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The Montague Reporter

YEAR 11 – NO. 33

also serving Erving, Gill, Leverett and Wendell

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

MAY 30, 2013

After 25 Years, Homeless Shelter Moves from Montague to Greenfield



JOE HENEFIELD PHOTO

The old shelter, at 15 Farren Avenue, had fallen into disrepair, and its location posed transportation challenges to residents.

By SHIRA HILLEL

TURNERS FALLS – The Franklin County Emergency Shelter is moving from Turners Falls to Greenfield later this summer.

After much searching, ServiceNet, the agency that runs the homeless shelter, has finally found a suitable location to move it to. According to Joe Henefield, the Real Estate Development Director at ServiceNet, they began looking for a new place for the shelter to reside in 2010, and their long efforts have finally come to fruition.

The shelter will move from its current location at 15 Farren Avenue, near the Farren Care Center in Montague, to 60 Wells Street, right off Main Street, in Greenfield.

ServiceNet rents the shelter's current building on the property of the Farren Care Center from its owners, the Sisters of Providence. Henefield said the Emergency Shelter has been in that building for at least 25 years.

The Franklin County Emergency Shelter is a year-round overnight shelter for homeless single adults,

see SHELTER page 5



LYNN PELLAND PHOTO

Don Girard, of Montague's Soldiers Memorial Committee, plays Taps at this year's Memorial Day celebration at the Veterans Memorial on Avenue A in Turners Falls. The ceremony featured a parade down the Avenue and the laying of wreaths at the memorials to the town's soldiers. See page 6 for more photographs.

Union 28 Opts for Temporary Superintendent

By DAVID DETMOLD

LEVERETT – "I have to advocate for the position being advertised for a full-time permanent superintendent," departing superintendent Joan Wickman told the budget and personnel committee of Union 28 on Wednesday, May 22. "We have four new administrators. This would be an ideal time for the top administrator to be on the job to move the team forward."

Shutesbury school committee member Michael DeChiara responded, "I am 5000 percent in favor of hiring an interim superintendent. It is so late in the year to do a rush job for a key leadership position. It doesn't make sense. There is huge instability in the Union. We have three new principals and a new special education director. We don't know whether we will be offering a position that will include five towns and four schools, or three towns and two schools. We need someone who can provide leadership and stability in a time of transition and to let the new principals know, 'This is how the region works'."

Most of the other members of the Union 28 committee ranged between these two polar opinions on the question of hiring a replacement for Wickman, who is leaving the top see U-28 page 5

Incoming G-M Super Sullivan: In His Words

By PATRICIA PRUITT

TURNERS FALLS – On Wednesday, May 22, after the Community Award ceremony and dinner at the Elks Hall, Michael Sullivan and I sat down to talk about who he is as an educator and person, and his expectations as the superintendent. Despite the cacophony of a dining room in the throes of being dismantled, Sullivan was relaxed and willing to talk about himself, his background, and his outlook on many aspects of his new position and the community that is the District, as well as the town of Montague.

While folding chairs were stacked or fell crashing to the floor, Sullivan told me his aspiration, when he graduated from high school in 1980, was always to be a teacher, but that his parents counseled him to shoot for a better-paying career. He heeded their advice and majored in accounting at UMass Amherst, but also studied history, which he had originally hoped to teach. After graduation he worked at the United States General Accounting Office, which took him from Boston to Washington D.C. and included a year spent in Panama. In addition to learning how government bureaucracy works, he was able to save money to go to graduate school.

Once again he chose UMass Amherst, this time for the school of education and secondary teaching. Sullivan received his Doctor of Education in secondary teaching, as well as a certificate in Social Studies. During graduate school he

tutored a high school student from Turners Falls. His first teaching position was in Westmoreland, NH, where he taught fifth through eighth grades and coached baseball and basketball.

His next position was at the Northampton Middle School, to be closer to his then future wife. In 1990 they bought their home in Northampton and have raised their two daughters there. Except for his stint with the GAO, he has been in the Valley continuously since college.

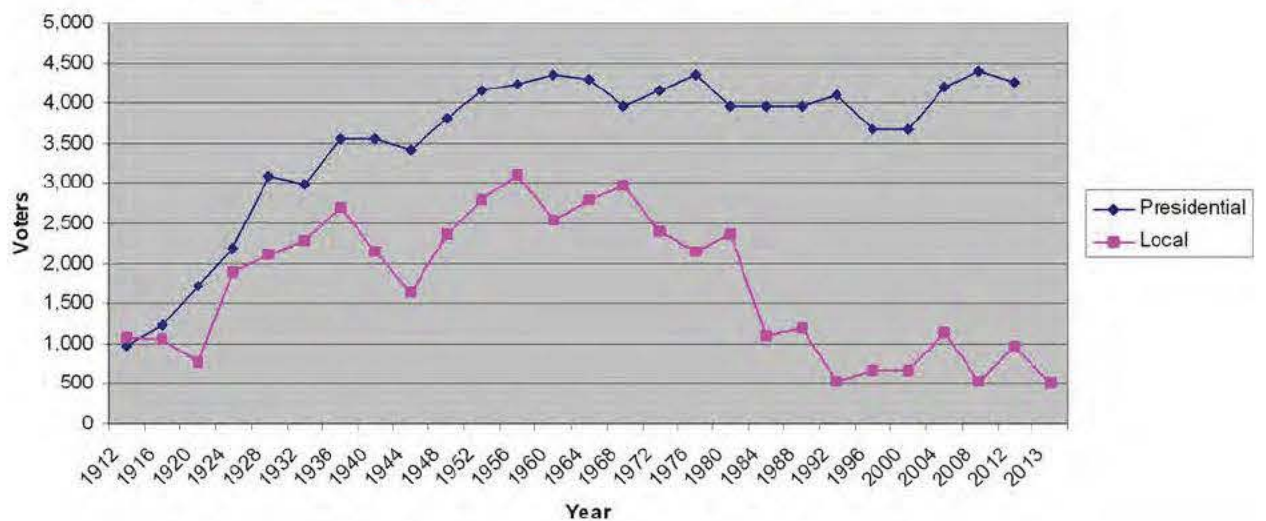
Sullivan points out that he has had several associations with our corner of Franklin County, from camping with his family at Barton Cove to learning the Native American and early colonial history of the town.

He says the commute to Turners is about the same as the drive from home to Longmeadow, but with less traffic. Asked to describe the differences between the Longmeadow district and GMRSD, he notes Longmeadow has not had to undertake or implement so many initiatives at once the way the GMRSD has had to do. He hopes to work with teaching staff to deepen the gains that they and the students have made. The improvements the District has undertaken are, in his words, "a long-term proposition."

Sullivan believes the biggest challenges are twofold: keeping the cost affordable while keeping the education quality high; and building good relations with all areas of the school community. He is here, he says, to "do for the District."

Why Are Montague's Local Elections Failing To Draw Residents?

Montague Voter Turnout



Over the last century, the participation gap between national and local election days has grown increasingly stark. This graph illustrates the historic polling numbers provided by the town clerk.

By JEFF SINGLETON

MONTAGUE – One local official called it "pathetic" and "sad." A town resident, posting on the website montaguema.net, suggested that it was part of a conspiracy by "the town" to keep voters in the dark. Others blamed the voters themselves. "It's not just here, it's everywhere," noted one resident. "People are just apathetic." Most residents shook their heads in disgust, as if it were the end of a solid week of rain or still more gridlock in Washington over the federal budget deficit.

The issue? Only 504 adults showed up at the polls on May 20 to vote in the annual town election. That is barely 9% of all registered

voters, which in turn is only a percentage of eligible voters. The 2013 turnout was the lowest in over a decade, but the normal level of voter participation rarely exceeds 20%. In 2012 there was a highly contested election for school committee, with lawn signs, neighborhoods blanketed with leaflets and poll workers on election day. The final turnout? 17.08%.

A few local elections have exceeded 20% turnout. In 2009 a contested election for Selectboard brought just under 29% of the voters to the polls. Proposition 2.5 tax overrides tend to spark more voter interest. In 2006 just under 32% of Montague voters went to the polls to defeat a proposed tax increase

to fund the regional school district. That's almost off the charts for a local election.

The decline in voter turnout in Presidential elections has been a source of national embarrassment for years. Presumably the beacon for modern Democracy, the United States has among the lowest levels of voter participation in the "advanced capitalist world."

It was not always so. In the late nineteenth century nearly three-quarters of the eligible voting population went to the polls. Presidents like Rutherford B. Hayes, James Garfield, and Grover Cleveland do not evoke fond memories or Hollywood biopics. Yet far more eligible

see VOTERS page 4

Pet of the Week A Dear Friend



Oscar

I'm a happy little guy who has been patiently awaiting a new home. I traveled all the way from Texas because the shelter I was in is overcrowded; my chances of adoption there were slim. I am sometimes a little nervous and shy meeting new folks, but if you take your time and use a gentle approach, I will soon be your friend. I was crate trained and house trained in my foster home and got along well there with the other dogs. If you'd like to know more about me, ask any staff person.

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

Wendell Free Library

Film: *The Wasp Woman*

Next Saturday, June 8, the Wendell Free Library will screen *The Wasp Woman*, a 1959 monster classic from cult director Roger Corman (Little Shop Of Horrors, Wild Angels, The Trip, etc.).

The ambitious head of a cosmetics firm takes an experimental anti-aging medication with unforeseen consequences. Waspy ones. Goofy popcorn movie ones. 73 minutes.

Before the movie there'll be a short (30 minutes) screening of episode 212 of "Dark Shadows" from 1967: the episode in which Barnabas Collins returns home.

The screening is this month's installment of monthly Science Fiction, Fantasy, Horror, and Monster movies at the library.

Admission is free. Showtime at 7:30 p.m.

