



EVERYONE LOVES A PARADE!

Thousands Turn out on the Hill to Welcome Spring

Pages 10 & 11

LAKE PLEASANT MILLERS FALLS MONTAGUE CENTER MONTAGUE CITY TURNERS FALLS

The Montague Reporter

YEAR 9 - NO. 28

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

ARRIL 14, 2011

Life Changing Experience in Kentucky for Turners Falls Students



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE LAUREL GORGE CULTURAL CENTER

Students and their advisors from Turners High pause from their community service work at Laurel Gorge Cultural Center in Elliot County, KY. Back row, l-r; David Garcia, Dakota Albano, Uriah Forest-Bulley, Alex Osowski, Heather Batchelor (teacher). Middle row; Kristy Dunbar, Krystal Radzwick, Kelsey O'Brien. Front row; Christopher Klosson (teacher), Evan Sbattuck, Brittany Yolish, Julie Thompson

BY JULIE THOMPSON
ELLIOT COUNTY, KY - "It was amazing to see and help out a part of the country I probably never would have seen."

These are the words of senior Uriah Forest-Bulley, one of the ten students who participated in a life altering experience this March.

For the third consecutive year, a group of ten students from Turners Falls High School and two advisers, Heather Batchelor and Christopher Klossen, spent a week in rural Kentucky to participate in community service.

We traveled to the rural town of Sandy Hook in

northeastern Kentucky to work with an organization called Frontier Housing, a non-profit similar to Habitat for Humanity, that builds homes for individuals and families in need.

Though we didn't help build a house, we did spend two days working on a run-down home Frontier

Housing had recently acquired, helping with landscaping, demolition and an unbelievable amount of painting, all in an effort to make the house livable for a new family.

We worked with students from Elliot County High School's Beta Club, see **KENTUCKY** pg 13

Keller Running for Third Full Term on Wendell Selectboard



AL MacNTIRE PHOTO

BY DAVID DETMOLD
WENDELL - Dan Keller is running unopposed for a third complete term on the Wendell selectboard. A professional video and film producer with Green Mountain Post Films in Turners Falls, Keller has also farmed for decades and raised a family on Cold Brook Road.

Before running to complete the unexpired term on the selectboard when Katherine Bentley left to take a job in Pennsylvania in September of 2003, Keller served 18 years on the town's finance committee.

So why is he running again?

"I like the job. It's a great group of people in the town government, a lot of dedicated volunteers, and it's a pleasure to work with everybody."

But Keller said, "It's a very big job, getting harder and harder to do, for a lot of reasons. The state makes things very complicated and that's getting worse. The open meeting law is slowing down the work of town government because of onerous posting requirements it puts on town boards."

see **KELLER** pg 18

Cabaret a Delicious Treat



The Kit Kat Girls and EmCee Frederick Edwards welcome you to Cabaret!

BY SUDI NIMMS
TURNERS FALLS - Willkommen! to Arena Civic Theatre's Kit Kat Klub in 1930s Berlin, where life is a Cabaret. This weekend the talented

director Jerry Marcanio will transform the Shea Theater into a nightclub of dazzling beauty and dark magic during the tumultuous political ascent of Nazi Germany.

You are greeted at the door by the dynamic, effervescent EmCee (Frederick Edwards) who implores you with his beautiful vibrato voice to see **CABARET** pg 13

Irish Coffee on the Shore Report from the River Rat Race



JOSH HEINEMANN PHOTO

It's a Rat Race out there! Better set a spell and have an Irish Coffee.

BY JOSH HEINEMANN
ATHOL - The high point of the River Rat Race this year was sitting on the bank after the race, sipping Irish coffee.

By then the sun was shining warm, there was a cool breeze off the Millers River, and we were tired enough to be content, sitting, sipping, watching the remaining boats cross under the finish flag, then slow down as both paddlers

stopped to let the boat coast, then lifted paddles again to wait in line at the ramp that leads to the Orange Riverside Park. The first 45 boats get jiggled, to make sure they are not too long or too narrow.

We did not have to worry about being among the first 45 boats, and so, along with a few others, we took out on the right side of the river, behind the Orange Fire Station.

Our neighbor from Wendell who was watching on the shore helped as we climbed up the rock wall and lifted the boat out behind us, being careful not to scratch it on the rocks. The right side clears out quickly and by the time the last stragglers are coming into view on the river, we were alone on the sunny rock wall, legs dangling over the water, coffee gone and replaced by sips of see **RAT RACE** pg 15

PET OF THE WEEK

Nicest Cat



Ariel

Are you interested in taking home the nicest cat in the world? Odd question but I think I know the answer.

I was found as a stray on the streets of Springfield and am now awaiting a home to call my own.

I am very playful and would be a great addition to any home. Do you have cats? I think we could be friends. Dogs? I am sure we can work something out.

I am accepting visitors all day so please stop by to see me!

I'm a member in the Lonely Hearts Club because I've been at the Adoption Center for several weeks now. This means my adoption fee is half off. To find out more about adopting me, please contact the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society at (413) 548-9898 or via email: info@dpvhs.org.

MONTAGUE LIBRARY NEWS

School Vacation Week Library Programs

BY LINDA HICKMAN

MONTAGUE - The Montague Public Libraries offer a wide selection of programs during vacation week. The Art-To-Go box will be in the children's room of the Carnegie Library and contains kits with all of the pieces for a variety of projects. Monday, April 18th, the libraries are closed for Patriots' Day. Tuesday at 10:00 a.m. at the Carnegie Library is Beads and Crafts with Ruth. Children of all ages are invited to get crafty with beads and other projects. The Millers Falls Library Club is Tuesday at 3:30 p.m. It is for children of all ages with Linda and this week

will feature turtles. It includes a turtle story and facts, crafts, and snack. Story Hour is Wednesday, April 20th at 10:15 a.m. at the Carnegie Library with Ruth. Young children and their families are invited for rabbit stories, crafts, songs, and a snack. Ella, a live Holland Lop bunny, will be a guest. Thursday at 10:00 a.m. is Music and Movement for young children at the Montague Center Library. Laurie Davidson and Tom Carroll perform a variety of music for this popular series. For library hours call Carnegie Library, 863-3214, Millers Falls Library, 659-3801, Montague Center Library, 367-2852.

ERVING LIBRARY NEWS

National Library Week Book Sale, Snapshot Day

The Friends of the Erving Public Library book sale begins Saturday, April 23rd and runs through Saturday, April 30th. Great selection of books, both vintage and "like new", will be available, along with books on tape, VHS tapes, and DVDs. The sale opens Saturday from 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m., and continue during open library hours. The final day of the sale, April 30th, coincides with Erving's Town Wide Tag Sale from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Donations may be dropped off during library hours. The Library participated in the Massachusetts Library Snapshot Day on Wednesday, April 13th. Anyone can participate by stop-

ping by the library and sharing a digital photo. Here's one.



The Library will be closed on Monday, April 18th in honor of Patriot's Day and Sunday, April 24th in observance of Easter.

Erving Public Library is located at 17 Moore Street. For more information and library hours call (413) 423-3348 or email ervinglibrary@net-scape.net. View our newsletter online at erving-public-library.wordpress.com.

WENDELL LIBRARY NEWS

Australia and New Zealand, Hoop House Design

Australia and New Zealand is the focus of a couple's slide show presented by Jonathan von Ranson on Friday, April 15th at 7:00 p.m. On what was a 'trip of a lifetime,' we visited a town that's more Wendell than Wendell. (In some interesting ways). We got stranded in our kayak, ate kangaroo sandwiches

at an Aboriginal cultural center and... Well, come to our slide show and we'll tell you more, including about our eight wonderful, unsettling days in New Zealand, where we were traveling during the Christchurch earthquake.

Basic Hoophouse Design and Building with Daniel Botkin on



PHOTO JOSEPH A. PARZ...

Riverside - SPS New England has cleaned the bridge deck down to bare bones on the Gill end as pictured. The next step is to strip old paint and rust from the tops of the I-beams, weld shear pins and paint the top in preparation for more deck grids and new beams on the west side for curb and railing support. The existing beams look pretty solid.

Historic Bridge Facts

PROVIDED BY ED GREGORY, OF GREENFIELD - from documents relating to the original construction of the Gill-Montague Bridge in 1937-38.

- Additional historic accounts of the Gill-Montague Bridge's sister spans. First, we'll look at the Lower Suspension Bridge or the White Bridge.
- The White Bridge between 5th Street in Turners Falls and Canada Hill in Greenfield was built in 1872. It served its purpose of providing an additional "stitch" between Turners Falls and Greenfield during a time when the fledgling Turners Falls was undergoing rapid industrial expansion.
- Above the Great Falls (where the piers of the Upper or "Red" Suspension Bridge are located today) Bissell's Ferry provided crossing for people and cargo.
- When paper mills were going up like dandelions among the row of industries that occupied the slim rocky-spine of land between the canal and the Connecticut River, John Russell of the Russell Cutlery Company and others in 1868 petitioned the county commissioners to have a road and bridge built from Greenfield to the "new city at Turners Falls". The entry point was to be determined at a place below the confluence of Fall River and the Connecticut River. At that time, the Montague City Bridge was the only inroad to the area from all compass points.
- The Montague City Bridge was prone to being washed away during the spring freshets, leaving Turners Falls stranded.

More bridge facts next week!

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 Published weekly on Thursday, (Every other week in July and August. Wednesday paper fourth week of November. No paper last week of December.)
 PHONE (413) 863-8666
 reporter@montaguema.net
 Postmaster: Send address changes to
 The Montague Reporter
 58 4th Street
 Turners Falls, MA 01376
 Advertising and copy deadline is Tuesday at NOON.
 This newspaper shall not be liable for errors in advertisements, but will print without charge that part of the advertisement in which an error occurred. The publishers reserve the right to refuse advertising for any reason and to alter copy or graphics to conform to standards of the newspaper, such as they are.
 Local Subscription Rates:
 \$20 for 1/2 Year

SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES - April 18th - 22nd

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 (413) 863-9357. Messages can be left on our machine when the center is not open. Call the Center now to reserve for the May 16th Catskills trip with Judy Johnson.

Monday, April 18th
 10:00 a.m. Senior Aerobics
 10:45 a.m. Chair Exercise
 12:00 noon Pot Luck lunch and Bingo
 No Knitting Circle

Tuesday, April 19th
 9:00 a.m. Walking Group
 No Yoga

1:00 p.m. Final Painting Class
Wednesday, April 20th
 10:00 a.m. Aerobics
 1:00 p.m. Quilters
Thursday, April 21st
 9:00 a.m. Tai Chi
 1:00 p.m. Pitch
Friday, April 22nd
 10:00 a.m. Aerobics
 10:45 a.m. Chair Exercise
 1:00 p.m. Writing Group

ERVING Senior Center, 18 Pleasant St., Erving (Old Center School, 1st Floor), is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. for activities and congregating meals. For information and reservations, call Polly Kiely, Senior Center Director, at (413) 423-3308. Mealsite Manager is Jim Saracino. Lunch is daily at 11:30 a.m., with reservations 24 hours in advance. Transportation can be provided for meals, shopping, or medical necessity. Please call the Senior Center to find out when the next blood pressure clinic will be held.

Monday, April 18th
 Closed

Thursday, April 21st at 7:00 p.m. A steel and plastic "hoophouse" can offer huge growing opportunities to the backyard gardener or micro-farmer. Farmer and teacher Daniel Botkin will share a slideshow/talk on basic hoophouse construction. (\$2-\$5 donation requested)
 Wendell Free Library is located at 7 Wendell Depot Road. Call (978) 544-3559 for more info.

Great Falls Middle School Students of the Week

Grade 6
 Michael Babcock

Grade 7
 Cullen Wozniak

Grade 8
 Teagan Deery
 Zachary Demars

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LEVERETT Senior Activities
 • Take-It-Easy (Chair) Yoga - Wednesdays, 10:00 a.m. at the Town Hall. Drop-in \$4.00 (first class free).
 • Senior Lunch - Fridays, 12:00. Call (413) 367-2694 by Wednesday for a reservation.
 • Contact the Leverett COA at (413) 548-1022, extension 5 or coa@leverett.ma.us if there is anything we can do to help you or for more information.

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



JESSICA LARKIN ILLUSTRATION

Local Briefs

COMPILED BY DON CLEGG - The Erving Elementary School PTO is sponsoring a "Touch a Vehicle" event to benefit the school library at the elementary school on Saturday, April 30th, from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. There will be numerous vehicles on site, including construction equipment, oil delivery and fire trucks to see and touch up close. There will be power wheel rides for children under five!

The Annual **NELCWIT 5K Race** Against Domestic Violence will be held on Saturday, April 23rd, from 9:00 a.m. to noon. The route begins and ends at the YMCA on Main Street in Greenfield and includes Highland Park. There is also a 5K Walk and a one-mile youth race.

For more information, please contact NELCWIT offices at 479 Main Street in Greenfield, call 413-772-0871 x116 or email info@nelcwit.org.

The Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society has received a grant from **Petsmart Charities** to be used by the Dakin Community spay and neuter clinic. The grant will provide free sterilization for pet cats of income eligible residents in Greenfield, Orange and Turners Falls. To schedule an appoint-

ment, call 413-781-4019, and provide proof of residency at the time of surgery. Assistance with transportation is available. People who live in other towns but need help are encouraged to call the clinic to discuss other program options. Information about Dakin and services are available at www.dpvhs.org.

The Annual Peter Cottontail's **EGGstravaganza** will be held in Unity Park in Turners Falls on Saturday, April 23rd, at 1:00 p.m. Children ages 4 to 12 are invited to take part in this great community tradition. There will be face painting, egg coloring, a bake sale, pictures with Peter Cottontail, and the annual egg hunt where kids will have the 'challenge' of finding approximately 5,000 candy and toy-filled eggs placed in designated areas throughout Unity Park. Participants must bring their own basket or bag for collecting eggs. The event is part of Montague parks and recreation spring programming, and will be held rain or shine.

The Gill Montague Community School Partnership is hosting the **Annual Community Awards Cere-**

mony on Wednesday, April 27th, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at St. Kaziemerz on Avenue A in downtown Turners Falls. This dinner celebration recognizes adults and youth who have made a contribution to the community. The awards dinner is free, with limited seating and pre-registration required. Contact Kara McLaughlin at pd@gmpartnership.org, or call 863-3258.

Greenfield Center School 7th graders studied permaculture in science this year. At the end of the unit, student Maya Watson wrote a morel mushroom proposal that won funding from the Greenfield Garden Club.

Watson explained that morels grow well under apple trees and release nutrients that help keep the apple trees healthy. Science teacher Rebecca Golden said, "We are definitely going to put Maya's project into action this spring, and we are hoping to be able to do other students' projects as well."

The **Great Falls Discovery Center**, 2 Avenue A, in Turners Falls will be open during Spring Break from April 19th through April 23rd. Check out all the children's activities, including scavenger hunts, story hour, and investigation stations on www.greatfallsma.org.

Send items for local briefs to: reporter-local@montague-ma.net.

Wendell Food Coordinator Update

BY LIZ CARTER - FARMERS MARKET

Thank you to everybody who has given feedback so far on the former Wendell Farmers Market. Please, keep the comments coming. What day would you be most likely to shop at a farmers market in town? Do you already attend another market on Saturdays? Also, anybody who would be interested in becoming a board member for a local market, please get in touch!

GREEN THUMB GAME

There's quite a few gardening questions in need of answers at the library. Some of my favorites included: what food plants are best adapted to containers? Is it too late to prune my raspberries this year? Why is hair considered a nitrogen in compost when we are carbon-based life forms? Where can I start seeds - my home doesn't have space or light? How can I get a beekeeper to keep a hive on my land? Do you know the answer to any of these? There's still plenty of time to play the green thumb game - or at least have a look. Lots of great gardening info so far.

SOME FREE STUFF

Anybody interested in a few sliding glass doors (great for cold frames or a greenhouse), or a usable freezer should call Nancy or Rick at 978-544-6760.

