, Owen Ortiz, Maggie Sroka, Kayla Drumgool, Nichole Voudren, Luca Garavaglia, and Lucy the dog played Sandy.

Many more people contributed to the show including stage crew and parents who worked hard to support the students; they worked on costumes and sets and as one student said, "carted" them back and forth so they could attend rehearsals. Much of the financial support for the music department comes from the music Boosters.



WORK LIFE from page 4

same order every day. It might sound silly, but I used to expend a lot of mental effort on this task. Now it is so automatic, I sometimes forget whether I have done it. Lunches take the same amount of time, but my mind is not taxed with thoughts like, "Don't forget the apple!"

To-do lists operate on the same principle; once you have written something down, you can stop worrying that you might forget it. There are many books out there about list making and about routines. I recommend that you find systems that work with your lifestyle. Personally I am always adding new ones. Every scrap of mental clarity helps!

Routines can help you squeeze in a little time for yourself, as well. I find that I am most likely to

By PATRICIA PRUITT

The Dr. Seuss Birthday Read and Party is fun for all involved: kids, parents, teachers, staff and volunteers. On Tuesday evening, March 12, the Sheffield elementary school classrooms and cafeteria were filled with Seuss celebrations.

In the classes teachers read a variety of well-loved Dr. Seuss titles. Susan Pelis (of grade 2) read *O The Thinks You Can Think*; Robin Whiteman (of grade 2) read *One Fish Two Fish*; Jill Krysil (of grade 1) read *Oh The Places you'll Go*; David Weidenfeld (school counselor) read *Sneetches*; and Krista Matrishon (of grade 2) read *The Lorax*.

Next came a trip down the hall to the cafeteria. In no time the room was a babble and a flurry as kids and parents settled in and picked out brightly colored – *think about red, think about pink* – frosted chocolate cupcakes, and milk.

Everyone sang "Happy Birthday" to Dr. Seuss, followed by a video on the big screen at the front of the room. Suddenly, a younger Justin Bieber appeared

reading *The Cat in the Hat* to the assembled group.

Then Bingo for Books! The bingo game began and soon kids were getting Bingo! and a chance to pick out a new copy of a story book in English or Spanish. In the end, everyone got a new book to take home. All that in one short hour! Very Seuss!

CORRECTION

In the article on School Regionalization that appeared last week, in the March 7, 2013 edition of *The Montague Reporter*, Leverett Elementary School principal Anne Ross was misquoted as saying "the educational benefits of regionalization speak for themselves." She actually said the quality of education at LES "speak for themselves."

Writes Ross, "My intent was to convey my confidence that the quality of education that the children receive at Leverett Elementary School is superior and the children are well prepared for the academic program at Amherst Regional Middle School."

that small problem out from the overwhelming I'm Too Busy All The Time problem, I was able to make sure to do it before bed. Problem solved. Some problems, like getting up early are not solvable, but placing the blame where it belongs—on the alarm clock!—and not on a miserable life, can help keep things in perspective.

WLI, I wish you luck in your pursuit of balance. These days we New Englanders can see signs of spring amidst the dirty March snow. I believe the green shoots of a joy and peace are beginning to break the surface in your overwhelming life. May they blossom in sunlight!

—Yours, Clio



REGIONALIZE from page 1

considered by the committee. Others included maintaining the status quo, creating a four-town elementary region, a four-town pre-kindergarten through 12 region and a "hybrid" region, in which Shutesbury would join the new district in the seventh grade.

The majority of planning board members appeared to support a pre-K through 12 regionalization involving all four towns. Several others voiced support for separate elementary and middle/high school regions.

The strong support for regionalization reflected the belief that the current governance system was not fiscally "viable" in the long term, although several board members noted that a consultant's report showed relatively small initial savings from consolidation. "It's a wash" said Leverett Finance Board member Ann Delano about

the immediate saving.

Yet Delano and other committee members believed their districts were not viable in the long term and that consolidation would help avoid big funding problems down the road. Several board members rejected the argument that new member towns would inherit Amherst's financial problems, where there is currently a large gap in the Fiscal Year 2014 budget causing major program cuts.

On the educational side, board members accepted a consultant's conclusions that consolidation would create greater efficiency by reducing the number of reports sent to the state and the number of meetings central office staff would be required to attend. This would leave more time "to focus on education." Members also argued that consolidation would improve the "alignment" of curriculum, particularly in the transition from elementary to middle school.

However, there was less discussion of the pros and cons of consolidation than about which proposal would pass the required town meetings. After several hours of discussion, the meeting took a break while the three members from Shutesbury caucused. Upon their return, Shutesbury reported its members did not feel comfortable bringing any proposal that required a change in the town's current elementary status to its town meeting. That left either the status quo, which no one on the board spoke in support of, or a three-town elementary district. Even the "hybrid" proposal, a four-town K through 12 region that Shutesbury would join in the seventh grade, would require approval of changes in the district agreement by all four towns.

The initial straw vote taken by the committee actually produced a 6-6 tie between the hybrid model and the three-town elementary

proposal. Then two committee members who had supported the hybrid changed their votes, creating a clear majority for the three town proposal. At that point, member Kip Fonsh of Leverett, who had been a strong supporter of the hybrid model, moved that the committee make the final decision unanimous to generate more support on town meetings. The motion was approved.

The next step in the process will be for the board to draft a potential regional agreement. Forums in each town will be held in April to "explain the [March 9] decision and gather input for design of a regional agreement." The agreement will be finalized in June, at which point there will be another set of town forums to review the proposed regional agreement and a state-required "Long Term Plan." In November each town will vote separately on whether to approve the regional agreement. If approved by the

towns, the proposal will go to the state for consideration in December. July 1, 2014 is the "assumed start date for a new region."



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Transmission Series – Spiritual Paintings by Adrian Montagano at the Wendell Free Library

By RICHARD BALDWIN

WENDELL – The Wendell Free Library is pleased to present Transmissions, an exhibition of new paintings by Adrian Montagano. This stark and elegant show transforms the gallery space into a kind of chapel, filling the room with icons inviting the viewer to resonate with the energy embodied in each.

Montagano writes, “The new work is abstract with a foundation in archaic/futuristic symbols. This is not a form of writing, per se. They are ideograms or pictographs with a musical and mathematical foundation.”

The ten works here are done in acrylic and oil, and most are composed of white lines against almost black grounds. The lines for the most part are joined together forming sets that read as personages or clusters of energy. All the pieces are related, similar and yet different from one another. Montagano’s statement linking the paintings to music is apt indeed. Each can be read as a musical piece, not so much as a musical score, but more in terms of overall effect. As the eye moves across the network of lines, the result is a kind of visual music.