Leverett Library

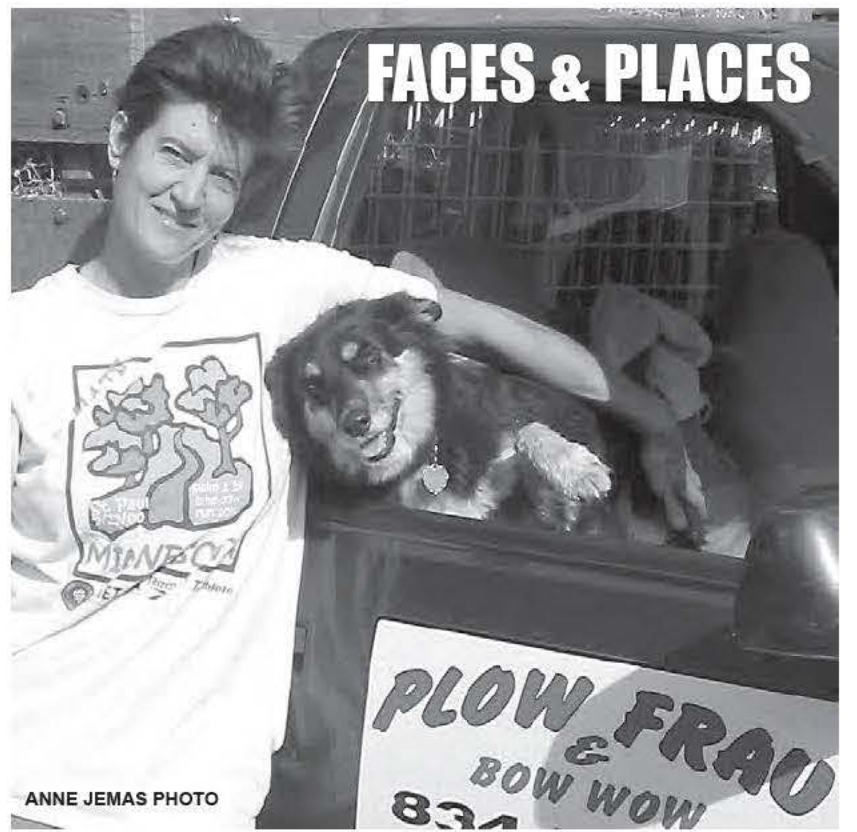
Gears Up for Library Bash

By DAVID DETMOLD

LEVERETT – After ten years in the new building, you might say the Leverett Library is overdue for a party, so the Friends of the Leverett Library are planning a 10th anniversary celebration in fine style. In fact, the celebration committee has come up with so many events in honor of the occasion they couldn't pack them all into one day. This weekend's festivities will run over from Saturday to Sunday, June 1 and 2, with Saturday's focus on children and families, and Sunday devoted to a celebration for the entire community.

The party gets underway with Shutesbury puppeteer Anna Sobel performing animal fables for youngsters at 11 a.m., followed at noon with a picnic lunch outside under a big tent (bring your own bagged lunch). The library will provide lemonade and a fabulous cake, baked by local *chef de pasteleria* Frank Martinez-Nocito. Children's entertainer Bob Hepner will transport his Magic Truck to the party from its regular docking station under the multicolored arrows across the street, and that should be a blast.

Saturday night will feature an ABC auction, starting at 7 p.m.,




ANNE JEMAS PHOTO

The end of an era: For thirteen years, Brava was one half of the Plow Frau & Bow Wow business. Working with Sita Lang throughout Western MA, she made friends wherever she went. Sita & Anne Jemas found Brava on the streets of Nevada on May 26, 1999. Brava died on May 24, 2013. She will be missed by many.

with 26 special prizes, one for each letter of the alphabet (this is a celebration with a literate flair, you see) – from an Airplane ride, with pilot (and library trustee chair) Chris

Condit to a Zen painting from a local Leverett artist. But in fact, too many great prizes are on offer to fit

see **LIBRARY** page 3

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Week of June 3rd in Montague

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JESSICA LARKIN ILLUSTRATION

By FRED CICETTI

Q. My doctor ordered a TSH test. What is that?

The thyroid is a small, butterfly-shaped gland located in the middle of the lower neck. It produces hormones that control metabolism, which are the chemical processes cells in the body perform to keep us alive.

It should come as no surprise that the thyroid gland often peters out as we get older. The thyroid stimulating hormone (TSH) test checks to see if your thyroid is producing the right amount of hormone for your system. If the gland is making too much hormone, you get hyperthyroidism; if it makes too little, you get hypothyroidism.

Hypothyroidism is very common in people over 60 years of age; the incidence of it steadily increases with age. About 25 percent of peo-

ple in nursing homes may have undiagnosed hypothyroidism because the symptoms of this condition can be misinterpreted as signs of aging.

The Thyroid Foundation of America recommends that people over 50 years old get a TSH test at least once every five years, and more often if there are symptoms. When thyroid disease is caught early, treatment can control the disorder even before the onset of symptoms. The symptoms of hypothyroidism include: fatigue, intolerance to cold, constipation, forgetfulness, muscle cramps, hair loss, depression, weight gain, dry skin, hoarseness and mood swings.

The symptoms of hyperthyroidism include: weight loss (not always in seniors), heat intolerance, hyperactivity, muscle weakness, palpitations, tremors, nervousness, irritability, insomnia, enlarged thyroid gland, frequent bowel movements, vision problems or eye irritation.

Q. I recall an episode of Seinfeld that got a lot of laughs about man breasts. I have them and it's not funny. Is there a cure?

Breast enlargement in males is common. About 30 percent of older men have this condition, which can

THE HEALTHY GEEZER

Hormones and Folk Remedies

be caused by hormonal changes or simple weight gain.

When the usual balance of the female hormone estrogen and the male hormone testosterone in a man shifts, he can get "gynecomastia," which is derived from two Greek words that mean "woman" and "breast."

Males normally produce small quantities of estrogen to regulate bone density, sperm production and mood. Natural hormonal changes that lead to gynecomastia occur not only in old age but also during infancy and adolescence.

Gynecomastia can be caused by a health problem such as liver, kidney or thyroid diseases. This condition can also result from drinking alcohol or taking drugs such as steroids, marijuana, amphetamines and heroin. There are medications that can cause gynecomastia, too.

If you have enlarged breasts, see your doctor for a check-up. Enlarged breasts can be a symptom of breast cancer or a testicular tumor.

Gynecomastia usually will go away without treatment. This condition is often treated with drugs. Sometimes, enlarged breasts are reduced surgically.

Q. Can copper bracelets treat

arthritis?

There is no scientific evidence that copper bracelets do anything more than make a fashion statement. However, there is no proof that the bracelets *don't* provide relief to arthritis sufferers.

Copper bracelets for arthritis have been around for a century or more. Many people swear that they work. Some doctors suspect that the positive reports are based upon symptoms going away by themselves.

Folk remedies like copper bracelets seem to be harmless. However, they often delay effective medical treatment, so these so-called "cures" are not completely benign.

Send your questions to fred@healthygeezers.com.

Senior Center Activities - June 3rd to June 7th

GILL-MONTAGUE
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. The Meal Site Manager is Kerry Togneri.

All fitness classes are supported by a grant from the Executive Office of Elder Affairs. Voluntary donations are accepted. Council on Aging Director is Roberta Potter.

For more information, to make meal reservations, or to sign up for programs call 863-9357. Messages can be left on our machine when the center is not open.

Monday 6/3
10:10 a.m. Aerobics
10:55 a.m. Chair
1:00 p.m. Knitting Group
Tuesday: 6/4
10:30 a.m. Chair Yoga with Jean Erlbaum
12:00 p.m. Lunch
12:45 p.m. COA Meeting postponed
Wednesday: 6/5
10:00 a.m. Aerobics
12:00 p.m. Lunch

12:45 p.m. Bingo
Thursday: 6/6
9:00 NO a.m. Tai Chi
10:30 a.m. Brown Bag
12:00 p.m. Lunch
1:00 p.m. Pitch
Friday: 6/7
10:00 a.m. Aerobics
10:45 a.m. Chair Exercise
12:00 Noon Pizza Party
1:00 p.m. Writing Group

ERVING
Erving Senior Center, 1 Care Drive, Erving, is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. for activities and congregating meals.

Lunch is at 11:30 a.m., with reservations required 24 hours in advance. Call Mealsite Manager Rebecca Meuse at (413) 423-3308, for meal information and reservations.

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


Monday 6/3
9:00 a.m. Tai Chi
10:00 a.m. Osteo Exercise

12:00 Noon Movie
Tuesday: 6/4
8:45 a.m. Chair Aerobics
12:30 p.m. Painting
Wednesday: 6/5
8:45 a.m. Line Dancing
9:30 a.m. Blood pressure
10:00 a.m. Chair Yoga
12:00 Noon Bingo
Thursday: 6/6
8:15 a.m. Foot Clinic
8:45 a.m. Aerobics
10:00 a.m. Posture Perfect
11:00 a.m. Brown Bag
12:00 Noon Cards
Friday: 6/7
9:00 a.m. Bowling
LEVERETT

For information, contact the Leverett COA at (413) 548-1022, ext. 5, or coa@leverett.ma.us.
Take-It-Easy Chair Yoga – Wednesdays at 10 a.m. at the Town Hall. Drop-in \$4 (first class free).
Senior Lunch – Fridays at noon. Call (413) 367-2694 by Wednesday for a reservation.

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

Great Falls Middle School Students of the Week
Grade 6
Ivy Watroba
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Chloe Ellis
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Jemma Dickson

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LOCAL BRIEFS

JESSICA LARKIN ILLUSTRATION

Compiled By DON CLEGG

The 18th Annual Relay For Life of Franklin County begins Friday, May 31, at 5:45 pm and continues until Saturday, June 1, at 3:30 pm. at the Franklin County Fairgrounds, located at 89 Wisdom Way in Greenfield.

Come celebrate the start of summer with an adorable selection of small barnyard pets at Greenfield Savings Bank in Turners Falls this Saturday morning, June 1, from 10 a.m. to noon. John Peters of Colrain will be bringing his version of "Noah's Ark," which includes laying pullets, baby chicks, ducks, guinea pigs, guinea hens and rabbits.

The critters are looking for their "forever home" so come check them

out! John will bring boxes.

The Celtic Heels Dance Company are performing for one night only at the Shea Theater on Saturday, June 1, starting at 7 p.m. Tickets are available at the door or by reservation at celticheels@gmail.com.

Great Falls Discovery Center staff are leading a canal-side nature walk on Sunday morning, June 2. Meet outside the main entrance to the GFDC at 8:30 am then leisurely explore level, paved bike trails and village sidewalks to learn about plants, animals, and mill town history. Topics may include birds, fish, invasive species, wildflowers, and cultural or industrial history. Please wear appropriate footwear, bring water, bug repellent, and sunscreen.

On Monday, June 3, there will

be a free Soup and Games night at Hope and Olive restaurant in Greenfield, to benefit the Seeds of Solidarity Education Center in Orange. Area restaurants donate soup and bread, Hope and Olive staff donates their time and bar proceeds, and there will be a raffle, bake sale, board games and all sorts of fun. The event runs from 5 to 7:30 p.m. Grow food everywhere!

Come see "The Glass Mountain", a play based on the Grimm fairy tale by the Gill Elementary School after-school ACT program. The Queen of the Land of Majeekistan is tired of being Queen and would like to become a magician. The King, furious, bans magic from the land. Witches, wizards, princesses, trolls, prime ministers, fates, enchanted places, ravens and giants variously assist or complicate the matter further.

A performance for families and the community will be held on Friday, June 7, at 7 p.m. at the Gill Town Hall. Admission is \$5, or \$3 for ages 14 and under. The play is supported in part by a grant from the Gill Cultural Council.