MOBILE POULTRY PROCESSING UNIT

I am in conversation with the New England Small Farms Institute to procure a piece of equipment called the "Mobile Poultry Processing Unit" for Wendell in the coming months. This is essentially a trailer-mounted poultry slaughterhouse, and after completing a training program, birds processed using the MPPU meet USDA standards for off-farm distribution. The MPPU would allow for safe and humane processing of birds

raised for home consumption, and could potentially create a source of income for small-scale producers in town. Learn more about the MPPU at nesfp.nutrition.tufts.edu/resources/mobile-poultry.html.

I recognize that this is a complex issue, and I want to encourage a public conversation about this initiative, before I take further steps to bring this equipment to town.

I also need people to hear from anybody who would be interested in using the MPPU - including how many birds you would want to process, when, and whether you'd like to sell them.

It would be very helpful if those of you reading this could contact friends and neighbors who raise chickens and ask them the same questions. As always, I can be reached by email, at (360)797-4034, or at the library on Saturday from 10:30-12:30.

SURVEYS ARE SO MUCH FUN!

Sorta...take the Wendell Food Culture Survey and experience it for yourself! Paper copies are available at the library. Thanks to everybody who has already filled them out.

SATURDAY OFFICE HOURS

I'll be at the library from 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. this Saturday to discuss any of these projects. Stop by and tell me what you think!

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Psychic Fair

The National Spiritual Alliance is sponsoring a Psychic Fair on Saturday, April 30th from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at Thompson Temple, across from the post office in Lake Pleasant. For more info visit the TNSA internet website, thenationalspiritualallianceinc.org.

Look into the future - perhaps you will see when the ice will be off the Lake next year.

Arbor Day Scavenger Hunt

BY STEVE DAMON GILL - The Gill agricultural commission is sponsoring an Arbor Day Scavenger Hunt.

Anyone interested in obtaining a scavenger list should please contact agcom@gillmass.org. The items on the list must be taken to Gill town hall on Arbor Day, Friday, April 29th between 6 - 7 in the evening. Each completed list will be rewarded with a surprise at the Wagon Wheel.

Steve Damon is the chair of the Gill agricultural commission.

Walk for Meals on Wheels

TURNERS FALLS - The annual Walk for Meals on Wheels will take place on May 7th from 8 - 11 a.m. at the Franklin County Technical School in Turners Falls. Funds raised by new walkers and new teams are doubled. Free FRTA bus service will be provided

from Athol, Orange, Deerfield, Greenfield and Shelburne Falls. Fun, prizes, and refreshments are all part of the day's events. You can receive a walk packet or reserve bus space by calling 773-5555 x 2226, or 978-544-2259 x 2226, or by emailing pkelly@fchcc.org.

Montague Parks and Recreation Department Presents

Peter Cottontail's EGGstravaganza



Saturday, April 23rd
1:00 p.m.
Unity Park, 1st Street
Turners Falls

Rain or Shine

Bring your own basket or bag for the eggs!

Children ages 4 to 12 are invited to take part in this great community tradition featuring: Face Painting • Egg Decorating • Pictures with Peter Cottontail • Bake Sale • and our Annual Egg Hunt where kids will have the 'challenge' of finding well over 5,000 candy and toy-filled eggs throughout Unity Park!

We thank the generosity of the event co-sponsors: Hillside Plastics, The Montague Elks, Franklin County Rotary Club, Greenfield Savings Bank, Sirum Equipment Co., Equi's Candy Store, and Boy Scout Troop #6. Proceeds benefit MPRD's Sponsor-a-Child Scholarship Program.

HOLY WEEK SERVICES with 2nd CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, Greenfield

Palm Sunday - 10:00 a.m. - *procession with palms for everyone.*

Maundy Thursday - 6:30 p.m. - *at 1st Congregational Church on Silver Street. An "Agape" Communion Meal followed by the Tenebrae Service.*

Good Friday - 12 noon - 3:00 p.m. - *Meditative Walk on the Labyrinth in the Sanctuary, at 2nd Church. 7:00 p.m. 1st Congregational Church - Scripture and Meditation.*

Easter Vigil - Saturday 7:00 p.m. - *at 2nd Church - Anticipation of the Resurrection*

Easter Celebration - 10:00 a.m. - *with the Hallelujah Chorus.*

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Circulation
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Layout & Design

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"The Voice of the Villages"
Founded by
Arthur Evans Harry Brandt David Detmold
August, 2002

Photography

 Claudia Wells
Joe Parzych

Distribution Manager
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Level 7

"Clearly, we're witnessing one of the greatest disasters in modern time."

**Dr. Alan Hansen, nuclear engineer,
vice president of Areva NC
(France's nuclear fuel division)
March 21st, 2011**

On April 12th, the Japanese government upgraded the ongoing core melt and fuel pool accidents at Fukushima to a Level 7 on the International Nuclear Event Scale, the most severe rating. But Greenpeace had concluded three weeks earlier that Fukushima was a Level 7 accident. Why did the Japanese government wait three more weeks to warn the public, and to permanently evacuate residents of the most severely affected villages outside the 12 mile evacuation zone?

Here is the statement issued by Greenpeace, on March 24th:

FUKUSHIMA ALREADY LEVEL 7 CHERNOBYL ACCIDENT

GREENPEACE; BERLIN - The accident that began at the Fukushima nuclear power plant on March 11th has already released radioactivity that requires it to be classified as level 7 on the International Nuclear Event Scale (INES).

A new analysis has been prepared for Greenpeace Germany by Dr. Helmut Hirsch. His assessment is based on data published by the French government's radiation protection agency

(IRSN) and the Austrian governments Central Institute for Meteorology and Geodynamics (ZAMG). The total amount of radionuclides iodine-131 and cesium-137 released since the start of the accident until March 23rd, as reported by the two institutes, require the Fukushima accident to be reclassified to the same level as the Chernobyl nuclear disaster 25 years ago in April of 1986.

In fact, so high are the releases that they amount to three INES 7 accidents.

In contrast to the Chernobyl accident which involved one nuclear reactor, Fukushima has

suffered major failures at four. Three reactors have suffered loss of coolant to a scale that has led to nuclear fuel melting. In addition, nuclear reactor spent fuel stored at the site has lost coolant, caught fire and in one case suffered a hydrogen gas explosion which destroyed unit 4 at Fukushima.

Dr. Hirsch concludes, "Taking all the releases from the Fukushima-daiichi reactors together, this event obviously is an INES 7, with the possibility that it is three INES 7's, taking each reactor separately, which results in a release of 100,000 Terabecquerels each."

Hirsch and Greenpeace are also scathing of the INES scale as the basis on which nuclear accidents are assessed by national governments and the IAEA. The INES scale was intended to be applied in the case of one accident at one site. At Fukushima, the accidents have been at multiple nuclear reactors, suffering two critical failures - reactor cooling and spent fuel storage. The INES scale was never designed for such an eventuality because the nuclear industry and the IAEA considered such things not possible. In an example of their distorted logic, INES classifies each event at the Fukushima power plant separately. Yet the releases of high levels of radioactivity do not discriminate in terms of who they affect once they are released.

"The implications of INES are that when considering the dose a person receives each source should be looked at separately - but it is the overall dose they receive that will determine what type of health consequences they will suffer. Chernobyl has proven a nightmare for its many hundreds of thousands of victims. Twenty-five years later we are witness to an ongoing accident of at least the same proportions,

see LEVEL 7 pg 5

US Democrats Would Rather Switch than Fight



Cutting Taxes on Millionaires while Cutting Pell Grants, Family Planning, Abortions for DC, Job Training for Unemployed Americans, High Speed Rail and National Parks.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Selectboards Can't Stop a Citizens' Initiative

I am writing in response to Tom Wolff's editorial "Give Peace a Chance" (MR IX #27). Peter d'Errico did not stop the initiative for the Leverett peace commission from coming to the floor of the Leverett town meeting this April. No selectboard as a whole, much less an individual selectboard member can stop a ballot question brought by the citizens of a town. If some of d'Errico's arguments persuaded some members of the Leverett peace committee to postpone the ballot question for a year, that is the decision of the Leverett peace committee.

It was my suggestion to members of the Leverett peace committee at the last meeting they attended that they wait a year and

use that time to clarify their mandate as a town commission, and to build on the work they have already done in the community. It was also suggested at that meeting that the Leverett peace committee would be more restricted as a town commission, bound by open meeting and other laws and municipal fiscal requirements. As a non-governmental organization, the Leverett peace committee is free to pursue its laudable mission unhampered by governmental constraints.

I would also like to respond to one other statement in the article. Neither the Leverett selectboard as a whole nor Peter d'Errico as a selectboard member dismissed the Affordable Housing Committee. Individual commit-

tee members resigned when the selectboard voted not to fund the next phase of a plan for an affordable housing development in Leverett that was going to cost \$700,000 for infrastructure alone.

Fortunately selectboards and individual selectboard members do not have the power to stop citizen initiatives. It is also fortunate that everyone has a right to voice an opinion.

- Julie Shively
Leverett

Julie Shively is a member of the Leverett selectboard. The opinions expressed here are her own, and do not necessarily represent those of other members of the selectboard.

Biomass Plans for Greenfield Alive and Well

The plans for a 47-megawatt biomass power plant in Greenfield are alive and well. According to court documents, Matt Wolfe is awaiting word from Boston about how much money in subsidies his project will receive. We guess he is hoping to be assured the project will

be profitable enough to the investors whom he plans to sell it to. We are looking forward to upcoming hearings where Mr. Wolfe will again try to sell his project to the zoning board.

In the meantime, we are petitioning the state to maintain a moratorium on the renewable energy credits that would have given the Greenfield project around \$10 million a year of ratepayer money, money that would be better spent creating jobs in energy conservation and public transportation. We're also asking the Massachusetts

Department of Environmental Protection to place a moratorium on air permits for biomass projects and asking the Massachusetts Public Health Council to issue a policy against these plants, including those planned for Springfield, Russell and Pittsfield. These projects pose a serious risk to public health and will likely have a detrimental impact on our forests.

Please sign our petition. The petitions can be signed at Tire Warehouse on Federal Street in Greenfield, or on line at www.greenfieldbiomass.info. All residents of Massachusetts, regardless of age or voter status, are encouraged to sign. For more information please visit the website or call 413-625-2886.

- Janet Sinclair
Shelburne Falls

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The Montague Reporter

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An Absurd Position

Thank you for extending a full half page to Peter d'Errico, so that the greater public can be exposed to the full absurdity of his position. That a peace commission can be granted 'police power' is laughable; that Mr. d'Errico can dedicate so much print toward denigrating a peace commission, even more so. All the bodies that Mr. d'Errico listed, from conservation commissions, to boards of health, to

police themselves, are imbued by regulatory 'police power' by state statute, not by a small town governing body. That Mr. d'Errico could turn a peace commission upside down into a fascist, power wielding, theocratic entity is a feat worthy of Lewis Carroll's Hatter. Government we can believe in? Perhaps in Wonderland.

- Ray DiDonato
Wendell

The Campaign for a Leverett Peace

Commission: a Summing Up

BY JIM PERKINS - The Committee for a Leverett Peace Commission has been hosting a series of ten events, starting with a talk by Michael Klare on February 3rd. The finale will be a presentation of the play, *Ambush* on T Street, on Friday, April 15th, at 7:30 p.m. at the Leverett Elementary School.

"Ambush" is a profound autobiographical searching of the lives of the three men, Court Dorsey, Al Miller, and John Sheldon, who wrote and perform it. It is a searing and courageous exploration of the effect of war on those who fight it and those who are in family relationships to men who are traumatized by it.

The resolution to be considered by the Leverett annual town meeting on April 30th calls for our town to discover what steps we can take locally to reduce the power of war over our lives. It is meant to focus the attention of the peo-

ple of Leverett on the great environmental and social problems humanity faces right now, and to inspire our intention to live our lives wisely and in harmony with what the world needs of us now.

Certainly our wars cost too much. According to the National Priorities Project, since 2001 the people of Leverett have contributed \$7,256,000 dollars to the war in Iraq, and \$3,639,000 to the war in Afghanistan.

However, the emphasis of this resolution is on the sacred and beautiful in nature, and the kindness and generosity of which people are capable. It is an appeal to act out of our higher nature. It envisions an evolved human consciousness in which war will hold no place. It asks the people of Leverett to affirm our faith in the possibility of a higher destiny for our human race and to work for that new day.

The last person to appear in

the committee's lecture series was Dr. Penny Gill. For the past 40 years, she has taught political science at Mount Holyoke College, where she presently serves as Dean of the College. She delivered her lecture, "Fear and Consciousness: Dare we Change?" to an audience of about 160 people gathered at the Leverett Congregational Church on April 1st. The talk provided a very broad framework for the project of a Leverett Peace Commission.

"We gather tonight to discuss peace, how to create it, and how to deny ourselves the ancient tools of war," she said. "But to create peace, we must build the conditions of peace. Peace is much more than the absence of war. The fundamental cause of war and aggression is human fear."

(Jim Perkins is a member of the Committee for a Leverett Peace Commission.)

From Indian Point to Vermont Yankee

W. BRATTLEBORO, VT - On April 10th, two dozen people began a 206-mile walk from Indian Point Nuclear Power Station on the Hudson River just north of New York to Vermont Yankee in Vernon, VT. Japanese Buddhist nun Jun Yasuda is leading the walk as a meditation on peace and a nuclear free world. The walkers will arrive at Vermont Yankee on April 24th.

The Safe and Green Campaign and Citizens Action Network are recruiting local walkers and sponsoring events in the Brattleboro area.

On Sunday, April 24th, the

public is welcome to join the walkers for their last 9 miles to Vermont Yankee. At 10:15 a.m. they will leave West Brattleboro (55 Marlboro Road) on Route 9 two miles west of I-91 Exit 2. At noon, walkers can join the last six-mile leg of the walk at the Marlboro Graduate Center in downtown Brattleboro, Vernon Street (Route 142). After a prayer vigil at the Vermont Yankee gates, car pools will return to Brattleboro and West Brattleboro. At 5:00 p.m., there will be a simple dinner at the West Village Meeting House (All Souls Unitarian Church) in West Brattleboro. All are welcome; a \$5 donation is requested.

Those interested in walking should register by e-mail to: safeandgreencampaign@gmail.com.

On Tuesday, April 26th, a memorial vigil will be held to observe the 25th anniversary of the Chernobyl nuclear reactor disaster. The memorial will be from 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. at the Wells Fountain in downtown Brattleboro.

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Keep the Leverett Post Office

I want to put in a strong appeal for keeping the Leverett post office open.

I run a home business (as does my wife) that involves shipping books. Thus I am often in the Leverett post office two to four times a week with packages. Interestingly, I often run into other residents of Leverett who are also shipping out products from their home business. If the Leverett post office closes, I will likely go to

the competition (UPS, Fed X) because they are cheaper (I've stuck with the USPS because of the convenience of the Leverett post office and my loyalty to the USPS) and easier to get to in my usual day than Sunderland, described as the nearest alternative.

Finally, a plug for our present Leverett post office staff. They are terrific. They help me figure out the best way to ship all kinds of things. They also

have been extremely helpful when the post office screws things up which the system often does (certified mail that never arrives, etc.). I would hate to lose these folks.

- Tom Wolff
Leverett

The U.S. Postal Service will hold an informational meeting about the future of the Leverett Post Office at the Leverett town hall on Wednesday, April 27th at 6:30 p.m.

Have We Gotten Recycling All Wrong?

BY DOUG MOSS

NORWALK, CT - The current issue of *E - The Environmental Magazine* (www.emagazine.com) looks at the growing movement in the United States to force companies that make packaging and products - from soda bottles to printer cartridges to electronics and mattresses - to pay for the cost of collecting and recycling the waste they create.

