



## BRICK HOUSE BASH

April Arts Weekend

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## AS YOU WRITE IT

Seniors' Anthology Now in Print

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LAKE PLEASANT MILLERS FALLS MONTAGUE CENTER MONTAGUE CITY TURNERS FALLS

# The Montague Reporter

also serving Irving, Gill, Leverett and Wendell

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YEAR 9 - NO. 27

REPORTER@MONTAGUEMA.NET

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

ARRIL 7, 2011

## 'Wendell Free University'

### The Library that Community Made



JONATHAN VON RANSON PHOTO

Wendell celebrated when the new library building opened in July of 2007. Librarian Rose Heidkamp (left) is pictured here with Clara Sarr and her son Alioune, along with many other admirers at the opening day festivities.

BY JONATHAN VON RANSON

WENDELL - The book discussion group this week at Wendell Free Library studied Ben

Hewitt's *The Town that Food Saved: How One Community Found Vitality in Local Food*.

There's a passage from it that might apply to the library itself.

At a restaurant called Claire's, it says, you can get a meal...

But there is something else that Claire's offers...in part

see FREE U page 14

## Sustainable Franklin County



CLAUDIA WELLS PHOTOMONTAGE

### Developing a Vision for Future Growth

BY DAVID DETMOLD - Two dozen representatives from the business, arts, planning, transportation, housing and economic development sectors came together at the community room of the Greenfield Savings Bank in Turners Falls on Tuesday to plan for a more sustainable Franklin County.

The steering committee, called together by the Franklin Regional Council of Governments, under the auspices of one of 45 competitive Sustainable Communities regional planning grant programs nationwide, funded by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), in a unique partnership with the federal Department of Transportation and the Environmental Protection

Agency, will hold public outreach sessions in three parts of the county this fall to gather community input on the future of growth and jobs in Franklin County.

Gathering data from these sessions, the steering committee will craft a regional vision for sustainable development - and a regional plan with benchmarks - to guide that development over the next 25 years.

Among those in attendance at the first steering committee meeting were the heads of the Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority, the Montague Housing Authority, the Orange town administrator, the head of Baystate Franklin Medical, the town planners of see SUSTAINABLE pg 17

## Dave Bock Resigns as Highway Boss

BY JOSH HEINEMANN

WENDELL - After their own special meeting earlier in the evening, the Wendell highway commission met the Wendell selectboard on March 30th with the news that road boss David Bock had resigned, effective two days earlier. No reason was given for Bock's sudden resignation, according to selectboard chair Christine Heard.

"I was surprised," said Heard, reached by phone this week. "I don't think he did give a reason."

Heard said Bock's unexplained resignation was not related to anonymous posters that had been put up around town last year alleging a personnel issue at the highway department.

Highway commission chair Harry Williston said he had no comment on the reason for Bock's resignation, other than to say, "He did his job."

Reached by phone, Bock, a resident of Athol, said, "I just resigned to resign and move on to do something else." He said his reason for resigning was unrelated to working conditions or pay rate, and added, "I've been looking to go back to construction or site work."

Bock served as interim highway superintendent for a few months after Danny Bacigalupo passed away, and was hired to the position permanently in February of 2009.

Two highway workers remain in the department to deal with the rest of mud season, and neither have expressed interest in becoming acting supervisor. Williston said the highway commission has begun advertising for a replacement for Bock. A hiring committee has formed, including a representative of the commission, the selectboard, and the general public. Williston said he hoped to have a replacement hired by May.

Cemetery commission chair Richard Mackey said he had openly aired complaints about Bock's performance in the past with the selectboard, and said those complaints revolved around "professional courtesy." Mackey said Bock, "had issues with even the existence of the cemetery commission."

But Bock said, "From everything the residents tell me, we did a very good job. The crew has a few projects lined up; they should be in pretty good shape going for-

see BOCK page 11

## Farm to School Forum Builds Support for Local Food System But Fails to Include Local Foods on Its Own Menu

BY KATIE NOLAN

GREENFIELD - "Kids need to know how to grow and eat real foods to thrive. We are well positioned in the region to make this happen." That was the message Deborah Habib of Seeds of Solidarity Farm in Orange delivered to a crowd of about 70 people at the Farm to School forum at the Greenfield Middle School on April 2nd.

In order to connect kids to fresh local foods, the Franklin County School Committee Caucus convened the forum to discuss the opportunities and obstacles around supplying local foods to local schools, as school committee members, school food service directors, farmers, agriculture commission members, parents, state legislators, and food transporters took note on a sunny spring Saturday.

The Farm to School program is a non-governmental organization operating in 48 states with the objective of serving healthy meals in school cafeterias, improving student nutrition, providing agriculture, health and nutrition education opportunities, and supporting local and regional

farmers. Kelly Erwin, the Massachusetts Farm to School director, told the forum her program acts "like a dating service," matchmaking between farmers who want to sell and schools that want to buy local produce.

Erwin said Farm to School also acts as "a cheerleading squad," offering informational support to farmers and promotional materials to schools.

"I think the local foods revolution started here in western Massachusetts," Erwin said, and suggested the region could be a model for the state and the nation as it moves to bring the local food movement into local school districts.

The forum presenters and the highly participatory audience seemed to be in accord that promoting local foods in schools is a good idea. According to state representative Denise Andrews (D-Orange) schools should take advantage of the region's "great food, great culture, and a great quality of life."

Lisa Damon, Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources coordinator for agricultural development said her

department is "strongly committed" to the Farm to School program. But she cautioned "changing the food distribution system is a challenge."

Jackie Dillenback, Mahar food service director, said one challenge is "expectations." As Americans, she said, "We want what we want." For instance, we expect tomatoes in our salad bar all year, even if there's no source for good tasting local tomatoes through the New England winter.

According to Dillenback, staff willingness to change can also be a challenge. In some school kitchens, the transition from heating processed foods to actually cooking fresh foods can be difficult.

Dillenback also cited cost as an obstacle to purchasing local foods, especially when the US Department of Agriculture offers subsidized commodity foods at \$2.20 to \$4.40 per case. The USDA buys produce such as potatoes, peas, carrots, corn, ground beef and chicken in volume, and has it processed at large commercial processing centers. Erwin said, "In New England, we

see FARM page 15

### PET OF THE WEEK She's a Beauty



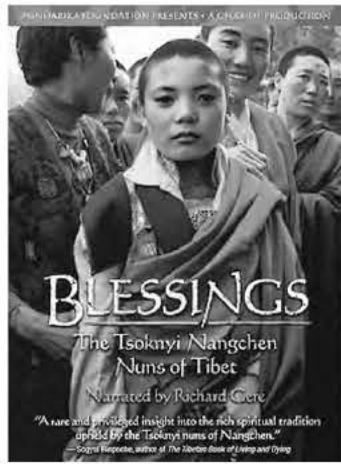
**Abigail**

My name is Abigail. I am a one-year-old domestic longhair cat in need of a good home. I had a different name when I came here, but it was 'Mama Cat', so I talked the humans into changing it to a prettier name. Because, as you can see, I'm very pretty. I'm a rare creamsicle-orange girl (usually boy cats are this color). I can be a little shy at first but I warm up fast. Just let me sniff you a few times, then you'll find that I'm incredibly sweet. Sometimes I talk a little, especially when I need to remind you to pet me. I'm a member in the Lonely Hearts Club because I've been at the adoption center for two months 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.

### WENDELL LIBRARY NEWS

#### Documentary *Blessings*, Feature Film *Young Frankenstein*

• *Blessings*, a documentary film about the Tsoknyi Nangchen nuns of Tibet, narrated by



Richard Gere, is showing at the Wendell Free Library on Friday, April 8th, at 7:00 p.m.

This film is a unique opportunity to experience an ancient tradition of female Buddhist practitioners in Tibet. Today, their practice is a vital part of Tibetan culture and is a wonderful inspiration to all those interested in meditation, and the cultivation of peace and loving-kindness.

• *Young Frankenstein* is showing at the Wendell Free Library on Saturday, April 9th at 7:30 p.m. Free Admission (but seating is limited).

#### Montague Map History Presentation

A large scale series of historic maps of Montague have been presented to the Carnegie Library, thanks to a grant from the local Cultural Council. David Allen, author of the 2004 publication *Early Maps of Montague*, has carried his research further and will present his findings on the map history of the town on Sunday, April 10th at 2:00 p.m. at the public safety complex on Turnpike Road.

The maps were digitally reproduced from a wide variety of sources including the Massachusetts Archives, the National Archives, Library of Congress, Historic Deerfield, and Allen's own collection. By repro-

ducing them at the same scale, it becomes easier to compare changes in roads and settlement through time. Of special interest are the 1794 and 1830 town maps which show the oldest roads and sites like grist mills, sawmills and taverns.

Allen will review historic maps of Massachusetts from the earliest Colonial maps through the detailed maps of the mid-19th century, including a scanned reprint of the rare Stevens map of Montague Center. Residents are encouraged to bring their own maps to add to the discussion.

The program is free and open to the public. Call Allen for more info at (413) 772-2801.

#### Dementia Caregivers Support

There is a group meeting for those who care for someone with dementia/memory disorder - like, but not limited to, Alzheimer's disease. The meeting is free and open to the public. The group meets on the first and third Wednesday of each month from

5:00 to 7:00 p.m. at Franklin County Home Care, 330 Montague City Rd, Turners Falls. This location is handicap accessible. For more information please call Molly Chambers at (978) 544-2259, extension 2229.

#### SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES - April 11th - April 15th

**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 11th**  
9:00 a.m. Foot clinic by appointment

10:00 a.m. Senior Aerobics  
10:45 a.m. Chair Exercise  
1:00 p.m. Knitting Circle

**Tuesday, April 12th**  
9:00 a.m. Walking Group  
10:30 a.m. Yoga

1:00 p.m. Painting Class

**Wednesday, April 13th**  
9:00 a.m. Foot clinic by appointment

10:00 a.m. Aerobics  
11:15 a.m. Friends of the Mealsite meeting

12:00 noon Birthday Lunch (Cake by Food City)  
1:00 p.m. Quilters  
**Thursday, April 14th**  
9:00 a.m. Tai Chi  
10:00 a.m. Coffee and conversation  
1:00 p.m. Pitch  
**Friday, April 15th**  
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 11th**  
9:00 a.m. Tai Chi  
10:00 a.m. Osteo-Exercise  
12:00 p.m. Pitch  
**Tuesday, April 12th**  
8:45 a.m. Chair Aerobics  
9:30 a.m. C.O.A. meeting  
12:30 p.m. Painting  
**Wednesday, April 13th**



Theodore Liddell and Jim Lake, of Liddell Brothers, from Halifax, installed seven wayfinding signs in Turners Falls and two on Route 2, on March 24th.

#### Historic Bridge Facts

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

- The deck, or road surface, of the Gill-Montague Bridge originally required 700 tons of blacktop. The blacktop was composed of a base of crushed stone, and a specially formulated asphalt binder.
- The bridge was weather-protected by the use of 50-tons of lead-based paint.
- Initially, plans were drawn up to insert fossil specimens in the bridge railing at strategically placed locations. The fossils would have been viewed as representative of the Mesozoic footprints discovered along the Connecticut River shoreline. During the groundwork for the piers it was hoped workers would discover some additional dinosaur footprints, but this plan did not come to fruition.
- The 80-ton crane used in the erection of the steel would be the heaviest load the bridge would ever be required to carry. That is, until a desk-bound, Boston engineer - who most likely never saw the Gill-Montague Bridge - deemed it necessary to burden the deck with a double row of Jersey Barriers in recent years!

More bridge facts next week!

#### GIANT TAG, BAKE & RUMMAGE SALE

Saturday, April 9th  
9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Our Lady of Peace Church  
90 Seventh Street, Turners Falls  
Good quality clothing & household items

The Montague Grange will hold a small Piano Moving Party on Saturday, April 9th, at 10:00 a.m. We will remove the piano from the hall and set it on the curb with a FREE sign.

#### Mon, Tue & Wed Specials

One Large 16" Pizza with 1 Topping for \$9.95 plus tax  
With Any 12" or 8" Sub  
1 FREE 12 oz. Can of Soda or 1 FREE order French Fries  
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\$20 for 1/2 Year



JESSICA LARKIN ILLUSTRATION

## Local Briefs

**COMPILED BY DON CLEGG** - Get outside to enjoy the weather!

**The First Annual Franklin County Spring Parade** is happening in Montague on Saturday, April 9th, from 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m., organized by the same awesome folks who brought you last year's Pumpkinfest.

The parade will make a three mile loop, beginning the Sheffield School on Crocker Avenue. It will take a left onto Montague Street, travel to the end, and turn left onto Turnpike Road. The parade will go past the Turners Falls High School, and take a left onto Millers Falls Road. At Scotty's Convenience Store, the parade will turn left onto High Street and end back at Sheffield. Fire chief Ray Godin will be the grand marshal of the parade.

The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, DCR, has a statewide volunteer **Park Serve Day** on Saturday, April 16th, from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. So wear your working clothes and help get the grounds of Great Falls Discovery Center, 2 Avenue A, in Turners Falls ready for the summer. Community organizations, civic groups, scouts, church groups and individuals are encouraged to participate. This event is for all ages. Please call Diane at 413-863-3221 for more details.

The Great Falls Discovery Center is a partnership which includes DCR, US Fish and Wildlife, the town of Montague, and "Friends of GFDC". If the United States Congress and president Obama do not agree on a fiscal budget by Friday, April 8th, then this coming weekend programming at the Discovery Center will be cancelled. U.S. Government employees, such as those that conduct the programming at the GFDC, are not allowed to continue their normal activities on a volunteer basis. **A government shutdown** can affect many facets of community life that sometimes get taken for granted.