The 2nd Annual Child Safety Day is Saturday, June 8, from 10

a.m. to 2 p.m. at Harmony Lodge, 20 Masonic Avenue, in Montague City, just across the street from the Farren Care Center. Programs include free bicycle safety, child identification, children's fire safety demonstra-

tions by Turners Falls Fire Department and bicycle safety course for all ages.

Send local briefs to editor@montaguereporter.org.

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LIBRARY from page 2

within a standard alphabet, so some letters will have more than one prize attached to them: like a Chili dinner for four cooked by Lorna Rivers, a basket of Dean's Beans coffee, a Handwoven shawl, Kielbasa and Pierogi prepared by Alan Mully, a Lego set, an X-Citing Chance to become a character in a new novel by Archer Mayor, or Yarn of your choice knit into a sweater by Elaine Barker.

The Velvet Elvis will be making a return visit, as it has become something of a boomerang mascot of Leverett Library auctions (now bid on with the understanding that new "owners" may only own it for one year at a time). Sandy Corcoran will keep the patter lively and the bidders off balance, and a dessert buffet will be available to help wet your appetite and loosen your purse strings.

The anniversary party will recommence Sunday at 2 p.m. outside beneath the tent (bring lawn chairs) with speechifying and song. Select-board chair Rich Brazeau, Representative Steve Kulik, and D'Ann Kelly will offer encomiums to all and sundry who helped to make the library the community center success story it has become. The Leverett Community Chorus will sing, and, of course, there will be more lemonade and cake (this time, baked by Dave Henion, of the Henion Bakery).

Former librarian Lorna Rivers

will be on hand, to recall the eight-year effort that went into planning the move from the former 800 square foot library building - which lacked indoor plumbing, and had only three electrical outlets - to the spacious new building that quickly became Leverett's living room.

This week, Kelty reminisced about those days. "The new building was such a community effort," she said. "We want to remind people of where we were, and how far we've come."

Kelty recalled the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners had finally moved Leverett to the top of the list for a construction grant of \$700,000. The grant came just at the point when the town had sunk a substantial amount of taxpayer money into a new addition for the elementary school and a new safety complex for the police and fire department.

"We went to town meeting with some concern," due to the timing, after those major building projects, said Kelty. "But we were overwhelmingly supported. Not that we didn't have many people who thought the project was too big, and the town could not afford it. But people really supported it, and it has been a huge success. The community room is always in use."

The Friends had a lot to do with that success. With Rivers leading the fundraising drive that identified the "Nifty Sixty," locals who were

willing to give at least \$1,000 each to help build the new library (they are memorialized on the mural in the building's foyer), the Friends ultimately raised \$250,000 toward the construction cost, leaving it to town meeting to raise the final \$380,000 to get the doors open.

Ten years and countless volunteer hours later, there are many to thank and much to be thankful for at the Leverett Library. Come out and join the celebration!



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GILL POLICE LOG

Theft and a Stuck Boat

Friday, 5/17

3:10 p.m. Officer located a sinkhole on the side of Route 2. State DPW notified.

5:15 p.m. Suspicious person located on the French King Bridge.

6 p.m. Brush fire located east of state boat ramp.

Saturday, 5/18

6:30 p.m. Court process served to Franklin Road resident.

7:20 p.m. Medical response on North Cross Road.

8 p.m. Firearms issue on Pisgah Mountain Road.

Sunday, 5/19

7:25 p.m. Motor vehicle broke down in Factory

Hollow. Removed same.

Monday, 5/20

8:15 a.m. Burglar alarm sounding at Main Road business. Employee error located.

1:50 p.m. Dog reported in the roadway in the area of Mount Hermon. Same removed.

2:40 p.m. Cow located outside of fenced area on Main Road at Lyons Hill.

Tuesday, 5/21

12:25 p.m. Resident from French King Highway reported trespassing issues.

6:35 p.m. Suspicious activity reported on Ben Hale Road. Checked area.

Wednesday, 5/22

2 p.m. Traffic complaint at intersection of Main Road and French King Highway.

4:25 p.m. Thefts reported at Ben Hale Road business. Discussed options with owners.

Friday, 5/24

9:15 a.m. Suspicious activity reported under the French King Bridge. Under investigation.

9:45 a.m. Possible restraining order violation. Under investigation.

5:50 p.m. Court process served to Riverview Drive resident.

9:10 p.m. Youths reported

creating traffic hazard on Main Road. Moved them along.

Sunday, 5/26

1:20 p.m. Boat reported stuck on embankment area of the French King Bridge. Assisted in moving same.

5 p.m. Assisted resident with lockout on Boyle Road.

6:45 p.m. Assisted Erving PD with domestic situation.

7:20 p.m. Stolen motor vehicle reported on Riverview Drive.

9:30 p.m. Northampton PD requested welfare check on Walnut Street resident.

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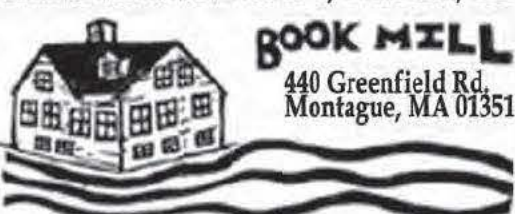
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August, 2002

Wave the Flag, and Blow the Bugle

Another Memorial Day parades past us, waving the flag of country, placing wreaths in front of the monuments we have built in towns and cities across our country to honor the fallen, who paid with their lives that the cause of America's safety be preserved.

One day a year, the last Monday in May, to remember and honor our dead; November 11 to honor those veterans, survivors of war, many of them maimed in body or mind and spirit as a result of their service in combat. Two days. Two days for honoring; how many for the many wounded to reenter their lives at home?

To be sure, we extend benefits to veterans and their families upon the discharge of a soldier. In theory we do that. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) aims to take 125 days to process a veteran's claim for benefits based on injuries suffered in combat; everything beyond that is part of a "backlog."

At the end of 2012, the total number of claims awaiting action was approximately 880,000. More than half a million of these qualify as backlog.

According to the Center for Investigative Reporting, the

current average wait at the Hartford VA is 213 days, and Boston's is a staggering 402 days. Injured vets are waiting in limbo for over a year to receive aid they were assured would be there. With a 14% error rate according to the VA's own numbers, its claim that it will clear the backlog by 2015 strains credibility.

Add to that the fact that conversion to an online database is in process, with the idea that a system compatible with the Department of Defense would streamline a member's paperwork from enlistment through veteran status. Clearly that is quite an undertaking for two agencies that have not been particularly coordinated in the past, and for the VA, a major shift from what has essentially been a paper-only system. All of which makes the time frame of 2015 seem decidedly optimistic, if not unlikely.

There are hundreds of thousands of our "honored" discharged warriors waiting to get therapy for post-traumatic stress, to receive care for other injuries, waiting to get on with their lives, and to receive the benefits most of us feel they deserve. Not an honorable way to treat the "Honored," is it?

VOTERS from page 1

adult Americans voted for these bearded white men back in the day.

Historians have debated the reasons for the decline in voting. Some have pointed to the reforms of the "Progressive Era" (before World War I): civil service exams, direct primaries, and referendums were implemented to reduce the influence of corrupt party bosses. But these reforms, designed to democratize the system, had the effect of weakening the political parties themselves. Active, if corrupt, local parties were the main agents for mobilizing voters during the classic era of party politics in the nineteenth century.

Political historians have also pointed to broader social and economic changes in the twentieth century. Parties and elections have

been replaced by sports, movies and music as forms of "mass culture" (Yes, political campaigns to elect Benjamin Harrison and James Garfield were major forms of entertainment back in the day). Many key functions of the nineteenth century party organizations – for example, providing for the poor and elderly – have been assumed by government. In this view both the New Deal and the Great Society reforms of the 1960s, often seen as promoting "economic democracy," weakened political parties.

A closer look at data on voting in Montague provides an interesting twist to this analysis. The accompanying chart (see page 1) shows voting in both local and presidential elections since 1912 based on town reports and data assembled by Montague town clerk. Montague

has generally had participation rates 30% higher than the national levels during Presidential elections.

The data show that local turnout in recent Presidential elections has been high by national standards. For example, turnout in the last four Presidential campaigns has averaged approximately 75%, well above the national average for the period. During the so-called "New Deal Era" (1930s through 1950s) and the decades when the baby boom generation came of political age (1960s through 1980s), voter participation in Montague Presidential elections remained high.

It is at the local level that voter participation declines dramatically. During the 1930s local voter turnout was nearly always well below turnout for presidential contests, but well below 50%. It remained at this level – local participation rates staying generally over half those in national elections – during the fif-

ties and sixties.

But participation in local elections began to decline significantly beginning in the early 1980s. By the 1992 election, local turnout in Montague (552) was well under 20% of the Presidential totals (4108) of the same year. With a few exceptions, this has been the level since that time.

Over the last century, the participation rate in local elections has declined, by our estimate, from 87% to 9% of registered voters. The rate in national elections has remained fairly consistent.

So perhaps Montague voters are not as "apathetic" as the 2013 local elections might suggest. Their political participation, at least in terms of voting, is relatively high with respect to national politics, but extremely low when races are restricted to the local level. And in this they may well not be that much different from the nation as a

whole, although perhaps the differences here are more extreme.

Why the increasing difference between national and local elections, particularly the abrupt and extreme decline of local participation in the 1980s? One reason might involve the benefits of that much-maligned concept, "partisanship." Although more research would have to be done to prove the point, a quick review of the town reports suggests that, until the 1970s, Montague was more sharply divided into Democratic and Republican camps. There were active party organizations that mobilized voters for local elections. And these organizations, as is almost always the case historically, coincided with and magnified the ethnic, cultural and class divisions in the town.

So if you are one of the many people frustrated by the partisanship and gridlock in Washington consider this: partisan attachments create political organizations and mobilize voters. While they make it virtually impossible to govern effectively, they seem to produce a good deal of citizen participation, which is generally considered to be central to the health of our democratic Republic.

Montague is relatively well-governed without the ideological passions we see in Washington. But that may mean nobody cares about local elections.



KHALIL BENDIB CARTOON, OTHERWORDS.ORG

Fifth Annual G-M Community Awards Dinner Recognizes Many Volunteers

TURNERS FALLS – Neither wind nor rain nor threat of a tornado could stop a crowd of over 170 folks, toddlers to grandparents, from celebrating the unsung s/heroes of Gill and Montague on May 22 at the Montague Elks Lodge. Every year The Gill Montague Community School Partnership hosts this event to publicly recognize youth and adults who make contributions to our community not expecting or receiving any notice.

It was an evening of pride and appreciation for the school and community, serving as a positive counterbalance to negative stereotyping that some outsiders hold given the struggles of the GM Regional School District.