Besides music or an imaginative kind of mathematics, the works are reminiscent of marks on a dark cave wall, maps, or directions for some kind of travel. In a number of works, Transmission #19, #20, #21, and Transmission #20 and #18, the linear compositions form vertical units that seem like individuals, tall bars of energy topped with an auric-like area of white. These paintings seem much like sets of spirits grouped together. In the largest piece, Transmission #19, #20, #21, three large vertical paintings are placed together as if presiding over the room itself.

The rich black backgrounds overlay colored areas. They add another dimension of energy. In one piece, Transmission #25, the underlayment of mostly blues and reds, makes up another design behind the white map-like matrix in the foreground.

Two large paintings, Transmission #26 and #27, are long horizontal pieces hung one above the other. These are most like pieces of music with blue lines leading the eye rhythmically across the surface, stopping momentarily at the circles painted in blue, black and yellow, all against a background of dots

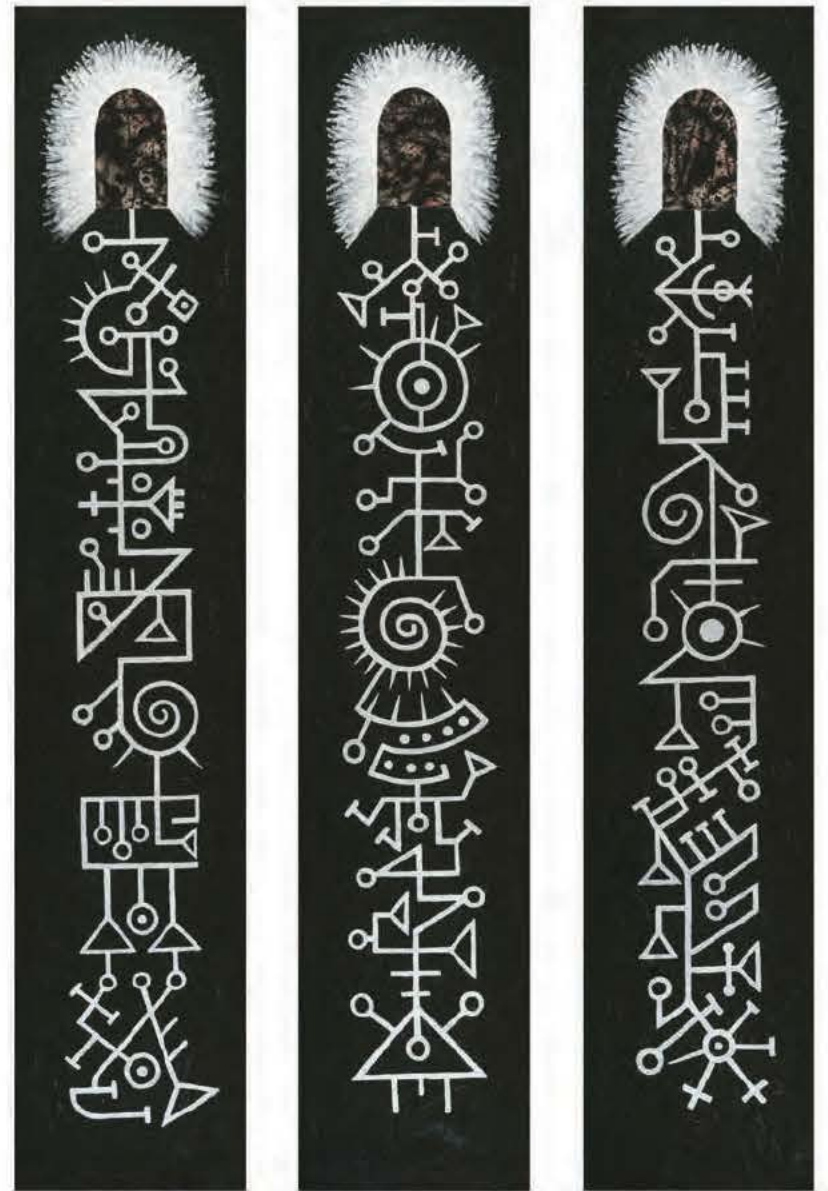
very much like notes on a staff.

Montagano, while having taken several art classes at Greenfield Community College, is largely self-taught. He has made art most of his life. As a young adult, making art became a central part of his life. While studying the history of art and image making, he developed a special attraction to icons, mandalas and glyphs, mark-making directly linked to spiritual practices. Recently this interest coalesced into a series of paintings. For Montagano these works are powerfully spiritual. They are not the result of looking outside at nature but rather sensing all-encompassing energy from within.

Montagano maintains a studio in Wendell. To see more of his work, visit www.portalsoftransmission.com.

There will be an artist reception at the Library on Saturday, March 23, from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.

The exhibition runs through April 30 in the Herrick Room at the Wendell Free Library. Hours: Tuesday 3-6; Wednesday 10-8; Saturday 9:30-3:30; (winter) Sunday 11:30 -3:30.



Caprine Capers



By KATHLEEN BUREK

MONTAGUE – Goats?! Goats you say? Why goats? That just brings up associations certain phrases: ‘getting your goat’ or ‘what a horny old goat!’ ‘A goatie!’

‘Scapegoat!’

How does one get mixed up with goats? When I mention that I raise goats to unsuspecting friends – I get the “stinky face.” You know, nose wrinkles, lips turn down maybe an ough or two.

The true nature of goats is in actuality the exact opposite of the bad press they receive. Goats are neat, clean and odor free. And are very soul satisfying.

Ahh, but there is a smell – a pungent strong – “come to me, my dahling” scent from none other than the male of the species – the buck! From about September to maybe, March, during the rutting season, the buck emits a scent intended to attract the female for breeding, similar to deer. So it is all about love. A doe will stand for the buck only when she and only she is in heat. Otherwise, forget that honey; I have a headache tonight.

If breeding is successful the gestation period is about 5 months.

These capricious animals are an ecologically sound resource that converts herbaceous substances humans are unable to use into food, fuel, fiber, milk, meat, hair,

skin nourishment and manure enrichment. (With fabulous results if fed to tomatoes.)

Goats are an appropriate animal for a household. A gallon of milk per day is an easy amount of supply to use and a goat’s manure output is made to home garden scale.

Goats are friendly social creatures; their herd being their social unit with a matriarch herd “queen” who is usually an older doe. They have feelings and emotions and usually display love to their babies. They are also complete vegetarians of the ruminant group.

Goat milk and goat milk dairy products are generally easier to

digest thanks to its smaller fat globules and different protein composition. It soothes the intestines with natural enzymes. (Note: The people of Bulgaria whose diet main consists of goat milk and goat milk products, have no incidence of colon cancers.)

Here’s something to ponder – adult goats are the same weight as humans and their babies are also within the same birth rate range as ours. Given the fact that the fat globules in the milk are smaller and more easily digestible, should we not be drinking goat milk when the projected weight of the adult goat is 200 pounds?