The Connecticut River Internists 2nd Annual **"Bruce's Run/Walk for Hospice"**, in memory of Bruce Van Boeckel M.D., will be held on Sunday, April 17th, starting at 9:30 a.m. There are three events to choose from: a two-mile fun walk, a 5K or a 10K run along the beautiful Turners Falls bike path. All events start and finish at the CRI offices at 8 Burnham Street in

Montague City. Call Hospice of Franklin County for details, 774-2400, or go the Ct. River Internist website at [www.ctriverinternists.com](http://www.ctriverinternists.com).

The Montague Congregational Church will hold their **70th Annual Sugar Supper** on Saturday, April 9th at 5:30 p.m. The menu will consist of corned beef hash, Harvard beets, baked beans, coleslaw, homemade breads and donuts, dill pickles, and beverages. Ripley Farms will provide the "Sugar on Snow."

There will be a **Healthy Eating for Successful Living Workshop Leader Training** at Franklin County Home Care Corporation, located at 330 Montague City Road on Tuesday, April 12th and Wednesday, April 13th, from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Learn to facilitate workshops for seniors who want to learn more about nutrition and how lifestyle changes can promote better health. The training is free and includes breakfast and lunch. Participants must attend both days of training and agree to co-lead at least two workshop series this year. For more information contact Lesley Kayan at 413-773-5555 ext. 2297 or visit [www.fchcc.org](http://www.fchcc.org).

The **Community Yoga and Wellness Center** located at 18 Federal Street, in Greenfield will present the movie **Yoga Unveiled: The Evolution and Essence of a Spiritual Tradition**. The movie, to be shown this Saturday, April 9th at 7:00 p.m., examines the essence of yoga as its creators understood it thousands of years ago.

The **Turners Falls Fire Department** has received a \$2,400 fire prevention grant from FM Global, one of the world's largest commercial insurers.

The award will be used to assist with prefire planning to efficiently collect and track data related to buildings in the Turners Falls fire district, to help the fire department in responding to emergencies. The grant will also allow the department to acquire a laptop computer, educational DVDs, and a power point projector to be used in presenting fire prevention programs in the schools and senior center.

**Donkey Basketball** is coming to the TFHS gym! On Friday, April 15th at 6:30 p.m., this tournament style game will feature teams of students, faculty, and local fire and safety personnel, all riding donkeys. This can't be

## Summer of Solutions Seeks Youth Applicants

**BY MARTHA PSKOWSKI**  
**TURNERS FALLS** - This June and July, youth from around the area will be joining together in Greenfield and Turners Falls to work on projects to build economic and environmental solutions in the community.

Summer of Solutions is a youth-led program, now in 15 locations around the country. It focuses on expanding job opportunities for youth in the Green

economy and working to make local communities more resilient to economic and environmental challenges.

In Greenfield and Turners Falls participants will learn how to grow food at local farms and gardens; learn energy efficiency skills from Co-op Power and work on local buildings; take and facilitate classes at the Brick House in Turners; learn the basics of bike maintenance;

make action plans to reach personal goals, and more.

Anyone aged 15 to 30 can apply to participate; the application deadline is April 24th. Full and part-time positions are available. Financial support is available for participants. Apply at [grandaspirations.org/apply2sos](http://grandaspirations.org/apply2sos).

For more info contact the planners at [pioneervalleysolutions@gmail.com](mailto:pioneervalleysolutions@gmail.com) or (301) 613-5700.

### WENDELL FOOD COORDINATOR UPDATE

## Free Labor for your Garden!

**BY LIZ CARTER** - Farm and garden interns are coming to town. They're working to learn about food production, and the more projects we can offer them, the better. So, if you need help building farm or garden structures, putting in your first garden, processing harvests, weeding, or anything in between, this is your chance to get some extra hands to lighten the load. Send an email to: [liz.k.carter@gmail.com](mailto:liz.k.carter@gmail.com) or give me a call at 360-797-4034 if you're interested, by April 9th.

**Wendell Food Culture Survey.** By popular demand, the Wendell food culture survey has gone electronic! Go to: [FreeOnlineSurveys.com/render-survey.asp?sid=sbjckcjfex-ktatv899268](http://FreeOnlineSurveys.com/render-survey.asp?sid=sbjckcjfex-ktatv899268). There are two kinds of questions on the survey. Some are designed to help us get a better idea of what folks in town are

eating and how they get their food, so the Wendell local foods committee can focus attention on projects that will be useful to most people. There are also some stock questions about food security and accessibility to generate data for support grant proposals. More paper copies of the survey will be at the library this Saturday. Thanks for your time and feedback!

**Wendell Farmers Market?** This Saturday at the library from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., and all

this week via email, I would love to hear about your experience with the former Wendell Farmers Market.

Did you shop there? Did you sell produce there? What worked, and what didn't? Would you like to see it come back? A local grower is interested in starting the market up again, and we need feedback from the community to know whether a farmers' market would work in Wendell.

**FREE:** one upright piano. Montague Grange, 36 Main Street, Montague. Pick up from curb after 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, April 9th.

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**Hallmark Institute of Photography Open House**  
Please join us on Sunday, April 10th from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. to see what we've been up to through tours of the facilities, digital image demonstrations, print exhibits and share refreshments. For more information call (413) 863-2478 or visit [hallmark.edu](http://hallmark.edu) or [facebook.com/hallmarkinstituteofphotography](http://facebook.com/hallmarkinstituteofphotography).

**LIVE IN MONTAGUE?**  
EST. 1754  
[www.MontagueMA.net](http://www.MontagueMA.net)  
local gossip, news & business listings

good for the gym floor! Don't miss this wild and crazy event - free donkey rides for kids under 12 at halftime. For more info call: 863-7270.

The **Cappellooza Event** of the year is being held this year in the auditorium of Turners Falls High School on Sunday, April 17th, starting at 2:00 p.m. This event was previously held in the Great Hall of the Great Falls Discovery Center but the large turnout in years past has prompted organizers to move this wonderful a cappella event to the larger hall. Seven high school groups are scheduled to participate with proceeds to benefit the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts. For further details: 413-498-2710.

Send items for local briefs to: [reporter-local@montague-ma.net](mailto:reporter-local@montague-ma.net).

**Montague Cable Contract Renewal**  
Information and Planning Meeting  
**April 12, 6:00 p.m.**  
at MCTV Studio, 34 Second Street, Turners Falls  
You are invited to an informational and organizational meeting regarding the upcoming contract renewal negotiations between Comcast, Montague's cable provider, and the Town of Montague. If you are interested in participating in the Comcast Contract Renewal Negotiations Committee, please come to this meeting to learn more. If you cannot attend this meeting, but are interested in participating as a committee member please email [carriagehouse@signedinstone.com](mailto:carriagehouse@signedinstone.com)  
Please come and please participate.  
There are important goals to be accomplished for our community!

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Claudia Wells - Art Director  
Katren Hoyden  
Janel Nockelby  
Boysen Hodgson

**Photography**  
Claudia Wells  
Joe Parzych

**Editorial Assistants**  
Hugh Corr  
Shira Hillel

**Distribution Manager**  
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Janel Nockelby

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## Fairness on Tax Day

BY CHUCK COLLINS

**JAMAICA PLAIN** - Have you heard? America is broke. So say many governors and lawmakers.

They're calling for deep cuts in teacher pay, firing cops, slashing medical services for working-class kids, and scrapping other essential services to narrow state and federal budget deficits.

There's a better and fairer way to tackle this situation. Government must stop doling out ever-larger tax breaks to the super rich and vast corporations.

Around the country, states and towns are gutting their budgets, undermining our quality of life.

"Our country is not really broke," said Cynthia Carranza who directs a food pantry in Niles, IL. Carranza witnesses the growing number of hungry people even as government support for her program is slashed. "But our wealth is skewed to a very few fortunate at the top. We're not broken, just twisted."

Our communities are enduring mammoth state and federal budget cuts because we have, in large part, failed to sufficiently tax America's millionaires and billionaires or prevent aggressive tax avoidance by multinational companies. The rest of us are paying to pick up the slack.

Congress has blown holes in our tax code, losing hundreds of billions in revenue. Worse, lawmakers have averted their eyes as corporate lobbyists drill new tax loopholes and extract new corporate welfare subsidies.

How else can we explain how a profitable company like General Electric pays no taxes? Since 2006, General Electric has reported over \$26 billion in profits, yet paid not one penny in U.S. taxes. They've actually received more than \$4 billion in subsidies and corporate welfare.

GE isn't alone. Other huge global companies such as Verizon, Boeing, ExxonMobil, and Bank of America also pay no taxes. These artful dodgers aggressively solicit government subsidies and use accounting tricks to move money to overseas tax havens like the Cayman Islands. They pretend to earn their profits offshore and then report their paper losses here in the United States — so they don't have to pay the IRS a dime.

Wealthy individuals have also benefited from a half-century of tax reductions. If U.S. millionaires and billionaires paid taxes based on 1961 tax rules, we'd have raised an added \$231 billion in federal revenue this year.

By reversing years of tax giveaways to America's rich and the corporations that enrich them, Congress could raise trillions in revenue. We could fund the public structures that safeguard our families and our future.

There are four revenue raisers Congress could institute tomorrow to generate \$400 billion a year — \$4 trillion over the next decade. Such programs would restore greater fairness to our tax system and reduce the extreme inequality polarizing our society.

Congress could levy a modest financial transaction tax on the transfers of stock, currency, and speculative investments that do little to strengthen the real economy. This would generate \$150 billion a year while exempting smaller investors.

Lawmakers could reduce corporate tax dodging by closing overseas tax havens and requiring companies to pay U.S. taxes on profits they actually earn in this country. This could generate as much as \$100 billion a year.

Congress could establish new top tax rates on households with annual incomes over \$1 million, which could generate another \$100 billion a year. Under our current tax system, a person earning \$374,000 a year pays the same top tax rate as someone earning \$10 million a year.

Lawmakers could institute a progressive estate tax on fortunes over \$5 million, with higher rates on billionaire estates. That would generate \$45 billion a year.

Taking all four of these steps could raise a total of approximately \$400 billion per year.

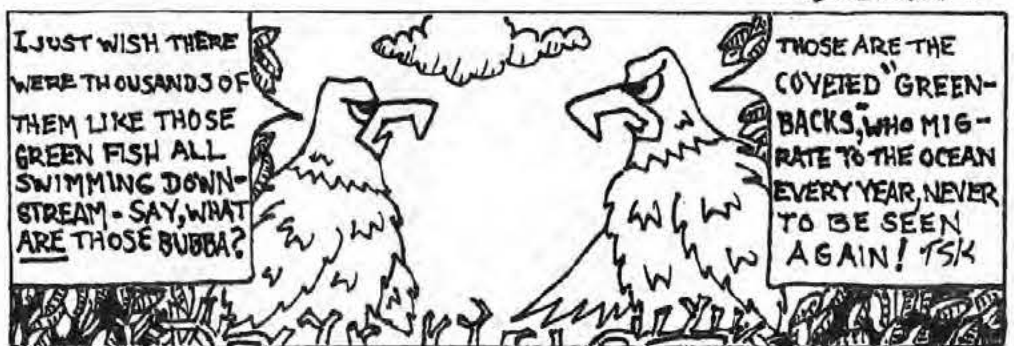
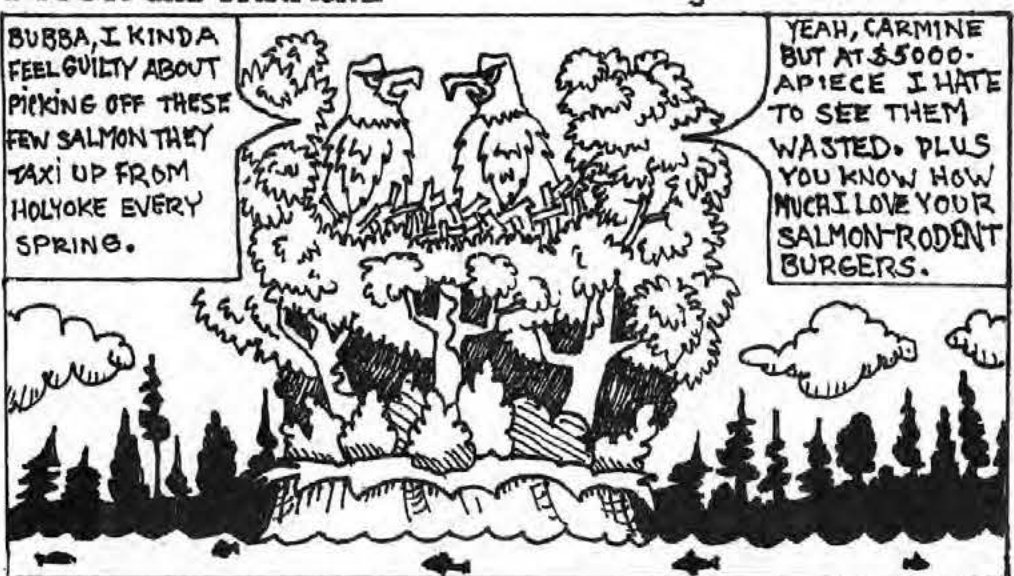
Sure, some politicians would rather cut services for children and the mentally ill before they dare to propose tax hikes on millionaires and tax-dodging corporations. But that doesn't mean we're broke. It just means we need to get our priorities straight.

*Chuck Collins, a former Montague resident, writes from the Institute for Policy Studies.*

*This article first appeared in Other Words.*

### BUBBA and CARMINE

### sages of Barton Cove



DENIS BORDEAUX CARTOON

## Waiting for Eaglets on Eagle Island

BY PAT CARLISLE

**GREAT FALLS** - I think it's safe to say we have an egg in our Barton Cove nest! Or maybe two.

Although with the camera mounted above the nest on Eagle Island still out of commission, we can no longer see directly into the nest to be 100% sure; still, it appears from the observable behavior of the adults that brooding is ongoing.

When we count the 35 - 37 days of incubation, we expect to see fish arrive for feedings of the new chick or chicks by April 12th

to 14th - next week!

Eagle hatchlings use an egg tooth to peck a hole from inside, crack their shell and emerge as wobbly little gray fuzzy babies with big feet!