During a delectable dinner of Spanish, Moldovan and Mexican food catered by the Farren Care Center, attendees shared their thoughts about what makes them feel connected to the community and what would help newcomers feel more connected.

Factors cited as helping to connect people included: the summer reading program at the library, riding and walking on the bike path, the soapbox

derby, Unity Park and movie night at The Brick House.

Among the needs cited were: information on where and how to register children for school, more robust publicity about social service programs, accessible community calendars of events, assistance to youth seeking summer jobs, and better public transportation.

The names of school-connected awardees were read by Marty Espinola, Acting Superintendent, and the names of community awardees were read by Chief Chip Dodge of the Montague Police. Each awardee received a personalized color certificate, which included who nominated them and why.

This year the nomination process was opened up to the entire community resulting in 86 people being recognized as an un-sung s/hero. These s/heroes ranged from the "kitchen Goddess" at Sheffield, the staff at MCTV, and select members of The Brick House Teen Center's Youth Leaders to the owners of Loot, the student coordinators of the Gay Straight Alliances at the middle and high schools, and middle and high school youths

recognized for their direct service to the MES-Sheffield student body. The entire list will be published by installments in the newsletter, the Partnership's website, and the Partnership's Facebook page.

Many thanks are owed to all the Partnership volunteers, businesses and community members and Court Dorsey, banjo minstrel, who helped make the evening so special.

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U.S. Casualties in Afghanistan as of 5/28/13

Wounded	Deaths
17,674	2,228



U-28 from page 1

job at elementary school Union 28 after seven years to take a job as superintendent and middle school principal at the Carlisle Public Schools in mid-July.

But with the town of Leverett anticipating a town meeting vote in November on the question of pulling out of the century old union with Erving, New Salem, Wendell and Shutesbury in order to form a new elementary school region with the towns of Pelham and Amherst – and with the further possibility of Shutesbury scheduling a vote in December to follow Leverett into the new region – the arguments in favor of hiring an interim superintendent won out over those who favored searching for a permanent leader for the Union.

The balance tipped more strongly in favor of hiring an interim superintendent when not one but two retiring Union 28 administrators tipped their hats into the ring for the interim job.

Bob Mahler, who has held the principalship of Shutesbury Elementary since leaving similar posts in Gill and Montague Center, offered his candidacy for interim superintendent, saying, "I see this as a chance for me to help the Union. I know the people. I know the process. I'm not interested in being the man responsible for the dissolution of the district. If I am given the job, I would do everything I could to promote it."

Retiring special education director Deb Gerry, who has worked for the Union for a dozen years, also offered her name for consideration for the interim position. Unlike Mahler, who said it would be an easy step for him to gain certification as a superintendent, Gerry is already certified, and she has worked in all the schools of the Union 28 region.

With two strong candidates willing to serve for the coming year, the Union 28 committee wound up voting 10 – 4 to advertise internally for an interim superintendent, hoping to make the choice in June, in time to allow for a smooth transition while Wickman was still available to

pass along the knowledge she has gained in the position over the last seven years.

And, judging from the public evaluation of Wickman which followed that vote, the committee has been as a whole pleased with her performance, with a large majority of committee members rating her as meeting or exceeding her goals over a wide range of categories as educational leader of the five elementary schools in the region.

Wickman had her critics among the town officials and school committee members she worked with over the years, and their voices were represented in the evaluation, with members from Leverett and Shutesbury among those who most frequently dissented from the majority in their performance ratings for Wickman. DeChiara abstained from the evaluation process entirely, and was overruled when he attempted to explain why he was not taking part.

But, at the end, Wickman thanked all the committee members for working with her over the years, and "for taking the risk of selecting me without experience. It's been a growing experience for me."

Wickman supported the candidacy of Gerry over Mahler for her interim replacement, citing Gerry's credentials and central office experience.

DeChiara has led the effort in Shutesbury to regionalize with Amherst and Pelham, an effort that has been at least temporarily sidelined by a pronounced lack of support for the change among his townspeople at public hearings. Despite this, he seemed by his comments on Wednesday inclined to back Mahler for the interim superintendency, even though Mahler spoke out against regionalization at a public forum in Shutesbury this winter, on the grounds that it might put non-tenured teachers in Shutesbury at risk of losing their jobs.

The Amherst region is planning about a dozen layoffs of teachers and staff to close a budget gap in FY'14.

SHELTER from page 1

and it is the only one in Franklin County. With a maximum capacity of 20 individuals, it is nearly always completely full.

As their website states: "Some folks spend a few nights, some spend a few weeks, and many spend a few months. All come with their own story of how they became homeless. Perhaps it's due to divorce or a death in the family. Perhaps they endured a fire in the house or a job loss. Or perhaps there was a devastating illness. The list of possible reasons goes on and on. No matter what their reason, we're here to help."

ServiceNet provides a wide range of human services for people in the Pioneer Valley. Included in their programs are shelter and housing services for the homeless. Their funding comes from local, state, and federal governments; the Franklin County and Hampshire Community United Ways; and private donations and grants.

In addition to a safe, warm place to sleep and nutritious meals, they also provide shelter residents support and advocacy services to address their financial, health, mental health, legal, education, employment, housing, budgeting, parenting, and child care needs.

They offer housing search services to help address issues that prevent people from finding and keeping a home and a follow-up program to help people keep their housing after they move out of the shelter.

The Emergency Shelter is a sober place. Residents cannot come in if they are inebriated or are using drugs. Upon arrival, they are assigned a counselor to work with them.

Henefield said "they have a regimented daily routine." At the Shelter, they must arrive by early evening to secure their bed. They are given food, but are expected to cook and clean up the kitchen under staff supervision, he continued.

During the winter's frigid temperatures, a handful of people arrived each night to the doors of the Shelter, and whether or not there

was a bed to offer, they were still accepted inside.

"The shelter is full all year with a waiting list, but if conditions are bad, we will accommodate any one in need," said Steve Karpovich, Director of the Emergency Shelter.

When people show up at night, staff finds them a chair or a couch for them to stay on, said Karpovich.

In the morning, residents travel to Greenfield, where ServiceNet works to connect them with housing.

Karpovich said, they are "not just an overnight shelter; we provide a range of services. People come here and are connected with a case manager who tries to match them with permanent housing. We have a high success rate."

ServiceNet also provides transitional housing that they rent to clients. The rental fee is determined upon a sliding scale fee depending on if they have a job. Food and utilities are included.

The current building on Farren Avenue is in disrepair. According to Henefield, the foundation is 150 years old, and the building has a lot of old lead paint. Another drawback is that their current location is out of the way from the services the residents need.

The Wells Street location, on the other hand, will be a major improvement for the residents. The Emergency Shelter will move together with the behavioral and other services that are currently on Main Street to the same building. The residents will not have to travel by van back and forth from Montague to Greenfield.

ServiceNet has been working hard for several years searching for a new location while maintaining the existing shelter. Henefield believes that the location will save money in the long run, and will enable ServiceNet to provide better services on its meager yearly budget.

Bill Martin, the Mayor of Greenfield, is pleased that all of the services will be in the same building, and that it will be off of Main Street, said Henefield.

The new home of the Emer-

gency Shelter must first undergo renovations, which are estimated to take eight weeks. At the moment, ServiceNet is waiting for the building permit to begin renovations.

They are hoping to move in by the end of August.

The renovations necessary to comply with health and safety regulations include a heating, ventilation and air conditioning system, a sprinkler system, and making the building handicapped accessible.

The shelter will have two large bedrooms with steel bunk beds and lockers to minimize bed bugs, which are "a huge problem in shelters," said Henefield. One room will have six beds for women, and the other will have 14 for men. Most residents are men because homeless women often have children with them and other housing services are better suited for their needs, Henefield explained.

Henefield also explained with pride that there will be a lounge area with couches and a television for use in the evenings. Residents will find it a comfortable place until they find permanent housing.



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Quilts of the Quabbin

NEW SALEM - Twenty Quabbin Valley quilts made between 1840 and 1940 are being exhibited on Sundays and Wednesdays during the month of June, from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m., at the Prescott Church Museum at the Swift River Valley Historical Society, at 40 Elm Street in New Salem. The quilts are from the four "lost towns" of Dana, Enfield, Greenwich, and Prescott that were disincorporated 75 years ago to allow the flooding of the Quabbin Reservoir.

Noted quilt historian and author Lynne Bassett, curator of textiles and fine arts at Old Sturbridge Village, will present a lecture on June 16 at 2 p.m. Space for the lecture is limited, so advance registration is advised: send your name, contact information, and a check for \$10 to the Swift River Valley Historical Society, P.O. Box 22, New Salem, MA, 01355 or email srvhsmuseum@gmail.com.

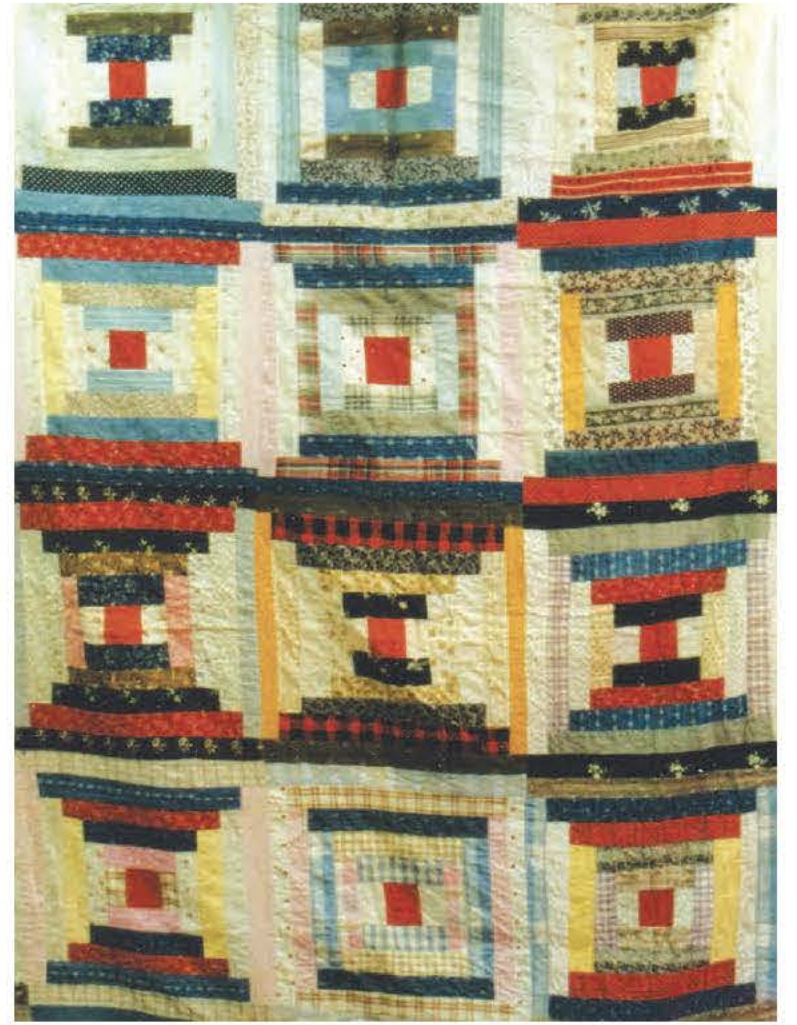


Rising star with Lemoyne stars

The lecture fee includes the talk and a tour of the quilt show by Lynne Bassett, one-year membership in the Swift River Valley Historical Society, refreshments,

and admission to the Whitaker Clary house museum.