Bill Grogan's Goat

Bill Grogan's goat was feelin' fine, ate three red shirts right off the line.

Bill took a stick gave him a whack, and tied him to a railroad track Now, when that train came into sight, that goat grew pale and green with fright.

The whistle blew the train drew nigh, Bill Grogan's goat was doomed to die

He heaved a sigh, as if in pain, coughed up the shirts and flagged the train!

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Pontiac's War and How America Became American

By DAVID BRULE

OLD DEERFIELD – The First American War of Independence may well have been fought in 1763-1765, and not by English colonists, but by Chief Pontiac and his Indian allies.

So proposes Dr. Colin Calloway, Professor of History and Samson Ocom Professor of Native American Studies at Dartmouth College. He addressed a group of about 150 history enthusiasts at the Deerfield Community Center at the first of the Historic Deerfield Winter Lecture Series.

Author of numerous books and essays on Native American issues, Calloway focused his remarks on Pontiac's War of 1763, and how it led to the transformation of the North American continent. A decade before the Shot Heard 'Round the World at Lexington and Concord, Indian tribes along the colonies' western edge beyond the Appalachians and in French-controlled Indian Territory, rose up against the twist of fate dealt them with the scratch of a pen by the Treaty of Paris in 1763.

That treaty, signed thousands of miles from the North American frontier, had repercussions for the native populations in the Northeast and the impacts were felt in our own Connecticut River Valley and the Colony of Massachusetts.

Calloway began by questioning the wisdom of the audience: "Shouldn't we be somewhere else on such a beautiful Sunday afternoon?"

Indeed it was a bright sunny day outside the Center this past March 9. But this lecture had been postponed from February 24 due to a major snowstorm that never happened. And we were not going to miss this talented teacher present his talk on "How America Became American."

He began with the statement that "History is written by the victors," a truism with which many are familiar. Calloway then referred to a sketch of the North American continent prior to 1763, which was divided between France, Great Britain, and Spain. The British colonists were basically confined to the east coast, with the Appalachian Mountains separating them from French territory, which stretched west to the Mississippi. Were it not for the defeat of France in 1763 after the battle of Quebec at the end of the French and Indian War, a large part of North America would have been French-speaking.

The defeat of the French created a vast new territory, which the British intended to rule. But they soon

found themselves facing multiple nations of very independent Indians, who considered themselves still undefeated, and still free people.

The French policies had maintained friendly, symbiotic and mutually beneficial relations with powerful tribes known as the Seneca, Delaware, Ojibway, Shawnee, and Ottawas, among many others. They inhabited the territories around Lake Ontario, Lake Erie, Lake Huron, and lands further south.

The British replaced the French and began attempting to rule in an arrogant heavy-handed way. The Commander-in-Chief of the North American British forces was none other than the infamous General Jeffery Amherst. Calloway called him "arrogant and ignorant of Indian ways, he viewed this new part of the Empire as something to be governed, not negotiated and cultivated by the giving of gifts to Indians," as the French had done.

With famine and disease stalking the tribes in the newly designated British Indian Territory, the younger warriors grew restless and resentful of the British attempt to dominate, and they rose up in revolt. Soon, as with King Philip's War of 1675-76, Pontiac the Ottawa war chief and his allies set the British outposts on fire. Forts all the way from Fort Niagara to Fort Edward August and Detroit were either attacked, captured or besieged for months.

By the end of 1763, William Penn's "peaceable kingdom" had become a zone of vicious racial violence, with Indians attacking and killing settlers, and settlers turning on peaceful Christian Indians in their midst and massacring them. General Amherst exhorted his officers to "extirpate by whatever means, any of those nations that fall into your hands."

This was the time of Amherst's launch of the infamous germ warfare against the tribes. Pretending to offer a peace-making gift, one of his officers gave Indians two blankets and a handkerchief infected with small pox, taken from the Fort Pitt hospital. Members of the Delaware tribe accepted the gesture, and brought back the disease-laden gifts to the tribe. The officers hoped that the disease would have "the desired effect," and so it did, with smallpox ravaging the villages that year.

But by 1765, Pontiac had fought the British to a standstill, and had made peace.



"In the Shadow of the King," 1992 lithograph by Robert Griffing

He had prevented Amherst from making them a conquered people. Instead, the British had learned the hard way, and soon stepped into the role formerly occupied by the French, and as Calloway stated, "they learned how to deal with the Indians as allies."

But the most intriguing parts came in Calloway's conclusions. He sees a linkage starting with Pontiac's

War that led to the transformation of the North American continent. Calloway calls Pontiac's War, the "First War of Independence," for in fact within 12 years the English colonists began their own revolt against heavy-handed British rule, at Lexington and Concord. Many of the roots of the 13 Colonies' revolt stemmed from British policies in the Indian Wars, and in Pontiac's War

in particular. The colonists resented demands by the British for supplies, higher taxes to support the wars, the quartering of Redcoats, and forced recruitment of soldiers to fight Indians. The colonists increasingly saw the Redcoats as threats to their property, prosperity, and liberty.

Ironically, as the British disowned

see PONTIAC page 10

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NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD MEETING

Restaurant Asks Why Employees Can't Eat at the Box Car

By KATIE NOLAN

Sharon Porlier and Erika Lemieux of the Box Car restaurant in Erving came to the Monday, March 11 selectboard meeting to complain because they heard from town employees that town officials had told the employees not to take coffee or lunch breaks at the restaurant. "I don't understand why it's a problem with them being in our restaurant," said Porlier. "Why would anyone in town want to hurt a town business? The place is clean and the food is good."

Selectboard member Margaret Sullivan remarked that at times four town trucks were seen in the Box Car parking lot for longer than the 30-minute lunch break, which resulted in complaints.

Selectboard member Andrew Goodwin told Porlier and Lemieux, "I apologize; the town did not do a good job of managing this." He added that town employees can do anything they want on their lunch breaks.

Selectboard chair Eugene Klepadlo said, "The board should encourage employees to patronize businesses in town." Public works director Paul Prest said that the town's personnel policies were out of date and that time limits for breaks would be clarified under an ongoing review.

"Please reconfirm to town employees that they can come in and have their muffin or toast," Porlier said as she and Lemieux left the meeting.

Eric Weiss of Hampshire Power told the selectboard that, although his agency's electric rates had been high for the last three months, Erving has saved \$45,746 since it signed on with Hampshire Power in 2008. "I urge you to look at the big picture, rather than last month and the year in general," he said. At the March 4 selectboard meeting, senior and community center director Polly Keily said that the increased rates and the geothermal heating system's electricity demand "could blow my budget."