All the folks who have been watching the daily nest activities on live cable access television since the first camera was installed above the eagle nest in 1997 have missed the Eagle Cam since the old nest tree and camera toppled in the storm of July 27th, 2008.

They can now have hope of a

replacement camera.

A small group of eagle fans have been meeting and planning for a few months about how to raise the needed funds to purchase a new camera. The Friends of Barton Cove Eagles will have more news soon.

My own bird's eye view of the eagle nest, through a telescope at my kitchen window, is disappearing as trees bud and leaves appear. Still, stay tuned to this newspaper, and I will do my best to keep you posted as the hoped for eagle chicks emerge.

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Economic Literacy is Power

My great-grandfather, Francesco Modesto Battaglini, used to say, "Get a good education, nobody can take it away from you."

Turners Falls High School gave me a great education, and from what I hear it continues to fare well in educating those who work hard and want to learn. But it's missing something I didn't even realize until I graduated: economics.

There isn't a single class on economics in the entire course of offerings. I find this deeply troubling, considering the recent comments of Robert Duvall, president of the National Council on Economic Education: "Economic literacy is a vital skill, just as vital as reading literacy."

If economic literacy is just as important as reading literacy, why do we not only offer but mandate English courses for every year of high school, yet utterly ignore economics?

Now, as an international politics and economics major, I know I'm likely a little biased, from student loans to mortgages to business operations, a firm grasp of economics is vital. Especially in the light of the current financial crisis, people really should know better than to take out subprime mortgages in a housing market that's too good to be true.

The Council for Economic Education surveyed American adults and high school students in 1999, finding that "Virtually every American adult believes that basic economics should be taught in school." Despite this interest, half of our country's adults and two-thirds of high school students failed the test of economic literacy.

America is strong in skillful human capital, and a firm grasp

of economics on the part of its citizens would energize this country and improve the welfare of everyone from the bottom up, strengthening us for coming conflicts.

It has been aptly suggested that the lack of economics education in public schools is a class issue. The Council's study demonstrated that students whose parents have a college degree tend to be more economically literate. Many private schools offer courses in economics.

Wealth is positively correlated with a firm knowledge of economics. Economic literacy in essence provides you the tools with which to shape your future. I am proposing, at the least, a single mandatory economics course at the high school level. Better would be an entire department of economics, much as we have a department of English, which could be topped off with an advanced placement course.

Knowledge is power, and economic knowledge gives one the power to accrue wealth (and from there, more power). A strong economic background on the part of this coming generation can raise our town up.

- Sam Colton,

TFHS Alum, Class of 2009  
Middlebury College Class of '13

### U.S. Casualties in Iraq and Afghanistan as of 4/7/11

US FORCES	
Casualties in Iraq as of this date	
4446	
Alghanistan	1527
Wounded in Iraq	32,049
Wounded in Afghanistan	10,468

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GUEST EDITORIAL

“Safe” Radiation is a Lethal TMI Lie

March 27th, 2011 – 32 years Later

BY HARVEY WASSERMAN BEXLEY, OH - There is no safe dose of radiation.

We do not x-ray pregnant women.

Any detectable fallout can kill.

When you hear the terms ‘safe’ and ‘insignificant’ in reference to radioactive fallout, ask yourself: “Safe for whom?” “Insignificant to which one of us?”

Despite the standard line of the corporate media, the radiation that has and will continue to come here from Fukushima is deadly to Americans. At very least it threatens countless embryos and fetuses in utero, the infants, the elderly, the unborn who will come to future mothers now being exposed.

No matter how small the dose, the human egg in waiting, or embryo or fetus in utero, or newborn infant, or weakened elder, has little defense against even the tiniest radioactive assault.

Science has never found such a ‘safe’ threshold of ionizing radiation, and never will.

In the 1950s, British epidemiologist Dr. Alice Stewart showed a definitive link between medical

x-rays administered to pregnant women and the curse of childhood leukemia among their offspring.

After a fierce 30-year debate, the medical profession agreed. Today, administering an x-ray to a pregnant woman is universally understood to be a serious health hazard.

Those who pioneered the health physics profession — towering greats like Dr. Karl Z. Morgan and Dr. John Gofman — set a definitive, impenetrable standard. A safe dose of radiation does not exist. All doses, ‘insignificant’ or otherwise, can harm the human organism.

That has been repeatedly shown in major studies — most notably by Dr. Ernest Stern-glass, Jay Gould, Joe Mangano, Arnie Gundersen, Dr. Steven Wing and others — showing that among human populations near commercial reactors, infant death rates plummet once reactors shut down.

In 1979, 32 years ago on

March 28th, the owners of Three Mile Island said there was no meltdown, no serious radiation release and no need for evacuation.

All were lies.

To this day no one knows how much radiation was released from TMI unit 2, or where it went or who it killed.

TMI’s owners ran ads dismissing the emissions as the equivalent of a single chest x-ray given to everyone within a ten mile radius.

That included all the pregnant women.

Soon infant death rates soared in nearby Harrisburg. Some 2400 central Pennsylvania families sued based on the health impacts.

In 1980, I interviewed dozens of these people. What started in the first days of the accident as a metallic taste in the mouth soon metastasized into rare cancers, leukemia, birth defects, stillbirths, sterility, malformations, open lesions, hair loss, and much more.

The death and mutation rate among farm and wild animals around Harrisburg was also thoroughly documented by the

Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture and a team of investigators from the Baltimore News-American.

We were again told there were “no health dangers” from radiation that hit California from Chernobyl ten days after that 1986 explosion. But bird births at the Point Reyes National Seashore quickly dropped 60% from the levels that had been carefully monitored and recorded through the previous decade.

The cloud then crossed the northern tier of the United States. Heightened radiation levels were found in milk in New England — as they were throughout Europe from radioactive clouds that had blown from Chernobyl in the other direction.

The doses were neither ‘insignificant’ nor ‘safe’ to those far or near.

In Russia ten years later, I interviewed dozens of downwind victims, and many of the 800,000 ‘liquidators’ who ran into Chernobyl’s seething corpse to help clean it up. After TMI, it was déjà vu all over again.

The most recently published findings, from a compendium of

more than 5,000 studies, indicate a global Chernobyl death toll in excess of 985,000, and still counting.

Today we are assaulted by yet another radioactive death cloud from yet another ‘perfectly safe’ nuclear plant.

Fukushima’s radiation is pouring into the air and water. The operators have reported radiation levels a million times normal, then retracted the estimate. Workers are being exposed to doses that are certain to be lethal. At least three of the reactors, and one or more of the spent fuel pools, still hover at the brink of catastrophe.

Fukushima’s radiation has now circled the globe. It is being released not as a single puff from a relatively new reactor, like at Chernobyl. Rather it’s a steady, constant, deadly stream.

Fukushima’s collective emissions are virtually certain to exceed Chernobyl’s.

And yet we continue to hear smug, misinformed ‘experts,’ TV meteorologists and industry talking heads saying these are ‘safe’ doses.

see SAFE page 7

Mutating in the Exclusion Zone

CHERNOBYL — “On the surface, Igor says, the wildlife seems to be thriving, but under the fur and hide, the DNA of most species has become unstable. They’ve eaten a lot of food contaminated with cesium and strontium. Even though the animals look fine, there are differences at

the chromosomal level in every generation, as yet mostly invisible. But some have started to show: there are bird populations with freakishly high levels of albinism, with 20 percent higher levels of asymmetry in their feathers, and higher cancer rates. There are strains of mice with

resistance to radioactivity — meaning they’ve developed heritable systems to repair damaged cells. Covered in radioactive particles after the disaster, one large pine forest turned from green to red: seedlings from this Red Forest placed in their own plantation

have grown up with various genetic abnormalities.

They have unusually long needles, and some grow not as trees but as bushes. The same has happened with some birch trees, which have grown in the shape of large, bushy feathers,

without a recognizable trunk at all.”

Excerpted from “Chernobyl, My Primeval, Teeming, Irradiated Eden” by Henry Shukman; published in Outdoor Magazine, March 2011.

For the entire article, go to: outsideonline.com/adventure/travel-ga-201103-chernobyl-wildlife-refuge-sidw-cmdev\_154483.html.

Downwinders’ No-Nukes Walk



Photo by Lionel Delevigne; Seabrook, NH August 1st, 1976

BY JONATHAN STEVENS MONTAGUE - On Sunday, April 24th, there will be a walk of solidarity and determination from

Montague to the nuclear power plant at Vernon, VT - solidarity with the Japanese victims of the present meltdown crisis in

Fukushima and determination that we will not suffer the same fate - beginning where it all began: at the Montague Farm, and heading to where it needs to end: Vermont Yankee. Montague Farm is considered to be the birthplace of the American anti-nuclear movement, where countless meetings, pamphlets, books, benefit concerts and actions were planned throughout the 1970s and 80s. It was from the Montague Farm in February of 1974 that Sam Lovejoy went and knocked down the infamous weather

tower gathering data for Northeast Utilities’ planned twin nuclear power plant on the Montague Plains.

Vermont Yankee is one of 23 existing plants in the US with a GE-designed Mark I containment vessel, practically identical to the units at Fukushima Daiichi. Far worse, the spent fuel pool at Vermont Yankee holds 640 tons of lethally radioactive spent fuel rods - far more than any of the damaged fuel pools in Fukushima - and the greatest threat to our Valley. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission, in its odd wisdom, has just extended Vermont Yankee’s operating license for 20 more years.

It is clearly time to re-activate our own energies, to counter the present - and future - dangers of nuclear power and weapons. It is a mere 25

miles from Montague to Vernon, a hardy walk for us, but no distance at all for radioactive isotopes on a southerly breeze. Rather than evacuate just yet, let’s move toward the center of the red circle and do our best to neutralize it.

On the 25th anniversary of the nuclear disaster at Chernobyl, the downwinders’ walk will leave at 7 a.m. from the Montague Farm on Ripley Road (off North Leverett Road). We plan

to arrive at the nuke by 4:30 p.m. for a short vigil, joining with a sister walk from Indian Point near New York City arriving at Vernon the same day. Please join us for the whole walk, or at either end.

For more information, contact Jonathan Stevens by email: somehungryghost@yahoo.com

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## GUEST EDITORIALS

## Come Visit a Small School

A *Boston Globe* editorial recently led with the assertion that "small town officials [are] unwilling to sacrifice even a modicum of control over their schools, even if doing so would benefit their children."

This characterization is grossly unfair. Small town officials, many of whom are unpaid volunteers, are more dedicated to and knowledgeable about their towns' children than are their urban and suburban counterparts, who routinely choose consolidation as a quick fix to save money, despite evidence that schools can actually get too big.

It takes a village, not a conglomerate, to raise a child, and we in the village have a strong appreciation for that distinction.

By now, more people should be realizing that the intangible, or less obvious, benefits of small schools in particular settings have something wonderful to offer children, something worth pre-

serving, even at some cost. Could they share some beneficial qualities of charter schools? It is an irresistible comparison.

As members of the small towns being attacked from the outside by well-meaning "experts", we urge the Commonwealth to become more familiar with the specific systems they wish to dismantle. This is not a case of local officials exerting some despotic stranglehold over poorer towns. It is a case of people who have actively chosen small town life and who are dedicated to preserving that way of life, for all the right reasons, especially when the putative harm to their children may not actually outweigh the benefits.

Visit the Swift River School. Talk to those town officials and residents, and you may be forced, in good conscience, to rethink your approach.

- Johanna Bartlett  
Wendell

## Give Peace a Chance

BY TOM WOLFF

**LEVERETT** - In last week's *Montague Reporter*, selectboard member Peter d'Errico explained why he is so strongly opposed to the idea of a Leverett Peace Commission that he has 'gone to war' with peace in his town, and in fact has sadly beaten back the chance for the town to vote on a formal Leverett Peace Commission this year. Instead, town meeting will simply vote on a study committee to explore the possibility of creating a peace commission.

D'Errico's first objection is that the commission would mix

government and religion, which is far from the truth. At one point in the beautifully worded preamble the document talks of mind, body and spirit. That's it. Committee members have even offered to remove this one line from the town meeting warrant, lest it offend anyone.

Proponents have talked about the petition as a spiritual approach to a world without war, but they are clear this does not mean a religious approach.

Spirituality and religion are two different concepts. So the accusation that this proposal mixes government and religion is

mentary and regional schools, and an unspecified placeholder has been included in the budget to represent the possible outcome of those negotiations.

The budget includes a .9% increase for the Leverett Elementary School (with much of that attributed to rising heating fuel costs) and a 3.5% increase for the regional school budget. That increase results from loss of state and federal aid, according to Leverett school committee chair Farshid Hajir; the upper school's budget was level funded this year.

Finance committee chair Don Gibavic recommended shifting \$1000 to cover anticipated hikes in fuel costs for the police and fire departments. The highway department has already requested a 12.4% increase in fuel expenses for the coming year.

"These expense items have been leveled for years," Gibavic said. Finance committee member Tom Powers noted, "Gas is up 28% this year... Everything I'm reading says gas will go up sig-

nificantly next year." Since there is, by present estimates of revenues, less than \$400 leeway in the proposed budget under the town's levy limit, Gibavic recommended shifting the \$1000 for fuel expenses away from a \$6,000 increase proposed for the tree warden budget, noting wryly, "Will isn't here to defend himself," a reference to highway superintendent Will Stratford.

Stratford had requested a \$6,000 increase (50%) in the tree warden's line item to cover the cost of six days of additional tree work along town roads, reasoning it was cheaper for the town to spend more to take down dead or dying trees than it would be to wait until they fall across the roads, requiring emergency response and removal costs.

Gibavic allowed, "The town is full of 150-year-old maples," but he believed Leverett could still get away with shaving a thousand dollars off the tree warden's line item.