The quilts have all been documented by Mass Quilts, an organization that has "covered" quilts and quilt history throughout Massachusetts. The collection includes quilts from a humble Four Patch with no quilting to one covered with appliqued oak leaves, lilies, tulips, and rosebuds and heavily quilted. Along with favorite patterns such as Log Cabin, Windmill, Honeycomb, Pinwheel, and Rising Star, the show will feature signature quilts, a tiny quilt for a doll's bed, and a framed piece, Tumbling Blocks, made with silk and satin samples sent to Mrs. Abraham Lincoln to choose from for her inauguration gown.



This quilt shows the traditional "log cabin" design.

REMEMBERING THE FALLEN IN TURNERS FALLS



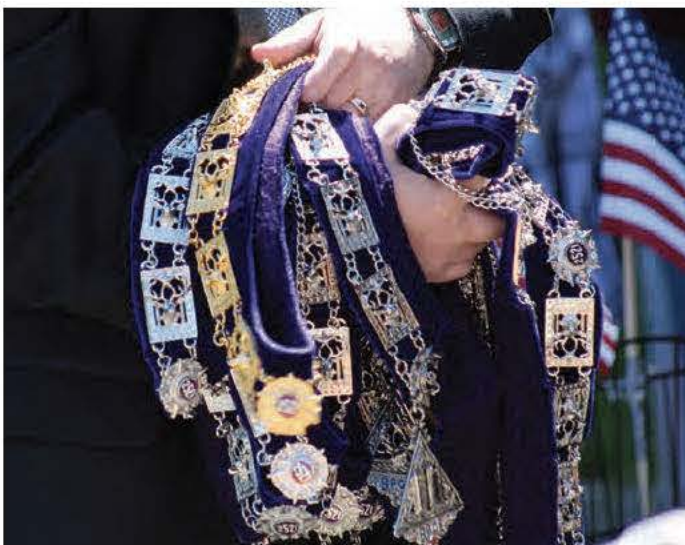
Above: Selectboard, VFW and American Legion officials pledge to the flag. Below: The Montague Elks Lodge represent in fine ceremonial attire.

LYNN PELLAND PHOTOS



Above: The Franklin County Technical School drumline leads the morning parade down Avenue A to the Veterans Memorial Park. Below: Jake Caisse places a wreath at the Iraq and Afghanistan monument.

DAWN MONTAGUE PHOTO



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West Along the River Home Again, Home Again

By DAVID BRULE

*The black porcelain lamp
Painted with boughs of cherry blossoms
Still stands on its end table
Unlit, the little chain untouched
Just the way I left it....*

ERVINGSIDE – While I was gone, everything inside the house remained the same, silent and waiting, except for a neighbor's weekly visit to water the house-bound orchids.

All inside remained the same while I was off rushing through airports, waiting with the other passengers, anxious, until the big bird lifted off, to eventually leave me standing days later, watching the silent swirling Rhône flow beneath the bridge that leads to the limestone cliffs of the edge of the Ardèche.

Off visiting the ruins of a Roman amphitheater in Orange, in the dry baking heat, instead of the echoes and laughter of raucous spectators in Caesar's Gaul, I was wondering if the Baltimore orioles were back in the yard, singing and working their way through our cherry tree, ridding the forming fruit of intrusive caterpillars. Even standing on the half bridge of Avignon, I watched the swallows and swifts sweep and glide screaming under the arches in the delight of their roller coaster flight, and wondered if my own swifts and swallows were back, and what about the whippoorwill?

Paris in springtime was all wet streets, shining in May rain, a bit

too chilly and damp to inspire romantic poetic musings about the Seine flowing sullen beneath the Pont Neuf and the Pont des Arts.

We found solace and refuge in churches: Saint Germain des Prés, our ancestors' parish of Saint Sulpice, or, in the cafés all glitter and bustle, noise and talk, newspapers, the rich aroma of espresso, the temptations of teasing a little glass of bubbly Vouvray wine.

France, the other France outside the café doors, seems to be going to hell in a handbasket: The Socialist Party of President François Hollande, one year in power, has proven to have no real plan for the mess the country is in. Labor unions, whose members voted massively Socialist, are still losing their factories, and feel betrayed by Hollande. Teachers, traditionally Socialist supporters, are still waiting for 50,000 additional educators to be hired as promised during the presidential campaign. His cabinet minister, in charge of an austerity budget, loaded with tax increases and sacrifice, was exposed as having salted away half a billion euros in Swiss banks as a personal precaution! Soccer riots ruin championship games and ceremonies. The celebrated Cannes Film Festival takes place under sheets of rain and 40 degree temperatures. Imagine, barely a starlet ventured out topless, or in at least a tiny bikini, onto the famed Riviera beaches. What is France coming to?

We made our way out to timeless Brittany, still Celtic in spite

of all, and while we stood among the thousands of standing stones, 7,000-year-old megalithic *menhirs* marching down to the sea, back home great-grandfather Judah's

be without money for a year. That's not my whole retirement plan, but I'm counting on getting something out of it!)

We, and a hundred others, danced our circular rhythmic, ancient steps of the *an dro* on the dirt floor of a massive barn out into the farming country, while the clock ticked as always in the old house on the Flat four thousand miles away. The

Atlantic, we touched down, with nary a jolt upon landing in Boston. Cousin Tom and Joan waiting to drive us home again. Arriving in the dark, opening the front door, inside all as we had left it. The welcoming chairs, the kitchen table, the cast iron Glenwood C. Familiar objects possessing distinctive spirit and personality -- we could even call them old friends -- had waited patiently.



The author takes time out to read his Montague Reporter at the Menhir stone alignments of Carnac, Brittany (5,000 B.C.).

lilacs bloomed in the dooryard as they had for more than 130 years, watching over the yard.

While the cuckoo called incessantly from the hedgerows along the fields just below the house near Uzel, didn't my catbird sashay around those lilacs mewing and scolding?

(By the way, I made sure I had coins in my pocket, waiting for that cuckoo. When you hear the cuckoo in the spring in Brittany, and you jingle your coins, they say you'll not

Millers flowed by the house as it does every day, eternal as the time marked off in the quiet kitchen. Migrating birds and bats flowed over our woods, and a mother bear with her three cubs trashed cousin Anabelle's garage and flattened birdfeeders all over the neighborhood.

Then, the calendar and the clock yielding, it was time to start back for our faraway home. More airports and waiting, lines, shoes and belts off for security checks, until winging over the heaving North

*You all held your places in these rooms,
Stuck to your knitting,
Waited for me to stand here again
Bags at my feet, house key still in hand
Admiring your constancy,
Your silent fealty, your steadfast repose.*

Billy Collins

KEEPING THEM RUNNING: AT THE ANTIQUE TRUCK CLUB OF AMERICA SHOW, MAY 5 AT AT YANKEE CANDLE



John H. Black of Northfield showed his 1929 Reo Speedster with only 49,000 actual miles on the speedometer. The engine appears to be a Continental, sporting seven main bearings. The truck was purchased new by Gordon Gerry of Warwick, and has been operated as a log truck ever since, though occasionally carrying a Caterpillar logging tractor like the one aboard. Black did all the restoration but the lettering on the door.




Bob West, age 90, stands next to his restored 1963 Mack tractor. He's still driving after 72 years. He has a 1991 Mack Ultraliner that he books onto any of 3 vans, a flatbed, tanker, lowbed, or dump trailer, hauling a wide variety of freight. He has restored a 1947 International KB 11, a cabover Mack, 1935 Ford Dump and the 1963 Mack B 61 behind him in the photo. He's not thinking of retiring any time, soon. "All my friends who retired, died right afterward."

PHOTOS AND CAPTIONS BY JOE PARZYCH

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NOTES FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD

Town Meeting Warrant Signed

By JOSH HEINEMANN

The Wendell selectboard met two consecutive evenings, Wednesday May 22 and Thursday May 23, when they signed the annual town meeting warrant after the finance committee had a chance, Wednesday evening, to examine the warrant's money articles.

The town meeting warrant must be posted at least one week in advance of the town meeting, or by May 26, and so board members reviewed the final copy they had signed the evening before and which they had given to the Fin Com.

The 34-article warrant would pay necessary bills, including \$2,034,337 under article 4 for general government operating expense. It would put money into the capital stabilization fund, the reserve fund, the unemployment compensation fund, the pension reserve fund, and into an established stabilization fund for investing sick leave pay. \$5,000 would buy a safe for the treasurer, \$6,000 would pay for an independent audit, \$6,000 would pay for connecting town buildings to a real high speed internet cable, and \$13,000 would pay for a study to explore options for K through 6 education for the towns remaining in Union 28.

Expenses for renovating the town hall kitchen are divided into three articles which would total \$19,600, but this amount does not include purchase of a new stove because that issue became too contentious. A separate article would establish a committee to study possibilities for a town hall handicap access ramp, but does not distinguish whether that ramp would provide a second wheelchair exit near the front of the town hall or would provide access to the stage level. Both access issues have been discussed.

Article 24 would change the annual town meeting day to a Saturday; article 32 would support medical marijuana in a way that does not favor large energy intensive corporate structures over smaller more local and greener production as has happened in other states that have approved medical use of marijuana. A petitioned article would call upon Baystate Health System to commit resources to maintain full services at Baystate Franklin Medical Center.

Also on Thursday, the

dog hearing for Cindy Freeman's dog was continued. Freeman was scheduled to come to Thursday's meeting with proof that the dog was placed out of town. She did not come and half an hour after her scheduled time board members considered their next step. They decided to give her another week to show proof, and failing that, to have Wendell's police officer or dog officer pick up the animal on sight, and have it euthanized (done in).

Garden Water

At the Wednesday meeting, John Craddock and Kate Nolan from the community garden committee met the selectboard to ask for their approval of a plan that might bring water to the personal plots and the general areas of the community garden. The garden has a well with a hand pump and buckets, and so far people have carried water in buckets to their plants and seedlings. That has been hard work, and may have discouraged some citizens from using the community garden.