This idea is known as Extended Producer Responsibility, or EPR. It has already resulted in significant waste reduction and increased recycling across much of Europe as companies have complied by instituting take-back provisions and less wasteful packaging designs. The closest the U.S. has come to such measures is in the ten states that have enacted bottle bills, keeping excess plastic out of landfills by making companies pay for the collection and recycling of bot-

les.

Beyond bottles, some 32 states now have product specific EPR laws that make manufacturers liable for the cost of recycling TVs and other electronics at the end of their useful lives. Fifteen state laws cover the safe disposal of mercury-containing automobile switches, nine cover the handling of lead-acid batteries and nine address mercury thermostats. Hazardous products are those most frequently covered, but the scope is expanding rapidly.

But despite the momentum at state and local levels, EPR is still far from becoming a federal mandate in the U.S. as it is in Europe and elsewhere. As it gains strength locally, however, the EPR movement will become a force to be reckoned with, enjoying the same kind of widespread public support recycling has across the country.

Three quarters of what the U.S. throws into landfills today

is products and packaging. A lot of it was designed for one-time use, and much of it is toxic. Taxpayers subsidize this waste disposal through their local governments, and if the waste is contaminated it's up to those same taxpayers to figure out and pay for proper disposal.

The current system imposes few penalties on manufacturers that put their beverages in one-way, non-refillable containers or swath their goods in excess packaging.

What's more, American recycling programs are increasingly "single stream," which means that instead of pre-sorting paper, plastic and other recyclables, everything is collected together. And that leads to a much higher percentage of spoilage.

According to Susan Collins, executive director of the Container Recycling Institute, "From [separated recycling] collection centers there is a contamination rate of maybe 2%, but it's 25% from single stream."

Even as EPR moves forward

in the U.S., industries that prefer not to pay for the waste their products generate are hoping to use it to undermine existing laws. Beverage makers in particular are embracing EPR as a work-around in the states (including huge population centers California and New York) that still have bottle bills.

Their new tactic is to publicly embrace recycling, mainly by distributing free bins. The industry likes such one-time payments, not the costly ongoing commitment represented by bottle bills. PepsiCo, for instance, is sponsoring the multi-year Dream Machine recycling initiative that has so far put bins and interactive recycling kiosks in 14 states. Such initiatives sound worthy, but if they undermine bottle bills as manufacturers hope, municipalities will have to bear more of the cost of collection and recycling, and the use of all-purpose bins will result in much more contaminated and unusable material.

from LEVEL 7 page 4

with the potential to be even more damaging. Nuclear power should have had no future after Chernobyl. This really has to be the end of this catastrophic industry," said Shaun Burnie, nuclear consultant to Greenpeace Germany.

Greenpeace is particularly concerned with the effects radioactive fallout will have on the densely populated landmass of Japan. A large proportion of the Chernobyl radioactivity fell on Belarus, with a population density of 40 persons per square kilometre. Japan, by contrast, has an average of 800 persons per square kilometre. Metropolitan Tokyo has a density of over 1200 persons sq/km. The implications for the collective dose of radiation to the population and human health are enormous.



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NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD**Erving to Decrease Share of Employee Health Benefits**

BY KATIE NOLAN - The selectboard and finance committee agreed to pay a 3% cost of living (COLA) increase for Erving employees in FY'12, and to decrease by 2% the percentage the town pays for employee health insurance, reducing the town's share from 86% to 84%.

The selectboard and finance committee discussed the FY'12 budget for over an hour at the April 11th meeting.

Finance committee chair Stanley Gradowski began by saying finance committee members "are not supporting any cost of living or step increases." He also said the town's share of employee health insurance costs should be reduced by 2% per year until the town's share has been reduced to 75%.

Selectboard chair Andrew Goodwin said it would be "tough" to increase the employees' health insurance costs without providing a COLA. He added, although the state and federal governments are in the midst of budget crises, "We're thankfully not in that position now."

Finance committee member Winifred Rubinaccio-Stone said their committee started the FY'12 budget process by asking departments to present level funded budgets, which she defined as no step raises and no COLA, unless cuts were made in other line items in the department's budget.

Noting the difficult economic times, Gradowski said, "A reduction in taxes is a good way to put some money in every household's pocket." He said the town's tax burden "continually rises" and added, "What I was hoping was to put a stop to increasing our budget."

"What services do you want to cut? Less police on

duty? Less time plowing roads?" Goodwin inquired. Goodwin said Erving's pay and benefit package encourages competent employees to continue working for the town.

Gradowski said, "I don't believe if we say No we're going to lose these people."

Goodwin observed that a 3% COLA for town employees would cost approximately \$30,000, and said, "We found a way to get \$75,000 without raising taxes," referring to Erving's plan to have the town of Montague pay a portion of the upgrade costs for the Erving wastewater treatment plant.

Last December, the Erving and Montague selectboards met to discuss sharing the capital costs of the recently completed \$5.6 million sewer improvements in Erving. The Erving treatment plant serves the Montague and Erving sides of Millers Falls. According to a 1973 agreement between the towns, Montague should share the costs of upgrades at the facility proportionally to the amount of flow it contributes to the treatment plant. However, the recent upgrade was completed without informing Montague in advance, and the old contract was not discovered until after the fact.

On April 11th, town administrator Tom Sharp told the selectboard and finance committee that Montague has not formally responded to the request, but "I think they will chip in and do their part."

"Our job is to become creative," Goodwin said, "and not always go after employees."

Finance committee member Daniel Hammock said, "I wish the school committee would work more with us on their end." He said Erving Elementary School's recent budgets

spend \$14,000 to \$18,000 per pupil, "a lot more per student than other places." He added, "I'm not sure the results we get are a lot better" than at other schools.

Rubinaccio-Stone agreed, saying, "The school committee again has not worked with us in looking where to make cuts."

State Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) figures show that Erving Elementary's per pupil expenditures for the 2008-2009 school year (the most recent year available) are similar to those for nearby small towns with a single elementary school, but greater than those for Orange, which has two elementary schools: Erving - \$13,545 per pupil; Wendell/New Salem - \$13,498 per pupil; Leverett - \$15,351 per pupil; Shutesbury - \$13,650 per pupil; Orange - \$11,441 per pupil.

Sharp observed that approximately 85% of the town's taxes are paid by one taxpayer - the Northfield Mountain project. He said if the town budget were cut by \$100,000, the approximate reduction in the tax bill for a \$200,000 residence would be \$2.

Arthur Johnson asked the selectboard to consider him for the position of town animal control officer (ACO), currently vacant. Johnson told the board that, because there is no ACO, the police department is responding to animal control issues. The selectboard decided to review the ACO job description and then post the position if needed. Johnson was encouraged to apply if the position is posted.

Informed that the planning board wants to include a zoning change on the annual town meeting warrant to allow drive-through

see **ERVING** pg 18

NOTES FROM THE MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD**Montague Readies Articles for May 7th Annual Town Meeting**

By Janel Nockleby - Annual town meeting will be here soon, preceded by a special town meeting. On May 7th at 8:30 a.m. in the Turners Falls High School Theater, to be exact, the selectboard has approved the placement of 30 annual town meeting articles on the ballot for town meeting member consideration, and an additional five articles for the special.

Some highlights of the articles include: a definition of what a garage is (hint: not a tarp!) for the newly proposed unregistered motor vehicles bylaw in article 29; a request of \$7,311,792 for the town of Montague's operating budget in article six; a request of \$7,576,183 for the operating budget of the Gill-Montague Regional School District in article ten; a request for \$9,000 in funds to repair the entrance ramp to the Sheffield

School so that it is ADA-compliant in article 12; a request to reduce the number of voting precincts in town from six to three and to reduce the total number of town meeting members from 126 to 72 in article 27; by petition, spearheaded by Precinct 1's John Reynolds, a request that a committee be appointed to study how many voting precincts should be in town, and whether the makeup or form of town meeting should be changed in article 28; a request for \$7,000 to repair Sheffield's auditorium steps since they are a safety hazard, in article 13; a request for \$3,000 to temporarily fix the Sheffield employee parking lot by patching potholes in article 14; an allocation of funds to fix the Water Pollution Control Facility's roof at a cost to the town of \$50,000 (\$80,000 will also be used from the sewer

retained earnings fund) in article 15; a request for \$54,055 for two six-wheel dump trucks in article 20; a request for the purchase of a \$222,951 street sweeper, a request for \$58,000 for pre-development and site engineering for a solar energy generation and industrial development on 163 acres of municipal land (a.k.a. a solar park) off of Turnpike Road in article 24; a \$20,000 request for bullet-proof vests, tasers, computers, firearms, and radios for the police department, in article 25, since grant funding for these items has dried up; by petition, spearheaded by Precinct 4's David Thompson, a request for the town to stop spending money on the Strathmore Mill complex effective ten days after the May 7th town meeting in article 26; and a resolution to seek

see **MONTAGUE** pg 9

NOTES FROM THE GILL-MONTAGUE REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE**Superintendent Ladd Plans Community Discussions to Gain Feedback from Parents**

BY ELLEN BLANCHETTE - Superintendent Carl Ladd presented the results of a survey of parents who have chosen to send their students to other school districts at the Gill-Montague school committee meeting on Tuesday night at the Turners Falls High School. The survey lists the reasons parents have chosen to move their children out of district, and the reason given by the most respondents (80%) was "concerns about academic standards." Quality of teaching, class size, family preference or tradition, and concerns about safety were also high on the list.

Ladd said the survey is the beginning of a process

where he will meet with small groups of parents and interested community members to discuss the issues and get their feedback.

Ladd's idea is to hold low-key community-based discussions where people can feel they have a chance to be heard. He talked about the importance of listening to parents' concerns and trying to address them.

Ladd said the district shows a loss of over \$800,000 in the coming school year due to school choice. "This is the one place where we have some control," Ladd said, adding that while there is nothing the district can do about the amount of Chapter 70 funding it receives from the state, the

district can do something about improving the number of students who stay in district schools or decide to choose into the district.

Marjorie Levenson, of Montague, asked for the committee to have a wider discussion of the survey results, but Ladd said he wants to gather more data through the planned community meetings to get a clearer view of the issues that need to be addressed. He said a lot of the responses reflected the 2003-2004 period, when deep cuts in the school budget caused many students to leave the district.

He asked the school committee to wait until he gets more data and talks to more parents before putting

see **SCHOOL** page 8

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NOTES FROM THE LEVERETT SCHOOL COMMITTEE

New Math Curriculum Supported at Leverett Elementary

BY DAVID DETMOLD - Paul Bocko, the curriculum coordinator for Union 28, gave a presentation about the implementation of the new math curriculum - Everyday Math - at the Leverett Elementary School to the school committee on April 5th.

He was joined by science and math teacher Nancy Gibavic.

Bocko said he had been working with teachers on Wednesday afternoons over the last many months to support the transition to the new math textbooks, and connecting them to teachers at Swift River School who have been using Everyday Math for the last six years. Leverett Elementary has been focusing on improving math MCAS scores, which were the focus of a report by principal Ann Ross in January.

Relying on data from the Department of Elementary and Secondary, Ross told the committee in January Leverett elementary students lagged behind their peers in Shutesbury by ten percentage points on math scores, with 58% of LES students scoring at or above proficient. Sixty-three percent of Fort River elementary students in Amherst scored at or above proficient in math, as did 71% of Pelham students.

The next opportunity to compare math MCAS scores across the district will come a few months after tests are given in May, said Leverett school committee chair Farshid Hajir, who said the benefit of having a "coherent math offering" is already being felt. But he warned, "In first year of implementation, scores don't always show improvement, they may even go down."

Gibvaic, who taught 4th grade for 17 years at LES, said, "I have seen math here for many years, and this is truly the best thing I've seen so far. Any math curriculum implemented school-wide will have many benefits. I am amazed at the speed and level of growth in the introduction of new skills," since Everyday Math was adopted.

The committee also heard a brief presentation from Amherst parent Joshua Goldstein, who chairs a task force looking into the possibility of a later start time for secondary students at the regional school.

Since bus routes for elementary students are interdependent with bus routes for the upper school, any move to implement a later start time for secondary students would have an impact on start times for elementary students as well.

At present, LES starts at 8:30 a.m. and dismisses at 3:05 p.m., while the regional school in Amherst starts at 7:45 a.m. and dismisses at 2:20 p.m.

Goldstein said the task force, which has been surveying parents and students for preferences, has three options under consideration - keeping the times as they are now, swapping the start times for elementary and secondary school, and moving the start times for both schools forward half an hour.

The task force will make a recommendation to the regional superintendent Maria Geryk by the end of this month, but any change in start times would require approval from teachers' unions as well as the school committees of each member town and the region.

Goldstein said, "We are

all convinced the evidence is pretty compelling [later start time] is a good thing for secondary students, for academic outcomes, all around health and mental health of the students, as well as reducing auto accidents."

Regional school committee representative Kip Fonsh said he would prefer the discussion to be focused on lengthening the school day rather than a later start time for secondary students.

Hajir said his daughter, who is in 4th grade and hence not supposed to be filling out the survey - which was intended for 6th graders on up - still had an opinion about any proposal to make elementary students go to school earlier.

Her opinion is, "Starting school at 7:30 a.m. is not wise. She would be fine with 9:00 a.m.," Hajir reported.

Hajir said the committee is interested in finding out from the survey results what the townspeople of Leverett feel about start times for the elementary and secondary schools.

In other news, the committee heard an unexpected finding from Ross and superintendent Joan Wickman that LES does have two openings next year for school choice students who might want to enter at the third grade.

"The real decision will come next month," said Hajir. "Do we want to continue to participate in the school choice program?"

Leverett Elementary does not allow students to choice in between kindergarten and third grade unless class sizes are below 15; and does not allow school choice students to enter 4th - 6th grades if class sizes are below 18.

see MATH pg 15

NOTES FROM THE GILL SELECTBOARD

Gill Voters Will Face 30 Articles at Town Meeting

BY DAVID DETMOLD - The Gill selectboard waded through 30 articles on a draft warrant for the upcoming May 9th annual town meeting on Monday. But first they disbursed \$3,000 from the Quintus Allen Fund to provide for an artist in residence at the Gill Elementary School.

Principal Rita Detweiler, with director Court Dorsey and GES arts committee member Jen Simms told the board, "Gill Elementary School has had a history of large end of year performances. Due to reduction of funds and time spent on academics, we haven't done anything for the last three years. The community has felt the lack."

Detweiler said GES has been pursuing a school-wide theme of stories from around the world, with an emphasis on 'Journeys' this year. Now, the arts committee, working with an \$800 grant from the Gill cultural council and \$400 raised from the PTO are hoping to put on a production based on the story, *Three Cups of Tea*.

To hire Dorsey to work with students as an artist in residence to develop the production, and coach the 6th graders to write the script, Detweiler asked the selectboard to allow her to also spend \$3,000 from the Quintus Allen fund, which has a balance of nearly \$10,000 at present. The fund, from a bequest by a former Gill resident of that name, is meant to be used for any activity outside of the regular operating budget that benefits the students at the elementary school.

The board granted her request. The performance will take place on June 2nd, outdoors, or the weekend after, in case of rain.

Turning to the town

meeting warrant, in addition to the annual big ticket items on school assessments and town operating budgets, the selectboard got into the nitty gritty of questions like whether Gill could really afford a cost of living increase (COLA) for employees this year. The personnel board has recommended a 1.3% increase.

Chair John Ward said, "I can't support a 1.3% increase when the private sector doesn't get it and seniors don't get it either. But I'm not looking to cut budgets either."

In preparing the budget, administrative assistant Ray Purington explained, town departments were asked to factor a 1.3% COLA into a level funded budget. So if town meeting were to decide to strip out the COLA, that would leave the departments facing an actual decrease in their budgets from last year.

The board discussed ways to avoid that potential budget decrease, although Purington said, "I don't think there has been a huge amount of squawking," from town departments when they were asked to level fund their budgets including the COLAs.

The highway department was not able to turn in a level funded budget this year, due to a step raise for one employee, Purington said. He noted that police part time salaries will once again appear as a separate warrant article from the regular department budget.