The selectboard abandoned its

see **BUDGET** page 7

Pagoda's annual winter walk in which they took the Peace Commission petition to towns across New England. They worked with the Leverett Library 'Leverett Reads' program for a very positive discussion on how King Phillip's War might have been avoided using modern peace building techniques. They ran a winter vacation break camp at the Leverett Arts Center where our children created art and songs of peace inspired by the art of Iraqi children. Finally, just last Friday they packed the Congregational Church for a talk by Penny Gill, Dean of the College at Mount Holyoke, on the role of fear in wars, and how to achieve peace.

All these events were hopeful and inspiring and the audience feedback confirmed that.

Leverett and the world needs hope, inspiration and peace. So I say to Peter D'Errico and my Leverett neighbors, please, let's Give Peace a Chance.

Tom Wolff has been involved in the committee for a Leverett Peace Commission but this letter is his own. The opinions expressed are his own and do not necessarily reflect those of other members of the committee.

Second, d'Errico worries that the Leverett Peace Commission will become a powerful policing force in the town, attempting to impose peace.

There is nothing peace commission proponents wrote or said that would ever suggest this. In fact, just about the only people that ever asked the group to consider getting involved in town conflicts were the selectboard themselves, when they suggested light-heartedly such a commission might help with the resolution of "dog conflicts" that come before them.

It is interesting to read d'Errico worrying about the inappropriate use of power by this new group, when he has single-handedly taken it into his own hands to defeat this initiative before it ever got to the town as a whole for a vote at town meeting. For the first time in my over 30 years in Leverett, I do worry about how much power a single selectboard member is wielding in our town. This is not a singular event. I saw a similar display in d'Errico's dismissal of the Affordable Housing Committee, when he disagreed with their directions.

Finally, d'Errico shares his

sense of doom about world affairs and his fear that an official peace commission would lead to further despair and cynicism. This is a stunning statement. The committee for a Leverett Peace Commission would offer exactly the opposite. The original preamble written by Jim Perkins is one of the most beautiful, hopeful statements I have read in years. The residents of Leverett have been very supportive and have gathered around this effort with high energy, and hope. The town of Leverett was presented with an incredible opportunity to support a resident initiative to make the town and maybe the world a better and more hopeful place and instead it got Bushwhacked.

A group like the committee for the Leverett Peace Commission must be judged by its actions, not by what one member of the selectboard reads between the lines about their purported motives.

So let's look at what the group has done to date, and decide whether it is leading to increased despair and cynicism.

They packed town hall for a talk by five college professor Michael Klare on Innovation in the Search for Peace. They held a send-off event for the Peace

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**NOTES FROM THE MAHAR REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

# Mahar Backs \$12.3 Budget; Alternate Assessment Method

BY KATIE NOLAN

**ORANGE** - The Mahar Regional school committee voted unanimously to present a \$12.3 million FY'12 budget to member towns on Tuesday, a 1.72% increase.

The committee also voted unanimously to use the "alternate averaging" assessment method for calculating assessments to the four member towns of New Salem, Orange, Petersham and Wendell.

For several years, the Wendell finance committee has been advocating for a change from the statutory method that has been in use for assessing budget costs to the member towns of the Mahar

district. Under the statutory method, towns in a region are assessed for school costs based on the relative wealth of the towns, as determined by a Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) formula. Because enrollment is not considered as a factor in the DESE formula, towns with low student enrollment wind up paying a higher per pupil cost than more affluent towns with higher enrollment.

Several Wendell annual town meetings have voted to reject the entire Mahar budget because of the town's dissatisfaction with the assessment method.

Under the alternate averaging

method approved this week, when a town's student enrollment at Mahar constitutes less than 5% of total Mahar enrollment, each member town's assessment for the total budget under the statutory method is divided by the number of students enrolled from the town. The per-pupil assessments for each of the four towns are then averaged and the average is used as the per pupil assessment for the low enrollment town.

The per-pupil assessments for the other towns would remain unchanged.

By this method, Orange, the least affluent town in the Mahar region, would continue to pay less per pupil than the other member towns, essentially being held harmless as assessment costs shift among New Salem,

Petersham and Wendell.

Under the alternate averaging method, Wendell's FY'12 assessment from Mahar is approximately \$311,000. Under the statutory method, Wendell's assessment would be approximately \$39,000 higher.

Petersham representative Dana Kennan told the committee that assessments under an alternate method must pass town meeting vote in all four member towns, while assessments under the statutory method need to pass in only three towns.

The committee voted to offset the total budget of \$12.3 million by applying \$500,000 from school choice receipts, so town assessments will be calculated based on a net budget of \$11.8 million.

**Farm to School**

At the request of Wendell representative Dick Baldwin, the

school committee agreed to ask the Collaborative Educational Services (CES) to pursue a "farm to school" local food transportation network developed by Hans Estrin of the University of Vermont extension service.

At the Farm to School forum sponsored by the Franklin County School Committee Caucus on April 2nd, Estrin presented an overview of the network, whereby schools can order locally grown fruits and vegetables online and receive deliveries from the farmer-owned transportation service.

Baldwin said he attended the forum, and discussed bringing the network to Franklin County with Estrin and Kevin Courtney of the Collaborative for Educational Services (CES). According to Baldwin, CES was "willing to be an umbrella see MAHAR page 12

from **SAFE** page 5

The response of the Obama Administration has been beyond derelict. As the accident began, the president went on national television to assure us there was nothing to worry about, and that he would continue to demand \$36 billion in taxpayer loan guarantees to build new nuclear plants.

Since then, even as the Fukushima crisis mounts, President Obama has remained silent.

At the very least we need reliable real-time mapping of the radioactive clouds as they cross the nation. Every American should be issued a mask, and sufficient potassium iodide pills with directions on how to use them, if necessary.

Above all, we need national leadership that puts the health of our people first and foremost.

As we have learned so tragically from Drs. Stewart, Morgan, Gofman and

Sternglass, from Gundersen and Mangano and so many other researchers, from TMI and Chernobyl, and from the ongoing operation of nuclear plants where infant death rates continue to be affected — a 'perfectly safe' dose of radiation does not exist.

Whenever you hear the term 'insignificant' fallout, ask yourself: "insignificant to whom?"

'Acceptable' to which expectant mother? To whose child? To how many mourning parents? For which dying elder?

Nuclear reactors make global warming worse and prolong our addiction to fossil fuels. They stand in the way of our transition to a totally green-powered Earth.

As we continue to learn at such a huge cost, there can never be a 'perfectly safe' nuclear reactor, any more than there can be a 'perfectly harmless' dose of radiation.

'Impossible' accidents con-

tinue to happen, one after the other, each successively worse.

What we fear most about TMI, then Chernobyl and now Fukushima, is not what has happened — but what is yet to come.

Please call the White House, the Congress and your state and local governments and demand they protect the health and safety of our people in the face of this disaster.

Harvey Wasserman ([www.freepress.org](http://www.freepress.org)), a former resident of Montague, edits [www.nukefree.org](http://www.nukefree.org). He is author of Solartopia! Our Green-PoweredEarth ([www.solar-topia.org](http://www.solar-topia.org)), and co-author, with Robert Alvarez, Norman Solomon and Eleanor Walters, of Killing Our Own: The Disaster of America's Experience With Atomic Radiation.



from **BUDGET** page 6

effort to convince the Department of Environmental Protection to allow the town to install an out-house at the transfer station for employee use. "It's against state law," said selectboard chair Rich Brazeau.

Instead, the town will purchase a used, handicapped accessible port-a-potty for \$400 and find room in the transfer station's maintenance budget to pay for regular service to pump out and sanitize the unit.

The selectboard is considering carving a half moon in the top of the port-a-potty, in mild protest of the state's exacting regulations.

Gibavic said the tax rate will go up by 76 cents if the budget is approved as drafted; no override will be needed. However, if the town approves a new \$375,000 fire truck, a debt exclusion vote may be required, unless a used truck in decent shape can be found that the town could afford from stabilization.

The town is also planning to purchase a new \$31,703 police cruiser this year.

The school committee's request for a \$14,425 special article to purchase new servers for the elementary school's computers met with heated opposition from the selectboard and from Powers on the finance committee, mainly over the timing of the request, and the process by which it arrived at the table.

Selectboard member Peter d'Errico wanted to know why the request was not built into the school's budget, if the condition of the server was known to be failing for quite some time.

No one from the school committee was present to defend the request, but Gibavic said, "A server is like a tractor — it's not something you replace every year. It's a capital request. It's not like a desktop computer."

The selectboard was particularly unhappy that the idea to make the replacement of the see **BUDGET** pg 20

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NOTES FROM THE MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

RiverCulture Previews a Full Slate of Activity

BY JANEL NOCKLEBY RiverCulture director Lisa Davol presented the selectboard on Monday with an update on upcoming events for everyone to look forward to, beginning with the annual Crabapple Festival, May 1st - 15th, including events at the Great Falls Discovery Center.

There will be a producers' call for public art, which will feature an opportunity for the public to make the decision on what work gets produced. The Water under the Bridge Festival is on again for the weekend of June 10th and 11th, with the goal of packing every venue in town with music performances, including a headliner band in Peskeompskut Park on June 11th. Bridge workers and DPW employees will be modeling hardhats creatively modified by local artists at the Hardhat Auction on June 25th.

Work is underway to nail down the details of this year's Turners Falls Block Party, usually the second Saturday in August. Will the Montague Business Association play a larger role in the project, will it be similar to past events, or will it also have an ethnic festival aspect to it? Stay tuned!

Davol also described the Riverscaping project, funded by a grant for four towns along the Connecticut River - Springfield,

Hadley, Holyoke, and Turners Falls—highlighting art and transformation along the river.

In other news, the paperwork required for presenting a town meeting warrant on re-precincting in Montague is continuing, with town clerk Deb Bourbeau working to finalize material for the vote on whether Montague should reduce its precincts from six to three, and whether it should reduce the number of elected town meeting members from 126 to 72. Bourbeau speculated there would be more discussion at town meeting on the proposal to reduce the number of town meeting members.

Pumpkinfest parking issues for the Arena Civic Theater company seem to be resolved through commitments from Pumpkinfest organizer Mike Nelson to reserve parking spaces for Shea Theater patrons at two locations near the Shea, and through changing the day's performance from a night time show to a matinee at 2 p.m. Nelson is "happy to help" reserve spaces at the Great Falls Discovery Center and elsewhere for theater-goers.

Emergency management director Bob Escott is applying for the town of Montague to receive \$3500 in grant money from the Massachusetts Emergency Management Association,

to be used for supplies to assist in emergency situations, such as a refrigerator for dispensing medications, and replacing an old laptop that has crashed.

The long anticipated Greenfield Road improvement project (minus an automobile bridge across the former railroad underpass) is still alive, as town administrator Frank Abbondanzio said design work should be completed within 90 days. Navigating around issues of agricultural land and wetlands protection will be part of the complexities of final design. Consulting engineers now speculate the final price tag for the road reconstruction project may run approximately four to five million dollars, rather than a previous estimate of six and a half million, to be paid through federal and state funds administered by the Franklin County Regional Council of Governments.

There is a new committee in town. The bylaw review committee will be tasked with reviewing the many outdated town bylaws. The committee will consist of Abbondanzio, health agent Gina McNeely, town clerk Bourbeau, police chief Ray Zukowski, town planner Walter Ramsey, building inspector David Jensen, and DPW chief Tom Bergeron.

NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD

Selectboard Asks School Committee to Reduce their Budget Request

BY KATIE NOLAN - The Erving school committee presented their \$2,134,800 elementary and \$1,038,951 secondary school budgets to the selectboard on April 4th.

The committee said the reason for the 3.2% elementary budget increase over last year's number is contracted step and cost of living raises, a growing population of special education students, and spiraling heating oil costs.

The town has little control over the 4.6% increase in secondary education costs, because the majority of students are tuitioned to the Gill-Montague regional school district.

Selectboard members expressed dismay at the prospect of funding an added \$111,000 requested over last year for elementary education, when the current draft of the town's FY'12 budget has only \$24,000 available for increases. Selectboard member James Hackett said the selectboard had "already made cuts at many levels" in other departments and line items.

School committee member MacKensy Bailey told the selectboard this was "not the budget we wanted." She said the committee would have liked to include additional paraprofessionals in the classrooms, but held back to avoid further increases to the budget. School committee member Melanie Burnett said, "This is not a luxury item."

Selectboard chair Andrew Goodwin said the selectboard had been "struggling" with how to pay for the schools along with other budget increases, such as the police department's request for

\$30,000 to pay for a fourth full time police officer.

Burnett said she would appreciate full time police coverage in town, and did not want to see departments pitted against each other.

Town administrator

"Our taxpayers expect us to add \$625,000 to the stabilization account each year."

-Tom Sharp, administrative coordinator

Tom Sharp said it was possible the town would need to reduce its annual contribution to the stabilization fund in order to fund the FY'12 school budget. Sharp said the town has a goal of adding \$625,000 to the stabilization fund each year, "and our taxpayers expect us to do that."

Union 28 director of finance Michael Kociela asked about the total amount in Erving's stabilization fund, and was told it currently held \$4.3 million.

However, Goodwin said, the town needs to conserve that balance because it faces many financial risks, including the potential costs for cleanup of the former Usher Mill brownfields site and possible need to retrofit the Erving Center wastewater treatment plant to handle lower flow in the event Erving Paper Mill were to cease operations.

Goodwin said that the selectboard didn't want to fund schools out of stabilization each year. He suggested that an approximately additional \$75,000 could be found in the bud-

get if that amount was not allocated to the wastewater treatment plants' enterprise fund for FY'12, anticipating payments from the town of Montague for that town's share of costs for recent upgrades to the treatment plant in Erving. If Montague chips in, "We could take the work we did this year and invest it back in the kids," said Goodwin.

The selectboard asked the school committee to look for line items that could be reduced, specifically asking for verification that the \$110,000 allocated to school choice costs was an accurate estimate based on actual costs from FY'11.

Hackett asked the school committee and selectboard to get the budget plan "squared away" before annual town meeting, rather than trying to negotiate cuts in other departments or line items on town meeting floor.