Others suggested making a yoke available at the well, but after years of carrying water, Craddock developed a plan that would use a donated electric pump and tank that he had, and a system of pipes that would allow any plot to be reached with a 50' hose. The cost for an electrician, and the materials total \$2,500 with volunteer labor. The garden committee has \$300 from donations and proceeds from a Full Moon Coffeehouse fundraiser.

Craddock had brought that plan to the April 24 selectboard meeting and selectboard member Jeffrey Pooser suggested using a solar pump rather than a conventional electric pump. Peter Gallant was at that meeting for another reason and reminded those present that Wendell has available National Grid grant money that can be used for alternative energy production and education about alternative energy.

Before this May 22 meeting Gallant, Alistair MacMartin, and garden committee members made a plan to use a solar panel to power a low voltage electric pump at the well to pump water to a storage tank high on the land from which gravity would supply water to gardeners.

Librarian Rosie Heidkamp, a member of the group that oversees the Na-

tional Grid grant money, told the garden committee members that the solar pump plan seemed a good use of that grant money.

Betsy Ames of the energy committee and the food security project also came to this May 22 meeting with her group's plan, which would collect rainwater from the town office building roof and direct it through gutters to larger storage tanks high in the garden where it can supply water by gravity to gardeners. She said we do not know how much water the well can provide, and thought it a waste to pump water up so that it can flow down again.

Craddock thought her plan has merit, but said the plan developed by the garden committee could be tied into a roof drain system easily even if the two systems were built independently.

Selectboard member Dan Keller said that the town office building already has a drainage system that has no gutters. The building has a perimeter drain with a perforated pipe set in gravel around the foundation. A hypalon liner lies below the gravel and the perforated pipes lead to a solid pipe that goes under the parking lot and drains into the garden almost directly above the well.

Looking for a support system for the tank, garden committee members approached the Friends of the Meetinghouse about the timbers for the steeple that was built for the meetinghouse, but stood on the ground until wind broke one of the supporting timbers and volunteers took it down piece by piece. An engineer said the steeple was too heavy for the building to support, and the Friends were willing to donate the timbers to the garden. Craddock said the garden committee would rebuild the steeple using the gap left by the one broken piece as an entrance to a small area that would have signs describing the solar (and possibly roof collection) water system, and the story of the steeple as well.

Town money will not have to be appropriated for the project, but the garden committee members asked for and received the selectboard's blessing for the project.

Other business

Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) members Pam Richardson and Don Bartlett

NOTES FROM THE LEVERETT SELECTBOARD

Loose Ends on Facilities Maintenance

By DAVID DETMOLD

Wrapping up the loose ends of the facilities maintenance debate that divided the school committee and the selectboard before town meeting, Leverett Elementary School principal Anne Ross and the school's head custodian Wayne Cromack met with town facilities manager John Kuczik and town administrator Margie McGinnis on Tuesday to iron out the responsibilities of the various parties concerned with upkeep and maintenance at the school.

Although the budget as passed by town meeting left the funding for maintenance with the school committee, Ross renewed her previously stated intent to pass along responsibility for monitoring the school's water supply, septic system, and solid waste pickup to Kuczik, whose work is paid for out of the town's side of the budget.

In order to effect this change, the town may have to revisit the issue in the fall to transfer funds from the school side of the budget to the town side, according to McGinnis, who briefed the selectboard on the discussion.

There was a tinge of "I told you so" in the air, as selectboard chair Rich Brazeau instructed McGinnis to work the details out with Kuczik. "I don't want to talk about it any more," he added.

The school committee will meet jointly with the selectboard on June 3 at 7 p.m. at the school library to appoint candidates interested in filling one or two open seats on the school committee until the next town election. Among the possible candidates interested in joining the school committee are former selectboard member Fenna Lee Bonsignore, historical commission member Susan Mareneck, and LES parent Cheryl Bonica.

There is at least one open seat on the committee, possibly two, depending on whether Sheila Hunter decides to take the seat she was elected to at town meeting, after conferring with the state ethics commission about the potential for conflict of interest while she remains employed by Union 28 as the principal of Swift River School for another month and a half.

A letter from a neighbor complaining about the dilapidated state of a barn owned by Steve Blinn, at 1 Dudleyville Road, has prompted the Franklin County cooperative building inspector, Jim Hawkins, to post the property as unsafe.

The selectboard on Tuesday moved to appoint a three-person committee, including a local engineer, a disinterested party, and fire chief John Moruzzi, to survey the property and report to Blinn and the town about their determination.

Town clerk Lisa Stratford,

who lives near the building in question, said the barn appears to be gradually falling into the Sawmill River. The house adjoining the barn is also under scrutiny by the building inspector, but Hawkins wanted to have the barn taken down first.

Brazeau said he would be interested to know whether the septic system for the house is also falling into the river. The board of health may be asked to conduct tests at the property to determine that.

Selectboard member Julie Shively spoke of the historic aspects of the buildings, and said there was a photograph of how the property once looked available for public viewing at the museum across the street. She expressed sadness over the current disrepair of the old buildings.

The selectboard plotted strategy for placing a lien on the property if demolition is called for, with the foreboding that the town would eventually be forced to spend money on cleaning up the property as a matter of public health and safety.

Looking ahead to other anticipated budget outlays, the selectboard will confer about a next meeting date with the fire department study committee. The study committee has raised the possibility of the town hiring a full-time firefighter to staff the fire station during the day, when many of the call firefighting force is away from town.

Shred It With The Business Association

MONTAGUE—Montague Business Association will coordinate a paper shredding day Saturday June 8. Valley Green Shredding has donated their services from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., and will be at the corner of Avenue A and 7th Street to shred papers that contain confidential information, such as customer or client records that include a person's name and Social Security Number,

driver's license number, state issued identification, financial account number, credit or debit account number, or personal identification number.

Area businesses and individuals are encouraged to bring their papers for shredding. Instructions from Valley Green Shredding include paper only; light textbooks, spiral notebooks, and paperclips are acceptable for this

event. Although there is no charge for the service, suggested donations per file box of papers is \$5 and up. Funds will go to downtown safety efforts and to the Gill-Montague Community School Partnership.

Those interested in volunteering for this event can contact Stephan Smith, A. H. Rist Insurance, 863-4373 or email stephan@ahrist.com.

met the selectboard to ask about consulting town counsel about the first case that has come before them. The new owner of the house that Don Ellis built, a big yellow house at the intersection of Morse Village Road and New Salem Road, wants to change the house from two apartments to four, one of which would be affordable under chapter 40 B.

Wendell bylaws have provision for three but not four living units in a building, but state law says a de-

veloper who includes 20% of the units he is creating as affordable can build "by right." The building inspector thought the developer could not build four units, but the developer thinks he can and went to the ZBA. Both members are new and this is the first situation they have had to face.

Pooser wondered if there is anything the town can do to protect itself from abuses; selectboard chair Christine Heard said it might not be a bad project because Wendell

has very few rental properties. Keller said ZBA members could call but that town counsel charges dearly for time, in ten minute increments, so they should have their questions ready and be brief.

Highway commissioner Harry Williston came in briefly for the continued Farley Road pole hearing and said that no National Grid engineer had met with the road crew. The hearing was continued to the next selectboard meeting.

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LOOKING BACK: 10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Here's the way it was on May 29, 2003: News from the Montague Reporter's archive.

Airport Expansion Planned

The Montague Airport commission has been working on a plan that would extend the runway at the municipal airport from 3,000 to 4,200 feet. This is viewed as a necessary update by many members of the commission, but the expansion is not without its detractors in the community. There will be a public hearing to discuss the planned changes on June 9, at the Franklin County Technical School.

Gill Officers Honored

On May 15, Chief David Hastings awarded Officer John Perreault a Community Service Award. Perreault, known to most as Officer John, received the award for his work as the department's juvenile officer.

In addition to teaching D.A.R.E., he has volunteered many hours at the school attending physical education classes, school-sponsored events, and sporting activities. He is

in charge of the Bicycle Rodeo.

Open Studio at Williams Garage

Who says the Turners art scene ain't happening? They must have missed the party on Sunday the 25th, when Tim de Christopher held a jazzed-out, jam-packed open studio brunch at his sculpture studio in the old Williams Garage on 2nd Street.

To the sizzling sounds of the Safari East trio, a standing-room-only crowd viewed de Christopher's mind-blowing sculptures, ranging from lovingly crafted elephants and dogs to the piece de resistance, a massive, gorgeously detailed limestone birdbath.

New Principal at Sheffield

Chip Wood, former Gill principal, is returning to the Gill-Montague system as the principal of Sheffield Elementary School. Wood was welcomed at Tuesday night's school committee meeting with a warm round of applause.

He is the co-creator of the Responsive Classroom approach to education and a co-founder of the Northeast Foundation for Children

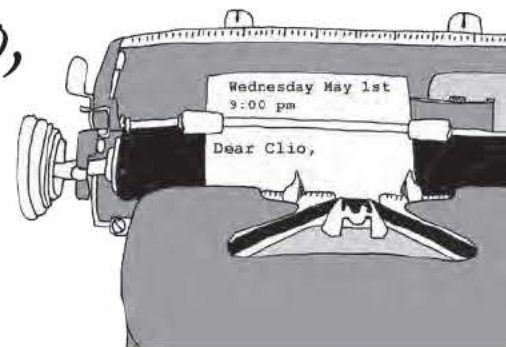
(NEFC), best known locally as the parent organization of the Greenfield Center School. Wood announced Tuesday that he is looking forward to his new position, and intends to be around for quite a while.

Losing Our Streetscape

In 1983, town meeting passed a streetscape plan for downtown Turners Falls, calling for planters and 25 benches along Avenue A. There are only 10 and a half left. In 1996, when public drug-dealing was a common sight on the Avenue, the Partnership for a Safe Montague and the former Montague Police Chief decided the best way to implement community policing would be to keep the community off the street, and went to the selectboard with a plan for removing all the benches.

Downtown residents showed up at a hearing that summer to oppose their removal, and the plan was nixed. In 2001, \$3,000 was approved by special town meeting to start the repair and replacement, and there is a rumor that two benches have been purchased, but they have not yet been installed.

Dear Clio,



Dear Clio,

I have a couple of co-workers who talk a lot during work hours. While I enjoy talking, and feel that some light social interaction, while detracting from work efficiency, is important for office morale, these particular co-workers go overboard.

Even though I try to signal with my body language that I am trying to look at my computer screen, and not ask any follow up questions, they still go on about their personal lives, often for upwards of a half hour at a stretch. The content of these personal conversations and their length feels consistently inappropriate. My work ethic nags at me and while I like these women, I do not feel so close to them to merit the kind of confessions they burden me with. I often think to myself: "I want to get stuff done and go home in a few hours. Even if I had the time for this conversation, I still wouldn't be interested."

