



LAKE PLEASANT MILLERS FALLS MONTAGUE CENTER MONTAGUE CITY TURNERS FALLS

The Montague Reporter

YEAR 10 – NO. 32

also serving Erving, Gill, Leverett and Wendell

75¢

REPORTER@MONTAGUEMA.NET

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

MAY 10, 2012

The Valley's Got Talent

BART DOTY PHOTO

Daisy Whitcomb-Skelton is one of this year's semifinalists in the Valley Idol competition at the Shea. Look out, Cee-Lo, here she come.

BY SHIRA HILLEL

TURNERS FALLS - Last weekend marked the kick off of the 2012 Valley Idol karaoke contest at the Shea Theater in Turners Falls. 29 contestants auditioned in Round One. The group was whittled down to 11 for the semi-finals. The grand finale will showcase a mere five contestants vying for the top prize of \$1000 (along with local publicity, of course).

This Valley imitation of a reality TV cultural phenomenon is an entertaining competition and also a fundraiser for the Shea Theater, the area's nonprofit performing arts civic center. Playing the role of Ryan Seacrest, the show's MC and host was Michael

see **TALENT** page 6

Montague to Own Ste. Anne's Rectory CUMBY BUILDING STANDS



DETMOLD PHOTO

The Ste. Anne's Rectory on 6th Street as it looked after the January 2009 fire.

BY DAVID DETMOLD - There is no wrecking ball in the near future for the former Cumberland Farms building on 38 Avenue A, and the town of Montague will add the former Ste. Anne's Rectory to a growing list of vacant properties around town taken for back taxes. Or in this case, from a foreclosure company that no longer wants to maintain the building.

Working steadily through

29 warrant articles for six and a half hours on Saturday, Montague town meeting members approved spending \$7,488,471 to fund town departments, a 2.42% (\$174,679) increase from last year, and \$7,850,604 for the town's share of the Gill-Montague Regional School District's operating budget, a 3.6% (\$274,421) increase. Town meeting members unanimously backed spending \$737,865 to fund

Montague's share of the Franklin Tech School's annual budget. That sum represents a \$59,563 (8.8%) increase from last year; three additional students attending the Tech School from Montague accounted for much of the increase.

The day got underway with a special town meeting that began at 8:30 a.m. forecast to last a half hour. But discussion dragged on for an hour and a half before the

main meeting got started, as voting members considered the fate of two very different structures at either end of downtown Turners. The former Cumberland Farms building is a squat, featureless, one story, 2,200-square-foot cinderblock on slab structure thrown up in 1975 on a corner of the footprint of the former Grand Trunk Hotel, which once graced the overlook to the

see **MONTAGUE** pg 10

Note to Readers:

With this issue, the *Montague Reporter* changes its outward form, after nearly ten years as a tabloid, and commits with any savings accrued thereby to improve the news gathering ability, graphic design potential and long term strength of your community newspaper.

It may take a few weeks to establish a unified look for the new broadsheet format, but we will try to make this transition as smooth as possible for you, our readers.

Your satisfaction is our most valued asset. Write to us with feedback and suggestions at reporter@montaguema.net.

As a broadsheet, we hope soon to be able to feature new columns, more photos, more in depth coverage of the news of view of our villages.

Hastings Challenges Ward for Selectboard: Who Will Get Gill's Vote?



DETMOLD PHOTO
John Ward

BY PATRICIA PRUITT - John Ward is seeking his second term on the Gill selectboard, but former highway superintendent Ernie Hastings has other ideas about Ward's plans.

Ward said he looks forward to serving again with his present colleagues on what he considers to be "a good board."

Asked what he thinks the big

issues are facing the town, Ward sites the deterioration of infrastructure, such as boilers, and, most immediately, roofs. The roof on the town hall needs to be replaced this year, for the most immediate example; roof tiles above the selectboard table on the second floor collapsed recently after being soaked with dripping rain.

Then there's the former Mariamante land on the corner of Main and West Gill roads. Ward, at least, would not mind seeing a solar installation on that land.

Of course, there are also concerns about the Gill-

Montague school district, such as how to get the district out of state designated Level 4 status, and how at the same time to be fiscally prudent within the constraints of town and school budgets.

Ward feels he brings to the board a different point of view from each of the other selectboard members, but the three work together well to find consensus. He described himself as one who likes to get things done. In his first term on the selectboard, he has seen significant progress made in reducing municipal energy use and the amount of

money the town spends on energy. The town worked closely with Siemens Building Technology on the Gill Elementary School energy upgrades, and now the town is working with a private contractor to install a new boiler and heating system upgrade in the public safety building.

In addition, Gill formed an energy committee

see **CHALLENGES** pg 12



PRUITT PHOTO
Ernie Hastings



JOEY R. PARZYCH PHOTO

The Kringle Farm truck is a rare 1935 International Harvester half ton pickup with a canopy express box manufactured by Hercules Body Division of Serval, Inc. Hercules also made engines, but not for International. International still make a lot of trucks but their pickups are as rare as Dodo birds.

An International Pickup Trip into the Past

BY JOSEPH A. PARZYCH BERNARDSTON - International Harvester started off manufacturing harvesters but later branched out into farm tractors and big trucks, which they manufacture to this day.

But, like Mack Trucks, they made very few pickups, making International pickups a rare species.

These small canopied pickup trucks became popular with small plot farmers

during the Depression when jobs and money were scarce.

The small plot farmers peddled their produce in residential areas out of these pickups heaped with produce, often with a scale hanging from the canopy.

One peddler who toured the streets of Greenfield always called out in a loud voice, "Potatoes, and tomatoes, and sweet c-o-r-n-n-n," no matter what vegetables he had on his truck. He spoke broken English

and that announcing cry may have been the first list of vegetables he'd learned. The housewives thought it was funny, and they hurried out to see what he actually had to offer.

The vegetables were fresher and cheaper than they could buy at the A & P or First National, so the peddler did a brisk business, and apparently never felt a need to change his tune.

see **PICKUP** pg 12

PET OF THE WEEK

Looking for the Right Lap



Diana

I'm Diana, a two-year-old female shorthair cat in need of a home. They call me 'Dainty Diana' because I am so petite and cute! I look like I just stepped in some fresh white paint because my feet and part of my legs are white. I may be small in size, but I have a huge amount of love to give! I adore it when people stop by and pet me and sometimes they let me sit on their lap while I tell them my story with my "meows." I am still very kitten-ish and playful! What I need now is a family who will love me and let me love them too. Please come on down for a visit, OK? I'm waiting for you! For more information on adopting me, contact the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society at 413-548-9898 or info@dpvhs.org.

WENDELL SENIOR CENTER

Healing Arts Offered to Seniors

On Monday, May 14th, the second installment of the healing arts series for Wendell elders will be held. This free program will take place from 11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. at the Wendell senior center.

Licensed massage therapist Patty Smythe will teach a class on the myofascial system and myofascial release. With 15 years experience, Smythe has found myofascial release to be an effective bodywork modality for relieving discomfort and problems stemming from muscular holding patterns due to age, trauma or stress. Fascia surrounds every organ, muscle, and bone. It is an interwoven

web of living tissue within which all the body's structures are suspended. It is the 'space between' and has profound effects on the health of all systems. Fascia has different states of elasticity: a gelatinous consistency, a salt-water taffiness, or when stressed can have a rigidity that exerts up to 2000 pounds per square inch and crushes structures such as lumbar discs. The class will discuss this overlooked bodywide system and will teach techniques to ease a variety of ailments.

Wear loose comfortable clothing. Space is limited. Call Shelly Hines at 978-544-3082 to reserve a spot.

THE HEALTHY GEEZER:

Questions on Walking Canes and Colonoscopies



JESSICA LARKIN ILLUSTRATION

BY FRED CICETTI

LEONIA, NJ - Q. What kind of cane should I get?

First, get a cane that fits. Let your arm hang at your side. The top of your cane should line up with your wrist. You can get an adjustable cane that can expand from about 31 to 40 inches in one inch increments. With your cane in your hand, the bend in your elbow should be about 30 degrees.

The old reliable "crook cane" is still very popular. Offset canes put weight more directly over the shaft and are usually adjustable. There are also folding canes that are easy to store. Broad-base canes with three or four legs have greater stability and are good for people with balance problems. In addition, there are canes that come with folding seats.

Wood canes are light and resilient. Aluminum canes are durable, adjustable and foldable. Graphite and fiberglass are very light and exceptionally strong.

Choose a handle that feels good. If you experience any numbness or pain in your hand, choose a different grip.

Check the weight limit. Typical canes can hold about 250 pounds.

Q. Is a colonoscopy painful?

I was given anesthesia for a colonoscopy and all I recall is getting on the examining table, feeling like I had a cocktail, and waking up in recovery as rested as if I had a late-afternoon nap on the beach.

The colonoscopy is the gold-standard procedure for colon-cancer detection. The colonoscope is a slender, flexible, lighted tube with a video camera at its tip. The examining physician inserts the tube into the rectum. The scope inflates the colon to provide a better view. The camera sends pictures of the inside of the colon to a TV monitor. The exam takes 15 to 30 minutes.

During the procedure, a doctor can remove most abnormal growths such as polyps with tiny tools passed through the scope. Most are benign, but some can turn into cancer. By getting polyps early, a colonoscopy can avoid a major operation.

Patients are given pain medication and a moderate sedative. Discuss sedation with your doctor. Some who've had the procedure have experienced different degrees of alertness, recall and discomfort.

Send your questions to fred@healthygeezers.com.



Joe Parzych (l) presents Jon Steiner, manager of Food City in Turners Falls, with a copy of *As You Write It* in appreciation for his generosity in furnishing refreshments for the reading by writers at the Gill-Montague Senior Center on Sunday, April 29th.

CARNEGIE LIBRARY NEWS

Nature Program for Homeschoolers



LINDA HICKMAN PHOTO

TURNERS FALLS - Audrey Kaiser of Montague seemed quite willing to explore the contents of a sterilized owl pellet with nature educator Dawn Marvin Ward at the Carnegie Library on Wednesday, May 2nd.

Audrey found small skulls and other bones from small rodents in the owl pellet.

Dawn presented a hands-on science program on birds for homeschoolers at the library as part of a series funded by the Montague Cultural Council, supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

WENDELL FREE LIBRARY NEWS

Beekeeping Workshop

BY LINDA HICKMAN - On Thursday, May 17th, a beekeeping workshop will take place at the Wendell Free Library from 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. Laurie Herbolsheimer and Dean Stiglitz, authors of *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Beekeeping*, will discuss raising treatment-free bees, colony collapse, and will bring a demonstration hive. The event is sponsored by the Wendell agricultural commission and the Friends of the Wendell Free Library. Refreshments will be served. For more info, call 978-544-3559.

Congrats Faye Adams

on graduating UMass Amherst with your BDIC: Journalism and Certificate Program in Native American Indian Studies Degree this Friday, May 12th! We love you and are so proud of you! love 'G' and Chris.