Selectboard member Eugene Klepadlo said he had calculated the per pupil cost at Erving Elementary at \$17,000.

Hackett asked, "At what point is that not cost-effective?"

School committee chair Jarod Boissoneault said his committee had "taken a hard look" at the costs of running the school, and Burnett added, "We really looked this over and did the best we could."

The school committee also requested an article on the town meeting warrant to allocate approximately \$32,000 from the computer stabilization fund in order to upgrade a percentage of the school computers in FY'12.

In addition, the school see ERVING pg 12

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GILL POLICE LOG

Animal Complaints and Vandalism

- Monday, 3/28 7:35 a.m. Suspicious motor vehicle on Franklin Road. Checked OK. 5:50 p.m. Hazard in roadway on West Gill and Main Roads. Removed by officer. Wednesday, 3/30 8:40 a.m. Animal complaint on Main Road. Owner located. 2:50 p.m. Tractor trailer unit stuck on Gill-Montague Bridge. Assisted same. Thursday, 3/31 6:20 a.m. Assisted Bernardston Fire on Bald Mountain Road. 7:10 a.m. Report of male subject yelling at passing motor vehicles on Route 2 in a white Buick. Gone on arrival. 9:40 a.m. Animal complaint on Main Road. Owner located. Friday, 4/1 5:10 p.m. Assisted Bernardston police with a domestic disturbance. 6:55 p.m. Report of vandalism and larceny at a business on Route 2. 7:50 p.m. Suspicious motor vehicle parked at a business on Route 2. Checked OK. Saturday, 4/2 2:10 p.m. Report of vandalism at a business on Route 2. Sunday, 4/3 11:10 p.m. Report of a suicide at French King Bridge.

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# Leverett's Demolition Delay Bylaw off to an Amicable Start

**BY DAVID DETMOLD** - The power of the town of Leverett to delay the demolition of a building or structure, at the risk of significant fine or sanction, was put to the first test on Tuesday, March 29th, when Peter Nelson's application to tear down a couple of attached sheds on the front of his barn on 31 Montague Road came before the town historical commission.

The commission seemed inclined to waive the requirement to hold a public hearing on the application and allow Nelson to tear them down forthwith, having first satisfied themselves that the attached sheds were less than a hundred years old, and in a state of complete disrepair.

"They are dangerous and unsafe," said commission member Kris Thomson. "He needs a licensed demolition crew to take them down."

Nelson said he had not been previously aware of the new bylaw when he went to town hall to get a demolition permit. But he said the brief delay while the commission scheduled a hearing has not been inconvenient, and his interaction with members of the commission to date has been entirely amicable.

Thomson, who inspected the sheds for the commission, said Nelson intends to keep the main barn, which is "in good shape," and contemporary with the main house, which he estimated to have been built in the 1860s.

According to the Leverett Reconnaissance Report, conducted in 2009 by the Franklin Regional Council of Governments and the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission in association with the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, the main house at 31 Montague Road was built in 1848, and is known as the Elijah Graves house. It is part of the Leverett Center Historical District, listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

According to Leverett historical commission chair Betsy Douglas, the sheds attached to the barn and extending out toward Montague Road were once used by Paul Woodard as a garage and filling station. Woodard was a bus driver, and the buses were refueled there,

Douglas recalled, when the Woodards owned the property.

There was a gas pump at the road.

Douglas seemed regretful to have to summon Nelson to a hearing before the board, when all present appeared to be in agreement that the sheds should come down. But the town's freshly minted demolition review bylaw, approved by town meeting in 2010, requires property owners to route their applications for demolition through the commission before receiving a permit from the building inspector, and a public hearing before the commission is called for within 30 days of the commission's receipt of an application.

Nelson said, "I didn't ask them to waive the hearing. The first time you're doing something, you don't want to screw it up."

The historical commission will hold the hearing on Nelson's application to demolish the sheds - which seem to be already in an advanced stage of taking themselves apart after this winter's severe weather - on Thursday, April 14th at 7:00 p.m. at town hall.

For other town residents, attending the hearing may have the side benefit of putting any fears they had about the new bylaw, and the power it confers on the historical commission, to rest, said member Susan Mareneck.

The sheds "have not been anybody's focus of preventative maintenance," said Thomson.

He added, "The ceiling joists are dimensional, and circular-sawn out of oak or chestnut."

Those two by six joists may provide the owner with some salvage value to make up for the cost of demolition, he said.

Mareneck thought it might be "in keeping with our bylaw to get some history of the sheds, to document them before they go." She suggested seeking the owner's permission to take photos of the sheds as they now stand, to add to the commission's file on the property.

The bylaw allows the historical commission to review buildings or structures in town within 30 days of an application to demolish, in order to determine

their historical significance. If buildings are determined to be more than 100 years old, of indeterminate age, or on a list previously submitted by the historical commission of buildings associated with historically significant people or events, the commission may then delay demolition for 50 more days, to hold a second hearing to determine whether the structure in question is a "preferably preserved building."

ditions in the town of Leverett, to add the village centers of East Leverett, North Leverett, and Moores Corner (including Dudleyville) to the previously designated Leverett Center district. The Massachusetts Historic Commission has granted \$7,000 towards hiring a consultant to research and prepare the applications for the historic district designations, adding that sum to the town's matching share of the

day. The Sawmill River flowed past sawmills and grist mills, with factories and tanneries abounding. Pail shops and sugar houses dotted the landscape, and shoes, boots, brooms and hats were produced in homes throughout town."

That was in the days before Wal-Mart, apparently.

The commission members also discussed how to best provide annual inspections of the several conservation restrictions once they are finalized on proper-



DETMOLD PHOTO

The attached sheds at 31 Montague Road are the subject of Leverett's first test of the new demolition delay bylaw, with a public hearing on April 14th at 7:00 p.m. (Best not delay too long, or gravity will finish the job.)

If the structure is determined to be a preferably preserved building, the commission has the power under the new bylaw to hold up demolition for 18 months in order to work with the owner to try to come up with an alternate plan for saving significant features, or perhaps to find a buyer who would be willing to preserve the building.

Nelson said his family purchased the property at 31 Montague Road in 1964. He found evidence of the 19th century occupant in the basement of the main house, where the initials ELG are painted on a wooden board, next to the date 1879.

He said the rear of the house appears to be of even older origin, perhaps dating from the 18th century, since the beams are joined with wooden pegs instead of metal fasteners.

In other news, the historical commission unanimously approved a motion to proceed with the application for three more historic district designa-

\$14,000 cost.

Additionally, the commission heard from Kathleen Lafferty, who has been working with John Foster to prepare a booklet on "Industrial Leverett" in time for sale at the April 30th town meeting.

Lafferty showed a mock-up of the booklet's cover, which features archival photos of town workshops and coke kilns superimposed on an old map showing a corner of East Leverett and Roaring Brook, with a sawmill, carpenter's shop and many familiar family names like Glazier, Field, Woodward, and Gunn, located by their old homesteads.

The back cover text reads in part: "Today, we see the remnants of a tannery foundation in the woods, an old dam on a stream, a lone coke kiln in a field. In 1838, however, Leverett had an official sealer of leather who inspected hides at town tanneries. Roaring Brook powered nine mills in a span of less than one mile, and coke kilns were tended 24 hours a

ties around town, including the North Leverett sawmill, the Moores Corner schoolhouse, and the Leverett Crafts and Arts building (formerly the 1903 Beaman and Marvel box shop, which replaced the 1875 Fray and Gates box shop at the same location, destroyed by fire).

The commission will also be required to perform annual inspections of the exterior of a private tomb located on the south end of Rattlesnake Gutter Road, to make sure it is being kept in compliance with a conservation restriction placed on that structure.

According to Douglas, the family who built the home lately occupied by Annette Gibavic buried a daughter there, who insisted on having her body placed in an above ground tomb, because she was deathly afraid of being buried alive.

The commission is only required to provide an external inspection of the tomb, however.

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# April Arts Weekend at the Brick House

BY TAMI STILES

**TURNERS FALLS** - This past weekend at the Brick House was all about creativity as the YouthServe Americorps members Ashely Niles, Katie Sachs and Teen Line Dial Self staff member Hannah Kaplan organized a celebration of youth, art, and spring for young people from Turners Falls and surrounding towns. The weekend-long festivities included an open mic, an artists' gallery, and workshops promoting various ways for youth to express themselves through the many media of art.

The kick-off began on Friday, April 1st with the art gallery and open mic. The turnout for the open mic was small, but this gave an opportunity for shy voices to be heard.

One participant was Zoe Salls, who wrote an original

song and sang it a cappella. A small group also sang "Let it Be," and "Stand By Me," despite the piano being out of tune and the electric guitar being on its last string. The

band Decimal Decay made their debut as well, which could be heard across the Turners Falls bridge.

Kat Tingle and Erin Myers organized the art gallery for the



TAMI STILES PHOTO  
Stella Isabella, Zoe Salls, Hannah Fjeld Katie Sachs, and Ashley Niles

weekend. Area talent was on display in both the movement studio upstairs and the community room downstairs. With art hanging on clothes line and on the walls, there was plenty of evidence of the vision and artistry of the local youth.

On Saturday, the workshops were in full force, with offerings of clowning, music improv, and 'zine production. 'Zines, popular in the 80s and 90s, are homemade mini magazines that provide a simple way to get your voice out, to share ideas and art. The Brick House produces a teen 'zine, and the weekend workshop allowed young people to come to consensus on the work to be contributed to the upcoming issue. Workshop facilitators Sachs and Kaplan helped to create the original Brickhouse 'Zine, and showed students the many different types of topics and formats that can be utilized in putting a good 'zine together.

Saturday night featured an

art lockdown and slumber party, with movies and art making. Twelve youth signed up, and all took the opportunity to munch on pizza and continue working on art projects. On Sunday, the Brick House served up a pancake breakfast before the closing ceremony.

The food and supplies for the weekend were in part donated by Whole Foods, Fosters, Stop and Shop, and Big Y, and in part funded by a mini grant from the Communities that Care Coalition.

The Brick House provides the area with opportunities in which students can create and explore themselves in a safe environment by promoting the arts as an avenue for self expression. The April Arts Weekend - hopefully the first of an annual series - was an event focused on the vitality of spring and the potential of youth to enrich their lives - and ours - by making connections through art.

# Bats Still Experiencing Unprecedented Decline

BY ANNE HARDING

**NORTHFIELD** - Dr. Tom French, director of the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species program, came directly from the trenches of the annual Massachusetts bat count to speak to a packed house at the Northfield Mountain Recreation and Environmental Center, for a program co-sponsored by the Athol Bird and Nature Club on Wednesday, March 9th.

He apologized for his muddy, bat guano-laden attire. But this was a guy who cared more about his passions than the sensitivities of his listeners (though in truth, the audience was equally passionate).

French delivered the news that several bat species will likely be added to the Massachusetts endangered species list in 2011, and some have already been petitioned for addition to the federal list.

The *Montague Reporter* has previously reported plummeting bat populations following the discovery of white-nose syndrome (WNS) in hibernacula in New York in 2006. The rapidly spreading syndrome, believed by some researchers to be caused by the fungus *Geomyces destructans*, has now infected at least nine bat species in 16 states. The disease is spreading north to Canada.

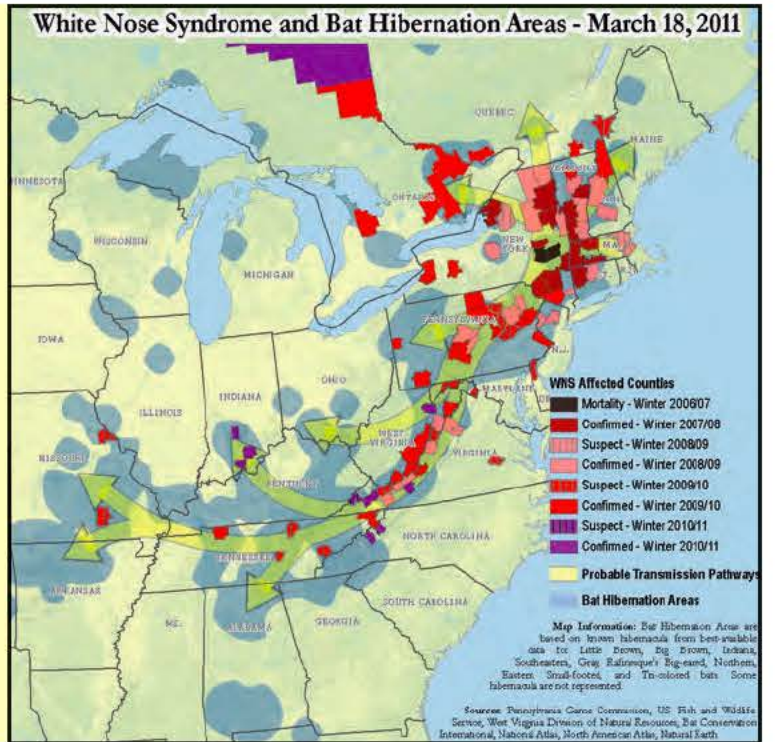
The most recently confirmed

infected states are Indiana and North Carolina. Documented kills are well over a million bats.

French said, "No one in the field has seen such unprecedented demise of any species in recent history (at least in this part of the world)."

Suspecting the fungus was being spread by cavers or other cave visitors; the Massachusetts Department of Fisheries and Game suspended their annual bat count in the winter of 2009/10 and more recently closed off public access to all caves and abandoned mines under their control.

The recent bat count did nothing to alleviate concerns about see **BATS** page 12



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# As You Write It at the Gill Montague Senior Center



JOE PARZYCH PHOTO

(left - right) Laura Rodley, Lil Fiske, Estelle Cade, Dorothy Hmieleski, Rosalie Bolton, Frances Hemond, Patricia Carlisle, Harry Stafursky and Joseph Parzych gathered Sunday to read from their anthology, *As You Write It*.