I have a hard time mustering up the courage to just say, "I have a lot of work on my plate right now, so I must wrap up our talk. Catch you later." What's stopping me? Why am I so bound by unwritten rules of politeness and the need to be seen as nice and sympathetic? I suppose it's a common problem - how to extricate oneself from a conversation you do not want to participate in. Do you have any words of wisdom?

Sincerely,
Disturbed by Excessive
Office Banter

Dear D.E.O.B.,

When I work with groups of people, I notice that some are able to be productive while carrying on a conversation, and others are not. It seems like our brains must be wired differently. People who are able to work this way prefer it. It's hard for them to understand why everyone does not chat while they work,

since, for them, it is fun and social.

Those who prefer to focus on one thing and complete tasks as efficiently as possible are left in a situation where they must put up with the annoying background noise or else risk appearing rude. Obviously you do not want either. I think that the key to not insulting your coworkers is clear communication.

If you send a vague message to colleagues that you don't want to talk to them, by acting uncomfortable or keeping replies short, then you have left it up to them to determine why. Since we can all fall prey to feelings of insecurity from time to time, some of your coworkers might begin to worry that they have done something to offend you, or even that you don't like them.

I think it is important to communicate that it is nothing personal. Your line, "I have a lot of work on my plate..." seems completely appropriate to me. You might also say, "Sorry that I am not very talkative, but I need to focus on my work right now." My guess is that once you have said this a few times, you will not need to again. Your colleagues will learn to recognize the signs.

As soon as you create an environment where you can be productive and meet your deadlines, you will be calmer and happier. When the work is done, you will be free to socialize without worrying that you are wasting time. Perhaps you will spend less time talking, but these more genuine interactions could lead to real friendships with your coworkers.

D.E.O.B., good luck creating the environment you need to be successful at work. Don't be afraid to be honest! Being clear about what you need will likely bring about positive consequences for you and your coworkers.

Yours, Clio

Contact Clio confidentially at:
editor@montaguereporter.org

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

At Least The Bear Is Not Our Problem

Monday 5/20

7:52 a.m. Hit-and-run accident at Unity and Central Streets. Minor damage. Under investigation.

8:15 p.m. Caller from Turners Falls Road reported a power outage safety hazard in the area. WMECO notified.

8:21 p.m. Report of possible gunshots in the area of East Taylor Road. Officer checked area; sound believed to have been fireworks.

11:34 p.m. General disturbance in alley way between Third and Fourth Streets. Officer found the situation had quieted down.

Tuesday 5/21

7:29 a.m. Abandoned 911 call from a daycare on O Street, stemming from a dispute between a provider and a parent. Provider advised of options.

9:05 a.m. Handled situation regarding Facebook harassment.

1:38 p.m. Bear on High Street in Greenfield. The bear has been there on and off for several days and is attracting a number of spectators. Referred to Greenfield and Environmental Police.

2:33 p.m. Odor of rubber burning in basement on Warner Street, no smoke showing. Turners Falls

Fire Department and officer responded.

4:35 p.m. Cloud of smoke and marijuana odor in the Park Street area. Unable to locate.

8:51 p.m. Restraining order violation on Central Street. Summons issued.

Wednesday 5/22

12:27 a.m. State police traced an abandoned 911 call to area of Montague City Road and Greenfield Road. Located and spoke with parties.

1:34 a.m. Burglary, breaking and entering at Fourth Street. Report taken.

9:06 a.m. Assault reported on L Street. Arrested a male subject, age 24, of Fourth Street, for domestic assault and battery.

2:41 p.m. Fight on Fourth Street. Investigated.

3:25 p.m. Arrested person was

parked behind another vehicle at the stop sign at Park Street, the truck backed up and struck her vehicle. Minor damage.

9:04 a.m. Larceny at Basically Bicycles on 88 Third Street.

2:20 p.m. Greenfield Savings Bank at 282 Avenue A requested an officer come speak with a woman who has reported checks stolen from her wallet last week. Checks were cashed at Food City. Under investigation.

10:05 p.m. Caller complained neighbors on Worcester Avenue vandalizing and tearing down her fence. Officer checked the area, nothing found.

Friday 5/24

1:23 a.m. Fire alarm sounded at Judd Wire at 124 Turnpike Road. Fire department responded, and officer sent, no smoke or fire seen. Building evacuated and checked, nothing found.

7:45 a.m. Larceny reported. Purse stolen from Montague Book Mill on Greenfield Road previous night.

8:43 a.m. Threatening harassment on Turners Falls Road. Investigated.

8:44 a.m. Vandalism at South Prospect Street.

3:10 p.m. Larceny at Simon's Stamps on 320 Avenue A. Advised of options.

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

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

Poetry Page Edited By Patricia Pruitt
design by Claudia Wells

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

Nothing Much To Say (with no apologies)

For P. H. Crosby
I have beaten
the kissing ball
that was in
the garden

to pieces which
you will probably
save
for no reason
Forgive me
It was malicious
so sweet
and so cold

— Paul Harrington

PASTICHE, WITH RESPONSE The Shiny Kissing Ball (apologies to William Carlos Williams)

So little depends upon the shiny
kissing ball
doused by the sprinkles
surrounded by whirly-gigs.

— P.H. Crosby
Gill

translucent illumination

I get lost in time
translucency runs
through my image
exposing my soul
the sun energy
illuminates
the cells of my skins
while I tend to my plants
working the earth
barefoot
thankful for abundance
thankful for stella astaria
to share
and the dandy lion to roar
detoxing my body

— Michelle Bryan
Turners Falls

HER EYES OPEN

Her eyes open,
As she rises from the night slumber,
Listening to the rushing rain making music,
Like thousands of pearls on glass,
Or a blacksmith pounding their hammer against a blistering steel rod,
Her colorless hair flies in wisps,
As she tends to the coals of a glowing fire,
Resembling orange honeydew shades,

Her lively coffee eyes roam curiously,
As if they never aged with her,
Remaining the same since infancy,
The lovely house she lives in sinks in a peak of land,
Overlooking the world and all its beautiful features,
Large, dry stones ricochet from mountain to mountain outside,
And can be heard from oceans away,
She strolls down a staircase of wood,
With colors illuminating the house,

Frosted windows find their way to seize her attention,
As magpies flutter through the brittle trees,
She faces the bulky painted door,
As she grasps her favorite dusty blue coat,
Pulling it around herself gently,
A shimmer of light seeps through the door,
Beaming through,
Inviting her to come out into nature,
Her steps resonate in sound through the pristine air,
As she paces herself towards a patch of lilacs and violets,
Quietly waiting for her all morning.

— Ella de Beauport
Turners Falls

For Palden

In a time of great disturbance
the peaceful order is uprooted
fire
a building burns, a man falls to his death
water
a tree is planted, flowers growing
earth
a bench removed, a bench is given
air
your children cry, we lose a friend
our tears fall and we remember joy
together--we face the past
together--we hold the present
together--we imagine the future
and bring it into being.
In hard times
we miss you
in these hard times
we miss you
in these hard times
we miss you, Palden.

— David Detmold
Turners Falls

Contributors

Michelle Bryan says "a wild spirit inside captures me and takes a hold of my soul and won't let me go until I have finished. I am a mother, a dancer and drummer, dreamer and artist and resident of Turners Falls."
Patricia Crosby has little time to write, but finds time to set down a poem or two to maintain her sanity. Patricia lives in Gill.
Ella de Beauport graduates from Full Circle School in Bernardston this summer, and is 11 years old. She comes from an artistic musical family, and enjoys writing poetry and short stories. She lives in Turners Falls, MA.
David Detmold saws a little, writes poems and fiction, writes articles for the Montague Reporter and misses his old friend.
Paul Harrington is a friend of P.H. Crosby's.

Below is a banner painted by Nina Rossi, inspired by David's poem For Palden.



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ALL THE TIME:

EVERY SUNDAY

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

EVERY TUESDAY

Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Kidleidoscope*, environmental program for ages 3-6 and their adults. 10:30 to 11:30 a.m., free. The Millers Falls Library Club: Free after school program. 3:30 to 4:45 p.m.

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

EVERY WEDNESDAY

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

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

Avenue A & 2nd St., Turners Falls: Farmers Market. 2 - 6 p.m.

EVERY THURSDAY

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

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

ART SHOWS:

Great Falls Discovery Center: Paintings & Photography by Ni-

cole Werth. Through June 30.

Nina's Nook, Turners Falls: Celestial Cafe featuring three-dimensional collage by artist Emily Goodwin. Now through June 22.

LOCAL EVENTS:

THURSDAY, MAY 30

Leverett Library: Leverett Historic Commission meeting with state representatives of the Mass Historical Commission regarding the three new historic districts in town with a powerpoint presentation. 7 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Patty Carpenter, jazz vocalist. 8 p.m.

Deja Brew Pub, Wendell: Blue Pearl, blues/jazz. 8 to 10 p.m.

The Montague Inn: Dance Party Karaoke with DJ Kellis. 8:30 p.m. to 12:30 a.m.

FRIDAY, MAY 31

Wendell Town Hall: Sing Out! Wendell Community Chorus concert, singing gospel, folk and choral music. With Moonlight & Morning Star, Carrie Ferguson, Doug Tanner, Francis Doughty, and Ajika Sawyer. Family friendly. Benefit for Community Chorus scholarships.

Ashfield Town Hall: Dead Man's Cell Phone, play (for grown-ups) that follows one woman's loopy journey into a dead man's life via his cellphone. Ashfield Community Theater presents this comedy. 7:30 pm. \$

Arts Block Café, Greenfield: The Jim Matus Duo. Opening band TBA. 8 p.m., \$

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: Christina Martin, folk rock alt country pop, 8 p.m.

The Montague Inn: Karaoke with TNT Productions, featuring DJ Steve. 8:30 p.m. to 12:30 a.m.

Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: Lake Side Drive, rock 'n' roll. 9:30 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: The Diamondstones & special guests, jam/funk/rock. 9:30 p.m., \$

SATURDAY, JUNE 1

The Shea Theater, Turners Falls: Celtic Heels Irish Dance Company and special guest musicians Fireseed. 7 to 9 p.m. \$

Montague Common Hall, Montague Center: Square Dance to old-time music. Music & caller TBD. All are welcome. 7 to 10 p.m., \$



This Thursday, June 6, Brooklyn-based experimental folk guitarist Steve Gunn takes the helm on a rather heady Bookmill bill. Vermonters MV/EE and Mainers Herbcraft ride along. So should you. Starts at 7:30 p.m.

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: Doug Kwartler, singer/songwriter, with special guest Susan Levine, folk americana. 7:30 p.m.