REMINDER

TO RESIDENTS OF MONTAGUE CENTER per order of the Montague Center Fire Department

There is to be NO DUMPING OF BRUSH OR OTHER BURNABLE DEBRIS at the site of the July Bonfire on Station Street

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SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES - May 14th - 18th

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

Monday, May 14th
9:00 a.m. Foot Clinic by Appointment
10:00 a.m. Aerobics
10:45 a.m. Chair Exercise
12:00 p.m. Pot Luck & Bingo
NO Knitting Circle
Tuesday, May 15th
9:00 a.m. Walking Group
10:30 a.m. Chair Yoga
1:00 p.m. Knitting Circle
Wednesday, May 16th
10:00 a.m. Aerobics
12:45 p.m. Bingo
Thursday, May 17th
9:00 a.m. Tai Chi
1:00 p.m. Pitch
Friday, May 18th

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

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

Walking Club
The Erving Seniors are forming a walking club that will meet at least twice a week, weather permitting, to walk together. Call Polly for more information.

Monday, May 14th
9:00 a.m. Tai Chi
10:00 a.m. Osteo Exerise
12:00 p.m. Pitch
Tuesday, May 15th
8:45 a.m. Chair Aerobics



John Gerber with a Chicken

LEVERETT LIBRARY NEWS

Raising Chickens

On Tuesday, May 15th, professor John Gerber will give a talk on raising chickens in the backyard.

Professor Gerber teaches about sustainable food and farming at the Stockbridge School at the University of Massachusetts.

His talk will begin at 7:00 p.m. at the Leverett Library on 75 Montague Road. For more information, call 413-548-9220 or visit www.leverettlibrary.org.

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Local Briefs

JESSICA LARION ILLUSTRATION

COMPILED BY DON CLEGG - The Western Mass Master Gardeners will be testing garden soil for pH content and answering gardening questions at the Greenfield Farmers Market on the town common on Saturday mornings, May 12th and 19th.

The Montague Congregational Church will hold a **plant and bake sale** on Saturday, May 12th, from 9:00 a.m. to noon. Proceeds will benefit the Heifer Project.

The Erving Elementary School PTO will host the **Annual Touch a Vehicle event** at Erving Elementary School, on Saturday, May 12th from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Really big vehicles, a rescue vehicle, and other vehicles like a Bobcat, a tractor and a demonstration of the Franklin County Tech School's Electra-thon car will be on hand, along with a chili contest and a lawnmower race. A donation entry fee of \$5 per person or \$15 per family is suggested, but no one will be turned away. Proceeds will benefit the music and art programs at Erving Elementary School.

The Montague Center Grange will host a **Backyard Farm and Garden Fair** on Saturday, May 12th, from 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., rain or shine. Buy, sell, or swap vegetable and flower plants, seeds, and locally grown products. Everyone is welcome to join in, with baked goods for sale and musicians jamming.

A simple memorial gathering to **remember former Leverett police chief, Fred Bixby**, will take place at the Village Coop on Saturday, May 12th at 3:00 p.m. A simple gathering to share remembrances is planned. Come share your stories and memories. The Coop is located on the corner of North Leverett and Rattlesnake Gutter roads in Leverett.

Montague residents, now is the time to go solar. Learn about the benefits of participating in the Solarize Montague program, the timeline for signing up for photovoltaics, and get a chance to ask questions. The Mass Clean Energy

Center will lead a **Solar 101 presentation** on Tuesday, May 15th starting at 7:00 p.m. in the Turners Falls High School auditorium.

The Wendell Permaculture Edible Forest Garden Group and the **Community Garden** will hold a joint **workday** on Saturday, May 12th, at 10:00 a.m. to get the paths at the community garden and the edible forest site covered in wood chips. Please bring shovels and rakes and work gloves. Rain date is Saturday, May 19th at 10:00 a.m.

On Saturday, May 19th, planners, participants and supporters of the **Summer of Solutions** in the Pioneer Valley will be biking the Valley, south to north, to raise money for the program. Starting in Springfield, the riders will head north through Holyoke, Northampton, Deerfield and finally into Greenfield.

All funds raised by the ride will go to providing stipends to participants who would not otherwise be able to take part in the program. Transportation to the starting point in Springfield will be provided, as well as lunch on the ride for all participants. For more info, visit www.pioneervalleyofsolutions.org

The Greenfield Savings Bank, 282 Avenue A, in Turners Falls will host "**Saving Gas \$\$\$**" from 10:30 a.m. to noon on Saturday, May 12th. Stephen Lelito, a certified master technician with 20 years experience will provide some "tricks of the trade" for saving gas.

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

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KAREN WILKINSON ILLUSTRATION

BY SALLY PICK

Montague residents and business owners interested in going solar this summer are invited to attend Solar 101 at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, May 15th, at the Turners Falls High School. Solar 101 will introduce the Solarize program, the basics of solar photovoltaics (PV), incentives, possible options for paying for PV, and the timeline for getting reduced cost PV through the Solarize program. People will also be able to ask questions of the expert presenters from the Mass Clean Energy Center.

The more people who sign up for Solarize Montague, the better the price will be for everyone, so residents are encouraged to bring their neighbors, family, and friends from Turners Falls, Millers Falls, Lake Pleasant, Montague City and Montague Center. The program is free and is expected to go for about an hour and a quarter.

Residents from all five villages of the town are also invited to the Montague Munch on Saturday, June 2nd, from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. This first

MONTAGUE ENERGY CORNER Solar Munch!

annual potluck at locations around the Montague Center Commons will feature this year's topic, Solarize Montague. The First Congregational Church of Montague, the Montague Center Library trustees, the Montague Center fire department and the Montague Center Grange are all collaborating with Solarize Montague volunteers to bring this event to the community. The schedule is as follows:

From 4:00 - 5:30 p.m. there will be appetizers, a Solarize Montague info booth, and a tour of weatherized features at Montague Center Library, with an open house featuring PV on the home of Jill Bromberg and Howard Blodgett, at 44 Main Street. Look for a fire truck parked nearby as an easy way to find the house. The Montague Center fire department will be handing out plastic fire hats for the festivities.

From 5:30 - 6:30 p.m. a potluck pasta dinner will be held at the 1st Congregational Church, with a brief presentation by Sheryl Sadler-Twyon, long-time Montague resident, on her journey to becoming solar.

From 6:30 p.m. there will be dessert at the Grange followed by a community square dance.

This Week at MCTV Interviews with Gill Greats to Air

BY CINDY TARAIL

GILL - Three well-known men from Gill who were very active in the community passed away during the past year: Bill Bumham, Ted Graveline, and Allan Adie.

In their memory, MCTV is airing several interviews produced by Don Clegg and John Duda, including Bill Bumham's history of the Gill Congregational Church, an interview with Allan Adie and an episode of *In the Artist's Studio* featuring Ted Graveline.

Clegg said, "Every once in awhile, we have a chance to interview some individuals who were a huge part of this community. I have always told people I have videoed that once MCTV has taped your show, we've got you forever, and we might replay that program time after time and years into the future.

Thank you Bill, Ted and Allan."

The MCTV viewer opinion survey concluded with 120 responses (a return rate of approximately 3%). Survey respondent Cathy Fistes won the drawing for a \$100 gift certificate to Ristorante DiPaolo. The data will be analyzed and reported on in June.

The Montague Community Cable board of directors is seeking members of the community with business, community organization and public relations experience to join the board or to volunteer short or long term. There are two exciting projects to work on over the summer: the TV station's facility improvement project and the Soap Box Derby. Contact MCTV at 413-863-9200 or outreach@montaguenvt.org to get involved at this exciting time.

To ensure enough food for everyone, the planning committee asks people to bring food to the assigned location below, based on the first letter of their last name:

A - G: bring appetizers, and non-alcoholic beverages to the library or 44 Main Street from 4:00 - 5:30 p.m.;
H - O: bring desserts to the Grange at 6:30 p.m.;

P - Z: bring dinner items to the 1st Congregational Church at 5:30 p.m.
Residents and businesses wanting program and event updates on Solarize Montague should e-mail MontagueEnergyCommittee@gmail.com. They can also request to be contacted by the solar installer once one has been selected for Montague.

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Arthur Evans

We the People, Not the Corporations

On Saturday, the town of Montague became the 35th municipality in the Commonwealth to pass a motion calling for a Constitutional amendment to end 'corporate personhood'.

The majority voice vote came at the end of a six and a half hour town meeting, on a petitioned article that will require the Montague town clerk to notify our local legislators, congressman, and senators "to support an amendment to the United States Constitution to clarify that corporations do not have the same rights as people, and that money is not speech for the purposes of election-related spending."

The man likely to become Montague's next congressman, Jim McGovern (D), who is running virtually unopposed for the new House district that stretches from his home base of Worcester to Hampshire and Franklin counties, (where John Olver's retirement leaves an opening in November), will certainly welcome Montague's passage of the motion to end corporate personhood.

After all, it was McGovern who introduced HJ Resolution 88, to amend the U.S. Constitution to determine that corporations are not, in fact, people, and to end the current practice of allowing corporations to 'speak' freely by spending undisclosed, unlimited amounts of money to influence elections in the United States.

"Corporations are not people," said congressman McGovern when he introduced his legislation last year. "They do not breathe. They do not have children. They do not die in war. They are artificial entities which we the people create and, as such, we govern them, not the other way around."

Referring to the Supreme Court ruling that overturned decades of settled law on the subject of corporate 'speech' in 2008, McGovern said, "The *Citizens United* ruling marks the most extreme extension of a corporate rights doctrine which has eroded our First Amendment and our Constitution. Now is the time for a 28th Amendment that lifts up the promise of American self-government: of, for, and by the people."

Three flesh and blood human beings walked to the front of the Turners Falls High School auditorium on Saturday, and one of them, Ferd Wulkan, of Montague Center, spoke eloquently on behalf of the motion, while two other petitioners, from Turners Falls, Maure Briggs Carrington and Diane McAvoy,

each stood beside him on her own two feet.

Wulkan said if Montague passed the measure, it would be in good company with Hawaii, New Mexico, Vermont, New York City, and Los Angeles in voting against *Citizens United* and corporate personhood, along with 34 cities and towns in Massachusetts, including, most recently, Leverett and Cummington.

The anti-corporate personhood movement seeks to amend the Constitution to clarify that election financing can indeed be regulated by the government, in the wake of the 5-4 Supreme Court ruling that opened the floodgates of SuperPAC election spending so that "very large corporations, unions, and the very wealthy, very often in secret" now dominate state and national elections, Wulkan said.

"We should be outraged that the Supreme Court has in effect cut off our voice and given our elections to the very wealthy," Wulkan said, using vocal cords to form each word. "More and more our spending priorities are set by those with almost unlimited wealth. We hope this is a small step in turning this around."

Long time town meeting members Les Cromack, Precinct 1, and Art Gilmore, Precinct 2, both of whom announced they had decided not to run again for their positions, spoke against the article, with Cromack saying he felt he had been elected to speak for the people of Montague on local issues only, and Gilmore speaking up to agree with him.

"I don't think I have the right to vote for this," said Cromack.

But Precinct 1's Allen Ross countered this sentiment, saying, "This article will allow citizens of this town not to be dominated by corporations."

With many more town meeting members raising their hands in hopes of adding their voices to the debate, Rich Kuklewicz, Precinct 4, moved quickly to call the question, and end the flurry of free speech.

Yet when the question was called, and moderator Ray Godin asked Montague town meeting members to speak on the main motion, the Yeas spoke resoundingly in favor of reserving free speech for actual people.

And to tell Congress to make a note of that resolution. Right there in the Constitution beneath the 27th Amendment, the one that prohibits senators and congresspeople from raising their pay in between elections.

It's good to remind our elected representatives who their real paymasters are, don't you think?

We the People, not the corporations.