**BY JOE PARZYCH**  
**TURNERS FALLS** - It was standing room only on Sunday, April 3rd, when a crowd gathered at the Gill-Montague senior center to hear writers, led by free-spirited Laura Rodley, read their stories from the anthology, *As You Write It*. No one walked on water, but a few writers appeared to be walking on air.

The stories were a result of Rodley supplying prompts,

sometimes in the form of ideas, other times in the form of objects, to trigger memories lying dormant in the writers' fecund brains. A prompt could be a piece of cloth, a jar of marbles or a box of assorted buttons that opened the dusty door of life's experiences stored in the attic of the mind. After a brief pause, a treasure trove of mental images came into focus and the writers bent to their task.

At Christmas, Rodley burst in shouting "Merry Christmas," laden with holiday treats, ringing an assortment of bells, including sleigh bells and an elephant bell. Prompts such as these never failed to trigger the furious scribbling of thoughts onto paper as the memories from an earlier time flowed like a fountain from our pens. Her biggest problem was bringing the pens to a halt. Each writers then shared their

stories with the group, as they did on Sunday.

Before the reading, Rodley laid out copies of the anthology on a table by the reader's podium. She'd designed the handsome cover, using a cursive font to reflect the handwriting of the group as they'd put their thoughts on paper during weekly sessions.

Lillian Fiske, president of the Montague Historical Society, supplied the cover picture: school children and their teacher sitting on the steps of the Montague Center School. The photo was taken back in the horse and buggy days when school kids attended barefoot, as seen in the photo. Fiske can furnish the names if someone spots a familiar face.

Rodley edited the book, and her family helped whip it into shape. There were many nail-biting moments when things went wrong at the printers. But, at the

last minute, as in the *Perils of Pauline*, Rodley leaped out of the path of the thundering locomotive, so to speak, and brought the books to the reading, hot off the press.

At the reading, the anthology brought on reminiscences from the older generation of the earlier times in which the stories took place. Younger people enjoyed stories of a time in life sometimes as different from today as life on another planet. People mingled during intermission and later enjoyed conversation and refreshments while authors signed stories in the book.

For those who missed the reading, do not despair. There'll be another one at the Greenfield Public Library meeting room on Saturday, April 16th at 10 a.m. Bring a friend. Refreshments will be served and there will be an opportunity to speak with the authors.

## BOCK from page 1

ward." The two remaining highway department employees will work as co-supervisors, and co-workers until a replacement for Bock is hired.

In other selectboard news, town coordinator Nancy Aldrich said the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has made some changes to the Cooleyville Road bridge repair project. Williston said he had hoped that project would go out to bid in January, and because of the changes and delays, he thought it best to delay the project another year.

Donna Horn opened the meeting when she rented the town hall for the evening of Saturday June 11th for the annual Misfit Prom, this one with the theme of Carnival. Proceeds from the prom will benefit the Almost Home All Breed Dog

Rescue Program, run by Wendell dog officer Maggie Houghton.

Aldrich checked with Mass Audubon about allowing a discount rate for a second young essay writer to attend Wildwood Camp in Rindge, NH this summer, but Mass Audubon said they could not afford a second discounted 'campership.'

The selectboard hoped Cole Emery, who was the runner up in the nature essay contest, might take advantage of the campership in 2012 instead.

Mass Audubon has agreed to discount the bulk of the camp's fee for one Wendell young person for three years, as an alternate means of compensating the town for the large amount of land Audubon owns in Wendell, for which, as a non-profit, it pays no property tax.

Selectboard chair Christine Heard said Aria Leelyn, who wrote the winning nature essay, is very excited about attending

the camp this year.

Last year, in a surprise amendment to the state budget, the DEP transferred regulation of technical reviews of small transfer stations and landfills to local boards of health. Finance committee chair Michael Idoine learned that the change applies to the siting of new facilities, and not to old facilities. Wendell's closed commercial landfill, the Diemand & Bennett (D and B) demolition debris landfill, remains under the supervision of the DEP, Idoine said.

The Franklin Council of Governments is forming a steering committee to guide a regional planning process for sustainable development for Franklin County, which will meet about eight times over the next 18 to 20 months. Aldrich said she would start with the planning board in seeking a volunteer to serve as Wendell's representative at those meetings.

**Call to Artists: Producers Series Seeks Proposals**  
**Deadline to submit: April 25th**  
 Award: \$1,750

Public to vote on winning proposal at Feast for the Arts  
 May 7th, 6 pm at the Montague E ks Lodge

For this new round of the Producer's Series, the public will be choosing and funding the winning proposal for a temporary participatory public art project to happen in downtown Turners Falls.

**Selection criteria: (please address the following in your proposal)**

- Likelihood you can pull it off (aka Can you do it for real?)
- Inventiveness/beauty/aha-ness (aka Does it wow us?)
- Use of location (some part of downtown Turners Falls) in a new/reimagined/creative way (aka Does it reinvent the location for us?)
- Participatory nature/reach (aka How many people will participate/be a part of/enjoy it?)
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from **BATS** page 10  
the severity of the plague.

The five affected species in order of past populations in Massachusetts are all bats that winter in caves – little brown bat, northern long-eared bat, tri-colored bat, big brown bat and small-footed bat. Historically the most common, the little brown bat tends to summer in buildings in female-only colonies from 50-100 and occasionally up to 2,000. In the winter little brown bats typically hibernate in caves in male-female colonies, but their summer breeding territories can range broadly. Their summer range may be a factor in the rapid spread of WNS.

The Massachusetts Department of Fisheries and Game monitors bat populations in seven abandoned mines and caves. Three winters ago there

were more than 10,000 bats hibernating in the old Upper Chester Mine, a popular caving destination. The first signs of WNS were noted there in February, 2008 followed by a significant population decline in March, 2009. There was no count in 2010. A mere 14 bats were found during the most recent bat survey held March 9th, 2011 – nine little brown bats and five tri-color bats.

The Lower Chester Mine housed 1,279 tri-color bats in 2002. Only one bat was found there in 2011.

Just a few years ago, the second most common bat in Massachusetts was the northern long-eared bat. Not one was found in 2011 in either New York or Massachusetts.

The Rowe Copper Mine had a winter bat population of 3,158 in

April, 2008 and only 25 in March, 2011 – 24 little brown bats and one big brown bat.

French did provide one small nugget of good news. Of the 25 bats found in the Rowe mine, only one was infected with WNS.

Other smaller caves yield similar news. The Zoar cave population went from 113 in 2009 to 29 in 2011; the Egremont limestone caves from 89 bats in 2006 to 18 in 2011 (none found with WNS).

The small-footed bat was always rare in Massachusetts but they are still found in one location in the state, and the percentage loss was less than recent years.

The low reproductive rate of bats (one pup per year) makes the 90-98% mortality rates from WNS particularly alarming. It could take decades for bat populations to rebound. In addition,

bats are critical predators of insects, feeding both on agricultural pests and insects that pose human health risks.

It is estimated that one little brown bat could eat more than a pound of insects between mid-April and mid-October. No one yet knows the impact of losing more than 90% of these insectivores.

Some biologists are concerned the spread of WNS may be affected by the broad use of pesticides to control human disease carrying mosquitoes such as West Nile Virus. The concern is understandable considering that overuse of DDT and other pesticides is believed to be the reason why Indiana bats have not been seen in Massachusetts since 1939.

It is still not clearly understood whether WNS is a cause or

symptom of bat mortality, in spite of the many state, federal and private researchers now studying the disease. The syndrome does not appear to affect major organs, but seems to disturb hibernation causing bats to wake up during winter – using up fat reserves and flying when they should be sleeping, leading to acute dehydration and premature death.

French hopes people will put up bat houses and report breeding bats in the upcoming months so biologists can track colonies. In addition, he recommends avoiding caves and mines during hibernation season, and reporting winter flying bats or evidence of dead bats.

Sightings can be reported by email to [mass.wildlife@state.ma.us](mailto:mass.wildlife@state.ma.us) or calling 508-389-6300.



from **ERVING** page 8

committee requested a separate warrant item for \$20,000 for air conditioning and a halon fire suppression system for the school's network server, which is located in a small interior room that gets very hot on hot summer days. Asked about the cost for the server, principal Charlene Galenski said it cost approximately \$5000.

Goodwin said that it didn't make sense to pay more for protecting the server than it was worth. He recommended seeking additional information to see if a less expensive protection system would be effective.

Emergency management director Luke Hartnett asked the selectboard to sign off on the contract for the Emergency Management Performance grant to fund a \$2500 "reverse 911" communications system. The system will allow emergency information telephone calls to residents in Erving who wish to participate.

After a request from Erving

Paper Mill general manager Tom Newton, the selectboard voted to extend the current revenue sharing agreement with Erving Paper Mill for third party waste hauler fees until June 30th. The town pays the paper mill \$1 a year to treat residential wastes from Erving Center, and has been receiving about \$150,000 annually from Erving Paper as its contracted share of third party fees.

At the March 21st meeting, Erving Paper Mill executives invited the selectboard and interested town residents to tour Erving Paper Mill to see how the mill is coping with hard economic times. The selectboard set May 23rd as the tour date.

The selectboard signed warrants for paying the senior center building contractor \$291,127.50 and the architect \$6355.32.

Erving received a \$500 grant from Franklin County Solid Waste District for recycled paper.

from **MAHAR** page 7  
agency," for a local food to local school network.

Committee chair Maureen Donelan of Orange said the network is "a great idea to look into." Orange representative Peter Cross will attend the April 13th CES meeting and convey the Mahar school committee's support for the proposal.

**School Choice**

The committee voted to remain a school choice school for FY'12.

Baldwin observed, "School choice has a dark side in Franklin County," noting net losses in Gill-Montague approaching half a million dollars for FY'12 through school choice.

He recommended the committee remain vigilant to ensure that the Mahar district does not end up as one that loses money to school choice.

Part of the school choice receipts at Mahar are generated by the Gateway to College program for students at risk of dropping out, a program run in partnership with Mt. Wachusett Community College.

Because this at-risk population with a graduation rate of approximately 50% is included in DESE statistics for Mahar, the published graduation rate for Mahar decreased signifi-

cantly after beginning this program.

Superintendent Michael Baldassarre told the committee he has been conferring with DESE, and they have agreed to classify Gateway to College as a separate school for graduation statistics and present separate graduation rate statistics for Mahar and Gateway to College. District statistics combining both rates will still be published.

Dr. Ed McCaul, executive director of CAPS Educational Collaborative, presented an overview of the junior Senators (middle school) and senior Senators (high school) program. CAPS provides in-school educational, physical, occupational, and speech therapy, English, math, science, and preparation for employment for Mahar students with severe disabilities. He commented, "I've never seen a partnership as wonderful and warm as at Mahar... the best situation I've seen in special education." Barbara White, CAPS program director at Mahar, said that she works in eight different communities, "and this school community is outstanding."

Cross reported the policy and planning subcommittee had recently discussed a lapsed temporary policy allowing home-schooled students in the district to participate in extra-

curricular activities at Mahar. One attendee characterized that subcommittee meeting as "heated."

Cross said the subcommittee was soliciting parent, faculty, student and other community input on developing the policy at a meeting April 14th at 4:30 p.m. at the Mahar library.


The committee went into executive session to discuss strategy regarding collective bargaining with Unit C (including para-professionals, cafeteria workers, janitors, and secretaries). When the committee returned to open session, Donelan said the committee had voted to accept the negotiated contract, with an unspecified amendment.

Massachusetts Teachers Association chair Will Curtis said that the employees would vote on whether to accept the amended contract on Wednesday, April 6th.

An indoor air quality study at Mahar conducted by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services found no major issues, according to Baldassarre. The assessment found chemicals in the art department that needed to be stored in a flame-proof cabinet, and some that needed to be removed and disposed of.



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**DATES TO REMEMBER:**

- May 10, 4:30 p.m. — Member meeting at Montague Community Television, 34 Second Street, Turners Falls
- June 21, 5:30 p.m. — Meet and Greet Networking Event, location to be announced
- July 1 — Join by this date to be listed in the next brochure

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**FREE U** from page 1

because the conditions for its growth were fertile: It provides a venue for people to come together, a place that's not work and not home, but something in between. 'The third place'...sociologist Ray Oldenburg calls it, a place that's separate from the first and second places of home and work.

Third Places, the book continues, are "cornerstones of community life [that] facilitate the sort of social engagement essential to any healthy community. They are the places where ideas are born and debated, where groundswells arise in discussion over food and drink."

The Wendell Free Library fits that definition. Food and drink are sometimes part of the offerings, but yeasty, real conversations have happened as well around a discussion circle on Stuart Brand's latest book in defense of nuclear power, or after a slide show on ancient stone ruins of New England.

In the library's environment – friendly, questioning, uplifting – minds can change a bit based on comments around a Web search on eating too much fruit, or from a circulation desk conversation about head lice. The same from a presentation in the Awesome Women's Film Series, or in encounters next to the DVD rack looking for Rabbit Proof Fence.

"I like to think of the library as that – a Third Place," said librarian Rosie Heidkamp – "a place for moving forward, improving, not just personally, but as a town."

As the library concludes the fourth busy winter season in its spacious new building, Heidkamp sat at a table in the Herrick Meeting Room, where many of the nearly 400 quality events and program sessions ("not fluff," she insisted) took place during the last full fiscal year, FY '10. This year will see a similar total. In quantitative measurement, library hours have increased from 15 per week in FY '07 to 22.5 in FY '10. Most tellingly, the number of users in the same period went from 4,583 to 11,100.

Contradicting predictions of irrelevance in an internet age, public libraries in general have been experiencing greater use,



Rose Heidkamp at Annual Town Meeting, 2007

Heidkamp said, as they are more needed in response to lost jobs and reduced incomes related to the recession. Still, the numbers at the Wendell library are extraordinary for a town of 900 people or less.

All the programming that is produced the increasing flow of patrons must be expensive for the town, right? No.