Ashfield Town Hall, Ashfield: Dead Man's Cell Phone (see Friday listing). 7:30 p.m. \$

Guiding Star Grange, Greenfield: Contra Dance, with Wild Asparagus. Beginners' workshop at 8 p.m.; dance from 8:30 to 11:30 p.m. \$

Deja Brew Pub, Wendell: Reprobate Blues Band, blues, 9 to 11:30 p.m.

Feeding Tube Records, Northampton: Happy Jawbone Family Band, Joseph "Pizza Slice" Argesta, and Loudville. 9 p.m., \$.

Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: Rock 201, classic rock. 9:30 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Glamor Shots '80s Prom.

SUNDAY, JUNE 2

Montague Common Hall, Montague Center: Recital for Susan Conger's fiddle and violin students. 7 to 8:30 p.m.

Deja Brew Pub, Wendell: Moonlight & Morning Star, new and old rhythm & blues. 8 to 10 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: SundayFunday with Marlene and friends. 8 p.m. free.

MONDAY, JUNE 3

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: play reading: The Crucible. 6:30 p.m. \$

The People's Pint, Greenfield: Karaoke. 9:30 p.m.

TUESDAY, JUNE 4

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: Fancy Trash, indie folk rock, with special guest, Matt Hebert, rock. 7:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 5

All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church, Greenfield: Mid-week Music Concert with Chris Harris, Lynne Walker, and Charles Hunting, vocals and four-hand piano. 12:15 to 12:45 p.m. \$

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: Gypsophilia, gypsy jazz klezmer funk classical indie rock bebop. 8 p.m. \$

The People's Pint, Greenfield: Old-time session. 8 p.m.

THURSDAY, JUNE 6

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: Poetry reading featuring poets January Gill O'Neil and Martha Rhodes. 7 p.m.

The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Falltown String Band. 7:30 to 10 p.m.

Montague Bookmill: Extended psych guitar haze with Steve Gunn, MV/EE, Herbcraft, and DJ Matt Krefting. 7:30 p.m., \$

FRIDAY, JUNE 7

The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Drew Paton's 1940's Hit Parade! 7 p.m. Free.

Pothole Pictures, Memorial Hall, Shelburne Falls: Koyaanisqatsi (1983). Classic portrait of our dying civilization, mesmerizing score by Philip Glass. Jump at the rare chance to see this on a big screen. Music before the show: Abdul Baki, piano, 7 p.m. Movie at 7:30 p.m. \$

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: PG Six, Josephine Foster, and Victor Herrero, beautiful touring psych/folk acts. 9:30 p.m., \$.

The Arts Block Café, Greenfield: Vibraphonist Larry Chernicoff and the Miniature Orchestra, with local heroes Tony Vacca, percussion, and John Clark, French horn. Acoustic classical jazz fusion. 8 p.m. \$

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: Yanni Batteau, country rockabilly. 8 p.m.

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

SATURDAY, JUNE 8

Shelburne Falls: Annual RiverFest: Paddlesports, Frog & Flower Parade, Vendor's booths, live music and more. 10 a.m.

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: Kristin Hoffman, singer/songwriter with special guest Stephanie Carlin, folk rock jazz. 7 p.m.

Pothole Pictures, Memorial Hall, Shelburne Falls: Koyaanisqatsi, second screening. Pre-show music: Dick Moulding, rompin' rags, 7 p.m. Movie at 7:30 p.m. \$

The Arts Block Café, Greenfield: The Happier Valley Comedy Show double bill: The Ha-Ha's in "Shrink: Where Freud Meets Funny," and special guest Sam Rush of New Century Theatre and BUMP (Boston's Unscripted Musical Project), who create a fully improvised one-act musical on the spot. 8 p.m. \$

Deja Brew Pub, Wendell: The Mark Nomad Band, dance-able mix of blues, funk and beyond. 9 to 11:30 p.m.

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THE GARDENER'S COMPANION

Progress with Planting, and with the Wars on the Pests



MARY AZARIAN WOODBLOCK PRINT

By LESLIE BROWN

After a spell of unseasonable weather which brought us to the brink of summer, the rains came and with them a huge drop in the temperature, returning us to early spring.

We were glad we had planted both peas and strawberries, and equally happy the tomatoes had not yet gone in. The tradition of setting out such warm weather crops on Memorial Day weekend or after the month's last full moon fell to the wayside.

These less-hardy plants have well outgrown their pots. Three tomatoes are blooming. Perhaps on the Monday holiday we'll set them out, removing the bottom set of leaves so as to plant the stem deeply. In addition to the root ball, there will be more roots sprouting from the buried stem giving strength to the tomato plant as it adjusts to the wind and weather.

We also have some younger plants which are still quite short. They'll go out as well; we've found in past seasons that these later bloomers catch up to their bigger siblings and will bring fruit at the same variety determined

time. Green and wax beans can go into the soil then as well. Wait a bit more for stable temperatures at seventy or above before putting in your peppers, melon and squash plants.

Meanwhile, the peas have enjoyed the cool weather, and are bright green and bushy. The new strawberry plants are putting out new leaves and look equally happy. Recently I was happy to read that either pine needles or plastic could mulch these berries just as well as the traditional straw. I bought straw for our last bed a number of years ago, but it was expensive and we didn't need a whole bale for the job. Even more annoying was the fact that the straw needed to be removed at the end of the season, so that the berry plants did not spend the fall and winter surrounded by wet, moldy mulch. We'll roll out plastic, which will keep down the weeds as well as holding in moisture. This mulch can be easily rolled up after it has done its job.

My impulse to plant a new strawberry bed has altered the configuration of the garden space, requiring fencing from rabbits and most particularly, the voracious woodchuck. This chubby eater is not interested in the tough leaves of the strawberry or the asparagus stalks. His preferences lie with newly sprouted beans, the leafy

crops of greens, and the freshly minted vines of squash and cucumber. Last season he tasted the tender top of a tomato plant and deemed it unpleasant.

Thus the original fence design -- which would have covered an area about fifty by fourteen feet, requiring the rental of a trench digger plus another machine to place poles -- could be abandoned. As the task became only digging a six inch trench around a patch about twelve by twelve feet, it also became much less daunting. We resolved to dig out the trench by hand and bury the first half foot of a length of three foot plastic covered wire. The fence, now supported by sturdy four foot metal poles, was installed in a few hours. It remains only to create a short, portable wooden step to allow access to the gardener.

Voilà: a safe haven for the favored woodchuck cuisine! This fence is low cost, labor limited and attractive. In a year or two if it seems prudent to rotate the vine crops, we will only need to create fencing for another plot of similar size.

Keeping up with a significant population of asparagus beetles organically has required regular attention. Picking these critters by hand was unpleasant, and resulted in the capture of only one while the

other four or five, congregated on a stalk, took to the air. I have had much better luck and no squeamishness about gently tapping the stalk over a container of soapy water and generally lose only a beetle each time. We are also harvesting daily to stay ahead of the invaders.

Asparagus beetles emerge in the spring and feed on the tender shoots, mate and deposit their eggs. The emerging larvae prefer the ferns and berries of the plant. Mature larvae burrow in the soil for the winter, emerging as beetles in the spring.

Picking the beetles and later the larvae, cleaning up plant debris at the end of the season will limit overwintering. Many gardeners, especially commercial growers use a broad spectrum pesticide for these pests. These controls are often harmful to other life, and may kill a parasitic wasp, which is a natural asparagus beetle controller. Since our currently chosen method of control includes cutting the new spears regularly, we often do not harvest enough vegetable a day for eating. We simply keep the day's harvest in a glass of water in the refrigerator until we have enough spears to serve. They stay crisp and fresh for several days.

The organic spray of salt, suds and vinegar in water which I applied to the pesky invaders of my spring bulb bed last year reduced much of the weed growth, par-

ticularly the ground cover which had spread from my neighbor's yard. This left the more challenging woody-stemmed bittersweet, honeysuckle, and multiflora rose. Initially, I cut these invaders back with a hand pruner. While this method works, more sprouts will appear from the underground root system which remains. Short of digging out the whole bed including all of the bulbs, staying on new growth is the only way to keep on top of these hearty plants. We recently invested in a weed trimmer which should speed up this chore.

Imagine the stump of a tree, which persists in sending out new shoots each year. If the sprouts are cut back each time they appear, removing the leaves which feed the tree, eventually the stump will die. As is readily evident, we are talking about a long-term project which will be greatly eased by the new machine, saving the gardener's energy for other garden tasks.

Shortening garden labor will enhance the joys of growing food and flower for the table and the soul. No less importantly, less garden labor will allow the time for stepping back to savor other joys of the natural world. For us this translates into the gift of time for walking, swimming, putting in the kayak, and the escape for travel adventures we so love.

Happy gardening and happy summer fun to you all!

Blue Trail Opening Day and Cleanup a Success

Local paddlers teamed up with a youth group and their host staff from Peak Expeditions, the Greenfield-based company that is running Paddle & Spoke out of the Orange Riverfront Park boathouse, to tidy up the Millers River Blue Trail for the recreation season.

"It was a great day, the weather was perfect, the riverbanks were in bloom, and the

volunteers did a great job removing trash and junk along the river's edge," said Keith Davies, outreach coordinator with the Millers River Watershed Council (MRWC), which organized the event.

The group also checked out various point of interest markers, paddle stops, and access points along the Blue Trail, which was



IVAN USSACH/MRWC PHOTO

Sean Ashcraft and Andrew, a youth volunteer, take aim at a floating debris pile on the Millers River during the May 18 Blue Trail cleanup.

launched in 2011 and runs the six miles from the Alan E Rich Environmental Park in Athol to Orange Riverfront Park. Mr. Davies noted that the Trail is ready for the season.

Peak Expeditions will be running a summer youth program at the Riverfront Boathouse in Orange this summer, and wanted to

volunteer for one or more monitoring opportunities. A few fun paddles are also planned for the summer.

For more information on Council activities, contact Keith Davies, MRWC, MassLIFT/AmeriCorps Project Outreach Coordinator, at watershed@millersriver.net or (978) 248-9491.

get the youth engaged in river stewardship early.

"I love doing things like this for the river and involving youth," noted Sean Ashcraft from Peak.

MRWC is starting its water quality monitoring program shortly after Memorial Day.

Local residents are encouraged

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The Bible says: "Jesus said to him, 'If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in Heaven; and come, follow Me.' But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions." (Matthew 19:21,22).

This rich young ruler, though he had it all, was seeking for something to fill that empty spot. In this world he was well off, but after death was his concern. When told what to do, he reacted the way you and I might. We shift our focus on what we thought we would lose, not what we were certain to gain.

Choosing Jesus Christ is choosing eternal life. Ask Jesus Christ to be your Savior.

This is as written.

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