Weiss explained that Hampshire Power buys electricity from the electricity

spot market that changes hourly. Recently, the market price has been high because natural gas, the most common fuel used by New England power plants, has increased in cost, due to increased demand, supply constraints from hurricane Sandy effects and limited pipeline capacity for New England. Weiss said that market electric price had dropped from \$0.15 to \$0.07 per kilowatt hour over the last few weeks, and this decrease would be reflected in Erving's near future bills.

Weiss also introduced HampshireSolar, a partnership between Hampshire Council of Governments (COG) and nexamp to provide solar net metering credits. Under this program, a developer builds a solar or wind generation facility, and credits are assigned to municipalities. The town could sign a 20-year contract to buy credits at a 30.5 percent discount from National Grid and at a 21 percent discount from WMECO. That could mean that for \$1,000 in solar credits generated, the town would only pay \$790, and a credit of the difference of \$210 would appear on its WMECO electric bill.

Hampshire Solar is asking the selectboard to include an article on the annual town meeting warrant to allow the selectboard to pursue solar net metering, if it decides it is a good idea. According to Weiss, passing such an article would not obligate the town to sign up for net metering.

The selectboard reviewed the draft fiscal year 2014 requested budgets for the highway department (\$373,000), water department (\$86,500), and wastewater department (\$661,000). All three of these requested FY'14 budgets are slightly lower than FY'13 amounts. Selectboard members questioned the highway department's separate request for a new \$95,000 Ford F-550 truck. Noting that the town had bought new trucks in FY'12 and in FY'13, Klepadlo suggested that the department "stretch out buying trucks to every other year." Prest agreed to

get back to the board with more information about all three budgets and the proposed truck at the March 18 meeting.

Fire chief Almon "Bud" Meatey told the selectboard that a proposed new \$490,000 custom pumper rescue truck would replace two trucks, Engine #9 and the rescue truck, thus reducing ongoing maintenance and insurance costs. Meatey said that Engine #9, at 35 years old, is beyond the 30-year lifespan recommended by the National Fire Protection Association. He said that the department's current 18-year old rescue truck could probably be sold for \$35,000 to \$50,000 and the Engine #9 could be donated to a "poor and desperate" department. The new truck, which has a 2,000-gallon water tank, would be stationed in Erving Center, where there are no hydrants. Meatey said he would be meeting with a state-approved apparatus vendor on March 14 and would report back to the selectboard with additional information.

The selectboard signed a contract with Franklin County Regional Housing Authority (FCRHA) to continue administering the community development block grant for the low-to-moderate income housing revolving loan fund. Income-eligible families may apply for loans for health and safety repairs to bring their houses up to code. FCRHA inspects the home, develops a list of needed repairs, arranges the loan, monitors the work and pays the contractor. Homeowners pay off the loan only when the property is sold or transferred. According to FCRHA's Robin Sherman, there is currently \$1.374 million in outstanding loans in Erving. In Erving, repayments are returned to the loan fund. However, repayments may be used for other community development block grant eligible programs.

The board agreed to provisions in the contract that return repayments to the

see ERVING page 9

NOTES FROM THE GILL SELECTBOARD MEETING

Police Cruiser on Order but Still in Dispute

By DAVID DETMOLD

Not long ago, Gill selectboard member Ann Banash offered an opinion about Gill purchasing a fuel efficient hybrid vehicle for its new front line police cruiser. Hybrids were coming, sooner rather than later, for Franklin County police departments, "and I would love it if Gill would be the first."

But, after the board voted 2-1 earlier this year in favor of the conventional crash test safety of an SUV rather than the futuristic fuel efficiency of a hybrid, the debate over its new police cruiser, due to arrive this week, has hardly simmered down.

"I feel like he exceeded his authority," said Gill selectboard member John Ward, referring to Police Chief David Hastings' decision to purchase the vehicle, which according to minutes from recent town meeting votes on the matter was to have cost no more than \$33,000, fully equipped, with computer.

"It escalated from a [Dodge] Charger, to a [Ford] Interceptor, to an Interceptor SUV, to an Interceptor SUV 4-Wheel Drive," said Ward, at the selectboard meeting on Monday, March 11, with Hastings present. The options, including four-wheel drive, drove the price tag for the vehicle up to over \$32,800, said Ward, without the \$3,000 on board computer.

Hastings said the funds for the computer could be taken from the Northfield Mount Hermon payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) account, traditionally used for emergency response equipment for Gill's public safety departments, without going back to town meeting.

Ward said a spending limit set by town meeting has now been exceeded without selectboard approval. He also said that the safety complex, including the police department, planned to retain the use of the police department's retiring Ford Explorer, for situations where a four wheel drive vehicle would be needed, and Hastings' decision to purchase a four-wheel drive Interceptor would cost the

town more if a tire were to blow out after 20 or 30,000 miles, for example, requiring the purchase of four new tires instead of one to maintain the power train warranty.

"We didn't have this discussion when we purchased a truck for the highway department," said Banash, who participated via speaker phone from her vacation in Florida. Banash said, "I still don't have a problem allowing them to use \$3,000 for a computer from NMH." And she said department heads, like Hastings, know best what is needed for their departments, because, "They're the experts."

With the selectboard's approval, the Gill energy commission had set aside \$4,000 from a state grant of \$139,900 awarded to the town when Gill was formally designated a Massachusetts Green Community, to upgrade the town's planned purchase of a new police cruiser from a conventionally fueled vehicle to a hybrid or fuel efficient vehicle. Commission member Claire Chang said the \$4,000, added to the town's debt exclusion commitment of \$33,000 for a fully equipped cruiser, would have been sufficient to purchase the 2013 hybrid Ford Fusion on the state bid. That vehicle is rated at an average of 47 miles per gallon. The selectboard, citing safety concerns, voted 2-1 in January to purchase the Interceptor SUV, with a city rating of 16 miles per gallon, 23 on the highway. Ward voted in the minority.

On Monday, Ward refused to second a motion to allow the town to borrow from the Greenfield Cooperative Bank, for three years at a 1.51 percent rate of interest, the \$32,877 needed to make the Interceptor purchase. He abstained from the vote, which was approved, 2-0, saying, "I don't want to be part of this. I don't think we're doing the right thing."

An ongoing discussion about whether the new cruiser will be marked with town of Gill police department insignias has yet to be resolved. Ward said, "I'm looking at this as a front line

police cruiser, the first cruiser the town has purchased with taxpayer dollars in a long time. And I want this to be a marked vehicle."

In order for the police department to maintain one unmarked vehicle, which by custom, if not by law, police departments like Gill's have tried to maintain, for the transport of minors, or domestic violence victims, for example, Hastings said the department would have to pay to remove the markings from one of the older cruisers. Ward suggested that could be accomplished with a heat gun and minimal effort. Acting chair Randy Crochier asked Hastings to provide estimates of the cost to mark the new cruiser and unmark one of the older vehicles.