"In our budget for the town, there's no money for programs," Heidkamp said. "Hiring presenters, buying films...it's all from the Friends [of the Wendell Free Library], Wendell Cultural Council and other grants."

She acknowledged using some of her time to "send out news releases, do posters," but considers it "part of my job."

The library offers much for pre-schoolers, elementary school-age kids and teens & tweens, including a children's room and a teen hangout, but Heidkamp wanted to stress its main focus – adults. "We've got great schools," she said, "but what do we as a town do for adults for learning? I see the library as filling that role."

Everybody involved – the board of trustees, employees and volunteers – now generally conceives of the library as not just the community's book repository but as a flexible, responsive public institution of education. This has helped the library thrive, according to Heidkamp, the open-faced 50-something homesteader who's been the

town's librarian since 1991.

"I try to keep my ear to the wind about what seems to be currently of interest in Wendell. Right now it's food, food security, the natural world."

A free give-and-take, as opposed to top-down decision-making, also helps create the spirit of the place, all at least partly a consequence of Heidkamp's listening, facilitating and delegating skills. She operates out of

the belief that, "Some people learn by reading, some by listening, some by viewing," as she put it. "We've come to think of ourselves as an institution for lifelong learning."

"When Rosie talked about the library becoming 'Wendell University', I was puzzled," recalled Adele Smith-Penniman, a member of the board of directors of the highly active Friends of the Wendell Free Library. "Now that I see all that's happening – the arts, the history, the genealogy, the events, the computers – I can see it really is Wendell University."

It's also something else. "When I go in on a Saturday, I run into other people, friends, neighbors, including youth – young people who are often invisible to us older people. I can feel the energy. It's alive!"

Smith-Penniman mentioned the recent, much-talked-about slide show and discussion on ancient stone structures featuring PBS producer Ted Timreck and Narragansett Deputy Tribal Historic Preservation officer Doug Harris. "I've seen stone structures in the state forest, and have been puzzled. Now I wonder, was I seeing early Native construction? Was it a Native sacred place?"

The library event caused her and others who attended to begin to see the local landscape and its original inhabitants in a fuller, more human way. If

Heidkamp is right, this deeper sense of history may allow new freshness and imagination in dealing with conditions today.

Besides such learning events, and the ever-present opportunities in books, on disks and at its seven public high-speed internet terminals (a precious resource in dial-up country), the library attends to several other needs of Wendell's adult population, among them yoga classes, art by local artists – which hangs in revolving exhibits – and that occasional dose of horror and science fiction. This is available in a film series arranged by volunteers and projected periodically onto the Herrick Room's ten foot screen in Blue-Ray high definition.

The projection equipment, donated by the Friends group, was used for Paul Godfrey's series of ecology classes. It helped illustrate the recent Dave Allen lecture presentation on historic maps of Wendell and Franklin County. It was used for Laurel Facey's movie about her family's maple syrup operation and other informational offerings by the Wendell agriculture commission.

Also donated by the Friends are the two big tables in the room, and the Oriental rug that covers much of the floor.

The vision of the Library trustees, and of Heidkamp, explains why each year for a number of years in the early 2000s town meeting put money aside to build a new library, and explains the eventual strong yeavotes to fund its construction (along with a new town office building). During the planning and construction phase, the Friends secured the funds for the Herrick Room itself, for the skylights on the main building, and the group is largely responsible for the rooftop photovoltaic panels that now provide roughly half the library's power usage.

The story of this solar system is an example of the breadth of the library's

past and present appeal. Under a utility company challenge, the Friends in 2008 encouraged Wendell's electric power customers to switch to a greener energy mix through the utilities' New England GreenStart program. Wendell responded strongly, thus qualifying the town for the \$9,500 Clean Energy Choice grant that paid for the photovoltaic system and several other energy-related programs. In addition, for enlisting a higher percentage of households than any other town in the state, the town received a \$5000 bonus.

One of the recent programs the library hosted was a lecture and slide presentation last spring by an expert on net energy from fossil fuel and alternative energy sources. The expert, David Murphy of SUNY Syracuse, claimed that when all energy inputs are considered, photovoltaic systems, like wind, unfortunately generate little, if any, net energy. His talk was paid for by the utility companies' Clean Energy Choice grant, and the images giving the data were thrown onto the screen, in part at least, by the solar power array on the library's roof.

The questions and potential mind shifts from that event still come up in conversations almost a year later. It's an example of the complexity of our times, of the Wendell Free Library's relevance, and a fulfillment of the mission the library has set for itself.

The library as it now stands and functions has made converts of some of those who thought the planners were thinking too big for this little town. On a basic level, said Court Dorsey, who sat at the west bay windows on a recent afternoon, "It's a beautiful space with a beautiful feel that supports everybody's ability to learn and grow."

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JESSICA LARKIN ILLUSTRATION

BY FRED CICETTI

**LEONIA, NJ - Q.** *I've been losing some hearing the last few years. I have to travel far from home and I was wondering if you had any suggestions for handling my hearing problems on the road?*

About one in three Americans over 60 suffers from loss of hearing, which can range from the inability to hear certain voices to deafness. Traveling poses special problems for the hearing-

impaired.

At the outset, I am crediting the American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery (AAO-HNS) for the dozen valuable travel tips in this column. The ideas are from the academy; the words are mine. The AAO-HNS is the world's largest organization representing specialists who treat the ear, nose, throat, and related structures of the head and neck.

Okay, here goes:

1.) Make travel arrangements in advance. Request written confirmation.

2.) Consider using a travel agent who can make reservations with airlines, hotels, and tourist attractions. If possible, meet with a travel agent in person to insure accurate communication.

3.) You can use your computer

to make reservations. Be sure to print copies of important information such as confirmation numbers, reservations and maps.

4.) Arrive early for every event on your schedule so you have time to rectify possible problems caused by miscommunication.

5.) If you are severely hearing-impaired, tell ground personnel, flight attendants, train conductors and bus drivers that you would like them to give you important information face-to-face.

6.) If you need a Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD), you can get service from many major airlines and transportation companies. A TDD will enable you to send and receive text messages. A typical TDD is about the size of a laptop computer with a keyboard and

small screen.

7.) All public telephones should now have a "blue grommet" attachment to the handset indicating it is compatible with hearing aids. Some public phones have an amplifying headset. Or you may purchase a pocket amplifier. Cellular phones have solved many of these problems. All cell-phone manufacturers have models that are compatible with hearing aids.

8.) There are small portable visual alert systems available that flash a light when the telephone rings, an alarm clock goes off, or a fire alarm sounds. These can be installed easily in hotel rooms. Request a room that is equipped for an individual with hearing loss. These communication features are frequently provided free of charge to hotel guests.

9.) FM listening systems can help the hearing-impaired traveler listen to lectures and tours by having a speaker use a transmitter microphone to broadcast over air waves to a receiver.

10.) Portable infrared systems can be used with hotel televisions and radios. These transmit sound via invisible infrared light to a listener's receiver.

11.) There are portable TV-band radios that can be tuned to compatible TV channels and listened to through an earphone.

12.) If you wear a hearing aid, be sure to pack extra batteries and tubing. It would be wise to take a dehumidifier for drying your hearing aids each night to prevent moisture problems.

*If you would like to ask a question, please write fred@healthygeez.com*

from FARM page 1

don't have huge processing and freezer facilities." She said no school district could serve meals for an affordable price without relying on USDA subsidized food.

Leyden dairy farmer Angie Facey cited processing costs as a problem for local milk producers.

She said, "It would be great to get Our Family Farms milk in schools," but school lunch programs require half-pint size containers, and the processing plant that packages Our Family Farms' milk packages unflavored milk only in gallons and half gallons.

Facey said building their own processing plant to allow more

flexibility in size would be "a huge investment" for the eight dairies in Our Family Farms that are "already operating on a slim margin."

Erwin noted one of the challenges in Franklin County is the distance between farmers and schools.

Sherry Fiske, former food

service director for the Orange elementary schools, said she personally transported produce by traveling to local farms to buy it. "We worked it out, because we wanted to make it work."

Hans Estrin, local food network coordinator at the University of Vermont extension service, said that one farm selling to one school is not a sustainable model. But by aggregating many diverse farms, "All of a sudden, this wholesale market is not piddly."

He described the Windham Farm and Food Network that transports produce from small farms to institutions in Vermont. Their system works by giving institutions the ability to order farm products offered by local farms online. The farmer-owned network picks up the products at the farms and distributes them to the institutions. The network

charges 10% above the wholesale price for delivery and service fees.

Estrin said he would "love to help facilitate" developing a similar local food delivery system in Franklin County.

Joe Czajkowski said he sells fresh vegetables and pre-cut items from his Hadley farm to local colleges, the Leverett Elementary School, and Orange Elementary Schools. He said his farm is state inspected and insured and laboratory tested for food safety. He sells fourteen food items in winter, including butternut squash, carrot slices, carrot sticks, vegetable medley, sweet potato sticks and frozen vegetables. The produce Czajkowski sells comes from his own farm and from 27 smaller farms in the Valley, from farmers he knows personally. Because he

see FARM page 16

**HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG**

**Break In, Domestic Assault, Driving Under the Influence**

**Tuesday, 3/29**

1:25 p.m. Burglary, breaking and entering on Second Street. Report taken.  
4:35 p.m. Threatening, harassment on Alice Street. Services rendered.  
5:58 p.m. Illegal dumping on East Main Street. Services rendered.  
10:05 p.m. Domestic disturbance on Park Street. Services rendered.

**Wednesday, 3/30**

12:58 a.m. Arrest of [redacted] for second offense of driving under the influence of liquor, driving as to endanger, marked lanes violations and speeding.  
1:24 p.m. Burglary, breaking and entering on K Street. Services rendered.  
5:31 p.m. Threatening, harassment on Third Street. Investigated.  
6:03 p.m. General distur-

bance on Second Street. Investigated.

9:53 p.m. General disturbance on Fifth Street. Investigated.

**Thursday, 3/31**

11:11 a.m. Arrest of [redacted] for third offense of driving under the influence of liquor, operating a motor vehicle with a revoked license for driving under the influence, marked lanes violations, operating to endanger, and leaving the scene of property damage.  
3:11 p.m. Attempted shoplifting at Food City on Avenue A. Investigated.

**Friday, 4/1**

7:56 p.m. Loud noise disturbance on East Main Street. Verbal warning.  
**Saturday, 4/2**

11:23 a.m. Report of motor vehicle plate missing on Old Sunderland Road.

**Sunday, 4/3**

7:21 a.m. Arrest of [redacted] for domestic assault and battery.

11:23 a.m. General disturbance at the village of Lake Pleasant. Services rendered.

11:38 a.m. Brush fire on Old Sunderland Road. Referred to other agency.

1:11 p.m. Loud noise disturbance on East Main Street. Peace restored.

1:57 p.m. Loud noise disturbance at the village of Lake Pleasant. Services rendered.  
2:03 p.m. Threatening, harassment on Fourth Street. Advised of options.

7:15 p.m. Arrest of [redacted] for operating a motor vehicle with a revoked license.

9:48 p.m. Arrest of [redacted] for disturbing the peace.

[redacted] for disturbing the peace.

**Monday, 4/4**

3:27 a.m. Domestic disturbance on Crocker Avenue. Area, business check complete.

6:24 a.m. Structure fire on Millers Falls Road. Referred to other agency.

8 a.m. Loud noise disturbance in the village of Lake Pleasant. Services rendered.

4:57 p.m. Larceny at Franklin County Technical School. Advised of options.

8:39 p.m. Drug, narcotics violation on Fourth Street. Report taken.

10:29 p.m. Threatening, harassment on Park Street. Referred to an officer.

**Tuesday, 4/5**

12:29 p.m. Burglary, breaking and entering on Oakman Street. Services rendered.

1:44 p.m. Drug, narcotics violation at Franklin County Technical School. Services rendered.

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# Wine, and Food, and Affordable Farming



Sarah and Ryan Voiland of Red Fire Farm, on Meadow Road in Montague

**MONTAGUE CENTER** - Supporters of sustainable local agriculture are invited to an evening of wine and appetizers at the home of Norma Johnson and Al Ross in support of Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust and Red Fire Farm's ambitious effort to create a permanently affordable sustainable farm in Montague.

The gathering will take place at 91 Taylor Hill Road on Friday, April 15th, from 5 - 7 p.m., and a request for contributions will be made.

Mount Grace director Leigh Youngblood (www.mountgrace.org) and Ryan & Sarah Voiland of Red Fire Farm (www.redfirefarm.com), will be on hand to talk about the

project, how it will benefit the Montague community, and answer questions.

This will be Mount Grace's first effort to provide whole farm affordability through a model of land tenure utilizing divided ownership, with Mount Grace owning the land - 122 acres of prime Montague farmland along the river - and Red Fire Farm owning the farmhouse, barn, outbuildings, and farm infrastructure. A tour of the farm will be offered after the gathering for those interested.

Please RSVP to Nathan Rudolph by April 11th: rudolph@mountgrace.org or 978-248-2055 x18 and feel free to invite others who might be interested.

from **FARM** page 15 consolidates for other farms, the institutions "don't have 27 trucks and 27 invoices" to deal with.

Bert Sawicki of Organic Renaissance, located in Athol and Boston, said his company also transports local produce to markets and is starting to reach out to local farmers. Organic Renaissance also aggregates the produce from small farms, so schools get one shipment rather than many.

Sawicki described moving to Massachusetts from California,

and touring the Pioneer Valley by bicycle, stopping at roadside stands to pick up a fresh local tomato as a snack. He said he realized "the food system was broken" when he bought a sandwich at a sandwich shop, and found it's ingredients contained not a fresh local tomato from a nearby farmstand, but a flavorless commercial tomato, probably, like himself, imported from California.

Donna LaClaire, Erving Elementary food service director, admitted she was not

currently buying food from local farms. "But that's why I'm here today."

The forum discussed strategies to help food service directors like LaClaire increase their purchasing of local foods.