Town meeting will also hear a report from the Riverside Municipal Building study committee, a report from the newly formed capital improvement committee, a proposal to set up a revolving loan fund to support the pro-

grams of the energy commission (like their upcoming rain barrel kit workshop on May 21st, at 1 p.m. at town hall) and a proposal from the agricultural commission to increase the number of seats on that board from five to seven, to accommodate interested members from the community who are waiting to get involved.

Selectboard member Randy Crochier said, "If we have more people interested than seats available, I'd like to open up the commission."

The town will consider replacing the police chief's 2002 Ford Explorer with a mid size Taurus, and the selectboard talked over a number of possible methods for paying for that purchase, including a debt exclusion vote, a three-year lease to purchase arrangement, or a transfer from stabilization. Purington said Chief Hastings had looked into the possibility of buying a hybrid vehicle, but the fuel savings did not appear to Hastings to justify the added \$4,000 - \$5,000 sticker price.

A proposal to create a capital stabilization fund to pay for "overdue maintenance projects and equipment needs", and perhaps to fund it through a Proposition 2½ override, will also be looked at by town meeting. Purington said, "When I look at the list of projects we're going to need to face up to - it's staggering. I don't know if the capital improvement committee will recommend a dollar amount, or whether this is just an initial conversation to get voters thinking about what will be needed."

A \$20,000 article to pay for interior doors and locks to enable the Gill

see GILL pg 15

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Leverett to Consider CPA Proposals

BY KATE FITZGERALD - The annual funding cycle of the Leverett Community Preservation Committee will come to an end at the April 30th annual town meeting. Up for a vote will be three funding proposals recommended by the LCPC this year, totaling \$175,450.

The LCPC serves as the steward for the Community Preservation Act (CPA) in Leverett. The CPA, which was passed in Massachusetts in 2000 and adopted in Leverett in 2001, is a piece of state legislation that allows towns to collect funds for projects centered on the acquisition, creation, and preservation of open space, affordable housing, recreation and historic resources in the local community. LCPC funds are generated through a surcharge on local property taxes at a rate of 3%, with certain exceptions made for those who would qualify for low income housing, or low to moderate senior housing.

To date, the state of Massachusetts, using a pool of funds generated from a statewide fee on transactions on registries of deeds, has matched the funds raised in Leverett at a one to one ratio.

This year, the Leverett historical commission is hoping to acquire CPA money to see North Leverett, Moores Corner, and East Leverett join Leverett Center in the National Register of Historic Places. The historical commission has applied for \$14,000 in CPA funding to hire a consultant to research and prepare the required documents for these village centers to be considered for inclusion in the National Register. This project comes the likelihood of a \$7,000 reimbursement from the Massachusetts Historical Commission, if accepted.

Also up for consideration at the town meeting is a proposal from the Leverett selectboard

see **LEVERETT** pg 9

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Disturbance, Harassment, Break In, Assault

Wednesday, 4/6

12 a.m. Report of larceny at Cumberland Farms on Montague City Road.

8:01 a.m. Motor vehicle disturbance at Carnegie Library on Avenue A. Services rendered.

2:58 p.m. Threatening, harassment on Second Street. Advised of options.

8:47 p.m. Report of restraining order violation on Avenue A.

8:53 p.m. Drug activity reported on Second Street. Advised of options.

Thursday, 4/7

11:04 a.m. Domestic disturbance on Eighth Street. Advised of options.

Friday, 4/8
9:42 a.m. Report of burglary, breaking and entering on Chestnut Street.

10:19 p.m. Arrest of [redacted], for operating a motor vehicle with a suspended/revoked license, for operating a vehicle under the influence, and a red light violation at Seventh Street and Avenue A.

Saturday, 4/9
7:28 p.m. Domestic disturbance on Poplar Street.

Advised of options.

Sunday, 4/10
8:25 p.m. Arrest of [redacted]

[redacted] for a harassment prevention order violation on Eleventh Street.

Monday, 4/11
6:13 p.m. Assault on Old Sunderland Road in Montague Center. Investigated.

8 p.m. Runaway, juvenile issue on Turners Falls Road. Returned to home or family.

8:58 p.m. Assault on Nadeau Avenue. Investigated.

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THE FEAST FOR THE ARTS is a lively evening of fine dining and cocktails during which dinner guests will get to vote on proposals for public arts projects in Turners Falls.

The Montague Elks Lodge (1 Elk Ave off of 7th and L Sts) is hosting this event on May 7, 6 pm.

Diners will enjoy a delicious meal thanks to:

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To buy or reserve tickets, please check in at our website for details www.turnersfallsriverculture.org by May 5th.

SEE YOU THERE!

from **SCHOOL** pg 6
the topic back on the agenda.

Ladd had positive news in reporting that enrollment for the kindergarten class at Montague Elementary is 81 students, requiring the addition of a fourth kindergarten teacher. To determine if the district will need the fourth kindergarten teacher next year, the district held an early enrollment session on March 2nd, and had 57 students register. Given that there are usually additional students who enroll during the summer and just before school starts in the fall, Ladd said it is likely the district will continue to need the fourth kindergarten teacher for the next school year.

In order to maintain optimal class size, the district will also hire a fourth first grade teacher, as the current kindergarten class advances next year.

Gill-Montague Going Wireless

Marty Espinola, director of grants and technology, gave guidance on how to spend the \$90,000 previously approved by the school committee for technology. This is a portion of the 2011 federal stimulus grant, and the school committee chose to approve the spending on technology improvements because budget cuts had prevented the district from properly maintaining their computers, and replacing older computers.

Espinola said because of the importance of maintaining the integrity of the district's financial and student data, his first priority for the newly available stimulus funds was to have the network manager purchase equipment needed to establish a disaster recovery program. This system will quickly restore computer programs and data in case of system failure due to fire, lightning, or any other unforeseen events. The cost for this system is \$12,483.

For the rest of the funds, Espinola emphasized the need for the district to 'go wireless.' He intends to use a substantial portion of the remaining one time grant funds to purchase network based equipment that would enable the school district to install wireless units in any location in the schools. The equipment will provide enough ports in their network closets so that tech staff can install additional inexpensive wireless access point devices as needed in the future.

Espinola explained that wireless devices such as laptops, netbooks or iPads could then be used wherever there is an access point device. Initially there will be four to eight access point devices installed in each building.

He noted that access points would be connected to the network using standard networking cable so that no additional electri-

cal outlets would be required. Some of the schools have limited capacity to add more electrical devices to their circuits.

The total cost of this project is \$54,980. The remainder of the funds will be spent to purchase replacement computer equipment.

After the meeting, Espinola explained the educational value of installing wireless access. He said that though there are several computer labs and certain classrooms that have computers, the number of students who get access to these is limited. There is only one computer lab in the high school. There is a classroom with computers for typing instruction, but it is limited to students taking the class. There is great competition for those computers available for general use, and teachers have to schedule time for their students to use them.

By installing wireless networks, students will be able to use laptops or other devices in many places within any of the district schools, and these access point devices will be installed in each of the school buildings so they can be used at all levels. As the availability of technology with built-in wireless devices expands, this will become more and more valuable to the students of the Gill-Montague school district, Espinola said.



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from **LEVERETT** pg 1

for \$150,000 in CPA funds to be used for the continued preservation of the Leverett town hall. The rehabilitation effort would include repairs to the exterior of the building, including replacing clapboards, priming and painting, repairs to pilasters and entrances, as well as interior repairs to the buckled floor on the first level.

Voters at town meeting will also decide on a proposal from the Rattlesnake Gutter Trust for \$11,450 to be used for the purchase of a parcel of land on Leverett Pond, adjacent to land already purchased using CPA funds.

Since voters approved the voluntary surcharge in 2001, the Leverett Community Preservation Committee, the local board that oversees the use of CPA funds, has collected more than \$1 million, with half of that amount coming from Leverett taxpayers, and half representing yearly matches from the state. Of that million dollars, the LCPC has dispersed

\$304,000, with the majority of that total going toward projects of historic preservation (\$160,250) and open space preservation.

By law, a community that adopts the Community Preservation Act must reserve 10% of revenues generated toward affordable housing, 10% for open space preservation, and 10% for historic preservation, with the remaining 70% available for use on any of these three priorities, or recreation.

In Leverett, completed projects include restorations of the North Leverett Sawmill, the Moores Corners Schoolhouse, and the purchase of various plots of land around Leverett Pond. Additionally, \$62,800 is currently on reserve for projects underway, including the restoration of the façade of the Leverett Crafts and Arts building.

Applications for CPA funding are submitted directly to the LCPC, which reviews the project proposal and determines its eligibility under state law. Following a public hearing in late winter of each year, the

LCPC decides to recommend or deny a project a vote at the annual town meeting. Final decisions for project funding are made by voters, with a two-thirds majority required for land acquisition, and a majority required for all other types of CPA projects. If a project is approved at the town meeting, funds become available in the form of reimbursement.

LCPC committee chair Laurel Kahn would like to see more proposals for beneficial community projects. Kahn told the crowd at this year's public hearing, held on March 2nd, "If you have a good idea, you can come to us and help put together a proposal to hire somebody else to do the thing. You don't have to step forward and say 'I'll do it,' just to apply for the money." Kahn said, "I really would like to encourage more proposals."

Kahn also pointed out there is no deadline for spending the CPA money that has already been collected. "One of the great things about this legislation is that we're allowed to

keep the money and roll it over," she said. "You really can save towards bigger projects."

Currently, about \$800,000 of CPA money remains available for future use by the town.

Applications for funding under the categories of open space, recreation, historical preservation or affordable housing in Leverett are available on the Leverett town website, at www.leverett.ma.us. Applications are received by December 1st of each year for consideration at the annual town meeting the following spring.

To date, other Franklin County towns that have passed the Community Preservation Act include Conway, Deerfield, Northfield, Shutesbury, and Whately. Ashfield turned it down in 2001, and Sunderland rejected it 2 to 1 at town meeting last year, only to approve it in a special election in December by a similar margin (62%).

The Community Preservation Act has been criticized as transferring wealth from poorer communities to

wealthier communities statewide, and failing to create new affordable housing.

Robin Sherman, director of the Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority, in her 2007 report entitled Massachusetts Community Preservation Act: Who Benefits, Who Pays? (www.hks.harvard.edu/var/ezp_site/storage/fckeditor/file/pdfs/centers-programs/centers/rappaport/workingpapers/cpa_final.pdf) noted, "Affluent communities are more likely to adopt the optional tax, and because matching funds are linked to property values, wealthy cities and towns have received most of the revenue raised by statewide fees."

In 2007, Sherman continued, "Cambridge, which accounted for an estimated one percent of deed registry fees collected statewide, received more than 15 percent of revenues from the state matching fund, for a total of more than \$25 million, making it the biggest 'winner' from the program."



from **MONTAGUE** pg 6

lower electric rates for town businesses and residents in a competitive market via the Hampshire Council of Government's aggregation of electricity supply project, Hampshire Power, in article 30.

Whew! Just a few potentially thorny items to consider, as Montague joins other towns, states, individuals, businesses, and the federal government in wrestling with the question of how much money can realistically be spent during a sputtering economic recovery, and, worldwide, how a democracy should be structured. Town meeting members can expect detailed information on each article for the town meeting warrant in the mail soon, and residents can get informed by visiting town hall, Montague post offices and libraries. Residents can also find the warrant on the town website - www.montague.net.

A representative from the Massachusetts secretary of state's office will be on hand at town meeting to help explain

the proposed precinct re-districting in Montague, and a representative from the Hampshire Council of Governments will also attend to explain the details of the proposed aggregation of electricity supply for town residents.

That proposal, in article 30, has the potential to save residents and businesses in Montague money on their electric bills through group purchasing, explained HCOG representative Geoff Rogers at Monday's selectboard meeting.

If approved by town meeting, residents would see a new name as the supplier on their Western Massachusetts Electric Company bills, but the delivery of electricity would otherwise remain the same (customers would still call WMECO if a tree falls on a power line, for example). However, by joining in the Hampshire Power program, individual and business rates should be lower than under WMECO's supply, Rogers said.

He described how Hampshire Power (as part of

the HCOG) is working towards "getting greener and more local" in its electricity supply business, in response to a question on whether Hampshire Power would consider purchasing electricity from Montague's proposed solar park (see town meeting article 24). Additionally, he said Hampshire Power would be OK with getting paid less, if towns use less electricity over time, as the town of Montague likely will for its town buildings after the energy performance contract with Siemens Building Technologies is completed.

If approved at town meeting, the proposal would bundle individual homes and businesses under Hampshire Power's supply, but allow each resident or business the option (via pre-paid return envelope, as required by state law) to opt out of the program if they so choose. The town will incur no cost for the transition. More than sixteen towns in Hampshire and Franklin counties have already voted to approve use of Hampshire

Power's aggregation of electricity plan for their residents. Should Montague make the same decision, Rogers said he anticipates the program will be up and running by the fall, at the latest.

Speaking of electricity - the new Gill-Montague Bridge, once completed, will have 56 lights on it, while the old one has just nine. Gill selectboard member Ray Purrington will be researching this anomaly further, including who will be paying the electricity bills for the bridge lights. Thank you, Ray!

In other news, this way to the new downtown way finding sign committee. Members of the committee are RiverCulture director Lisa Davol, town planner Walter Ramsey, Mik Muller and Chris Janke from the Montague Business Association, and Lou Ekus (also from the MBA) as an alternate. Ramsey said the committee intends to evaluate the new signs in Turners Falls for font size (perhaps a bit too small to be read by the naked eye) in downtown

Turners and to consider which events and slogans should appear on the larger, adjustable signs that point the way to Turners Falls on Route 2 in Gill.

The new signs were installed late last month in an effort to partially mitigate the impact of the Gill-Montague bridge construction, which will last three or more years. Currently the signs on Route 2 proclaim that Turners Falls is "easy to love" yet "hard to leave," and they note that the popular Turners Falls Block Party is the second Saturday in August.

Now that last winter's snow is behind us, we have a final version of the inclement weather policy for town hall staff, newly approved by the selectboard. Upcoming very important dates: pre-town meeting on May 4th, annual and special town meetings on May 7th, town elections on May 16th, and a Mutton and Mead festival at the Millers Falls Road and Gun Club off Turners Falls Road in Montague on June 18th.




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Coming up Next!
The stalwart crew from Montague's Mutton and Mead Festival advertised the next big event – to take place at the Millers Falls Rod and Gun Club



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SPRING PARADE!



Montague turned out in force on Saturday for the first annual Franklin County Spring Parade, organized by the intrepid Michael Nelson. Nelson, who has chaired the Franklin County Fair Parade for the last five years, and plainly knows how to put together a great show, as he proved last year with the Pumpkinfest on Avenue A, said he got the idea for a Spring Parade on the Hill in Turners "one cold snowy day," in winter. "I needed something to make people smile when the sun finally came out, and thankfully, April 9th was a beautiful sunny day!

"People were just thrilled," he said - and that was nothing but the truth. Families and friends lined the parade route, cooked up barbecue, and held house parties afterwards. Nelson said credible estimates put the crowd at 4,000 - about half the people in town! Many told him, "I can't wait for next year," when the parade will take place on April 12th (pending selectboard approval, which Nelson plans to seek next week). Reserve your spot in the 2012 spring parade by calling Nelson at 413-522-0712, or by email at michaelnelsonmba@aol.com. Hurray!