SARAH DUPREY ILLUSTRATION

Though he pledged to "Keep his Ear to the Ground in Listening to the Pulse of the Town," Joseph Newton came in third in the race for Erving Selectboard.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Write in Cogswell for School Committee

Gill and Montague voters, I am asking you to vote for Lesley McCord Cogswell for a three-year, write-in candidate on the Gill-Montague Regional School Committee. I have known Lesley since she was a child attending elementary school and have stayed in contact with her throughout her adult years. I currently sit on the board of directors of the Turners Falls High School Alumni Association with her.

Lesley is an open minded, thoughtful and caring citizen of Montague. She brings enthusiasm

and commitment to the alumni association, and always challenges the association to reach out and form alliances. Her ideas are creative; she follows up with commitment. Throughout our discussions, Lesley stays open minded to try new ideas and reach consensus to guide the association forward.

Speaking as a former member of the Gill-Montague Regional School Committee, I believe Lesley's background makes her the perfect candidate for the position. She will bring to the table the

ability to reach consensus and promote the district. Lesley takes no sides except for what is right, fair and best for the children of this district.

It is time for the residents of Gill-Montague to believe and take pride in our schools, as so many of us have and continue to do. Let us erase the cloud that has been forming over this district, by voting for Lesley Cogswell.

—Douglas Brown
Montague

Editor's Note:

While we are on the subject of misattribute quotes, due to a reporting error in last week's account of Leverett's annual town meeting, a series of quotes by Ray Bradley was inaccurately attributed to Kip Fonsh. It was Bradley, a climate scientist from UMass, who, among other things, said in a discussion of the proposed cell tower bylaw that he had travelled to Greenland and found "they have better cell phone coverage than we have here." We are quick to admit errors when we make them, and we apologize.

Misattributed Quote

Thank you for reporting about the Montague selectboard meeting of April 30th. While the article was mostly accurate, some of the comments are improperly attributed, or out of sequence.

In a discussion about the Turners Falls Airport, I was quoted as saying "We want to be closer to self-sufficient," which is the gist of what I was saying, but that is not an exact quote, although reported that way. I was next quoted as saying "It's a Green thing

..." which was actually said by airport manager Mickey Longo, and while he mentioned that we wanted to take the burden off the taxpayers, that portion was said before the Green reference.

While minor in nature, and fairly reflective of the updates in general, I thought I'd bring the misquotes to your attention.

—Peter Golrick
Chair, Montague Airport
Commissioners

Former Committee Members Back Cogswell

We, Ray Smith, Paul (Trapper) Lawrence, Mike Mackin, John Zywna, Sue Sibley, Barbara Bodenstein, Dawn Monkiewicz, and myself were elected members of the Gill-Montague Regional School Committee over the past several decades. We are aware, through personal experience, of the difficult work a school committee is charged with. We recognize the need for positive and con-

structive views to be represented on the committee. We ask the voters of Gill and Montague to consider the write-in candidacy of Lesley Cogswell for a three-year term on the Gill Montague Regional School District (GMRSD) Committee.

Ms. Cogswell embodies the educational and professional standards needed to move the district forward. We believe she has the

knowledge, positive attitude and capability to be an exemplary representative on the GMRSD committee.

Thank you for your consideration in writing in Lesley Cogswell, 21 Norman Circle, Turners Falls, for the three-year Montague seat on May 21st.

—Kathleen McCord
Turners Falls

Singleton: Experienced Advocate for Schools and Towns

With great enthusiasm I support the re-election of Jeff Singleton to the GMRSD committee. As a current member of the school committee, Jeff has been a true advocate for both the schools and the citizens of our two towns. As a member and former chair of the Montague finance committee Jeff, early on, began to work diligently on the need to address the fiscal crisis affecting and dividing the district. During his first term as a school committee member he continued to press for a long-range solution to the funding dilemma, and took a

leading role in creating a long-term fiscal plan for the schools that has resulted in balanced budgets over the last two years.

The success this plan has achieved in stabilizing the budget has also contributed greatly to diminishing tensions between the school district and the member towns. Jeff is among the few in the state who truly understand the state's Chapter 70 formula and what needs to be done to fix it. He is a strong proponent of continuing the ongoing dialogue with the Department of Elementary and

Secondary Education in order to ensure the state lives up to its commitments.

Jeff has also been a consistent advocate for quality education. As an educator himself, with over 30 years of teaching experience, he knows what classrooms, teachers and students need.

Gill and Montague need Jeff Singleton to continue as their representative on the GMRSD school committee.

—Christopher Sawyer-
Laucanno
Turners Falls

U.S. Casualties in Afghanistan as of 5/9/12

Wounded: 15,332
Deaths: 1,964



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GUEST EDITORIAL

In her recent editorial "Revise Chapter 70," (MR X #31) Patricia Pruitt asks, "One wonders why our town and school officials ever believed the Gill-Montague Regional School District would see 3% annual increases in state aid."

Pruitt is no doubt referring to so-called "Table B," the plan for fiscal stability that helped end state control of GMRSD finances in November of 2010.

When Table B was first present-

ed by the 'technical committee' to school district, town and state officials, Pruitt's question was the first one asked. The fiscal plan presumed an annual increase in town contributions to the district of between two and three percent. It also assumed the district would hold its budget increases to 2.5%. To make this work, state Chapter 70 aid needed to increase by 3%. But would this actually happen?

To answer this question, Jeff

Wulfson, the assistant state commissioner for education finance, asked the technical committee to project levels of state aid to the district under different assumptions embedded in the Chapter 70 formula. At first we thought he might be trying to torture us, since conventional wisdom holds that the formula is virtually impossible to understand. It turns out this is not true. The core formula is hardly simple

see CHAPTER 70 page 5

The G-M Compact Works

GUEST EDITORIALS

One Rotten Pipeline

**BY WILLIAM COLLINS
CALGARY, ALBERTA** - Poor TransCanada. Everything looked so promising.

The company had just finished drawing a line across Saskatchewan, North Dakota, South Dakota, Kansas, and Oklahoma, with hardly a peep of protest. The folks back in Alberta were solidly behind turning their valued forests into moonscape to harvest all those petrodollars and all those jobs. The provincial government, too, had already dismissed the environment and embraced the delicious expected profits.

Further, Washington seemed ready to play ball. Gas prices were soaring, Republicans were drooling, and president Barack Obama needed to show action prior to the upcoming election. Port Arthur, Texas, where the dismal refineries are, had already been deemed an urban sacrifice zone. No one of import was much concerned about the poisonous quality of the air thereabouts. So what could go wrong?

Well, dimwittedness for one. In constantly pressing to cut costs, TransCanada proposed a shorter route for its planned seven billion dollar Keystone XL oil wonderpipe. Imprudently, it was to cut across a large corner of Nebraska, assaulting both the iconic and fragile Sand Hills and the sacred Ogallala Aquifer. Bad

move. Comhuskers may not be environmental frontrunners on national issues, but they know which side their agricultural livelihood is buttered on. It's the Ogallala, and anyone who risks spilling the world's dirtiest oil into that revered reserve is in for trouble.

Not to say that Nebraskans themselves aren't known to waste plenty of that precious aquifer. It's just that nobody else had better try it.

So suddenly the traditional enemies of global warming had an unexpected local and potent ally — Nebraskans — to help bolster their more cosmic arguments about climate change. Yes, a pipeline leak can cause some very nasty local damage, but Alberta's tar sands can threaten some of the nastiest damage in the entire world. Of all the noxious sources of oil, they are the worst. Simply extracting the product produces more CO2 than burning the oil itself. And the vast mileage of forest that is clear cut, scraped, toxic pooled, and abandoned is no longer available to absorb CO2 from the air. A tour of the area could make one swear off SUVs.

This joint crusade was plainly a lot more than TransCanada had bargained for. It had exulted in buying everybody off, but suddenly there was civil disobedience in front of the White House and 1,252 environmen-

tal protesters were arrested.

By January, Obama had rejected plans to build the pipeline, citing concerns about a rushed schedule forced by Congress that wouldn't allow enough time for due environmental diligence. Big Oil needn't really worry, however. After all, the Republicans in Congress are still trying to finagle the project into a crucial transportation bill, TransCanada is reexamining an alternative route that traverses North Dakota, and British Columbia is considering a line across its mountains to the Pacific for shipping the oil straight to China. Even without that kind of re-routing, there had already been talk of exporting Port Arthur's noxious product.

Plainly this kind of corporate nonsense will continue until Al Gore is released from wherever they are holding him and is finally able to persuade us to forsake our suicidal addiction to oil. When nations go to the length of mining tar sands to feed their habit they are sick indeed.

Yes, the Keystone XL pipeline is a confusing mix of political apples, oranges, and avocados. Just keep in mind, they're all rotten.

William Collins is the former mayor of Norwalk, CT. This article first appeared in Other Words, (www.otherwords.org).

Erving Approves School Budget

BY KATIE NOLAN - The Erving annual town meeting on Wednesday, May 9th, passed every warrant article, including the Erving Elementary School FY'13 budget of \$2,411,531, a 13% increase over FY'12.

The finance committee offered an amendment to hold the school's budget to a 5% increase. Finance committee member Daniel Hammock contrasted the per pupil expenditure at EES, which the finance committee calculated at between \$14,600 and \$19,000, with much lower per pupil expenditures in Orange, Petersham, and Florida (approximately \$10,000 to \$12,000, according to Hammock).

But school committee chair Jarod Boissonneault told the meeting the increase was needed to fund a speech and language therapist, occupational therapist, and special education teachers to meet needs that have been present at the school for a long time. The finance committee amendment failed by a vote of 23 for holding the increase to 5% and 50

against. The higher budget amount proposed by the school committee was then approved by majority voice vote.

At the selectboard organizational meeting held just before the annual town meeting, Margaret Sullivan, who was declared the winner of the three-way selectboard race, was sworn in as a new selectboard member. Town clerk Richard Newton informed the selectboard that write-in selectboard candidate Arthur Johnson, who had received 79 votes to Sullivan's 93, had contacted the clerk's office to ask about how to get a vote recount and requested the recount petition form. Newton said the Massachusetts Secretary of State's office advised him to swear in Sullivan as the new selectboard member unless and until a recount determines otherwise.

Johnson has until ten days after the election to file a recount petition with the town clerk.

Eugene Klepadlo was elected as selectboard chair.

CHAPTER 70 from page 4 but the level of complexity is not that much greater than policies selectboards, finance committees and school committees encounter frequently.

The tech panel linked together spreadsheets containing key elements of the Chapter 70 formula and plugged in different assumptions. It turned out that if the state implemented the extensions or add-ons to the core formula as it did between 2007 and 2009 and the school district stabilized enrollment, we would get the 3%.

Since the core Chapter 70 formula did not appear to give aid increases to most districts, we assumed the state might add mechanisms so most districts would get increases, as in the past. District enrollment appeared to be stabilizing (FY 2011 and 2012 saw stable enrollment).

Of course we could not guarantee these things would happen. The assumptions or agreements in Table B were possible because they were based on recent experience.

We were also acutely aware that these assumptions might not prove valid, which brings me to the second part of the answer to Pruitt's question. Table B was not meant to be a crystal ball, a plan that rose or fell based on the projections at one point in time. It was meant to be an agreement by all parties on the rough levels of funding and expenditures needed to keep the district viable. It was also meant to create a mechanism for recognizing problems and negotiating solutions in advance, before each budget cycle begins. And all parties, including the state, would be part of this process.