The discussion about the new police cruiser grew quite heated at times, with Chang suggesting Hastings was "dissing her" and Hastings implying not everyone present understood the needs of the police department. Meanwhile Banash, participating remotely from Florida, on several occasions said she had difficulty hearing what members of the audience were saying. The difficulty of hearing and identifying audience commentary has been cited as a factor to be considered when deciding whether to allow remote participation in town governmental meetings.

In other news, the board proposed a tentative date for annual town meeting on Monday, June 17.

Town administrative assistant Ray Purington noted that the Gill Montague Regional School District has revised its preliminary estimate for Gill's FY'14 assessment downward, to just \$34,407 more than last year's \$1.4 million figure, which would put this year's total within the margin of a 2.5 percent increase.

Banash said, "I think it's good they've reduced the budget. But there are still questions about the budget forecast and programming to answer."

Purington said the middle

see GILL page 9

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NOTES FROM THE LEVERETT SELECTBOARD MEETING

Shutesbury Opts Out of Regionalization Plan, for Now

By DAVID DETMOLD

Concerned that townspeople did not support the move to regionalize their elementary school with the schools of Amherst, Pelham and Leverett, the town of Shutesbury punted on current regionalization planning efforts, following a vote of the regional school district planning board during a five hour meeting in Amherst on Saturday, March 9.

A number of alternative school governance plans were considered at that meeting, according to Leverett selectboard member Julie Shively, who is also a member of the regional school district planning board that has been looking at options for the four towns, which are already regionalized for 7 – 12 education. Without Shutesbury, the other three towns will now pursue a three-town, K-6 region; town meeting votes are anticipated in November of this year to decide whether the modified regionalization plan will make it off the drawing board.

Shively told her colleagues on the selectboard on Tuesday, March 12, “Shutesbury decided not to opt in at this point. They could opt in down the road. While everyone thought a pre-K – 12 region would be

best, it could evolve into that. We will start next week to draft a regional agreement.”

Shively also said the regional planning board had failed to secure a state innovation grant to help defray the expenses that may be involved in drafting and securing a legal review of a regional agreement for the proposed pre-K – 6 three-town region, which would expand and replace the current superintendency union by

of the Amherst-Pelham region, which churned through five superintendents in as many years starting in 2008. Shively noted that Geryk had children of her own in the regional schools, and had previously served the region as director of student services, and as an interim superintendent in 2009.

Shively said the regional planning board would hold two more community forums in Leverett before the town meeting vote in November. She said the board hopes to draft a regional agreement before June 30, by which time any remaining funds from a previous state grant for regionalization planning must be expended.

Shively, who had told a public informational forum on school regionalization held at the Leverett Elementary School on Feb. 28 that a pre-K – 12 four-town region was the preferred option under consideration by the planning board, said Tuesday that after Shutesbury had withdrawn, “We thought pre-K – 6 would work better with the smaller towns,” of Pelham and Leverett, which remain committed to the plan.

She added, “We’re kind of excited. There’s a lot of work to be done, of course.” In reference to Leverett’s

see LEVERETT pg 10

“We’re working with a 20th-century model, and things have really changed in education.”

**— Julie Shively
Leverett Selectboard**

which the elementary schools of Pelham and Amherst are now governed under the superintendency of Maria Geryk, who also leads the Amherst-Pelham 7 – 12 region.

The proposed three town pre-K – 6 region would also be led by the Amherst superintendent, and Shively gave Geryk high marks for community relations, teacher morale, and potential longevity, following a period of upheaval in the top office

ERVING from page 8

loan fund, allow FCRHA to apply for waivers to increase the maximum amount of a loan, allow forgiving 50 percent of the loan after 15 years, and allow requests for forgiveness of the loan based on hardship.

Town administrator Tom Sharp told the selectboard that this week a Tighe & Bond structural engineer will evaluate the boiler building at the former Usher Plant before repairs, including a new roof for the building, are started. The \$7,950 cost for the structural analysis is covered by money voted for cleaning up the site at the August

2012 special town meeting. The selectboard also voted to open up the property by removing perimeter fencing and fencing only around the existing building.

The selectboard agreed to complete the annual town meeting warrant in time to be sent out as a special edition of Around Town in mid-April. The March 18 selectboard meeting agenda will include a review of personnel policies and an updated animal control officer job description. The selectboard will meet March 25 with the finance committee to consider the FY’14 budget.



NOTES FROM THE GILL MONTAGUE JOINT FINANCE & SELECTBOARDS MEETING

FY 14 School Budget Approaches Affordability

By JEFF SINGLETON

On Wednesday, March 6, members of the Gill and Montague Finance committees and selectboards devoted slightly over two hours to a joint review of the current Gill-Montague Regional School District budget. Members of the town boards appeared pleased that the budget had been reduced in recent weeks to reflect the realities of projected town revenues; however, there remains a gap between the proposed assessments by the district and town estimates of available revenues that can be allocated to education.

The budget proposed by the school district, a so-called “all funds budget,” totals \$19,122,495. This is a reduction of approximately \$200,000 from the budget approved by the school committee at the end of January. This in addition to changes in estimated revenues produced a reduction of approximately \$240,000 in total assessments to the member towns over the January budget. The revised assessment would thus be an increase of \$196,506, or 2.1 percent over the previous year (FY13) according to the calculations presented to the committee.

The finance committees have not yet voted to approve the assessments and are waiting until the school committee votes on the final

budget at the end of March.

The so-called “all funds budget” is a new calculation that includes revenues and spending from grants, the state “circuit breaker” program and school choice. Circuit breaker is a state program that reimburses allocations for high cost special education students. School choice revenues and expenditures are for students who have “tuitioned” to nearby schools at a rate of \$5,000 per student (plus special education costs). Grants were, in the past, not included in the budget on which local assessments to the member towns were based.

This is the first year that the all funds budget approach has been used and some questions remain about consistency with the traditional budget and assessment process. For example the school committee voted the traditional “local” or “general fund” budget in January, which does not include the above revenue sources. Whether the member towns can be assessed on the basis of a different budget from that approved by the school committee remains to be seen.

The GMRSD budget was presented by Interim Superintendent Mark Prince, School Committee Chair Joyce Phillips, and Mark Chapulis of the firm Management Solutions. The latter has been hired

to oversee the business management functions of the district that were once administered by an in-house business manager. Other School Committee members attending the meeting included Sandy Brown of Gill and Marjorie Levenson and Lesley Cogswell of Montague.

Phillips read a lengthy statement describing the goals of the school district, including its efforts to end its current level “underperforming” status imposed by the state. The state Education Commissioner Mitchell Chester has announced that the level 4 designation will end when the school committee hires a permanent superintendent and approves an updated district improvement plan.