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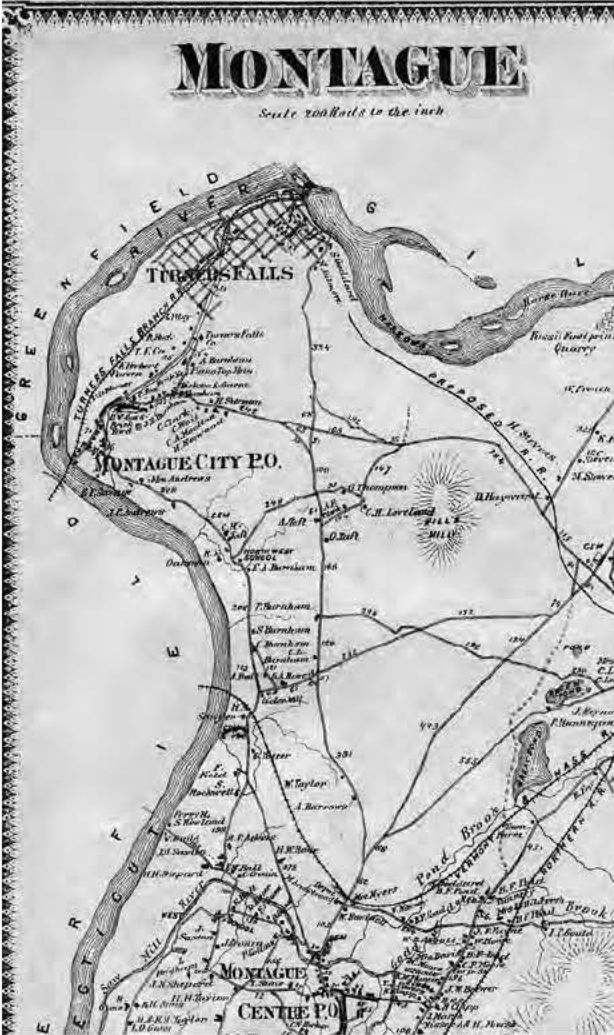
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Old Map Travelling Road Show Comes to Montague

nal materials were on hand for viewing as well.

The most dramatic was a well known 1858 Franklin County map measuring about 7 feet wide by 3 feet tall, gingerly unrolled, which added weight to Allen's assertion that early maps were neither accessible nor convenient. One 1740 map was printed in London, England.

The earliest map of the Montague area in Allen's collection was published in 1702. Naturally, the area was mostly wooded in that depiction. Since Montague was formerly part of "Swampfield," now known as Sunderland, the earliest maps did not necessarily reference the town by name. But Allen showed maps as early as 1715 that did refer to Montague by name, even though the town was not incorporated for nearly 40 more years.

Moving through time, another slide showed a 1730 map where "Old Sunderland" included modern day Montague, Sunderland, Leverett and parts of Wendell.

Early state maps published in 1750 and 1780 falsely depicted many populated areas as empty. All towns in the Commonwealth were directed to submit accurate maps that included significant geographic features. By 1830 the state was asking for local maps with road information in addition to features, and the compilation was finally published in 1844. This was the first map to show the Turners Falls power canal. These local maps

were also used as the basis of an 1832 Hoyt map of Franklin County.

Maps became more common from the 1850s to the 1870s for three reasons: lowered printing costs enabled a rising middle class with discretionary funds to buy them, and the expansion of railroads opened up the hinterlands to cartographers and immigrants alike.

Allen said about 15 or 20 prominent cartographers were busily creating maps all over the country in those days. These early entrepreneurs literally walked every road included on the maps, using an odometer and compass. Local maps often included detailed homeowner and business information, which helped push their sales.

Maps from this era can be very useful in genealogical research, as Allen demonstrated with a story about travelling to Pomfret, VT to seek information about his great grandmother, and other ancestors. This whim of his mother's turned into a research project, and it was not long before Allen found not only two ancestral family homes but also some distant cousins.

The federal government got involved in the mapmaking business in the 1890s in New England, producing the first US Geological Survey topographic maps, very accurate and detailed. The first series took about five years to publish after the data gathering was complete.

The advent of the automobile brought with it the need for

maps with road names. In this area, the first 'driving map' was produced in 1909, followed by a 1924 County Roads index map. The index map was produced by the county engineering department to determine the status of roads – county versus town roads. It is used by land surveyors to this day.

Other sources for genealogical and historical research are fire insurance maps that were produced in great detail so companies could underwrite policies without actually visiting the buildings – they became prominent in the late 1800s and early 1900s and included details like construction types and proximity to other buildings – all factors which might affect the insurance rate.

Allen noted the Carnegie Library owns a complete set of this type of maps.

Another good source of research information is the collection of aerial photographs housed at the National Archives. There are several very detailed series from 1939, the 1950s, the 1970s and the present.

Allen's passion for old maps and historical research was evident throughout the talk. He noted a good source of information could be found at vhist.com/mcc/towns/montague as well as his own site www.old-maps.com where map reproductions can be purchased online. He also noted a great deal of Winslow Wentworth archives could be found at www.roberge-associates.com

This antique map of Montague Massachusetts comes from Beer's Atlas of Franklin County Massachusetts. This atlas was published by F.W. Beers 93 Maiden Lane New York in 1871. This old map of Montague Massachusetts shows many of the landowners and businesses of the time.

BY ANNE HARDING - Dave Allen brought a fascinating collection of historic maps of Montague to the community room at the new police station on Sunday, April 10th, where about two dozen local history buffs listened intently and occasionally corrected Allen's presentation.

The map collection, paid for by a grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council and donated to the Carnegie Library, is a boon to the town, since historic maps of are not necessarily found in the towns they plot. Most of the maps available for review were reproductions, but some of the origi-

JA'DUKE STUDENTS TO PERFORM AT DISNEY

BY ANNE HARDING
TURNERS FALLS - "We're going to Disney!" was the word from Kimberly Williams and her Ja'Duke dance students at the last practice Wednesday evening – before their Friday, April 15th departure to perform at Disney World in Florida.

It's been a long process and a lot of hard work and patience to get there. That work started a year ago with an in-depth application, a video proposal and sample costume photos.

The application is complicated by the fact that Disney accepts only one proposal at a time.

Williams teaches two Disney classes – there are 21 in the junior class for children aged 8 to 12 and 26 in the senior class for ages 13 and older. The first application was accepted back in May, but both groups started rehearsals immediately, hoping the second application would also be successful. It wasn't until February they got the good news that both performances

were going to happen.

Williams is glad the troupes don't have to use her back-up plan – a modified routine that alternates junior and senior numbers, giving each dancer about half the performance time. The programs combine singing and dancing, with teaching dance teacher and Judy Kulp coaching vocals.

The junior class numbers include: Car Wash, Feel the Beat, What a Wonderful World, Start the Party, Dance Evolution and One Voice One

Heart. Their show is scheduled for Wednesday, April 20th at 2:15 p.m. The senior class numbers include: So you Think You Can Dance Medley, It's On, Bonse Aba, Man in the Mirror, and Hairspray Medley. Their show will take place on Sunday, April 17th at 3:00 p.m.

The buses depart Friday afternoon from Travel Kuz in Gill. They'll drive through the night, stopping for breakfast and lunch on Saturday, and should arrive at their hotel in Florida on Saturday the 16th around 4 p.m. Immediately after arrival, the dancers will

rehearse in the parking lot before enjoying a swim in the pool and a pizza party.

The senior group performs Sunday, the 17th at the Waterside Stage in the Downtown Disney (part of Hollywood Studio). Monday the group will visit the Magic Kingdom and Tuesday they're off to the Animal Kingdom. Wednesday is the next performance day, with the Junior group performing at the Waterside Stage. On Thursday, the students will spend the day at Blizzard

see JA'DUKE page 20

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Dancing the Night Away with Heroes in Trouble

BY TAMI STILES

MILLERS FALLS - Heroes in Trouble were rocking the records off the walls at the Route 63 Roadhouse in Millers Falls last Friday. With lead guitarist Steve Sakowitz, bassist Kenny Fortin, drummer Eric Sakowitz, and lead singer Roger Sagandorf singing Rock and Roll that kept the dance floor sizzling and the early spring chill at bay.

As I walked into the joint, the room seemed just about to lift off, with folks mingling, getting comfortable and socializing with the neighbors to enjoy a TGIF frosty beverage of their choice. The bartenders hopped to get everyone's orders, as the place

was pretty packed. In fact, the room was one sardine shy of a tin. Heroes in Trouble was wailing on the stage, playing the Beatles' "I Saw Her Standing There," minus the bowl haircuts and tweed suits.

Lift off occurred just as I hit my seat and the band started playing "Tush" by ZZ Top. People starting making their way to the dance floor, and Sagandorf revved up the vocals, while Sakowitz started to set the place on fire with his guitar.

From that moment on, the dance floor was the place to be as the band played Van Halen's version of, "You Really Got Me" and AC/DC's "Dynamite." The

audience sang back up to the "Hey, Hey, Hey's" and many hands clapped to the beat that Eric Sakowitz laid down. This is where the head banging began.

As the song ended, Sagandorf shouted out, "We sound a heck of a lot better the more you drink," the room laughed and lifted their glasses along with him. Bassist Kenny Fortin took the mic and tore into Neil Young's "Rockin' in the Free World."

The room was a continuous flux of faces coming through the door; people were standing at the back of the room as the tables filled with groups of friends partying, taking pic-

tures and enjoying the company.

Sagandorf hit the stage once again, with Collective Soul's "Heaven let your Light Shine Down" and couples and singles alike hit the dance floor once again. People sang along to the "Oh, Oh, Oh, Oh's," couples at the bar cuddled up, and everyone was in harmony for a moment.

I had a chance to talk to Sagandorf, and found out the current incarnation of the band met last September, through Craig's List, and the moment they all got together to practice it was an instant fit. The members are all local to the area, although Sagandorf travels a distance to come up to gigs in the Pioneer Valley.

Steve Sakowitz started the band in the 90's, got tripped up on some kryptonite, but now they are back and leaping over tall buildings like never before.

Tunes from the 70s through the 90s were the flavor of the night, and what Heroes in Trouble put on the table was a fine tribute to big hair, blazing guitar licks and danceable tunes. The crowd was responsive throughout the night and got in on many of the songs including, "Satisfaction" by the Rolling Stones, and "My Sharona" by The Knack.

With HIT's steady beat, solid guitar work and strong vocals, the Roadhouse invited people to dance away the night, and twist again like they did last summer, and they were glad to oblige.

from **KENTUCKY** pg 1

which is like our National Honors Society. We really made a difference.

For the combined two days of work, we saved Frontier Housing an estimated \$5,000 to \$8,000. The TFHS students felt this was an immense accomplishment for such a short time. It really is unbelievable how much money a little community service work can save.

Each one of us learned new skills that will help us in the future. "I loved picking up a paint brush and pushing myself out of my comfort zone," said senior Brittany Yolish. "By the end of the week I was so sad to leave."

Not only were we doing this work to benefit others, but we also learned a lot about ourselves and our abilities as indi-

viduals and as a group.

Having gone on this trip in 2009, and now again this year, I can honestly say that this trip has changed my perspective on life. We think growing up in such a small area that we have it hard, but we don't always realize there are other communities in the same situation. I was inspired by the strong sense of community I saw when I arrived in Kentucky.

We got a chance to hang out with local high school students and hear their stories, and no matter how much they struggled, there was always someone in their community willing to help out in any way they could. They were so thankful we came down to lend a helping hand and they made sure we knew it.

Upon returning to Kentucky this year I was surprised when many of the students remem-

bered me, and were excited to see us return. One of the best feelings was seeing the difference we have made over the last three years. When we went to Laurel Gorge, a cultural center and nature preserve in Elliot County, to clean up trash as we do every year, there was a noticeable difference in the amount of trash - much less than the first year I participated.

Senior David Garcia said when he got home, the first thing he thought was, "I'm going to miss Kentucky. I'm going to miss the people and the new friends I made. It was a pleasure to be part of this group."

Senior Kelsey O'Brien agreed with Garcia, saying, "I am really glad I was able to go on this trip. It felt good to help others and take a closer look at a different culture. I really think

we made a difference."

Freshman Evan Shattuck put it best when he said, "I know I will remember this for the rest of my life. It was life changing." We couldn't have accomplished all that we did on our own. We spent the months prior to the trip making phone calls, writing letters and doing vast amounts of fundraising including our dodge ball tournament and Saturdays at Food City in Turners collecting donations. We worked hard to make this trip happen and on behalf of the group I would like to say thank you to anyone who helped us to make it possible, including patrons of Food City, the Gill-Montague Education Fund and Our Lady of Peace, who gave us grants for the trip, and the TFHS Sports Boosters, who donated t-shirts for us to give to

our new friends in Kentucky.

Participating in this trip meant so much to each of us and we wanted to share our experiences with all of you, and maybe even inspire you a little to push yourself beyond your comfort zone and help those who need it most.

I would like to close with one last thought from our trip sponsor in Kentucky, Frank Olson, who said, "Work in the service of a greater good and in the service of others is priceless and individual. Each of us gave up something to gain something greater. The beneficiaries are Elliott County's citizens, Frontier Housing as an organization, and Turners Falls High School and community."

Julie Thompson is a senior at Turners Falls High School.



from **CABARET** pg 1

leave your troubles at the door and immerse yourself in the gritty, glamorous life of burlesque.

The Kit Kat Girls glide onto stage to entertain and tantalize with a lifted eyebrow and come-hither smile. Edwards' Emcee brings goose flesh to the arms with his fabulous performance, and a goosetstep to the chorus line in the Kick Line number that wows us at the opening of Act Two.

Meet our hero, fresh-faced Clifford Bradshaw (Colin Allen) an American writer who meets up with the powerful German Ernst Ludwig (Marc Osten) on the train to Berlin. Ludwig takes Bradshaw under his wing and recommends him to the local inn and the colorful characters there as he gathers inspiration for his first novel.

Sally Bowles (the marvelous Martha King-Devine) is the young headliner at the Kit Kat Klub who lives "a

thrillingly scandalous life" and lures Bradshaw into her den, while the party that is Berlin's nightlife becomes their playground. King-Devine's commanding voice and keen performance run the gamut of emotion from nuance to naughty to anguish with panache. From cheeky showgirl to tender woman she delivers and fills the stage with prowess and passion.

Other very notable performances are turned in by Jennifer Hassell Coliskey as Fraulein Schneider, the sensible innkeeper who has to make difficult choices. Joey Lavalle MacKay plays the shortsighted fruit seller Herr Schultz, and tenant Fraulein Kost, in a solid performance by Rochelle Gorts, is a woman desperate yet determined to keep her rent paid during uncertain times. These meaty parts are very well played by this trio of talented best-supporting actors.

The eight-piece orchestra

does the lilting, haunting score justice. It is refreshing to hear live musicians, rather than the piped-in, prerecorded music on questionable sound systems many community theatre companies utilize. Musical director Susanne Anderson brilliantly blends the music with the action. She has collected a fine group of musicians, including percussionist Ethan Barrieau, who has almost as much fun as the performers on stage with his drum solos and the alternative plinks, plunks, and wheees! he gets to throw in for pizzazz.

There are many unforgettable songs in this can't-miss show. Poignance and emotion are the overriding themes of the lyrics in "Don't Go," and "Maybe This Time," sung by Bradshaw and Bowles respectively, "What Would You Do," and "I Don't Care Much," by Schneider and the Emcee. Sass and kitsch fill the lines of "Don't Tell Mama," by Bowles,

"Two Ladies" by the Emcee, Lulu, and Rosie, "Meeskite," by Schultz, and "If You Could See Her," by the Emcee. A chilling theme of the unrealized Nazi utopian paradise is sung with stone-faced stoicism by acolytes of Adolf Hitler in, "Tomorrow Belongs to Me."

Impeccably choreographed by Penny Herter, the Kit Kat dancers sway and sizzle with sultry moves that are beautifully executed to the last curve of their wrist. Costuming by Karen Hinds is suggestive but never raunchy, a delicate balance of seduction and style.

Thus is the thrill-ride of Cabaret - a nightclub where everything and everyone is beautiful and on display with, for the moment, the celebratory gaiety of youth. It's a party filled nightlife, with a chilling Party hovering in the wings. The wrenching decisions made during war time, and the terrifying vein of extreme politics round out the emotional whirl-

wind that the audience tours.