I believe Table B and the compact have fundamentally changed the way the regional school district and member towns discuss budgets and assessments. This is the third straight

fiscal year GMRSD budgets have been affordable and assessments have been approved by the member towns without contention. At the same time we have developed very good relationships and credibility with our state partners, giving us more clout than a small district would normally enjoy.

On the downside, the failure to achieve the 3% state aid increase agreed to be necessary for district stability puts these gains at risk. The state did not implement the extensions to the formula as it did in FY 2007 to 2009. GMRSD enrollment, after two years of stability, fell by over 5%. But Table B did not create these problems — it creates the opportunity to develop strategies to address them.

I believe our planning efforts show that if the district is to be viable, we must try to stabilize enrollment. This does not have to be a contentious battle within the district (Greenfield is doing it with a good deal of success) and it does not have to contradict our efforts to get out of Level 4. At the same time we need to use our connections with the state and with other districts regionally to encourage a serious rethinking of the Chapter 70 formula. The formula will not change before next fiscal year, but we can get new ideas on the table now. Keep in mind, this formula does not in fact work for two thirds of the districts in the state.

To quote Commissioner Wulfson's letter to the technical panel in November of 2010: "Your research and study with respect to the Gill-Montague district will inform [initiatives to review state education finance] and will hopefully lead to further improvements in the Chapter 70 formula in the years ahead."

—Jeff Singleton
Montague

Fukushima Unit 4's Ability to Withstand another Earthquake Rated at "Zero"

**BY LINDA GUNTER
TAKOMA PARK, MD** - Concerned Japanese citizen groups and US senator, Ron Wyden (D-OR), are calling for swift international action to prevent a catastrophic high-level radioactive waste fire at the precarious Unit 4 reactor building at the Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear power plant in Japan.

Unit 4 is leaning and could topple if hit with another earthquake or tsunami, resulting in a deadly high-level radioactive waste fire. The ability for the unit to withstand another seismic event is rated at zero.

A coalition of concerned Japanese citizens is urging United Nations secretary general Ban-Ki Moon and Japanese prime minister Yoshihiko Noda to properly inform the Japanese people of the perilous situation at Fukushima Daiichi, and to work together to prevent what would be an irreversible disaster that would release huge amounts of lethal radiation, dwarfing the scale of the original disaster, which began in March of last year.

"If the cooling water supply is lost to the high-level radioactive waste storage pool in Unit 4, it could be just a matter of hours before the irradiated nuclear fuel is on fire," warned Kevin Kamps, radioactive waste specialist at Beyond Nuclear.



This March 24, 2011 aerial photo shows the damaged Unit 4 of the Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear power plant, where 1,231 irradiated fuel rods sit in an upper story storage pool.

"A fire in the Unit 4 high-level radioactive waste storage pool could release up to eight times more hazardous cesium-137 than the Chernobyl reactor explosion. That in turn would mean the site would have to be evacuated, risking the potential for all seven high-level radioactive waste storage pools at the site to ignite. If that happened, Fukushima Daiichi would release 85 times the levels of cesium released by Chernobyl, potentially forcing an

evacuation, and permanent condemnation, of hundreds to thousands of square miles," Kamps added.

Cesium-137 fallout from the Fukushima nuclear catastrophe has already been measured by the US Geological Survey across the US, although the agency has downplayed the risks, despite the position long held by the National Academy of Sciences that there is no safe dose of radiation.

US Senator Ron Wyden (D-OR) visited the stricken Fukushima site several weeks ago and was particularly alarmed by the slow response of Fukushima Daiichi utility owner, Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO), which has a several year-long plan to secure Unit 4 and its fuel pool, and urged swifter action.

"Loss of containment in any of these pools, especially the pool at Unit 4, which has the highest inventory of hottest fuel, could result in an even greater release of radiation than the initial incident," Wyden said.

Organizations around the world are urged to sign on to a letter calling for swift international action to remediate the danger posed by Fukushima Dai-ichi Unit 4, by emailing their support to info@greenaction-japan.org. The full text of the letter plus endorsements can be read at: <http://wp.me/p1FMPy-B6>.

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Mount Grace Launches Campaign for Affordable Farms in Montague

BY DAVID KOTKER

ATHOL - Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust will launch its first campaign for affordable farms project - the Red Fire Farm project in conjunction with the Spring Fling at Red Fire Farm, on Saturday, May 12th, at 1:00 p.m., on 184 Meadow Road, in Montague. Mount Grace will purchase the former Blue Meadow and Tuvek Farm land in Montague, now held by Red Fire Farm, to establish a permanently affordable whole farm.

Under this model, Mount Grace will own the land and ensure good stewards operate the farm. The

land will be leased at a market-based rate to farmers that purchase the farm house and buildings, which are kept affordable through price restrictions that run with the land. Red Fire Farm will be the first tenant of the first permanently affordable whole farm in our region - a model pioneered by Equity Trust, a national organization based in Montague.

Mount Grace has raised over \$233,000 toward the \$400,000 needed to acquire the land, and has been awarded both a grant from Pew Charitable Trusts and a grant to match large gifts made to the campaign.

Speaking at the campaign kick-off on Saturday will be: Phil Korman, director of Communities Involved in Supporting Agriculture (CISA); Leigh Youngblood, director of Mount Grace; and Ryan and Sarah Voiland, owners of Red Fire Farm.

The campaign kick-off is part of Red Fire Farm's Spring Fling 2012. The Spring Fling will feature an open house and events including a volunteer garden clean-up, farm tours, plant sales from the greenhouse, and an afternoon tea in honor of Mother's Day.

The public is welcome.



DETMOLD PHOTO

Ryan and Sarah Voiland, owners of Red Fire Farm

May Day in Montague



LISA DAVOL PHOTO

Morris Dancers in full regalia led revellers in traditional song and dance around the Maypole on Sunday in Montague Center - "to Welcome in the Summer, to Welcome in the May - a."

TALENT from page 1

Glazier of the Shea Theater. Contestants of all ages, provided they are at least 16, came from throughout the Valley; their towns of origin ranged from Athol to Wilbraham and beyond.

On Friday, May 4th, the initial contestants auditioned by performing only 90 seconds of a song of their choice. Nerves were high as singers eagerly waited in line, unsure if the song they had practiced would be available in the DJ's library. Denizens of the Millers Falls Friday night karaoke or the Sports Bar's Wednesday night karaoke had the advantage of prior familiarity with DJ Johnny's list of songs.

On Friday, May 19th, five finalists will perform two songs each. Judges will score each song separately, and the contestant with the highest combined score will be the grand prize winner.

Audience members are allowed to vote for their favorite performer. At the end of the competition, the contestant with the most audience votes will win a \$250 audience favorite award, regardless of where they finish in the judges' final standings.

Separating the Wheat from the Chaff

Instead of Steven Tyler, Jennifer Lopez and Randy Jackson, this year's Valley's judges were Dan Guin, general manager for the local radio stations WHAI, Bear Country and Hits 94; Dorota Wilhelmi-Kol, the director of the music academy of Greenfield; and Enoch Jensen, a record producer from EastLake Recording Studios in Shelburne Falls.

The three judges critiqued every performance. They also assigned a number grade to performers in each of the four criterion categories: *vocal quality, vocal range, song choice fit with performer's voice and showmanship*. Enoch Jensen explained they are looking for the performer that can transcend "from karaoke to entertainer."

The song performances ranged from the goofy to extraordinary. Many of the contestants were serious singers, well-practiced for the chance to reveal their inner diva. Voices that could belt it out seemed to lend themselves to anthemic songs, a platform suited to show off their chops. While there was some country, older pop and musical theater, for the most part, song choices were comprised of requisite numbers by Journey, Whitney Houston, Beyonce, and their ilk, and the crowd-stirring "I Will Survive" and tear-jerking "Total Eclipse of the Heart." Judges and audience members alike seemed to

favor vocal virtuosity over interesting or unusual song choices.

The judges had such a difficult time deciding that, in the end, all 29 auditioning contestants were invited back for the following night's round one.

Words of Wisdom from Industry Insiders

The real star of the show was judge Wilhelmi-Kol. She is a classically trained violinist and pianist, holding music degrees from the Fryderyk Chopin Music Academy in her native Warsaw, Poland. Her accent and botched English phrasing were very entertaining.

While she claimed to like rock music "very much," her cultural background seemed to lack a framework from which to judge many of these popular American songs. Memorable insights from Wilhelmi-Kol ranged from, "Excellent performance from every point of my view," to "Voice good but performance looking all the time at monitor not good so 50/50," to "I felt nothing."

Many participants who take their aspirations seriously seemed genuinely down in the mouth as they left the theater after not making the cut.

Those who are returning next week are: Jolina Blier, Nikia Camp, Tamara Caputo, Jeffery Corp, Alexander Meisner, Erin Nugent, Kimberly Parker, Sabrina Parker, Joseph Stankiewicz, Molly Steinmark and Daisy Whitcomb-Skelton.

Contestants, remember the judges' advice. "You seemed nervous. I think I could see you shaking at parts," (Jensen.) So, "Next time just nail it and relax," (Guinn.) Oh, yeah, and practice, "You're classically trained, right? I would've expected more from someone classically trained," (Jensen.)

Come see the talented vocalist semi-finalists duke it out on Saturday, May 12th at 7:00 p.m. The theme of the night is movie soundtracks, and each semifinalist will perform two songs.

If you prefer, you can also catch kids, ages 7 - 15, performing in the Valley Idol Jr. singing competition. Their semi-finals will take place next Saturday, May 12th at 9:30 a.m. If not super-stars, they are sure to be super-cute.

Regardless of your musical preference, you'll be impressed by the vocal quality of these singers. And as one contestant reminded us through the words of Billy Joel: "It's still rock n' roll to me..."

Call the Shea Theater for tickets or more information: 413-863-2281.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Disorderly Conduct, Hit & Run, Brush Fire

Tuesday, 5/1

10:25 p.m. Domestic disturbance at Turners Falls Road and Old Northfield Road. Investigated.

Wednesday, 5/2

8:59 p.m. Arrest of [redacted]

[redacted], for unlicensed operation of a motor vehicle on

Millers Falls Road at Carlisle Avenue.

5:36 p.m. Arrest of [redacted]

[redacted], on a

straight warrant at Rite Aid on Avenue A.

Thursday, 5/3

1:30 p.m. Illegal dumping at the Montague Bookmill on Greenfield Road. Services rendered.

6:24 p.m. Suspicious auto by the high tension power lines on Plains Road. Services rendered.

Friday, 5/4

3:10 p.m. Drug, narcotics violation on Griswold Street. Report taken.

5 p.m. Hit and run accident at Farren Care Center North lot on Montague City Road. Services rendered.

Saturday, 5/5

12:23 a.m. Suspicious auto on Plains Road. Investigated.

3:45 a.m. Burglary, breaking and entering on Avenue A. Services rendered.

10:16 p.m. Fight on Fourth Street. Investigated.

11:33 p.m. Fight on Turnpike Rd. investigated.

11:48 p.m. Fight on Third Street. Peace restored.

Sunday, 5/6

4:49 p.m. General disturbance at Eagle Automotive on Second Street. Report

taken.

5:51 p.m. Arrest of [redacted]

[redacted] for

two straight warrants and a default warrant.

Monday, 5/7

12:02 a.m. Arrest of [redacted]

[redacted] on a probation warrant.

5:49 a.m. Arrest of [redacted]

[redacted] for operating a motor vehicle with a revoked license and registration not in possession.