The joint meeting spent a great deal of time discussing grants and their impact on the district budget and town assessments. District officials handed out a rather sobering list of grants that showed a dramatic total decline from \$1,899,124 in FY11 to \$1,243,697 in FY13, a reduction of over \$650,000 or nearly 33 percent. At least half of this reduction reflects the end of the so-called federal stimulus programs, including the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act and the Education Jobs Fund.

see SCHOOL pg 10

GILL from page 8

mile high speed fiber optic cable being provided to community anchor locations in underserved western and central Massachusetts communities should go live in about another month in Gill. This will allow for high speed access in the Slate Library (which already has free access through Comcast) and town hall (where access is also provided by Comcast, at a low monthly fee), as well as the elementary school, the public safety complex and the Riverside Municipal Building. Purington stressed that middle mile access would not provide hook-ups

to individual homes, many of which already have access to DSL through Verizon or Comcast in Gill.

The board signed a quarterly sewer commitment of \$19,710 for the Riverside sewer district, up slightly from the December bill of \$18,554. Those are the first two quarterly bills since the recent price hike for the town’s sewer users and are based on the last three months of 2012, and the first quarter of this year. Those amounts are very close to the quarterly sewer commitments one year prior, Purington said.

Purington said the town will be required to hire an architect to review and sign

off on the work of reroofing the town hall, a factor he had neglected to include in the bid spec as awarded. He did not think the problem would add significantly to the cost, or cause any delay in the project.

On Tuesday, March 26 at 5:30 p.m. at town hall, the board of health will hold a hearing on new tobacco regulations, to include a proposed smoking restriction in playgrounds and athletic fields, within 20 feet of municipal buildings, in private clubs, and anywhere local food permits are in effect.

On April 6, the town energy commission will hold

an energy fair at town hall from 9:30 a.m. to noon, as part of a townwide effort to reduce energy consumption by 13 percent in 2013. The fair will include exhibitions, demonstrations, and an energy conservation panel discussion. The town agricultural commission will hold a farmers market on the common to coincide with the event.

And this just in: trash stickers are now available for sale at the Wagon Wheel.



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SCHOOL from pg 9

Town officials voiced concern that programs funded by grants would have to be absorbed by the general fund budget financed by local revenues. School officials stated that some grant funded programs were temporary, others were continued but financed from “other sources” and still others might have to be financed by general fund revenues. A budget assumptions sheet handed out to the school committee in January noted a \$128,000 increase in wages was “due to projected revenue reductions from other funding sources-grants.”

The Montague Finance Committee is seeking more developed and consistent information about the GMRSD budget from school officials. At last year’s annual town meeting both the school district leadership and the

finance committee were criticized for not providing sufficient documentation on the budget. In a letter to the school district leadership, finance committee chair John Hanold thanked the leadership for their presentation and efforts to produce an affordable assessment for the member towns. However, he requested more adequate budget information for the upcoming town meeting:

“My concern...results, in part, from a comment I received from a town meeting member who supported the finance committee’s recommendation last May, but only reluctantly. Unless consistent and complete information is available this year, this person expects to speak against appropriating any assessment until more information is available.”



PONTIAC from page 7

Amherst and his brutal tactics, they assumed a more benign and protective attitude towards the Indian territories. The white colonists found themselves prohibited from crossing the boundary line down the center of the Appalachians.

They were blocked by those very same Redcoats from moving west into Indian territory and settling in land beyond the mountains. Large numbers of soldiers, no longer needed on the frontier, withdrew to the eastern cities and coast, where the colonists fostered a growing resentment towards the Redcoats now in their streets.

Here, Calloway sees history accelerating, and an America transforming in a chain reaction of events that Pontiac started in 1763-65. The American Revolution of 1776 grew in part out of the

oppressive presence of the British mentioned above. The French, ever willing to help the enemies of England, aided the colonists in their fight for independence; then French officers brought the revolutionary fervor back to France, which led to the downfall of the French monarchy by 1789. Napoleon rose to power by 1799, and sought to reestablish French power in the Mississippi basin. Those efforts failed and he agreed to the Louisiana Purchase by 1812, thus permitting the original 13 Colonies to expand to the Rockies.

Calloway’s final remarks were a reminder that Native American history pervades all of our own history. To ignore events such as King Philip’s War and Pontiac’s War is to neglect an important part of North American history, to have a very incomplete picture of how America became American.



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LEVERETT from pg 9

current school governance model, where the elementary school is allied with elementary schools in Shutesbury, New Salem, Wendell and Erving in the century old Union 28 superintendency union, although the upper school students of Shutesbury and Leverett attend Amherst regional schools from grades 7 – 12, “We’re working with a 20th century model, and things have really changed in education.”

Much of the selectboard agenda on March 12 was taken up with discussion of retirement issues for town employees in general, and firefighters in particular.

Nancy Gibavic, a science teacher with 35 years experience at Leverett Elementary School, spent a good deal of extracurricular time recently tabulating the percentages that Hampshire and Franklin County towns pay for health insurance benefits for retirees and their spouses. She presented a chart of her findings to the selectboard on Tuesday, which showed that, out of about 40 towns surveyed, Leverett is nearly alone, with the exceptions of Conway and Whately, in excluding spousal benefits from their retirees benefit packages.

Gibavic said employees, like herself, who currently pay to maintain family or spousal health insurance plans, would find themselves in the position of paying more on annual premiums to continue their current plans than they would make from their annual retirement benefits. “What is your reaction to this?” Gibavic asked the board.

Board member Peter d’Errico said, “A chart like this leaves me cold.” He said towns like Leverett have basically been stuck in a dysfunctional tax and spending system that is unsustainable.

Shively said, “First of all, the state

is recommending a whole series of changes that will come into force within a year,” to retirement policy for public employees. Meanwhile, she said, “The private sector no longer provides retirement health insurance. They no longer cover pensions.”

Shively also brought up the statistic that Leverett has the highest percentage of people over 65 living below the poverty line – a little over 30 percent of Leverett senior citizens are in this category, she said – and she added, “People are flipping out more than ever about their taxes.”

At the urging of Leverett Elementary teacher Ellen Gow, Leverett town meeting passed a retirement benefit package for town employees in 2004, according to Margie McGinnis, town administrator. That package, which committed the town to paying 50 percent of health benefits for retirees, though not for their spouses or family members, was approved by a ballot of 184 in favor, 21 opposed, she noted.

Shively said a town meeting vote would be needed to expand that package further to include retiree spousal benefits.

Board chair Rich Brazeau said, “I’d like to pay 100 percent” of family plans for retirees, but town finances would not permit it. He said Leverett was one of very few towns in the state to make any down payment into a separate fund to cover future benefit obligations for employees. Bigger cities, and the state itself, are billions of dollars short of covering these obligations, he said, which is why changes to state retirement benefit policies are now anticipated.