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Cabaret runs this Friday and Saturday evenings, April 15th and 16th, at 8:00 p.m. at the Shea Theater, 71 Avenue A, in Turners Falls. There is a Sunday matinee at 2 p.m. on the 17th. Tickets are available at the Jones Library in Amherst, the World Eye Bookshop in Greenfield, or reserved in advance by calling the Shea Theater box office at (413) 863-2281 x 3.



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Sharing the Land at Valley Community Land Trust

BY LIZ CARTER

TURNERS FALLS - An upcoming purchase is bringing a new generation of families into the fold of the Valley Community Land Trust — a non-profit addressing rural affordable housing.

The phrase “substandard housing” carries images of urban slums. But the insidiousness of the housing crisis in the United States lies in the fact that substandard housing — residential structures that do not meet local health or safety requirements — is statistically more likely to be buried out of view; isolated in woods or in fields, or crumbling in quaint rural downtowns. According to the National Rural Housing Coalition, “a disproportionate amount of the nation’s substandard housing is in rural areas,” and over one quarter of rural residents spend more on housing than they can reasonably afford.

Here in Massachusetts, the rising price of land adds fuel to the fire. “The cost of land is a huge impediment to housing affordability,” says Ellie Kastanopolous of Valley Community Land Trust.

At its worst, rural poverty, though far less visible than a crumbling high-rise, can be absolute. With no public transportation, limited job opportunities, and geographically disparate social resources, one business closing can create a rut that traps its workers for generations.

But at its best, rural poverty is a census term that fits individuals who have found cre-

ative ways to support their families that can’t be tracked by conventional economic indicators. This might describe your neighbor with the huge backyard garden, or the ten students and two goats sharing a house down the street. This might describe a family that’s foregone cable so they can all be home the extra seven hours a week their Comcast bill would cost in labor.

These are tradespeople whose businesses are low in overhead and high on artistry. Some of the out-of-work mill workers, old-time farmers, and back-to-the-landers have survived, to the belittlement of economic indicators everywhere.

People have thrived in rural areas since there were people, there’s nothing radical about that. The most daunting thing faced by both the rural poor and proponents of the simple life in the 21st century isn’t the harsh countryside, it’s the horrific economic climate. Valley Community Land Trust, one of the oldest community land trusts in the country, is a non-profit that has spent three decades manufacturing a creative model to create affordable rural housing.

The trust owns over 100 acres of land in Franklin County, which it leases to ten families who own houses on the land. The trust holds land, “considering it neither as private nor public property, but as a sacred resource to be held in trust for present and future generations,” according to their website. Individuals who share the



COURTESY OF WWW.VCLT.ORG

A house and barn on Valley Community Land Trust land in Colrain

trust’s vision for land stewardship — including the equity they build in their home — but the land around their home is used sustainably, and the home they live in will, in theory, always be affordable to those who follow them.

It’s been a while since the Valley Community Land Trust has made a new purchase of land. “We don’t have a lot of outside funding. The con of that is that we don’t have as much subsidy to put into housing, the pro is we can be more flexible of requirements on the leaseholder of the land,” said Megan McDonough, the VCLT. The land trust is now in the process of seeking out a new piece of land for a new generation of trust members.

Anna Hendricks and Toby Briggs were living in a collective house in Boston, when partial ownership of a piece of land in Gill was donated to a collective bookstore they were affiliated with. “It was this really amazing opportunity that got us out of the city into living here,” said Hendricks. After arranging to caretake the property and moving out west, their collective house became a collective farm. At Undergrowth Farm, on Boyle Road, they grow beans and corn for their own consumption, and a cash crop of garlic to pay for supplies.

After a while, Hendricks and Briggs — who is a carpenter —

decided it was time to build their own house.

“That’s not a possibility where we’re living now,” said Hendricks. They found out about the VCLT from a friend who was a member.

“I have been aware of the community land trust model that has really been successful in making affordable housing possible in urban areas,” said Hendricks. “I had never heard of it in rural areas. Most land trusts here are about land conservation, not affordable housing. The VCLT is unique in helping people who want to live off the land, and live simply, be able to do it without a lot of resources.

Hendricks and Briggs joined the search committee and have started to help the trust look for land. After a frustrating search through posted real estate produced nothing more than subdivided acreage, the couple has started driving by properties that appear to be vacant, looking up the owners on public record, and contacting them.

Hendricks and Briggs want to continue to produce “as much of their own food as possible,” and so are looking for property that would be good for food production as well as affordable housing. “Ideally it would have five to ten acres of flat open fields with another ten to a hundred acres of woods, a

water source, and enough frontage for four or five houses that could be built in a cluster to keep as much of the land open as possible, in a fifteen minute drive to Greenfield or Turners Falls,” Hendricks said.

Rebecca Yaffe is another member of the Land Trust. Yaffe is mainly interested in inhabiting an existing structure on land trust land. As a furniture maker who is training to be a hospice nurse, low-cost living is important to Yaffe to maintain her way of life.

“I didn’t always see the sense in people’s living situation. It was always such a struggle, and so isolated and people weren’t sharing things that could be shared,” said Yaffe. She found out about VCLT through another furniture maker who lives on trust land in Colrain.

“You’re sharing land and there’s a communal purpose, but you have a private house, and there’s not this deliberate promise that you’re all going to interact in a certain way. It doesn’t seem pure or perfect or anything, but it has a number of years now that shows its stability. It appeals to me just because it seems possible,” said Yaffe.

For more information, call VCLT’s administrative coordinator Megan McDonough at 413-624-5128; go to: vclt.org; or email: info@vclt.org.

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from **RAT RACE** page 1
water.

When every racer was accounted for the Orange firefighters put their rescue boat away, and the safety crews from all the other towns packed up and went home.

What makes a cup of Irish coffee so fine on Rat Race Day is the hour long hard push down the river that comes before it. There is nothing else like trying to squeeze a little more out of muscles that are already tired, trying to catch that boat just a little bit

ahead. Training and practice can make you stronger, but on race day you want to use yourself in the race; if you have anything left at race's end you did not push hard enough.

This year we were ahead of schedule; we were used up a mile before the end. In that last mile with a light headwind (I tried to remember, it's pushing them back just as it's pushing us back) we stayed even with boat 98, stayed a half length ahead, then just before the finish they pulled a foot ahead of us and stayed there.

We couldn't catch up.

The rest of the race, the shoreline, people cheering, the wind, everything but the finish flag strung across the river, and boat 98, a 16 foot aluminum boat with two young guys paddling, disappeared.

We started 111, a good starting position, except a tree was leaning out over the water a short way in front of us too low to fit under unless we went out to the middle in a hurry, and we finished 119.

We were ahead of the boats that go from one side to the other

like drunks, and we only got slowed a few times by tangles of boats in front of us. It was a polite race this year; the only times people held our gunwales was to steady themselves, and I can forgive that. I heard that only two boats went over.

Our nieces, the PI RATS, started 30, and finished 130, and their father and friend started 129 and finished 63. They had an 18 foot wood canvas canoe, heavy but fast, and they came in first in the wood canvas class.



HEINEMANN PHOTO
These nieces went all to pieces, starting 30 and ending 130.

from **GILL** page 7

Elementary School to be locked down in a crisis will also be on the town meeting warrant. "It's a sad thing to say your school needs to be able to lock down. That's something I would never have thought of when I was in school," Crochier said.

Improving the foundation drainage at the Slate Library is on the warrant, and voters will get to decide whether to allow the residents of Gill to join an aggregated electricity supply plan through the Hampshire Council of Governments, an offshoot of the arrangement that has already been saving money on the town's electric bill for municipal buildings for some years.

A rumored petitioned article did not come forward, but Purington had included a placeholder on the draft warrant just in

case. The proposed article would have doubled the property taxes for residents who do not attend annual town meeting. The impetus for the article appeared to stem from "a growing frustration and concern that residents are not as active in town government as the used to be," said Purington.

In other business, the selectboard wrestled with a variety of financing plans to move the energy performance contract with Siemens forward, to replace the boiler, abate asbestos, and improve the building envelope at the elementary school.

Since the town has already received a \$150,000 state grant toward this project, which is estimated to cost about \$275,000, and since the selectboard is bound by a previous town meeting vote to keep the financing revenue neutral even in the early

years of the performance contract, the board is considering having the town go it alone, without Siemens, abandoning the performance guarantee, and forfeiting about \$3000 to pay for Siemens' investment grade audit of the elementary school, if an acceptable financing plan cannot be worked out for the remainder of the project costs.

Crochier reported the Franklin Regional Council of Governments has received a \$29,550 planning grant from Mass Department of Public Health to support a countywide public health initiative, to explore ways to streamline the delivery of public health services in the county.

In a bit of good budget news, Gill will benefit, along with the rest of the Commonwealth, from the governor's \$200 million roads and bridges bond - increas-

ing the state's Chapter 90 commitment to cities and towns by \$45 million (29%) over last year's amounts. Gill stands to gain exactly that - 29% - said Purington, and will receive \$152,763 in Chapter 90 aid this year, up from \$118,034 last year.

Mick LaClaire will waste no time putting the extra cash to good use repaving Oak, Myrtle, Meadow, Pine, Grove and Riverview in Riverside (\$100,000), and also putting down new oil and stone on North Cross, Boyle, and Center Road (\$60,000).

Keith Lily has resigned from the conservation commission, after at least seven years, citing other time commitments.

After noting his resignation with regret, the board said they may need a bigger white board to list all the town committees that

have seats begging for interested residents to fill. That list includes: the council on aging, the recreation commission, the regional agreement (GMRSD) study committee, the Riverside Municipal Building Study Committee, the zoning board of appeals, the open space advisory committee, the town forest task force, the energy commission, the historical commission, and now, alas, the conservation commission.

Ray Purington reported there are no races for the upcoming town elections on May 16th, although a race between Patricia Crosby and Sandy Brown appears to be in the offing for the seat on the GMRSD school committee being vacated by Crosby's daughter, Sorrel Hatch. Both Crosby and Brown have served on the school committee in years past.

from **MATH** page 7

In the past, Fonsh has urged the committee to consider closing the elementary school to school choice students entirely, on the grounds that the program is harming neighboring school districts. Fonsh has compared the program to a drug addiction, because the elementary school has come to rely on the income stream school choice students provide.

The school committee voted unanimously to support a special article on the April 30th town meeting warrant for \$14,425 to replace two "outdated" servers.

Technology teacher Karin Gravina answered questions about the servers, one of which was purchased in 2002, the other in 2007. Gravina said the plan is to refurbish the newer server, at a cost of \$598, to support "certain kinds of applications in the labs," Hajir said. Modified for that use,

the 2007 server should last another three or four years, he added.

The \$14,425 includes warrantee and installation of the new servers, which run all the equipment in the computer lab, the library, the interactive classroom smartboards, and the administrative computers.

The school committee reacted positively to the news that the Massachusetts School Building Authority has approved Leverett's Green Repair project to replace windows and repair the slate roof, adding insulation at the elementary school. The MSBA will reimburse the town 51.42% of the expected \$564,248 cost for the project, leaving the town to pay about \$293,500.

"I'm very pleased the project manager and architect and selectboard have moved the plan forward," said Hajir. "I think it's a wise thing to maintain the upkeep of the school."

At the regional school, on the other hand, Fonsh told the committee the price tag of the upper school's Green Repair program had ballooned, due to asbestos removal and door replacement costs. Initially ballparked at \$476,000, the project's cost to the region now is estimated at \$884,000. "What we don't know," said Hajir, "is whether the region is going to increase our assessment for FY'12 based on the cost of this project. That is difficult. We are already running very tight."

The school committee also heard a report on the number of Leverett students who do not currently choose to attend the town's elementary or regional school. "We want to get a handle on all the aspects of the budget," said Hajir.

Superintendent Wickman reported four elementary students attend the Chinese Immersion

school in Hadley, and two choice out to the Hadley elementary school. Six students attend private schools, and six are home schooled.

Leverett had a net loss of about \$39,000 in charter school tuition this year, lost \$10,000 in choice out, and about \$36,000 in private and home schooled students who might otherwise be attending public schools and bringing state aid with them, according to preliminary numbers from October 1st of 2010.

Finally, legislative aides from state senator Stan Rosenberg and representative Steve Kulik's office have informed Union 28 that the supervisory committee for the union has the power to set benefit levels for school employees. This is a new twist on the ongoing saga of whether the town with the most students attending a U-28 school (presently Erving) has the power to estab-

lish higher rates of benefits for U-28 employees than member towns pay to their own employees.

The present arrangement, whereby Erving establishes a rate equal to 79% for the cost of retirees' health benefits, far higher than the 50% Leverett and Shutesbury pay their own retirees, has led to a number of lengthy meetings between officials from all five towns in the union, wrangling over the benefit package for a single employee who recently retired from the central office. The five towns are endeavoring to get special legislation enacted to regularize the process, and match levels each town pays for U-28 benefits to the levels those towns pay for their own employees. But the recent advisory from the legislative aides may toss the ball into the U-28 supervisory committee's court.

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Student Murals Enrich TFHS

BY MARK HUDYMA - Turners Falls High School students are helping to brighten up the walls of the school. A large mural is currently transforming the walls of the cafeteria. Students from Heidi Schmidt's art class and Vicky Valley's current events class have been working on the murals for several weeks, and are beginning to paint.

The project came together when 'the stars aligned.' As Schmidt began to talk with Valley about the project, a mini grant was awarded by the Gill-Montague Educational Fund to fund materials, and the project got the OK from principal Donna Fitzpatrick. Board member Katie Kuklewicz said the GMEF, which provides funding to programs that enrich student education, were "eager to provide funds for a mural project." Soon, the classes were busy conceptualizing the artwork for the project.

Each section of the mural was designed and painted by a small group of students. In preparation,

students researched famous muralists like Shepard Fairey, Robert Wyland, and Banksy, and attempted to replicate their styles.

Each group selected a word such as "Power," or "Change," then incorporated it into their design.

Many students felt challenged by the project. "That first day, it was so frustrating," said Kate Dobosz, a junior. Riley Howe, a sophomore, added, "Coming up with the idea was the hard part."

The project will "hopefully be completed before April break," said Schmidt.

There are plans to paint additional areas of the school, said Valley. Also, the after school program at the Middle School, Quest, has plans to paint a large cement wall in the student parking lot this coming fall.

The murals promise to brighten and beautify our school environment, and will certainly enrich the educational experience of the artists who research and paint them.

Mark Hudyma is a junior at Turners Falls High School.



A student at Turners Falls High works on the mural in the cafeteria

It's Official - the Ice is Off the Lake!

BY DAVID JAMES

LAKE PLEASANT - At 5 p.m. on Thursday, April 7th, local eyes ceased their annual search of the surface of the namesake lake of Montague's most miniscule village to look for other harbingers of spring - blossoming of the crocus and the daffodil - for the judges of the Ice Off the Lake Contest had decreed winter officially departed and dead.

Since 1977 residents of Lake Pleasant have conducted a ritual of the changing of the seasons in which participants draw a date and take their blind-luck chances on the day when the last cube of lake ice would give up its ghost. The competition became so popular that a shadow second version was instituted in 2005 to accommodate overflow interest for those wishing to participate even after the last ticket for the

traditional contest was gone.

This year the winner of Contest One was Joyce Cote, virtual lifelong resident of the village and its postmaster for a quarter century before retirement in 2007. Contest Two winner was Louise Emond, a long-term community dweller who relocated to Shutesbury last fall. This was the second trip to the championship circle for both. Cote won in 1991 and Emond in 2001.

Ironically, the name of the contest can be misleading. Winners may be declared even though ice remnants yet remain swimming in the lake, for as with so much of life, what is seen depends on the location of the seer.

Contest judges convene at the appointed hour at the Raisin Rosen picket halfway across the Bridge of Names, a wooden walkway which joins the two

halves of the village. They survey the surface of the lake visible from that vantage point. If no ice can be observed, the contest is declared done... no matter that the judges may have passed ice pockets, even sheets, near the shores as they wended their way to arrive at the bridge midpoint above a sluiceway allowing lake overflow to give birth to a stream that meanders south to the Sawmill River.