Tuesday, 5/8

1:04 a.m. Arrest of [redacted]

[redacted] for domestic assault and battery, malicious destruction of property over \$250, and assault and battery with a dangerous weapon.

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Friday, 5/4
3:10 p.m. Drug, narcotics violation on Griswold Street. Report taken.
5 p.m. Hit and run accident at Farren Care Center North lot on Montague City Road. Services rendered.

Saturday, 5/5
12:23 a.m. Suspicious auto on Plains Road. Investigated.
3:45 a.m. Burglary, breaking and entering on Avenue A. Services rendered.
10:16 p.m. Fight on Fourth Street. Investigated.
11:33 p.m. Fight on Turnpike Rd. investigated.
11:48 p.m. Fight on Third Street. Peace restored.

Sunday, 5/6
4:49 p.m. General disturbance at Eagle Automotive on Second Street. Report taken.
5:51 p.m. Arrest of [redacted] for two straight warrants and a default warrant.

Monday, 5/7
12:02 a.m. Arrest of [redacted] on a probation warrant.
5:49 a.m. Arrest of [redacted] for operating a motor vehicle with a revoked license and registration not in possession.

Tuesday, 5/8
1:04 a.m. Arrest of [redacted] for domestic assault and battery, malicious destruction of property over \$250, and assault and battery with a dangerous weapon.

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THE NEIGHBORHOOD TOXICOLOGIST

Leaves of Three, Stay the Heck Away from Me



Poison Ivy

BY NADIA BAJWA, BETSY DICKENSON, & LIANNA LEE SOUTH HADLEY - Think you're not allergic? Chances are you will be.

Researchers at Duke University in 2006-2007 found that rising CO2 in the atmosphere is leading to more robust and toxic poison ivy plants. The urushiol (yoo-roo-she-all) oil produced by plants found in the Anacardiaceae family (which includes poison ivy, poison sumac along with others like mango and cashew) is the toxin that causes red rashes, swelling, itching, and puss-filled blisters in 80% of the population. The allergic response is not limited to contact dermatitis, but can cause damage in the body, when ingested or inhaled. Urushiol is non-volatile (you can't be exposed through mere vapors) but when burning can adhere particulates and be inhaled.

Exposure to poison ivy is a growing public health concern in the Northeast. After your first encounter with the plant, sensitivity to urushiol increases with each subsequent contact. Even worse, sensitivity to other members of the Anacardiaceae family may occur.

Poison ivy presents itself in different forms due to location, species, and season. The majority of the year it is green with shiny leaves, and during early fall the leaves turn a brilliant red. Urushiol content is greatest during the spring and summer when it is at its photosynthetic peak - so watch out for those shiny young leaves!

Late fall and winter are particularly high-risk times for exposure

because poison ivy plants are missing their signature 'leaves of three' and appear to be dead to the untrained eye. Yet urushiol remains active throughout the year in stems, roots, and berries. On clothing, shoes, and tools the oil remains toxic for up to one year. Thoroughly washing exposed objects with warm water and oil-free soaps will remove the urushiol.

Contrary to popular belief, the effects of contact dermatitis are not exacerbated by touching the affected area, or by the puss seeping to non-infected regions. Additionally, there must be direct contact with urushiol for an allergic reaction to occur. Merely walking past a poison ivy plant is not enough.

If you do find you've been weeding away in a poison ivy patch, washing the affected area within an hour of contact will help reduce the severity of an allergic reaction. Numerous over the counter treatments are also available for the treatment of contact dermatitis, including calamine lotion.

Eradicating poison ivy from your property is a problem in and of itself. Mowing and shredding will disperse urushiol into the air, and the oil persists in compost piles. This, coupled with increasingly vigorous growth, makes poison ivy a formidable opponent.

Emily Monosson, author of the Neighborhood Toxicologist column in the Montague Reporter, taught the authors of this article in her Environmental Contaminants class at Mount Holyoke College.

NOTES FROM THE LEVERETT SELECTBOARD

Selectboard Vows to Advance Cell Phone Bylaw

BY DAVID DETMOLD - The Leverett selectboard do not plan to take the narrow defeat at town meeting of a revised cell tower bylaw lying down.

"We'll bring it forward ourselves if we have to," said Peter d'Errico, to the concurrence of his colleagues.

After voters at annual town meeting on April 28th failed to find a two thirds majority - by just a three vote margin - to loosen restrictions on cell towers in town, the selectboard said at least two members of the planning board told them after the meeting they would be unwilling to bring the bylaw back for a another try.

Leverett passed a very restrictive cell tower bylaw about ten years ago, which limited the sites where a cell tower could be built to commercial zones, even though Leverett's three small commercial zones are all in low lying areas. No company has come forward with enough interest to apply to build a telecommunications tower in town. And as things stand, there is little or no cell phone coverage in most areas of Leverett.

But interest in improving cellular communication has been growing in the intervening years, particularly after last October's storm knocked out power and communications for most Leverett residents for days. Firefighters and police have told the selectboard their ability to respond in emergencies is hampered by lack of cell phone coverage, and many average citizens have spoken out at hearings calling for loosened restrictions to allow cell phone tow-

D'Errico said on Tuesday, "If they want to go down that road, it is a revolution challenging the federal government's exemption of health impacts in the siting of cell towers. Just like the revolution challenging the federal government's preemption of health impacts of nuclear power."

Selectboard chair Rich Brazeau wondered if opposition to siting a cell tower in town would lessen if the selectboard were to propose putting up a cell tower as a municipal enterprise, similar to the \$3.6 million high speed broadband fiber network voters approved at the same town meeting last month.

D'Errico has said on numerous occasions that the income the town could receive from cell phone towers if they were to be sited in town would go a long way toward paying the cost of the installation of the broadband network.

In any event, the board appointed any and all of the following citizens whose names had been submitted to form a cell tower committee to study the issue further: Nancy Grossman, Richard Nathhorst, Ray Bradley, Faye Zipkowitz, Chuck Dauchy, Nancy and Brian Emond, Sue Leschine, Bob Hallock, and Peter Reich.

It was not entirely clear whether all of those named would welcome the appointment.

In other business, the selectboard appointed Barbara Tiner to be the interim clerk for the selectboard, until Lisa Stratford returns from medical leave, at \$15 an hour. They

could make their home affordable to a buyer that meets the state's low or moderate income qualifications, by first selling a permanent affordability covenant to the town, which would reduce the final sale price to the buyer. The town would use money from the 10% of Community Preservation Act funds by law set aside for affordable housing in town to purchase the covenant, which would remain with the deed, thus insuring a measure of affordability for the property over time. The selectboard estimated there were at least \$80,000 or so already set aside in this fund.

The board hopes to meet with the seller's realtor and members of the town's affordable housing trust in two weeks.

Excitement is building for the dedication of the Brushy Mountain conservation restriction on May 29th at 11 a.m. The ceremony, which will be attended by Governor Deval Patrick and other top officials, land trust representatives, and representatives of the Cowl's Company, will take place at the Mitchell Farm on Teewaddle Hill Road. There may be restricted access on that part of the dirt road for a period of time in the middle of the day.

Rich Brazeau accepted the nomination of his colleagues to serve another term as selectboard chair, although the excitement level was a bit more restrained on this occasion.

"Maybe this is the last time,"



Leverett selectboard members Rich Brazeau, Julie Shively, and Peter d'Errico show off a big check from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, Leverett's grant for achieving Green Community status. The town plans to use the money to install photovoltaic panels on top of the town's public safety complex, and for lighting upgrades in the library, town hall, and the safety complex.

ers to be built in town.

Other citizens, concerned about emerging but contested data that links certain environmental and health problems to proximity to cell towers, have resisted the move to allow cell towers to be built in any zone in town by special permit, with moderate setback requirements, including a 600-foot setback from residences.

This group gathered 61 votes to block enactment of the more lenient cell tower bylaw at town meeting, and opponents have called for more time to sift through a raft of health studies on the subject.

appointed New Salem town clerk Stacy Senflug as interim town clerk, also until Stratford returns.

Julie Shively told her colleagues a North Leverett homeowner, looking to sell her house, is interested in becoming an early adopter of the

t o w n ' s brand new affordable housing program. Under one aspect of the program, a s e l l e r

said Brazeau, wistfully.

"You do an incredible amount of work, and do it well," said d'Errico, and I know if you said, 'No' one of us would have to do it."

"I second the nomination again," said Shively.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ERVING POLICE LOG
Car vs Deer; Illegal Dumping

Tuesday, 5/1
9:40 a.m. 911 Hang-up call from Prospect Street residence. Found to be problem with phone line.
1:20 p.m. 911 Hang-up call from Prospect Street residence. Found to be problem with phone line as well.
1:45 p.m. Report of car vs. deer on Gulf Road in Northfield near Erving line. Assisted Northfield police.

Wednesday, 5/2
7:40 a.m. Report of flashing red light at Erving Paper Mill. Checked same. Was not an emergency.
12:50 p.m. Report of illegal dumping of trash on Old State Road.
8:30 p.m. Report of a possible motor vehicle crash on Northfield Road. Resident heard what sounded like a

crash. Searched area. Nothing found.
Friday, 5/4
7:30 p.m. Assisted Gill police with motor vehicle crash. No injury.
Sunday, 5/6
4 p.m. Report of vehicles and children's toys blocking Highland Avenue. Checked area. Nothing found.
7:15 p.m. Possible fireworks in area of Moore Street. Was resident scaring wildlife away.

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NOTES FROM THE MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

Ready, Set, Go Solar

BY JANEL NOCKLEBY - Now that the town of Montague has received one of 17 competitive Solarize Mass grant awards through the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (Mass CEC), it's time for Montague businesses and residents to get the scoop on energy savings through discounted pricing on photovoltaic solar installations.

But what do you have to do? Fear not, Montague has a Solar Coach!

Sally Pick of the town energy committee provided a status update on the Solarize Montague project to the selectboard on Monday evening, and she recommended an excellent first step on learning more would be to attend a Solar 101 talk on Tuesday, May 15th from 7 - 8:15 p.m. at the Turners Falls High School auditorium.

Can't make the talk? Maybe a Montague Munch potluck on the Montague town commons on Saturday, June 2nd, from 4 - 7 p.m. would better fit your schedule. Coach Pick assures us that there will be yummy potluck food and dessert and a big red fire truck parked in front of a home off of Main Street that already has a solar electrical system installed, to "see it in action."

By then, the Solarize Montague committee and the Mass CEC will have selected a solar installer for Montague, and pricing information will be available, including minimal or no upfront cost options. (The Montague fire depart-

ment and the First Congregational Church are two of fifteen Montague community organizations pitching in with the effort to harness the sunshine.)

Residents and businesses must sign a contract with the selected installer by September 30th. Check out the website montague.net on the energy committee section, and view the Solarize FAQs page.

Or, solarizemass.com/montague. Or, look for the Montague energy committee's facebook page. Or, email MontagueEnergyCommittee@gmail.com.

Be assured residents and businesses of all five villages of Montague are eligible for discounted installations, said Pick. And, the more people who sign up, the more money everyone in town will save. Tell your neighbors! Make that casserole and go solar!

Meanwhile, a different kind of installation may begin construction as early as Monday, May 14th, at the Strathmore mill complex building eleven. Northfield artist Terry Marshlian will place 26 aluminum panels on the façade of the building, creating ripples of reflected light that will change with the wind, the angle of the sun, and the weather. Funded by a Riverscaping project grant, Marshlian assured the selectboard that all required safety precautions will be taken during the installation, and the frames for the panels can

withstand the weight of both the art and any snow and ice accumulation. The duration of the installation is up to the selectboard, and for now, is open-ended.