Employees in towns that have recently joined the state Group Insurance Commission, which locally include Ashfield, Bernardston, Buckland, Colrain, Heath, Leyden,

Northfield, and Warwick, get to choose between a variety of health plans, to which the member towns contribute varying percentages between 60 and 79 percent. Spousal benefits are included in the GIC plans, which due to economies of scale are intended to keep annual increases in health plan spending lower for municipalities that join.

Leverett tax collector DeeAnn Civello said the town currently pays \$25,107 a month toward the health insurance premiums of current employees, and \$2,340 a month for health benefits for retirees, for a combined total of \$329,364 annually.

Meanwhile, the impending retirement of Stewart Olson, a captain and training officer for the town’s call fire department, who turns 65 this month, prompted a round table discussion between the selectboard and the fire department study committee on Tuesday.

Speaking for that committee, Judy Weinthal told the board, “There seems to be some controversy about whether 65 is indeed a mandatory retirement age for call or volunteer firefighters. A decision needs to be made rapidly because Stewart is critical to the fire department now.”

Olson said, “It isn’t just me. There’s a number of other people who are going to be turning 65 in the next few years – the department is going to look very different.”

Among them is fire chief John Moruzzi, who will hit 65 in 2015, after 40 years of service to the town.

The selectboard urged Olson to remain in his position, go through the formality of retiring from the county retirement system at 65 as

required, and continue to train new recruits and fight fires as long as he wished to, up to the age of 70, when the town’s insurance will no longer cover active duty firefighters. The board made a motion to that effect, passed it unanimously, and Olson seemed content with the outcome of the discussion.

Olson noted that he had paid in more than \$6,000 to the county retirement system over the years, for his part time job at the fire department, had earned less than \$50 in interest on that sum, and expected to see the county retirement board pay between 20 and 30 percent of the principal back to the federal government in taxes before remitting the remainder to Olson. At that rate, he expressed little regret about leaving the retirement system behind, while continuing to work part time in his current position.

While a broader study of the potential for regionalization of fire protection and emergency response services move forward, the fire department study committee said it had already held discussions with the town of Sunderland’s fire department about moving to an enhanced mutual aid agreement between the two towns, similar to the arrangement Leverett currently maintains with Shutesbury. Under an enhanced mutual aid system, fire fighters in both towns are called automatically for brush fires, chimney fires, car accidents with entrapment, and similar calls. But Olson noted that too often, as it stands now, there are not enough volunteer firefighters in

town to answer such calls.

Speaking of retirements, Don Gibavic has decided not to run again for his position on the finance committee, of which he has served as chair, and Don Robinson is stepping down from his chairmanship of the board of assessors, where he has served since time immemorial. Annual town meeting, on April 27, will be hard pressed to find replacements for these long time town officials, but nevertheless they will have to try. Dawn Sacks, school committee chair, will not be running for another three year term this year, nor will school committee member Aaron Osbourne.

Gibavic gave high marks to selectboard chair Rich Brazeau’s son Neil, who supervises the town’s transfer station, for his FY’14 budget presentation on Tuesday. Not only did the younger Brazeau recommend a budget for next year with a \$65 decrease from current year spending, but he also anticipated turning back some \$7,000 to the general fund in unspent money from FY’13. Not only that, his data spread sheet was clear and comprehensible, leading Gibavic to suggest that Neil pass his budget worksheet around to other town department heads. “But then they’ll want you to do it for them,” added Gibavic, half humorously.

Neil Brazeau said the town had sold almost double the amount of transfer station stickers this year as last, following a pledge to enforce the requirement that all residents using the transfer station would be required to have one on their windshield, or else. That helped to account for the money likely to be left over in his budget by the end of this fiscal year, but so did higher prices for scrap metal, and Neil’s willingness to drive used batteries over to Greenfield for recycling in his own vehicle.



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

EVERY TUESDAY

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

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

EVERY WEDNESDAY

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

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

EVERY THURSDAY

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

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

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

LOCAL EVENTS:

THURSDAY, MARCH 14

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

Turners Falls High School: District-wide concert: *Cover The World With Love*. Featuring the bands and choruses of Gill and Montague Elementaries, Great Falls Middle School, and TFHS. 7 to 9 p.m., free.

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

FRIDAY, MARCH 15

Between the Uprights, Turners Falls: *Big Ole Irish Bash*. With *Curly Fingers Dupree*, 5 to 9 p.m. at the Sports Bar, and *DJ MIA*, 10 p.m. to midnight at the Extra Point Nightclub. Giveaways, contests, drink specials, buffet, drinking songs. No cover.

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

Arts Block Café, Greenfield: *Idea of March Festival with Something Else, The Fawns, The Warblers, Night of the Rabbit, The Whoville String Dusters, Pachanga, and Cardinaux/Starpoli*. 8 p.m., \$

Deja Brew Pub, Wendell: *Josh Levangie & the Mud, Blood & Beer Band*, singing all your

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

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

SATURDAY, MARCH 16

LCA Barnes Gallery, Leverett: Reception for *Jumpstart!*, a student exhibit from winter painting classes led by Louise Minks & Deborah Rubin. Live music and food. 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

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. \$.

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.

SUNDAY, MARCH 17

Deja Brew Pub, Wendell: *Ottomatic Slim*, Chicago-style blues. 9 to 11:30 p.m.

MONDAY, MARCH 18

The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Bingo, 8 p.m.

TUESDAY, MARCH 19

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: Encore Performing Arts, Inc. presents *Jack And The Beanstalk*. Two shows: 10 a.m. and noon.

Bruce's Bowser, 1497 Main St., Athol: Film screening: part one of *Not For Ourselves Alone*, a documentary on Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony. 6:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20

The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Quiznite* with QuizMaster Alex. 8 p.m.

THURSDAY, MARCH 21

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *LB-GTIQA breakfast social* for elders & allies. Catered by 2nd St. Baking Co. 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Greenfield Community College Downtown Center: Senior symposium on opera: *So You Think You Know Puccini?* First of two. Pre-registration advised. 2 to 4 p.m., \$

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

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

FRIDAY, MARCH 22

Pothole Pictures, Memorial Hall, Shelburne Falls: *Bully*, a powerful documentary about one of the most important educational and social issues of our time. 2012. PG13. 98 minutes. Following the film, educators from Mohawk Trail Regional High & Middle School & other community members will lead a panel discussion about bullying. 7:30 p.m. Music



Local singer-songwriter Heather Maloney celebrates the release of her new CD this Saturday at the Shea Theater in Turners Falls. *Poor Old Shine* opens. 8 p.m.

PHOTO COURTESY HEATHERMALONEY.COM

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

Greenfield High School, Greenfield: *Pioneer Valley Symphony's PVS At The Movies*. Featuring works by Dvorak, Beethoven and Wagner that have been featured in film. 7:30 p.m.