Judging this year was reduced from a normal trio to the duo of Pat Otto, Sr., and yours truly, David James. The third judge, Joyce Cote, recused herself to avoid semblance of conflict of interest, but later joyfully acknowledged the sagacity of her benchmates. The contest date range was from March 6th, the earliest melt date, to April 19th, the last ice-gone date recorded in the 35-year history of the event.

High School Class to Host Donkey Ball

MARK HUDYMA

TURNERS FALLS - This is not a Senior prank.

The Turners Fall High School gym will soon be filled with a herd of donkeys, when the class of 2014 plays host to Donkey Basketball on Friday, April 15th.

The idea for this unusual fundraising effort came in the form of an advertisement from Green Mountain Donkey Ball. The members of the class quickly decided to sponsor the event, which will raise funds for the Class of 2014's prom, class gifts, and senior trip.

Teams will be made up of school and community members, with teams for students, teachers, coaches, and police and firefighters. Student players were picked by lottery, and could either sign themselves up or get

nominated by fellow students.

The players will ride trained donkeys around the gym, trying to stay in the saddle while otherwise engaging in a shortened game of basketball.

The game will take part in three rounds, with each team playing one another, then the winners of those matches playing each other.

The doors open at 6:30 p.m., and concessions will be available. Tickets are \$7 in advance, and \$8 at the door, and can be purchased from Scotty's, Equi's, and Turners Falls Pizza House. There will also be a 50/50 raffle the night of the event. Come watch students, teachers and emergency responders make asses out of themselves, with silliness abounding. It is sure to be a fun event!

Clamshell Alliance: A Call To Action

Fukushima: Chernobyl in Japan
Conway, NH - Entergy Nuclear is poised to violate the will of the people of Vermont and operate the Vermont Yankee reactor (same make, model and age as Fukushima) past the 2012 contractual closure date. The NRC granted the VY reactor a 20-year extension just days after the meltdowns in Japan began. We must begin now to prepare for mass nonviolent action. We call on Clam activists to meet at the World Fellowship in Conway, NH, on July 23rd, to plan and strategize and organize. We call on all activists to immediately connect with other Clams, allies and concerned citizens; hold meetings in their local and regional communities; organize nonviolent actions, demonstrations and educational events; and send spokes to the July 23rd meeting, and to communicate their plans to: clamshellalliance@yahoo.com.

On April 26th, 25 years to the day after the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear disaster, we call on all Clams to organize local activities such as candlelight vigils on town commons and other nonviolent forms of public education and demonstration from 6-8 p.m. on Tuesday, April 26th.

Signed by: Amie Alpert, Jeanine Burns, Diane Clancy, Kristie Conrad, Andy Davis, Judy Elliott, Barry Feldman, Paul Gunter, Jay Gustafano, Benjie Hiller, Peter Kellman, Cindy Girvani Leerer, George Mokray, Robin Read, Nelia Sargent, Kirk Stone, Brian Tokar, Sharon Tracy, Tom Wyatt.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GILL POLICE LOG

Assist Other Police, Domestic Disturbance

Wednesday, 4/6	abduction on Meadow Street in Riverside area.	tension lines off of Main Road.
6:30 a.m. Suspicious motor vehicle on Grist Mill Road. Checked out OK.	Parent/child discipline issue.	3:50 p.m. Motor vehicle accident at Main Road and Route 2. No injuries.
4:20 p.m. Assisted state police with motor vehicle accident.	6:50 p.m. Domestic disturbance on Ben Hale Road. Services rendered.	Sunday, 4/10
Thursday, 4/7	10:35 a.m. Reported vandalism on the high	7:00 p.m. Animal complaint on Riverview Drive. Owner contacted for proper procedure.

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JESSICA LARKIN ILLUSTRATION

BY FRED CICETTI

LEONIA, NJ - Q. I've heard the term "shock" a million times, but I realize I don't really know what it means. What is shock?

Shock is a condition in which blood pressure is too low and not enough oxygenated blood can sustain your body. The medical

disorder of shock is not the 'shock' people feel from a sudden traumatic event. In the United States, hospital emergency departments report more than one million cases of shock each year.

There are different kinds of shock. They include: anaphylactic shock from an allergic reaction, cardiogenic shock from a heart deficiency, hypovolemic shock from bleeding, neurogenic shock from severe emotional disturbance, and septic shock from infections in your blood.

The symptoms of shock include cold and sweaty skin that may be pale or gray, weak but rapid pulse, irritability, thirst,

irregular breathing, dizziness, profuse sweating, fatigue, dilated pupils, lackluster eyes, anxiety, confusion, nausea, and reduced urine flow.

If untreated, shock is usually fatal. If shock is treated, the outlook depends on the cause, the other disorders the person has, the presence and severity of any organ failure, the amount of time that passes before treatment begins, and the type of treatment given. Regardless of treatment, the likelihood of death caused by shock is great after a massive heart attack, especially in older people.

It is important to get immedi-

ate treatment when shock is diagnosed. If you come upon someone in shock, the first step you should take is to call 911 for emergency medical assistance.

Any bleeding should be stopped. Then the victim should be laid down and kept warm. Raise the person's legs about one to two feet to get the blood returning to the heart. Breathing should be checked. The head should be turned to the side to prevent inhalation of vomit. Nothing should be given by mouth.

When the emergency medical technicians (EMTs) arrive, they may give oxygen through a face

mask or provide a mechanical device to assist breathing. They may also give large volumes of fluids intravenously to raise blood pressure. A blood transfusion may be given.

Drugs that constrict the blood vessels may be administered to boost blood flow to the brain or heart. A bacterial infection could be treated with antibiotics. A drug such as atropine may be used to increase a slow heart rate, and other drugs may be given to improve the ability of the heart muscle to contract.

If you have a question, please write to fred@healthygeezer.com

'Voo' Re-opens after Thorough Scrubdown

BY DAVID DETMOLD

TURNERS FALLS - The popular Rendezvous bar and restaurant on 3rd Street in Turners Falls was closed by order of the board of health on Tuesday, on grounds of cleanliness in relation to food service.

"I conducted a routine inspection of the kitchen, and I found it to be quite inadequate for safe food service," said town health agent Gina McNeely on Wednesday.

McNeely said, "The kitchen was extremely unclean. By that I mean worn out cutting boards that are no longer cleanable because they are so deeply scratched; the dishwasher was not operating at a proper temperature to sanitize the plates; the ice maker was long overdue for a good cleaning;" as well as Panini grills inadequately cleaned, and a microwave oven with broken gaskets. "That's a hazard," McNeely said.

Additionally, "the hand wash bar glasses were not clean enough." McNeely said, "When a glass is held up to the light, I could see a lot of fingerprints and a lot of grease. They need to be more careful washing the glasses. I'm not referring to water spots; I'm referring to grease."

McNeely put this down to "inadequate washing," at the three hole sink behind the bar, but stated, "The water temperature there was perfectly adequate, good and hot."

She said, "I closed them at noon on Tuesday, sort of 'under the radar,' to give them a chance to clean up the kitchen. I went back at five o'clock and I still found it inadequate. I gave them a chance and they fell quite short. That's when I posted the building. I don't do that lightly."

Rendezvous co-owner Jaime Berger said on Wednesday afternoon, "We are working full time addressing a lot of small issues

we understand are valid, but we don't think warranted closing us down. We hope to be open today or tomorrow."

Berger said he was aware of similar issues raised by McNeely in the past, but said, "The response strikes us and our new kitchen manager David MacDonald as extreme."

Berger said on Wednesday, "We are scrubbing upstairs and down for starters, floor to ceiling. We are repainting areas of walls and stairs, replacing ceiling tiles in the kitchen, and we are going to institute a more thorough spot check cleaning regimen." As for the microwave with broken gaskets, "We removed it and replaced it."

Recently hired kitchen manager David MacDonald, who comes to the Rendezvous from his former position as executive chef at Union Station and Spaghetti Freddie's in Northampton, and the Putney Inn before that, said, "We're going to put together an action plan including a cleaning check list and staff training. We're going to follow the manual. We can quickly address all the issues raised."

MacDonald stressed that none of the issues raised by McNeely involved food preparation. "There was nothing out of temperature; nothing not labeled or rotated properly; all of our coolers worked fine."

Co-owner Chris Janke added the water temperature in the automatic dishwasher was registering

at 158 degrees, just two degrees shy of the 160 degrees required. Maintenance to the dishwasher was being addressed to raise the temperature, Janke said.

McNeely said this was her third or fourth inspection at the Rendezvous since the bar reopened under present management four years ago. By state law, town health agents are supposed to inspect food service facilities bi-annually, and McNeely admitted her regimen may have fallen slightly short of that with the Rendezvous.

McNeely, who has acted in the past to shut down the kitchen at Hunting Hills bakery in Montague Center, and the former Chinatown Restaurant in Turners Falls over health code violations, and closed down Grumpy's vendor stall at the Spring Parade in Turners Falls last weekend for cleanliness issues, said she had cited the Rendezvous for "Ongoing problems since my first inspection there, sort of an accumulation of problems." She said, "I'm going to be asking the board of health to hold a hearing on this, and I'm going to ask the board of health to either pull their food service license or have them come up with a plan for how they will manage this kitchen according to the code."

Berger responded, "We are taking the individual citations very seriously, and we're going to address them all. Our patrons love our food and our drink, as the Valley Advocate Awards have shown year after year.

The Rendezvous won the

Advocate readers' poll for "Best Neighborhood Bar," last year, and placed second in the category of "Best Bar Atmosphere."

On Thursday morning, McNeely said she had reinspected the Rendezvous and found it to be "completely satisfactory."

"They cleaned up everything. It looked real good. They have a plan in place to continue to comply."

Berger said, "We plan to continue to address the issues, and are confident we have as clean a kitchen as any in town."

Turners Falls Fire District Annual Meeting to Consider New Fire Truck

Voters who live in Montague City, Turners Falls and Millers Falls are invited to attend the annual meeting of the Turners Falls Fire District in the Hillcrest School Auditorium, 30 Griswold Street, on Tuesday, April 19th, at 7:00 p.m.

On the 21 article warrant, besides the district's annual operating budget (\$1.73 million), are articles to upgrade the kitchen at the fire station for \$6,000, pay an additional \$75,000 towards the district's back-up well at Hannegan Brook, and an article to spend \$425,000 to purchase a new fire truck.

Fire District finance committee member Joe Janikas said, "If all these articles pass, it will be close to a 10% increase in taxation. That's unacceptable. The biggest budget buster is the new fire truck."

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ERVING POLICE LOG

Erratic Operator, Assist Other Police

Wednesday, 4/6 12:45 p.m. Motor vehicle lock out on Paper Mill Road. Gained entry.	Eastbound. Stopped same. No issues. Advised of calls.	Sunday, 4/10 12:00 p.m. Assisted state police attempting to locate subject on North Street.
Thursday, 4/7 2:45 p.m. Report of sick raccoon on State Road. In area, animal gone upon arrival.	8:35 p.m. Checked Millers Falls Road residence regarding earlier be-on-the-lookout vehicle. Was not there.	Monday, 4/11 7:25 p.m. Report of brush fire in the area of the Usher Plant.
6:05 p.m. Report of erratic operator all of over the road on Route 2	Friday, 4/8 2:35 p.m. Alarm at Old State Road residence. Checked same. All OK.	Checked same with fire department. No fire found.

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from **KELLER** page 1

Keller recently complained to state senator Stan Rosenberg about the requirements placed on volunteer boards by the state's new open meeting law, among them the need to post agendas 48 hours in advance, excluding Sundays and holidays. If something comes up on a Friday or Saturday, Keller said, a board or committee can no longer deal with it in a timely fashion.

"How on Earth did you come up with these requirements?" Keller recalled asking Rosenberg.

Rosenberg replied, "We didn't know what we were doing."

"I said, 'Why don't you go back and repeal it then?'"

But Rosenberg said legislators are wary of revisiting or revising the open meeting law, for fear voters will suspect they are motivated by venality.

So small towns must conform.

Keller moved to Wendell in 1969, part of the wave of idealist young back-to-the-landers who populated communes sprouting at that time in Montague, Guilford, VT and – at the Popcorn Farm – in Mormon Hollow. Their ecological concerns, coupled with a grow your own food, do-it-yourself music and media ethos, and avant garde projects like recycling and protesting nuclear power have in a long, strange way come to maturation in some of the more innovative aspects of Wendell's town government and community life.

Wendell, which recently passed a first in the Commonwealth conservation development bylaw to balance measured growth with the preservation of natural corridors and the working landscape, still maintains an active and acclaimed monthly coffeehouse series at the town hall that raises funds for everything from the volunteer fire department to the Chicken Coop School. The town placed photovoltaic panels and a window mounted solar furnace on its new library, passed resolutions to decriminalize marijuana use and close the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant, keeps a food pantry at the town hall, a free clothing box at the Meeting House, and recently became the first town in the

county – if not the country – to hire a paid local food coordinator. Coincidentally or not (if discussion on the town's active town-folk chat board is any index) interest in gardening and food production appears to be blossoming this year.

"It happens to be there's a bunch of hardworking, community-oriented, dedicated people in town. It's like a chain reaction. That energy stimulates more energy, and people seem to get a lot accomplished and have a good time doing it," Keller said. "For the most part."

But despite its ongoing push for community self reliance, Wendell is not immune from the economic currents buffeting the nation.

"I think the biggest challenge that all small towns face is dropping revenues from the state and particularly, in Wendell, dropping revenues from PILOT (payment in lieu of tax) revenues," Keller said. "The state pays us very little in PILOT for their land."

Interviewed in August of 2003 when he originally tossed his hat into the ring for selectboard, Keller said, "When I first got on the finance committee, state payments in lieu of taxes to Wendell were in the \$250,000 range."

After declining to nearly nothing, lobbying efforts from the STAR organization (Small Towns Against Repression) succeeded in getting those payments going again.

Wendell received about \$100,000 a year in PILOT payments in 2003, Keller said at the time. This week, he said that figure had been declining year by year, to now less than \$50,000 a year.

"That's really unfair for towns with a lot of state forest like Wendell," Keller said, "Unfunded mandates from the state are multiplying." He reiterated, "The open meeting law is a good example – it was well intentioned, but it is virtually making it impossible for some volunteer boards to function."

Fear of forced regionalization has caused many communities to rally around their small schools, and Wendell has been no exception when it comes to their elementary school – the Swift River School, shared with the neighboring town of New Salem.

Keller called Swift River "a jewel in our town," and "a great partnership with New Salem." He said the school has "a great faculty and staff," and added, "I hope it stays just the way it is. I think Wendell's school age population is on an upswing, and the overall attendance is about normal."

School secretary Christine Heard, who sits on the selectboard with Keller, confirmed that Wendell's enrollment at Swift

River was at a six year high – at 58 students, out of a total population of 145, with 73 from New Salem and 14 students choosing in from other districts (as of October 1st, 2010 – the latest figures from the state). Last year, Wendell sent 51 students to Swift River, and was down to as few as 47 recently, she said.

Overall, the school population has fluctuated between a low of 144 and a high of 151 over the last six years. "Pretty stable," Heard said.

Keller is upbeat about the prospects for the town in the coming years.

"I think it's going to be a great three years for Wendell. The library continues to expand opportunities for the whole community – films, meetings, it's a very, very lively cultural spot. We of course have the Déjà Brew, a center for a lot of different cultural activities, poetry and music. The conservation commission has been doing a great job providing access to [the town's new conservation land at] Fiske Pond, in terms of maintaining foot bridges, signage, the parking area. A lot of people are enjoying it."

In town government Keller cited, "a real effort to streamline and increase the efficiency of the money managing departments. It's coming to fruition. We have all the financial departments interlinked electronically, and good people in all positions that know what they're doing."