"The idea is to attract attention to the building so that people don't just see the broken windows," said Marshlian. Town planner Walter Ramsey, Turners Falls RiverCulture director Lisa Davol, and town building inspector David Jensen were on the Riverscaping selection committee for the Turners Falls Strathmore site. Best viewing of the installation and end result will be from the Turners Falls canal side bike path. Best viewing hours will be determined by the sun, or even the moon.

In other news, selectboard members voted to approve the town election warrant, for elections on May 21st. Polls will be open at all six precincts from 7 a.m. until 7 p.m. Positions open are one selectman, one moderator, one assessor, one board of health member, three public library trustees, one housing authority member, one parks and recreation commissioner, one non-veteran soldiers' memorial trustee, one veteran soldiers' memorial trustee. None of the candidates running for these positions has any official competition on the ballot, unless a write-in campaign gets started soon. A whole bunch of town meeting member positions of varying term lengths in all six precinct are also up for grabs.

NOTES FROM THE GILL SELECTBOARD

Gill Moves to Become a Green Community

BY EMILY KREMS - The "Greening" of the town of Gill was a focus at this week's Gill selectboard meeting. Four members of the town energy commission attended the meeting, asking the selectboard to approve policies that would bring the town closer to becoming a Green community. Under the Massachusetts Green Communities legislation, towns and cities that meet five criteria are eligible to receive state grants for energy efficiency improvements and Green power generation.

To meet one of these criteria, a fuel-efficiency vehicle policy was approved by the selectboard, to require non-exempt vehicles to be replaced over time by vehicles that meet state fuel-efficiency guidelines. This policy would not pertain to exempt vehicles (which include the town's highway, fire, and police cruisers), and it was noted vehicles would only need to be replaced when economically feasible.

The selectboard also approved an anti-idling policy, but not without some concern. "Where's the teeth?" asked chair Randy Crochier, alluding to the difficulty in enforcing less idling time. He also said he hoped town citizens would not be approaching police officers in an emergency to ask them to turn off the engine of a police cruiser.

The commission members expressed interest in working with the town departments to

develop a plan that employees feel comfortable with that ensures compliance with the anti-idling policy.

Since the town has previously approved the stretch energy building code, a by-right solar siting bylaw, and expedited permitting for same, the final criterion to meet the Green Communities guideline would be for the town to approve an overall energy reduction plan to reduce municipal energy use by 20% over five years.

Claire Chang, commission chair, explained that many of the energy savings systems newly in place or about to be installed - including a new boiler, energy management system and lighting controls at the elementary school and a new boiler and heating upgrades at the public safety complex - can be included in the calculations, bringing the energy reduction already achieved in town buildings to 19.6%. She said she expects the percentage to easily surpass the 20% threshold within the five year framework. This plan was swiftly approved by the selectboard.

Members of the energy commission expressed satisfaction with the process as the town moves toward applying for Green Community status. According to member Ivan Ussach, the new policies for the town of Gill are "fair and moderate, not an overly burdensome way to do things," unlike some other area towns he felt had taken "extreme

measures," to comply with the state guidelines. Member Tupper Brown, referring to the other members of the commission, noted "These citizens have worked very hard." The selectboard members thanked the commission for their efforts.

In other business, Bill Draper resigned from his position as Library Trustee. The timing of the resignation does not allow for a vote to occur at the upcoming town election, scheduled for Monday the 21st, (polls open noon to 8:00 p.m., with a contest for selectboard between Ernie Hastings and incumbent John Ward the only race on the ballot). Therefore, an interim trustee will be appointed by the remaining trustees and the selectboard to serve until the next town elections in May 2013. Town residents who are interested in applying for the interim position are invited to contact librarian Lissa Greenough at the Slate Memorial Library at 863-4386.

The selectboard was notified in an e-mail from MCTV that the station is asking the town of Gill to pay for time spent on the post-production of video for town events, including selectboard meetings. MCTV estimated \$80 per meeting would cover the costs.

Selectboard member Ann Banash said, "That's a lot of money. I know we have it, but

see GILL page 10

NOTES FROM THE GILL-MONTAGUE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Principal Donelan Leaving the District

BY PATRICIA PRUITT - Personnel changes of several sorts were the big news at the Gill-Montague school committee meeting this week. Not only is interim superintendent Nadine Ekstrom in the process of appointing staff and administrative positions for the 2012-13 school year, she will have several more positions to fill, before her own tenure comes to its end next month.

After one year as principal at the Montague Elementary School, Maureen Donelan is leaving that post to fill an elementary principal's position in her home town of Orange.

Other departures, due to retirement after long and dedicated service to the district include: Nancy Daniel Green with 35.8 years of service, most recently as education data coordinator; David Hoyt,

teacher of graphic arts and photography, 30 years, and Marsha Norwood, 15 years as a paraprofessional.

Other changes include restructuring of the administrative staff at the high school and middle school. Patricia Gardner will be the principal at the high school, with Kim Hearn as assistant principal, and Donna Fitzpatrick will be principal of the Great Falls Middle School.

Ekstrom emphasized her goal is for all teachers and paraprofessionals to know their assignments for next year by the end of next week; non-renewals will also be notified by that time.

A memorandum of agreement signed in June, 2011 between the GMRSD and the Gill-Montague Education Association governing block

period assignments for teachers was reviewed and determined to be beneficial for students, offering them more challenges as well as academic services and support. The MOA will continue thru the next school year.

Rebecca Wright and Jean Bean gave a report of the progress and changes taking place both in the district and statewide in the English Language Learners (ELL) program. Wright outlined the growth of the program from its beginnings seven years ago to its current number of 57 students, among whom are speakers of Russian, Spanish, Korean, Vietnamese and Creole. She said there are already 11 preschoolers enrolled for next year.

In short ELL is the one area see SCHOOL page 9

Grateful for a Public Hearing

BY TANYA CUSHMAN - Finally, citizens who are hearing impaired were able to listen in at town meeting. Thom Masterton, who has been working diligently to help make that happen, reports that with the help of new headphone receivers, the annual town meeting on April 28th was the first one he could hear in years. He said the ability to hear the proceedings will give him a better feeling about participating in town government. All four of the headset receivers were appreciated by those who used them, and a list was created of others who would have liked to. The town hall and library hearing assistance systems are still being worked on.

Jean Bergstrom's wild lunch on Sunday, May 6th,

was a tasty success. The delicacies included nettle tea, dandelion muffins, a cream of greens soup made of nettles, violet leaf, chickweed, cleavers and comfrey, a wild leek pesto and a garlic mustard pesto and, for dessert, Japanese knotweed squares. Maybe we could all eat very locally!

Linda Wentworth, Leverett librarian, reports that on May 2nd, Mira Bartok described to an audience of 16 how she came to write "The Memory Palace," which was recently awarded the National Book Critics Prize for Autobiography. She had not wanted to write a book that was alarming or would make people feel sorry for her. Instead, she wanted readers to see her mother, who was stricken with schiz-

ophrenia when the author was young, as a remarkable person - one who struggled for decades to live life on her terms, rather than the disease's. Bartok also described how she felt a new compassion for her mother when she received a traumatic brain injury in an auto accident. Her website is thememory-palace.com.

Bonnie Parsons of the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission is finishing up the descriptive history for nominating East Leverett, North Leverett and Moores Corner for the National Register. Her knowledge of architecture in the valley, as well as her know-how on researching local Pioneer Valley history, should make for an informative, interest-

see GRATEFUL page 10

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NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD

Sullivan Wins a Three-Way Race for Selectboard



Selectboard member Margaret Sullivan

BY KATIE NOLAN - Town treasurer Margaret Sullivan is now also selectboard member Margaret Sullivan.

Sullivan, of Old State Road, came out first in a three way race on Monday, besting write-in candidate Arthur Johnson, of Mountain Road, and 18-year old Joseph Newton, of River Road.

Newton, son of town clerk Richard Newton, polled third with 55 votes; Johnson came in second with 79, and Sullivan won the most votes, 93, to take the three-year seat on the board left open when Jaime Hackett decided not to run for a second term.

Sullivan said, "I feel very ecstatic that I won; it is a privilege to have won in such a close race. I'm proud there are a lot of people who think I will do a good job, and I will."

Sullivan said among her top priorities would be ensuring the Usher Mill complex is dealt with along the lines the reuse committee may soon recommend. "They've put their hearts into it, and I respect that," said Sullivan.

She said the town "started working on job descriptions and a merit raise system a year and a half ago. That has been sort of dropped. I'd like to push that forward, and have proper job descriptions. I'd love to get a personnel committee going again, and I am looking for volunteers to help with that."

She added, "I'm concerned that if Leverett or Shutesbury pull out of U-28, Erving needs to have a plan. We need to make sure the [regionalization] committee is doing due diligence and coming up with the answers."

In an election otherwise devoid of races, Daniel Hammock won a write in seat for constable with 17 votes over Luke Hartnett, with 8 votes. Jillian Betters, with 8 votes, bested Song Hui May and Charlene McDonough who received 3 votes each for a one year seat on the recreation commission.

Also on Monday night, Tighe & Bond submitted bid specifications to the selectboard to clean up the former Usher Mill complex at their May 7th meeting. A pre-bid meeting for potential contractors is scheduled for May 23rd. The bid opening is projected for June 4th, with the cleanup contract awarded June 20th.

The selectboard said their goal would be to start work on the Usher Mill project by mid-summer.

"The contractor could be on the property in early July," commented selectboard member Eugene Klepadlo, who was elected chair of the selectboard at a subsequent organizational meeting.

Town administrator Tom Sharp told the selectboard a large crane, approximately 20 tons, was still present on the former Usher Mill property. The town will ask former owner Patriot Environmental to remove it, and if Patriot does not respond, the town will have the crane removed.

Sharp said two metal scappers had already inspected the crane to see if they were interested in it. One offered to pay the town \$500 to \$1,000 for the crane, or \$2,000 if he were allowed to cut it up on site. The other offered to take it off the property without charge.

The highway department reinstalled metal fencing along the riverbank side of the former Usher Mill, and plastic fencing along the road.

In honor of his last meeting on the selectboard, out-

going member Jamie Hackett, who declined to run for re-election, was asked to make all the motions at the meeting.

Sharp and municipal clerk Betsy Sicard served a dark chocolate mousse cake decorated with blue and green trim and shaved chocolate to the selectboard and a dozen or so other well-wishers to celebrate Hackett's years of service on the board.

Board of health member Cyd Scott informed the board that people are living in the former Renovator's Supply building in Erving. That building does not conform to board of health residential standards. Scott said the Franklin County regional building inspector has asked for the code violations to be corrected, and has received plans for doing so, but has not seen any action on those plans for over a year.

Scott said the building inspector is asking the selectboard to work with the board of health and fire department to correct the problems, and see that the building is made habitable. He said the board of health may be able to levy fines on the owner or residents to force action. After that, he said the next step would be for the town to go to court to make sure violations are corrected or that the building is no longer used as a residence.

Scott said he felt the town boards should reach consensus before taking legal action.

The selectboard agreed to stay in communication, and asked Sharp to contact town counsel.

As town treasurer, Margaret Sullivan told the board some town departments are sending the treasurer's office incomplete hiring packets for new employees. Because of this, she doesn't know whether all the requirements, such as CORI checks, have been completed for the new employees and is concerned about writing paychecks for them. The board decided to send a letter to all departments that report to the selectboard outlining hiring procedures and asking department heads to follow them.