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

Arts Block Café, Greenfield: *Alafia*, Afrobeat-influenced dance music. 8 p.m., \$

Flywheel, Easthampton: *Blanche*

before the movie: *Ken Swiatek*, folksinger/songwriter. 7 p.m.

CALL FOR ARTISTS

Montague Arts Movement call for fine art, any medium, from Montague residents, for the 5th Annual *May Day Fine Art Show and Sale* on May 5. Registration fee \$20. Send email to Montague.Arts.Movement@gmail.com by April 1.

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Chamomile is one of the most familiar medicinal herbs.
Illustration from Köhler's Medizinal-Pflanzen, 1897.

By REBECCA MOKEY

Are you interested in starting to dabble in treating common health problems with herbal medicine, but find that you just don't know where to start?

You don't have to be an herbalist to make low-cost, high quality medicine. If you are already a gardener, you can easily incorporate several deeply nourishing, safe, and effective herbs into your garden and kitchen. You may even already grow some of these wonderful plants.

This article suggests several easy to grow herbs to get you started.

Calendula (*Calendula officinalis*) flowers are beautiful and bloom through late October. Dried calendula flowers make a great herb infused oil, which is very healing

for the skin. You can direct seed calendula or start indoors. As they bloom, continuously clip the flowers throughout the season and dry them until you have a good supply.

Smash up the dried Calendula blossoms and place them in a glass jar; cover the flowers completely with an oil of your choosing (almond, sesame or jojoba oil tend to be lighter, and more easily absorbed by the skin, while olive oil is heavier, but also suitable); allow the jar of oil to sit in a dark cupboard for 2-6 weeks; strain and press the oil; *voila!* It can be massaged directly onto the skin. Make it into a simple salve by melting beeswax into it, or add a teaspoon of it into a warm bath.

Lemon Verbena (*Aloysia triphylla*) is a beautiful, aromatic plant of

which the leaves make a wonderful tea. Lemon Verbena tea soothes agitation and mental upset for people of all ages. I've effectively used it with rose petals to soothe a broken heart. Native to South America, it is an annual in the northeast but can be brought inside in a pot to spend the winter inside in a sunny location and leaves picked and dried for tea all winter. Garden centers often carry young plants for transplant.

Lemon Balm (*Melissa officinalis*) is another great calming aromatic perennial in the mint family. With milk and honey, it makes a delicious tea. Lemon Balm shouldn't be used by people who have low thyroid function. You can start it from a clipping, transplant or seed. The plants get old after a few years and should be pulled out, but they self seed easily so there is no need to worry about supply running out.

Whether dry or fresh, dandelion root (*Taraxacum officinalis*) is a great liver tonic. In the early spring, when cleaning up the garden, you can dig up all the early emerging dandelion roots before they flower. Be sure to pull them from a place that has not been treated with pesticides or contaminated with other inorganic substances.

Chop fine and dry or roast the roots in the oven to make a nice tea. You can also sauté the roots, fresh, in a stir fry. Dry the leaves for a tea that is great for draining excess fluid in the body if a diuretic is needed.

Dandelion is also rich in potassium, which replaces the potassium that diuretics usually deplete. The fresh leaves of the dandelion can be eaten in salads or sautéed. Young buds are fine to eat too.

Nothing from the store can compare with a cup of home-grown Chamomile (*Anthemis nobilis*, and related species) tea. It is very soothing and cooling to the stomach, and is wonderful for calming children.

Starting Out with Herbal Medicine

The seeds of chamomile are tiny, so mix with sand and direct seed them in a bed rather than a row. Clip the flowering tops as they come, and they will keep coming. You can grab a bunch with your hand and snip the tops off into a basket for collection and drying. Chamomile will self-seed, and probably shift a bit.

Oats (*Avena sativa*) make a nourishing tonic for the nervous system. The minerals from oats nourish and calm the body. You can buy 50 cents worth of oats at the Farmer's Co-operative in Greenfield. Rake up a bed, spread the seed thickly and then barely cover the seed with dirt. Water daily until germination. Clip their seed pods off at the "milky" stage – before they are completely ripe and still moist inside. Harvest them by grabbing a handful and cutting the seed heads off with scissors, letting them fall into a basket or a bag.

Infusions of milky oat tops, made by pouring boiling water over them and letting sit, covered, anywhere from 20 minutes to overnight, are a great tea for daily consumption. Skullcap (*Scutellaria lateriflora*) infusion also makes a good daily tonic for the nervous system.

Echinacea (*Echinacea purpurea*), if you don't grow it already, is a beautiful self seeding immune supporting herb that the birds love as much as we do. You may already be familiar with Echinacea tincture as a helper in times of flu and colds. The roots are picked after the first frost

of their second or third year, and can be made into either a decoction or a tincture extract. To make a root tincture, pour vodka or brandy over a jar packed with the roots and let sit out of direct sunlight for about six weeks; strain, label, and store in glass. You can purchase dropper bottles at Green Fields Market, or any health food store.

And finally, *peppermint* is a very powerful plant for the digestive system. It can help with Irritable Bowel, can keep the gall bladder healthy and is a great general digestive aid. Place a barrier in the ground for peppermint to keep it from spreading out of control, or plant it in a place where you don't mind this happening, but DO plant it.

There are many books and local herbalists to refer to. I particularly recommend books by Rosemary Gladstar, Deb Soule, Michael Tierra, and David Hoffman. If you're seeking a local guide for your new explorations of herbal medicine, Blue Crow Botanicals, run by local herbalist Bonnie Bloom in Gill, offers classes throughout the season on working with medicinal plants.

The best way to begin learning about herbs is to plant them, spend time watching them grow, taste them, and see what happens in you!

Habitat for Humanity Information Meeting

Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity (PVH) invites potential homeowners to a family information meeting on Saturday, Mar. 16 at the Greenfield Savings Bank on Avenue A in Turners Falls at 10 a.m.

If you are interested in becoming a Habitat for Humanity homeowner, you must attend a Family Information Meeting. We will be building in Turners Falls. During that meeting, potential applicants will learn about Habitat's selection criteria and how to prepare to be successful in the application process. The selection criteria include need, ability to make modest mortgage payments, and willingness to partner with Habitat, such as participating in the construction of the home. To prepare for making an application, those interested will be encouraged to take such steps as attending a first-time homebuyer's course and checking their credit standing.

PVH serves Hampshire and Franklin Counties; they seek to eliminate homelessness and substandard housing by making decent affordable shelter a matter of conscience and action for all people. PVH builds homes with volunteer labor and donations of material, supplies, land, and services. PVH then sells each home with a no-interest mortgage to a low-income family. The family becomes an active Habitat partner contributing many hours of sweat equity during the construction of their home. PVH has helped more than 34 families since their founding in 1989.

For information about becoming a Habitat homeowner, donating, or volunteering please visit our website at www.PVHabitat.org or call the Pioneer Valley Habitat office at (413) 586-5430.

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