He looks back on the building of the new town offices and library, and the conversion of the former library into a senior center "with a living room feel" as among the highlights of his last two terms in office, crediting the collaborative effort of community and town government for getting those projects accomplished.

But are Wendell taxpayers taxed too much, considering the town has been able to build up a million dollar plus stabilization account so soon after the ribbon cutting on the new town buildings four years ago?

"I think Wendell taxpayers think they're getting a good deal for their money for what they're paying," Keller added, "At the moment, the finance committee is looking at the possibility of using some of that million dollars to lower the tax rate."

He insisted, even in tough economic times like these, "It's very healthy to have a good bank account," and said the town's stabilization fund is "within the ballpark" though slightly on the high side of what the Department of Revenue recommends. Stabilization "has come in very handy in the town in the past," Keller noted.

Keller would like to see the former Maple Valley School re-

used – and thought its best possible re-use, given the dormitories, gymnasium, and big commercial kitchen at this central institutional complex in town, would be as another residential school. He said the selectboard had been active in efforts to find a new tenant for the campus, and had also reached out to Wendell citizen groups like Wendell Works to encourage a collaborative reuse of some of the buildings there. "We're going to do what we can to help."

Other projects on the horizon include facilitating the delivery of high speed internet access to town residents, through the Wired West cooperative or whichever method seems advisable once trunk lines reach the town center through the effort of the Mass Broadband Institute, "in theory in a year or two."

The town will soon vote on a multi-million dollar roof replacement and heating system upgrade at the Swift River School, hoping to receive 51% reimbursement through the state's Green Repair program. And the selectboard, with the assistance of buildings' supervisor Ted Lewis, are moving ahead with a project to redirect runoff from the town hall and police station roofs to a culvert, and away from an aggrieved neighbor's land.

The recent installation of double walled oil tanks at the town hall is a further effort to insure


that neighbors in the center do not have unwanted impact from town buildings, since a leak of heating fuel could be devastating to nearby wells, Keller noted.

So, in ways large and small, Keller said, "I think the town is going to try to keep ahead of the curve in terms of upgrading the infrastructure."

He talked about one other project in the pipeline – the anticipated issuing of a request for proposals for the town-owned Marion Herrick residence on 30 plus acres on Wickett Pond Road. He said the town would seek a buyer to restore and provide energy efficiency for the house, while preserving the remaining open space. But he bristled at the suggestion that the Herrick residence may be the oldest home in town.

"I think the house we have here might be the oldest," said Keller, speaking from 32 Cold Brook Road. "The original part of the house was built in the 1790s."

That was certainly a few years before the communards showed up to reclaim the land, grow their own food, pool their resources, and battle against pesticide sprays along power lines and nuclear radiation wafting down the wind from Vernon. It's been a lot of work, yet much has been accomplished since that time.

Given a chance, Keller hopes to continue the effort for another three year term. 

SWIFT RIVER Pre-K and KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION

for residents of New Salem and Wendell

NEW SALEM - The Swift River School offers pre-school and kindergarten programs for age eligible children whose families live in Wendell and New Salem. Children who are three or four years old by September 1st, 2011 are eligible to attend the pre-school. Children who are five years old by September 1st, 2011 are eligible to attend the kindergarten. The preschool is currently open four mornings per week. The kindergarten is Monday through Friday, and follows the elementary school schedule. If you would like to register please call Phyllis Lawrence at 978-544-6926 X236 or stop in at our Main Office between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. Registration packets are available and will be mailed to you upon request. For more information and to visit the classrooms and meet the teachers, an OPEN HOUSE will be held on Wednesday, May 11th. The pre-school open house is from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. The kindergarten open house is between 2:00 and 3:00 p.m.

If you have concerns about your child's development, Swift River School conducts free screenings for children age three to five. Call the Early Childhood office at Swift River School to schedule an appointment.

from **ERVING** pg 6


businesses in town, Goodwin asked Sharp to check with town counsel Donna McNicol about whether required comment periods had been observed.

The selectboard voted to sign a letter to the legislature supporting the expanded bottle bill currently before the state legislature. The bill will add a deposit for containers of all nonalcoholic drinks except milk and dairy beverages.

Sharp informed the selectboard that a school regionalization committee had been formed and would meet for the first time on April 15th at 3:30 p.m.


The selectboard closed the open meeting and met in executive session "for the purpose of considering the reputation, character, physical condition, mental health or the discipline or dismissal of, or to hear complaints or charges brought against a public officer, employee, staff member or individual..." and to "discuss a revenue sharing agreement with Erving Paper Mill."

The second reason given is not among the exemptions found in the state's Open Meeting Law.

The Erving selectboard has gone into executive session ten times in the last 21 meetings. 

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Through

SATURDAY, APRIL 30th

Great Falls Discovery Center: *Spineless Splendor*: a Photography Exhibit by Northern Naturalists, Noah Charney and Charley Eiseman.

FRIDAY, APRIL 8th through

SUNDAY, JUNE 5th

Hallmark Gallery, Turners Falls: *I Was There: Stories of War and Homecoming*, Public Reception - Friday, April 8th 3 - 7 p.m.

THURSDAY, APRIL 14th

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Free Range*, classic rock and dance music, 8 - 10 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Ellen Cogan and John Mason*, jazz, 7:30 p.m. Free.

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: *Megan Slankard with special guest Patrick Dyer Wolf*, 7:30 p.m.

FRIDAY, APRIL 15th

Leverett Elementary School: *Ambush on T Street*, the original production from well-known Pioneer Valley artists Court

Dorsey, Al Miller and John Sheldon... a clash of autobiography, poetry, guitar screams, healing humor and manic raves, 7:30 - 10:30 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Nexus*, eclectic, harmonic rock, 9 - 11 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Bear Country*, Jason Aldean ticket giveaway, 8 - 10 p.m. with *Damon Reeves and the Love Thieves*. Free.

Arts Block Café, Greenfield: *Leah Randazzo Group*, 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, APRIL 16th

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Park Service Day*, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. Get outside to enjoy the weather! Park Service Day is a statewide day of volunteer service, so wear your working clothes to help get the Center and grounds ready for summer. This event is for all ages. Youth organizations are encouraged to contact Diane at 413-863-3221 to find out about all the activities, work and chores that could use some spring clean-up help at the Great Falls Discovery Center.

Greenfield Public Library: *As you write It*, A Franklin County Anthology edited by Laura Rodley. Come hear inspiring stories from the depression area and beyond by local senior authors *Rosalie Bolton, Estelle Cade, Patricia Carlisle, Lilian Fiske, Francis Hemond, Dorothy Hmieleski, Joseph A Parzych and Harry Stafursky*. The event is free, refreshments will be served. 10 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Annie Hassett & Love in the Making*, 9 - 11 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Rockit Queer*, dance party, 9:30 p.m.

Leverett Town Hall: *American Portrait Songwriter, Ben Bedford*, will perform at the Echo Lake Coffeehouse, 7:30 p.m.

St. James Episcopal Church, Greenfield: *Recovery Project Live Music Showcase*, a community open to all concerned with drug and alcohol addiction, will be hosting an exciting Live and Recorded Music Showcase at 6 p.m. Live music from the Glenwood Mills Band, Dave & Lela as well as the fabulous DJ's Flashback and Laurie B.

Montague Bookmill: *School For The Dead Tenth Anniversary Celebration*, 8 p.m.

SUNDAY, APRIL 17th

Turner's Falls High School Auditorium, *A cappelloza!* 7 high school groups sing a cappella to benefit the Food Bank of Western Mass, 2 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Steve Crow, Peter Kim & Joe Fitzpatrick, Acoustic Trio* -

Warped Americana 8 - 10 p.m.

MONDAY, APRIL 18th:

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

Thrive Project, Turners Falls: *Showing of Smoke Signals*, the first movie, written, directed, and co-produced by a Native American, *Sherman Alexie*, author of *Ten Little Indians*. 7 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 20th

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Quizmaster Chad's Quiznite Quiz*. 8 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Knitting and Craft Night*, 7 - 10 p.m.

THURSDAY, APRIL 21st

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Peter Siegel and Friends*. 9:30 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Wailin' Dave Robinson & Tommy Filault*, blues-based roots music, 8 - 10 p.m.

FRIDAY, APRIL 22nd

Barton Cove, Gill: Northfield Mountain Recreation and Environmental Center presents *Fairy Fun at Barton Cove*, for ages 4 and up. Make fairy dust, hear fairy stories, play games, build woodland fairy houses, and eat fairy snacks. Wear clothes that can get messy. Register at 800-859-2960, 4:30 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Salvation Alley String Band and Sweet Soubrette*, 9:30 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Josh Levangie and The Mud, Blood & Beer Band*, singing all of your Johnny Cash favorites and many more, 9 - 11 p.m.

SATURDAY, APRIL 23rd

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Lonesome Brothers*, 9:30 p.m.

Unity Park, Turners Falls: *EGGstravaganza!* Children ages 4 to 12 are invited to take part in this great community tradition, featuring: face painting, egg decorating, pictures with Peter Cottontail, bake sale, and our Annual Egg Hunt where kids will have the challenge of finding well over 5,000 candy and toy-filled eggs placed throughout Unity Park. Participants must bring their own basket/bag for the eggs. Rain or shine. 1 p.m.

Memorial Hall Theater
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Wendell Town Hall: *Wendell Full Moon Coffeehouse featuring Tracy Grammer*, 7:30 p.m.

The Brick House, Turners Falls: *Phantom Erratic show featuring Ms. Sandy + Ms. Yet, Uke of Spaces, Spiderwebs, Mona Nash, Ben Hersey and DB Russell, Flaming Dragons of Middle Earth*, 7 p.m. All ages.

AUDITIONS

SATURDAY, APRIL 23rd

Starlight Theatre will be holding open auditions for their summer production of *Rent* at 9:30a.m. at Maple Ridge Community Center, in Sunderland for ages teens and older. Shows are Aug. 5 & 6 at Northampton Center for the Arts.



Tracy Grammer plays at the Wendell Full Moon Coffeehouse on Saturday, April 23rd at 7:30 p.m.

Info: Cindy 413-533-7896.

SUNDAY, APRIL 24th

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *TNT Karaoke*, 8 p.m.

MONDAY, APRIL 25th

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Open Mic with Dada Dino*, Free, 8 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *All Small Caps - Season Finale*, a night of spoken word, special poetry night menu available, bring a friend and your appetite, 7 - 10 p.m.

Grace Episcopal Church - Parish Hall, Amherst: *Voices from Chernobyl*, reading adapted from work by Svetlana Alexievich, and Henry Rosenberg of Physicians for Social Responsibility will speak after the performance. 7 p.m.

Unitarian Society of Northampton/Florence: *Voices from Chernobyl*, reading adapted from work by Svetlana Alexievich, and Ira Helfand of Physicians for Social Responsibility will speak after the performance. 7 p.m.

TUESDAY, APRIL 26th

Unitarian Society of Northampton/Florence: *Voices from Chernobyl*, reading adapted from work by Svetlana Alexievich, and Ira Helfand of Physicians for Social Responsibility will speak after the performance. 7 p.m.

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At Last and Suddenly, We Have Spring



MARY AZARIAN WOODBLOCK

BY LESLIE BROWN

MONTAGUE CITY - The windy days have dried out the garden beds. It is prime time for setting out the cold crops.

The timing is good. With the intensity of the sun's rays, the sunroom has become too warm for these cool loving plants.

The lettuces, beets and kale seedlings are becoming leggy. The leeks have developed long tendrils of roots in search of deeper territory.

I rake the raised beds free of weeds and leaves, spread a new layer of composted soil and set out the young seedlings. It is a temptation to feed them, but I resist, instead ensuring that they remain moist.

In the stress of relocation it is best to assure moisture but to hold off feeding until the plants are settled in.

New seedlings in the garden need coddling, but not vitamins.

the day, but leave plenty of time for the beds to dry out before sunset and the chilly evening temperatures.

It is this variability of New England spring, cold mornings and overnights, still with the likelihood of frost, that make early planting challenging. When the anticipated warmth comes, windows are thrown open, outdoor furniture appears, motorcycles and convertibles are polished and put out on display.

It's important to resist the temptation to plant our heat loving crops too early as the unusually warm days come now and then. Wait for the permanent warmth of the soil and for the steadiness of temperature before setting out anything that might be vulnerable to sudden cold.

The patio blueberry plants I ordered on impulse this winter came too early. They were

already sporting the buds of blossoms, yet it was too soon to stun them with the varying temperatures of early April. Still, it made no sense to leave them to the tropical temperatures in the sunroom.

I tried to set them out in a sheltered spot during daytime and bring them in at night. Still, they lost foliage, appear stressed, and one is in blossom. At least, they are guaranteed. If they die, I can call the nursery and receive a second mailing in a timelier fashion.

Once again I've been tempted to try an asparagus bed, despite two past failures. Each winter, I crave this spring green vegetable and, against my better judgment, buy the early crop from the southern hemisphere instead of waiting a few weeks more for the more reliable and less costly shipment from California.

So, recently we made a trip to Nourse Farms with the object of getting advice and setting out once more to establish my own bed.

Happily, this impulse was a good one, as they are already nearly sold out of asparagus roots for this season. A conversation with an expert persuaded me to place and pay for an order of 25 roots, but to let the producer keep them in cold storage for

another week or two before I plant.

I learned that the most critical element is the soil, which must be sweet and light.

I bought some green sand to lighten my already friable garden dirt, and spread and turned in some lime as well.

Our New England soil tends towards the acidic. Of course, it is recommended that we test our plot for its pH, which needs to be around 7.

I scoured the house for the soil testing kit we received for Christmas many seasons ago, and finally located it, clean and unused in its original package.

Unfortunately, as is often the case in my household, while the kit has never been used, the manual has mysteriously disappeared. Happily, I know no harm will come to my garden by adding some sweeteners.

A quick check on Google assures me I am not alone, as many search options include correspondence from others suffering the same plight: a soil test kit with no directions. Unlike some product lines, this one does not offer a free instructional manual to download.

Never mind. When I get back to work on Monday, I'll check with the scientists and fellow gardeners in the building,

because this time I want to do it right. I'll keep you posted.

Meanwhile, the tomato seed is planted and I await germination. Once again, I am growing a happy mix of old favorites and some new ones. Returning favorites include: Sungold, a prolific crack-resistant cherry with sharp tomato flavor, Rose, a beautiful, large pink heirloom, Pineapple, for its beauty in slicing and Brandywine, for large sized fruit and sweet tomato taste.

New ventures are: Virginia Sweets, an heirloom beefsteak of red and yellow touted for being a big producer, Sioux, an heirloom sought after for its sweet yet tangy flavor and Early Wonder, a tomato producing good taste though still an early bearer.

With the advent of spring, there is never a shortage of chores to be done in the yard and garden. Each day I find new muscles I forgot I had and sleep better each night, fatigued in body instead of mind. Beyond growing your own food and knowing the origin of what you eat, having a garden feeds the soul. It demands hard work, yet provides time out to renew, to catch the rays of early sunshine, and smell all of the wonderful scents of spring, to bask in bird song and the chirping of the early peepers. It is as close to a spiritual experience as it is its own form of meditation.

Wishing you all of the joys and benefits of spring, and happy gardening to all kindred spirits!

JA'DUKE from page 12

Beach, with a farewell dinner in Kissimmee.

Then, another 24-hour bus ride back to Gill - they'll arrive early Saturday morning - just in time to rehearse for the local production of

the musical *Dr. Doolittle*, which will include all dancers in all classes.

There are 250 students in Ja'Duke classes altogether. Offerings include tap, jazz, ballet, lyrical, hip-hop, acrobatics and pointe. The Ja'Duke Center for

the Performing Arts also offers musical theater, dance and chorus classes. Each class meets once a week and performs in at least three shows per year. For more details visit www.jaduke.com or call 413-863-0001.

Photo courtesy of Ja'Duke productions



This senior class from Ja'Duke Productions will be performing at Disney World this week. So will the Junior class!

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