The board requested that interim public works director Paul Prest submit draft job descriptions for the reorganized public works positions.

NOTES FROM THE LEVERETT SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Leverett Elementary Reaffirms School Choice

BY DAVID DETMOLD - On Monday, the Leverett school committee reorganized with two new members, Catherine Brooks and Aaron Osborne, elected Dawn Sachs as chair, and voted 4-1 to reaffirm that Leverett Elementary will remain, for now, a school open to school choice students.

Sarah Dolven, who expressed mixed feelings about the school choice program, calling the funding mechanism unfair but the money it brings from surrounding school districts vital to Leverett Elementary's budget, was among the majority voting for continuing the program.

Before the vote, Dolven said, "It's a very flawed system at the state level. It has decimated the town of Montague, and people in Montague are desperate to get their kids in here, because there is nothing there."

Principal Ann Ross told the committee the list of students planning to enter kindergarten next year from the town of Leverett itself had dropped from 7 to 5, though that number could rise again before September. Ross said there is a waiting list of eight kindergarteners from neighboring towns hoping to get into Leverett Elementary next year.

Ross and U-28 superintendent Joan Wickman said it would be difficult to handle a kindergarten class that small from both an educational and socialization standpoint. Wickman said it would also

be hard to combine a small kindergarten class with another grade level under modern state education requirements.

Committee members responded that Shutesbury Elementary, which is not a school choice school, combines grade levels as need be to make up minimum class sizes.

And new member Catherine Brooks asked if it would not help to cancel out the revenue loss of school choice students entering kindergarten if the committee voted against school choice, and laid off a kindergarten classroom aide.

Each school choice student entering LES brings in \$5,000 in state aid from the sending school district.

Kip Fonsh, after first making a motion to allow Ross to bring as many school choice students into next year's kindergarten class as she deemed necessary to fulfill educational requirements, voted for that motion, but then voted against a subsequent motion to keep Leverett Elementary a school choice school.

Sachs, Fonsh and others on the committee recommended meeting with town officials. Dolven said she would draft a statement on school choice to constitute the basis of a survey of town residents on the matter, to better inform the school committee in future years' deliberations on school choice.

After she received the unanimous endorsement of her committee to serve as

chair, Sachs acknowledged the hard work and dedication of her predecessor in that post, Farshid Hajir, who resigned at the end of his fifth year, citing increased responsibilities at work.

"Farshid left suddenly," said Sachs. "We didn't even acknowledge him in a school committee meeting. We need to thank him for the amount of work he did for the region and the school committee."

Sachs added she would be attending school full time and also working an internship as she takes on her new role as LES committee chair. "I will not be able to put the time into it that Farshid did. I will do my very best; I have very high standards for what I do, but my time is limited."

The meeting adjourned for a time in the middle of the agenda to conduct executive session negotiations on the teacher contract. The school is seeking three new teachers for next year. Ross said the search committee has forwarded names for consideration for those openings to Wickman for review.

Afterwards, the committee discussed the upcoming May 22nd vote at the Amherst-Pelham regional school district to change the start time for the upper school students. If the region votes to move to a later start time for upper school students, as expected, then the elementary schools that feed into the region, including Leverett will most likely be forced to shift to an earlier start time.

Stay tuned.

from SCHOOL page 8 of the school age population showing growth.

Since 2000 there has been a 57% increase statewide to approximately 70,000 ELL students in the state.

Wright explained there is a new emphasis on professional training for teachers in core curriculum classes. Before 2008, these teachers were not required to fulfill the 45 hours of trainings to work with foreign language speakers. Now, all core content teachers will take 45 hours as one training course.

These trainings will take place over the summer, and the cost will be subsidized by the state.

Wright announced that three ELL seniors had been accepted to colleges: one to Providence College; one to the University of Mexico; and one to a local communi-

ty college.

After a short interlude of three different attempts by school committee members to make separate points of order, all refused recognition by the chair, legal counsel Russell DuPere advised the chair to return to the agenda.

Next, Jennifer Coscia, from the district's business accounting firm, the Management Solution group, explained transfers of monies in the budget. She explained that monies saved on unfilled positions and electricity among other things has enabled the district to purchase textbooks and iPads for science for students, as well as a new catch-basin, security cameras, and a lawn mower for the physical plant.

The superintendent search committee has not been formed yet, but will be after

all applications for the position are reviewed on May 15th by Ekstrom and Pat Correia from the Massachusetts Association of School Committees.

After some discussion of the services offered by the Management Solution, and the best way to go forward for covering the business office, the committee unanimously voted to put out a bid for a two-year business management contract.

Jeff Singleton offered a suggestion for a beginning step to solicit feedback from students in the form of an exit interview or survey of graduating seniors and their parents. This will be on the next agenda for discussion.

The committee then went into executive session for the purposes of collective bargaining.



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Ferry Meadow Farm - part XXXIX

Philadelphia, PA 2017

BY ELOISE MICHAEL

At 5:00 p.m., I run out the door to the parking garage as fast as I can. I had planned to leave my car here and take the train, but now I am in too much of a hurry.

I get on the highway and head south. Normally I stick to the speed limit, but now I drive 85 miles an hour, nervously scanning for speed traps.

Somewhere on the New Jersey Turnpike I realize I haven't had dinner.

It's nearly 10:00. I get off at the next rest area, named for Grover Cleveland.

I am so distracted I nearly hit a pedestrian, who glares at me. I get out of my car, feeling shaky, and go

inside.

Being in the middle of a crowd makes me feel safer. No one even looks at me. Everyone is focused on buying food, using the bathroom, and getting back on the road.

I get in a line that snakes around until it reaches the food. My phone rings. "Resa, where are you?" Diana asks when I pick up.

"New Jersey." "Oh, I was just thinking maybe you would spend the night in Boston," she says, trying to sound casual but not succeeding.

"Well," I say, "Do you want me to?"

"No. No, of course not," she says. "You're already in New Jersey." Then she adds, "I can't

wait to see you. And show you the apartment tomorrow."

I can tell from her voice that something is really wrong but feel like I can't ask. "Me, too," I say.

"Are you hungry?" Diana asks, and I can tell that the right answer is yes.

"Yeah," I say. Now I am up to the food, so I let a few people go ahead of me while I talk to Diana.

"Let's meet at the pizza place we used to go to when we were kids. You know, Larry's."

I can tell something is wrong because we never went to a place called Larry's Pizza. We went to Ray's Pizza every weekend.

I think she is saying this in case the FBI is listening.

"Sure," I say, "just like old times," hoping she will figure out I know the right place to meet her.

"Call me when you get into Philadelphia," she says.

"OK."

"Bye, Rese," she says.

"Bye," I hang up.

Hearing the sound of Diana's voice has made me more scared than I already was.

Back in the car I eat food from a paper bag while I drive. There's traffic, of course, and it's over an hour before I call Diana again.

I drive into the neighborhood where I grew up, find Ray's, and walk into the dark pizza place.

Diana is sitting in a booth. She looks up at me. I lean over to hug and kiss her; then I slide into the bench across from her.

"Theresa," she says urgently. "The FBI was at my house. They know about the doppelgangers. They even know about you. They say we stole them."

I am not sure what to say.

"I know," I begin. "They were at my house, too."

Diana looks terrified. "Did they find the doppelganger?" she asks.

I shake my head.

"I can't believe they didn't. Our apartment is so small. They walked in, and how could we hide the other bodies?"

Now I am scared. "So what happened?"

"They said they would let us go if we got rid of the doppelgangers."

"Did you?"

"Of course. We could get in a lot of trouble for stealing something so expensive. We could go to jail. They told us that," she adds, in case I didn't take her word for it.

"OK," I say, "can Neil help me get rid of my doppelganger?"

"But the FBI don't know you have it."

"They definitely suspect," I say.

Continued Next Issue

MONTAGUE from page 1

Connecticut River at Avenue A and 2nd Street. The Cumby building has been mostly empty since 1990, and in recent years has suffered from a leaking roof, and mold.

Now owned by the Montague Economic Development and Industrial Corporation, the building has attracted the interest of a troika of local organizations - Montague Community Television, Turners Falls RiverCulture, and the Montague Business Association.

The latter two lack office space, and are also interested in the building as a tourist gateway to downtown from the soon-to-be completely renovated Gill-Montague bridge.

MCTV is in need of larger studios, and would like to finance the renovation of the property for that purpose, which would enable them to move across 2nd Street from their present location without paying an exorbitant fee to reroute their live cable.

Mark Fairbrother, chair of the Montague selectboard, has not spoken favorably of MCTV's proposal at recent selectboard meetings, and

on Saturday he offered an amendment to the article seeking to appropriate \$30,000 for the town to fix the roof and remediate the mold, or to demolish the Cumby building, in case MCTV's bid to acquire the property falls through.

Fairbrother sought to limit the use of those funds to demolition of the building only. But town meeting rejected his amendment on a majority voice vote, even though they had moments earlier accepted an amendment from town planner Walter Ramsey to increase the sum to be appropriated from \$30,000 to \$32,000. The meeting took that action after Ramsey informed members it would cost at least \$32,000 to demolish the building and reseed the site as green space.

Town meeting voted 55-29 to pass Ramsey's amendment for more money to demolish or repair the building. Subsequently, building inspector David Jensen, who argued against considering demolition until all other options for reuse of the building are explored, offered an amendment to strike the words "or demolition," from the article. His

amendment passed on a vote of 58-24, and the amended article carried.

Next, town meeting members turned their attention to the former Ste. Anne's rectory, at 25 6th Street, a Queen Anne's-style, two story brick building built at the turn of the 19th century, now listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Recently damaged by fire in an upstairs bedroom, the building fell into foreclosure when plans by John Ancil and Jordan Quinn to develop the adjoining church into a nightclub, concert hall, and dining complex fell apart, along with their domestic union.

With both parties present in the auditorium as the discussion began, town meeting took on the awkward undertones of a divorce proceeding, as talk turned to a zoning dispute between the former couple as to how the boundary and setback lines had been recently redrawn, right down the middle of the architecturally connected buildings.

"The parties who are currently in possession [of the church] are not in a good position to solve the problem. The town would probably be in the best position to do so," said town

administrator Frank Abbondanzio, who also said the town's "primary objective is to move the property as soon as possible."

Abbondanzio spoke of adapting the town's commercial homesteading program to allow for cultural reuse of the rectory, which has eight rooms, five bedrooms, and three fireplaces, decorative trim and wood floors in good condition, and is estimated to need \$125,000 worth of repairs.

Abbondanzio said the town may favor artist studios as a possible end use for the property.

Town meeting accepted a gift of the building from the current mortgage holder, City Mortgage. The sum of \$2,200 in back taxes will be abated as part of the deal.

By majority vote, town meeting approved spending more than \$1,900 to replace flags and brackets along town roads to celebrate patriotic holidays.

With that, the special town meeting came to a close and the annual meeting finally got underway.

In other business, town meeting agreed to pay \$44,000 for the first year lease of a new six wheel dump

truck, after turning back a bid from finance chair John Hanold to buy the machine outright, saving about \$20,000 in interest fees over the five year lease to buy program.

Brushing aside criticisms that a Right to Farm bylaw was a social movement disguised as legislation, town meeting overwhelmingly supported the right of any Montague citizen to farm within town borders, which happen to contain some of the world's most fertile river bottom farmlands. Montague will realize a 5% discount on future agricultural protection purchases from the state of Massachusetts as a result, and the town's agricultural commission is recognized as a possible source of help to mediate disputes between farms and farm neighbors over issues like noise, hours of operation, and odors.

Montague will set up a committee to study the makeup of the Gill-Montague school committee, after nearly unanimous passage of a measure brought by petition circulated by school committee member Jeff Singleton, and others.



GRATEFUL from page 8

ing read. The work should be ready for submission to the Mass Historical Commission in June.

Usually, in the first week of May, the woods are full of the ephemeral flowers that are such a treasure to find because they are so short-lived: Mayflower, anemone, bloodroot. Those pass-

ing blooms came and went about three weeks ago.

However, the impressive, pie-like, single leaves of bloodroot keep getting bigger; they grace the entrance to the 4-H Forest off of Shutesbury Road, along with plenty of red maple seedlings.



GILL from page 8

that's \$20 plus per hour."

After some discussion and an offer by energy commission member Janet Masucci to volunteer a few hours a month at the MCTV studio, the selectboard asked to hold a meeting with MCTV board members to discuss the proposal. Back of the envelope calculations

indicated up to a quarter of the town's \$10,000 - \$12,000 annual payments from Comcast to provide cable access programming would be consumed if the board accepted MCTV's proposal in its entirety - the money is also used to pay stipends for people willing to shoot video in town and to buy equipment as needed for cable access programming.

An additional 1,000 feet has been added to the Connecticut River Bank Stabilization program undertaken by Northfield Mountain to address riverbank erosion along the Connecticut River. The new stretch to be remediated, just upstream of the pump

hydro facility's intake tunnel, is owned by Michael Bathory, along with an additional stretch owned by Alan Wallace and Barbara Watson.

Gill might become the next area town to vote on an anti-corporate personhood petition if Masucci has her way.

She asked if a petitioned anti-corporate personhood article could be voted on at the upcoming town meeting. Crochier advised her to collect at least ten signatures for the proposal, while administrative assistant Ray Purington looks into the process for bringing it to a town vote. The towns of Montague and Leverett have recently joined about three dozen other Massachusetts towns that have voted for similar motions.



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NORTHAMPTON - Mark Twain once noted that Wagner's music is better than it sounds. A similar observation can be made of Debussy's Paris: Art, Music, and Sounds of the City currently on exhibit through June 10th at the Smith College Museum of Art. It's better than it looks.

At least at first. Imagine a large room divided into three parts. Each part focuses on creating through music, art, dance, and literature an impression of Paris at the turn of the last century. As you walk from room to room, the individual works begin to form a collage in your mind of the bohemian, avant-garde, decadent world we associate with Montmartre, the Moulin Rouge, and the Ballet Russes. Loosely connecting them all is the music of Claude Debussy, whose 150th birthday is being celebrated this year.

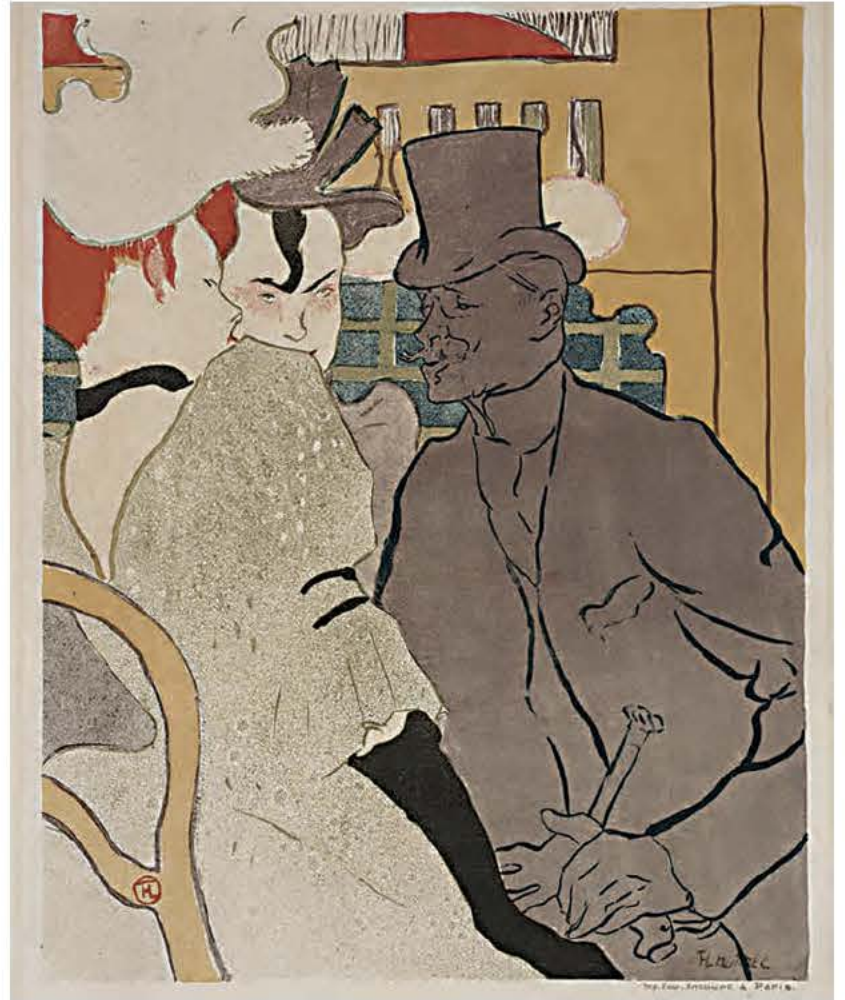
Perhaps it's best to start with him. Little Claude entered the Paris Conservatoire, the greatest music school in the world, at the age of ten. Twelve years later, in 1882, he emerged as an accomplished musician and imaginative composer of distinctly original works. His most popular composition, "Clair de Lune," comes from this period.

But Debussy was also attracted to art and literature and to Le Chat Noir, where he frequently played piano tunes that were unlikely to be heard in any concert hall. He loved the landscapes of Monet, whose work appears in the exhibit, but was also friends with Degas, whose backstage views of ballet dancers and the predatory men who propositioned them he also admired. It was after reading Stephane Mallarme's poem "Afternoon of a Faun" in 1876 that Debussy composed his

famous "Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun" that became infamous in 1912 when the great Russian dancer Vaslav Nijinsky caused a major scandal when he choreographed it for Serge Diaghilev's Ballet Russes.

If your head is spinning with names, dates, titles, and resulting images, you have some idea of what it feels like to walk through this exhibit. Now add to your spin the names of and representative works by Atget, Bonnard, Manet, Pissaro, Seurat, Toulouse-Lautrec and Vuillard. Imagine further all this being accompanied by not only the music of Debussy but recordings of everything from street sounds, organ grinders, poetry, can-can tunes, and songs sung by the cabaret stars Aristide Bruant and Yvette Guilbert. There's even a video and explanation of the exotic "fire dance."

The Paris that remains in your mind when you leave the museum may also be considered as part of the exhibit. You too are now a continuing part of the artistic process created by all these poets, artists, composers, singers, dancers, and musicians. And it won't be long before you're booking your flight to the City of Light.



Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec. French, 1864-1901
L'anglais Warner au Moulin Rouge, c. 1892

Brush and spatter lithograph in olive green, aubergine, blue, red, orange, yellow and black on originally buff, now brown, Van Gelder laid paper

Spring at the Breakfast Club



BY FRAN HEMOND

MONTAGUE CENTER - The breakfast club greeted a windy spring morning with enthusiasm, apparently enjoying the rhythm and ride of the foot-square feeder which swings from a little porch roof. The smaller birds, song sparrow and chickadees, had given way to the bright cardinals, who sat on opposite sides of their table for a long and leisurely meal.

For me, the female cardinal is a particular delight, for I well remember first spotting her some 60 years ago, on the Connecticut shore, in years when cardinals were first moving up from the south and were not yet established here.

They have stayed around all winter, and must like the protection of the thick rhododendron, and the vista from the nearby willow.

A couple of Baltimore Orioles stopped by a couple of days ago, and I hoped they would find a nesting place to their satisfaction. Once upon a time they were regular occupants of a nest high in an elm that towered

above the house, and later in the not so spectacular maple that replaced it. Their most recent nest, nearby, hung precariously from the weeping willow, a tall, not very rugged tree that has lost the branch they loved to use.

The blue jay made his usual visit. All the other birds dispersed and he made the most of his solitary time. I have not seen him with a mate, although I am certain he is a responsible family man. I well remember a peck on the top of my head as I was trying to hang clothes out in the sun. He was patrolling my back yard while his little one was with its mother.

An immature eagle flew over the pond, just big and brown, giving no hint yet of the majestic image he will soon portray with white head and tail feathers, yellow bill and legs.

Spring is surely a busy time, for birds as well as bird lovers. Looking at all the fuss at the feeder, one wonders if these guests ever live to enjoy the quiet of retirement years.

CHALLENGES from page 1
sion which has worked to bring town energy use down by nearly 20% from 2010 levels.

The Challenger

Ernest (Ernie) Hastings, the challenger in this election, traces his family back five generations in Gill, and believes he can bring a sense of the history of Gill to the board — something he feels is lacking at the moment. Hastings said several people have asked him to run for the position.

Hastings has been active in Gill since 1963, and has served on numerous boards. In fact, Hastings is still serving as the town tree warden. He was also superintendent of the highway department for 25 years.

He is another who likes to get things done.

Hastings quotes a saying as follows: "There's the right way, the wrong way, and my way of getting it done."

He believes the big challenge facing Gill now is the continuous increase in the cost of operations; how to maintain town services and stability in a zero growth situation. Gill... "can't keep cutting. Level funding means a 5 - 10% cut."

Hastings remembers when small businesses could succeed in Gill; there was a welding shop, and a printing shop. But he thinks zoning regulations would not allow those businesses now. So he asks, "How can the town generate any income growth?" Hastings suggests this is an area where people need to change their thinking.

Hastings said he would probably be a supporter of alternative energy and allows he would like to see solar on the roof of the public safety building. He also would like to see town help utilized more on renovation projects.

"It all depends on what the people of Gill want," he added.

PICKUP from page 1

The Wyatt Store in Bernardston had a similar Model A canopied truck to carry groceries and household items like lamp chimneys, wicks, potato peelers, flashlight batteries, mops and brooms. Holman Whitaker first drove the Model A truck empty around the hill towns of Leyden, Colrain, Gill, Guilford, and parts of Bernardston and Greenfield, with a different route for each day of the week.

Technically he was not a peddler, since he didn't sell from the truck. In the morning he'd take orders, and return to the store to fill them. After lunch, he'd deliver the orders and collect the money.

In winter when the snow was deep and the roads weren't plowed, Whitaker harnessed up his "Grocery Hoss" and faithfully made his rounds no matter what

the weather was. His customers appreciated his dedication, and never failed to give him an order big enough to make his trip worthwhile. He worked at the job, with nary a complaint, until WWII.

Whitaker had difficulty keeping track of the confusing number and assortment of rationing stamps.

In frustration, he quit, and fin-

ished out his working days at the Bernardston Grain Mill where he outworked younger, huskier men, lugging sacks of grain, with his lean but muscular build.

Wyatt's Store is still in operation as "The Corner Store," next to the Sunoco station on Route 10 in Bernardston, but the days of route sales and International pickups are history.



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