Erwin said the School Nutrition Association of Massachusetts has started trainings for school food service with a local foods focus. The national Farm to School Network is conducting a policy analysis of the USDA commodity program and considering ways it could be improved.

Erwin cited an important role for local governments, saying Hatfield, Amherst, and Cambridge had instituted agricultural commission or school committee policies supporting preferential purchasing of local foods in their schools.

Kevin Courtney of the non-profit Collaborative Education Services (CES) suggested the cooperative bidding process that CES already offers Franklin and Hampshire county schools could be expanded to include bidding on purchases of local foods.

Leverett Elementary food service director Molly Sneadon said a greenhouse will soon be constructed at the school, with support from People's Bank in Holyoke and community

volunteers. The greenhouse will provide some fresh school-grown foods to add the local foods served at LES, and lessons based on the greenhouse will be incorporated into the school curriculum.

Sandy Thomas, interim associate dean at Greenfield Community College said GCC was "exploring our role in the regional food system and local food economy." She said GCC held a focus group recently with farmers and small business owners to help guide the college in its effort to support the local food system.

Habib said, "Pulling off Farm to School will take all of us - chopping carrots and advocating policy." She said each school in Massachusetts is required to have a wellness policy. She urged parents and local food advocates to find out what was in their school's wellness policy and build on it. In some cases, the wellness policy may already support preferential use of local food in the school cafeteria, or establishing school gardens and greenhouses.

After presentations and lunch, participants brainstormed ways to encourage use of local foods in schools. Some of the suggested actions included inviting farmers into the schools to introduce the fresh produce, creating school gardens, supporting food service

departments, integrating local food production into the curriculum, looking at eating local foods as a long-term health benefit, and having the school committee caucus communicate with the USDA about the commodity program that acts as an effective disincentive to the cafeteria use of fresh local food.

The forum included a breakfast and lunch for attendees. One forum participant commented, "It was a lovely breakfast, but not my vision of what we would have here."

Our Family Farms provided chocolate and strawberry flavored local milk in half-pint containers for the breakfast and lunch. Facey explained that regulations allow only half-pint size milk containers in schools, even for adult events like the Farm to School Forum, and their milk processor packages only flavored half pints.

The cafeteria staff serving the breakfast of bagels, cream cheese, muffins, oranges, apples, canteloupe, and bananas, said the food was not local. "But we wish it could be." The lunch was an attractive and well-stocked salad bar with iceberg lettuce, cucumbers, green peppers, chickpeas, cottage cheese, cheese cubes, ham cubes, and the previously mentioned flavorless commercial winter tomatoes.

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## School Children to Make GIANT EARTH DAY BALL from Plastic Bags

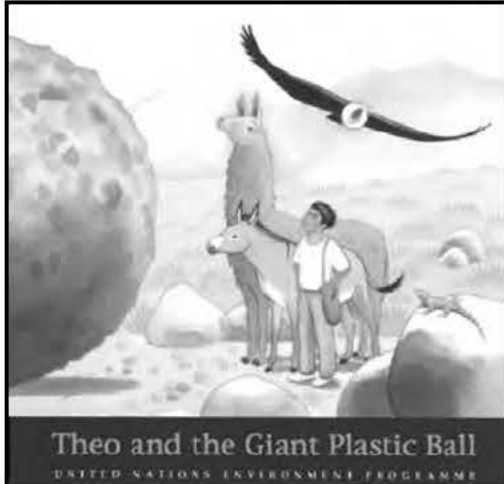
BY CHARLOTTE CAUSTON

**NORTHAMPTON** - All Northampton public schools will work together in April to make the largest ball ever made entirely of single-use plastic shopping bags. The event will culminate on April 23rd at Northampton's Earth Day celebration in Pulaski Park when the ball will be rolled down the streets of Northampton and into the park.

In a tribute to the children's book, *Theo and the Giant Plastic Ball*, published by the United Nations Environmental Programme, Green Action in Northampton Schools, Green Northampton and the Center for EcoTechnology are coordinating this project to raise awareness of the environmental impact of using plastic bags in stores, and to push for Northampton to become a 'bring your own bag' shopping district.

All four elementary schools in the district, JFK Middle School,

and the Environmental Club at Northampton High School have signed up for the program. Classrooms are collecting used plastic bags from their homes and from family and friends, then tying them together to form a rope. The number of bags tied together by the class are being counted and recorded. Plastic



Theo and the Giant Plastic Ball  
UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

ropes will be picked up by volunteers and taken to a central location. During spring break students and volunteers will assemble the ball ready for the Earth Day celebration on Saturday April 23rd. After the Earth Day celebration, the ball will be available to schools and environmental

groups wishing to display it as an educational tool in promoting respect for the environment and the reduction of waste.

Single-use plastic bags are made from crude oil, natural gas, or other petrochemical derivatives - all nonrenewable resources. Single use plastic bags are non-biodegradable, breaking into smaller particles over hundreds of years, but never decomposing. Each year, Americans throw away some 100 billion polyethylene plastic bags. A typical American shopper uses 500 plastic bags each year.

Each year, Americans throw away some 100 billion polyethylene plastic bags. A typical American shopper uses 500 plastic bags each year.

## Hundreds of Straw Bales Delivered to Gardeners



JONATHAN VON RANSON PHOTO

Lou and Aria Leehyn loading up their bales of straw.

BY DAVID DETMOLD

**WENDELL** - It seems there's a lot of interest in gardening in Wendell this year.

At a late March meeting with Wendell's local food coordinator Liz Carter, members of the local food committee, and other interested residents, the idea came up of ordering garden supplies - like mulch hay. Subsequently, committee members arranged with a Deerfield farmer, Gary Kolokoski, for a bulk straw order (straw is better than hay, which

often has seeds that sprout) for people to use for mulch.

A notice on the townfolk email list produced 30 takers, and 264 bales were ordered and delivered to Jonathan von Ranson's barn in the center of town.

Over the next two days, people picked up and paid for their order. "The response to the Local Food Committee's straw mulch order was incredible," said Laurie DiDonato, "and we're excited we were able to help so many local gardeners with this initiative."

from **SUSTAINABLE** pg 1 Montague and Greenfield, the director of the Franklin County Community Development Corporation, the director of Community Action, and representatives of Athol Memorial Hospital, the Shelburne Falls business association, the North Quabbin Community Coalition, the Franklin Regional Transportation Authority, Turners Falls River Culture, the Franklin Regional Employment Board, and many more. If you were looking for county-wide buy in to a regional effort to bring sustainable growth and Green jobs to Franklin County, you need look no further than that overcrowded room.

Peggy Sloan, director of planning and development for the Franklin Regional Council of Governments, said the purpose of the grant, which FRCOG applied for and will administer on behalf of a consortium of participating agencies and the town governments of Greenfield, Montague, Deerfield and Orange, is "to improve regional planning efforts, and integrate housing, economic development, energy and transportation decisions to incorporate livability, sustainabil-

ity and social equity values into land use planning.

She said the effort would try to incorporate the "six livability principles of HUD" across the Franklin County region - support for existing communities, promotion of equitable, affordable housing, enhancement of economic competitiveness, provision of more transportation choices, valuing of communities and their natural and cultural resources, and coordination and leverage of federal policies and investments.

Sloan said the FRCOG is projecting Franklin County will grow by 3500 households (7%) and will add 2500 jobs over the next 25 years. The sustainability planning effort will attempt to incorporate public input to guide that growth along existing transportation routes, preserving farmland and priority habitat for rare and endangered species, while giving priority to energy goals that conserve and reduce carbon fuels, job growth that augments existing patterns of development, and housing creation and rehab that supports the revitalization of community centers, rather than sprawl.

If nothing is done to change

the present pattern of growth, FRCOG's planners warned, an area of farmland and forest in Franklin County equal in size to the town of Sunderland - 7,300 acres - will be developed over the next 25 years.

"I don't see what is going to drive that many jobs, or any kind of economic development plans to push us in that direction," countered Franklin Medical president Chuck Giganto.

Sloan conceded, "Economic development is always a challenge in Franklin County," but she backed her predictive models, and noted Franklin County has grown in population by 21% since 1970, even though 37% of residents commute outside the county for work.

She also noted, the population as a whole grew by 6% over the last 20 years, but the number of registered vehicles in the country grew by 42% over the same period of time. Ouch!

Greening Greenfield's Nancy Hazard said the prediction of 3500 new households over the next 25 years might be dwarfed if climate change heats up a migration from coastal cities impacted by rising ocean waters.

"A lot of people are concerned

about mass migrations from coastal cities to our area due to climate change," she said.

She also noted the state's energy plan calls for reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, and Franklin County needs to match that goal in future development.

"How do we get there from here?" she asked.

Sloan said, "The details will be in the regional plan, with trends and goals identified, along with specific activities."

Sustainability in shopping choices for future Franklin County residents was also called into question by Montague Housing Authority director Bella Dickerman, who wanted to know whether Greenfield supported the addition of a second Wal-Mart to the county's shopping choices.

Greenfield planner Eric Twarog said, "We have a legitimate proposal that meets the regulations for major development that will add 250 jobs," on the French King Highway.

And Dickerman replied, "I think about low income people. Wal-Mart is affordable to me."

Hazard responded, "We need to talk about 'What is a livable wage.'"

Sloan said, "That's part of the

HUD guidelines, not just to create minimum wage jobs, but to create livable wage jobs."

The committee picked a next meeting date on Tuesday, June 7th, at 1 p.m. at the GSB meeting room. And then one by one, they got back in their cars and drove back to their offices and homes.

## Orcut Family Benefit

A spaghetti dinner will be held at the Northfield Elementary School on Friday, April 8th, from 5:30 - 8:30 p.m. to benefit John Orcutt, the 13-year-old who suffered a stroke and aneurism on March 23rd. Orcutt is in stable but critical condition at UMass Worcester Hospital.

## GMEF Gala

Mark your calendars for the 7th Annual Turners Falls High School gala on Saturday, April 30th at 7:30 p.m. as the Gill Montague Education Fund presents: "The Golden Age of Rock 'n' Roll," featuring The Memories.

Tickets on sale now at Scotty's, the World Eye, or by calling Sandy at 863-7296, or online at [www.thgmef.org](http://www.thgmef.org). Proceeds benefit student enrichment at GMRSD.

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**Operation Touch of Home Sox Tickets Raffle Photographic Exhibition of Local Veterans at The Gallery at Hallmark**

BY SARA CAMPBELL

**WENDELL** - Operation Touch of Home, a group of local volunteers who send care packages to servicemen and women overseas, is raffling five tickets to a May Red Sox game to help fund their projects.

Volunteers for OTOH gathered on Saturday, April 2nd at the North Orange Community Church and packed up supplies

came home in December of 2010. Her friend Kristin Letourneau's brother, Michael Letourneau, is currently stationed overseas. Spc. James Campbell of Millers Falls, whose deployment is ending soon, was a recipient of last November's shipment. He is expected to return from 11 months in Afghanistan with the 101st Airborne to Fort Campbell,

The Gallery at Hallmark is pleased to announce the opening of "I Was There: Stories of War and Homecoming", a powerful photographic exhibition of local veterans. The exhibit is a collaboration between Hallmark Institute of Photography, the Veterans Education Project (VEP) and the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association (PVMA) and its National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Big Read. The Big Read is a program of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with the Institute of Museum and Library Services and Arts Midwest.

The idea for the exhibit was inspired by Tim O'Brien's classic novel about the Vietnam War, *The Things They Carried*. Still incredibly popular after 21 years in print, the book was chosen by Deerfield's Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association for this year's Big Read book of the year. The exhibition features portraits and interviews of veterans from the local area. Most of the veterans served in Vietnam, as did author O'Brien, an Army infantryman who was wounded in action. Some veterans of World War II, Iraq, Afghanistan and other conflicts also posed for Hallmark Institute of Photography instructor David Turner, one of the architects of

the project.

The exhibit will depict "the things they carried" and explore the themes of O'Brien's book in several ways, according to the PVMA's Outreach Coordinator, Sheila Damkoehler. Some veterans hold items they literally carried in wartime or are otherwise connected to their wartime service, such as letters from home, photographs of loved ones, medals and service ribbons, and hats displaying the insignia of their military unit. The expressions in Turner's photos also vividly depict the feelings - from strength to pride to sadness - that many veterans carried home from the war zones where they served, and still carry to this day. Excerpts from brief interviews with the veterans, juxtaposed with quotes from the novel, will be exhibited with the photos, providing additional insight into the tangible and intangible things that veterans carry.

The exhibit also aims to give a face and a voice to a cross section of local veterans who are, to the general public, largely anonymous, according to Robert M. Wilson, Executive Director of the Veterans Education Project.

The exhibition opening reception, available to the public at no charge, will take place at

The Gallery at Hallmark on April 8th from 3:00 to 7:00 p.m. The show will be on display Fridays through Sundays from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. through Sunday, June 5th, 2011.



Volunteers hold packages destined for servicemen and women overseas.

of snacks, toiletries, videos, books and games for men and women in the armed services. It only took an hour to fill over 40 packages and write personal notes to these young people from Greenfield, Shelburne, North Adams and other area towns. Laura Donaghy and her son Nikolas Martin, from Turners Falls, have participated before. Laura's brother Matt Cassidy, stationed in Kuwait last year,

came home in December of 2010. Her friend Kristin Letourneau's brother, Michael Letourneau, is currently stationed overseas. Spc. James Campbell of Millers Falls, whose deployment is ending soon, was a recipient of last November's shipment. He is expected to return from 11 months in Afghanistan with the 101st Airborne to Fort Campbell,

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### HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ERVING POLICE LOG

#### Brush Fire, Unlicensed Solicitation, Arrest for Break In

**Tuesday, 3/29**  
1:10 p.m. Criminal application issued to [redacted] in Orange, for operating a motor vehicle with a revoked registration and operating a motor vehicle without insurance.

**Wednesday, 3/30**  
11:40 a.m. Report of a brush fire on Route 2 at East Prospect Street. Assisted with same.

9:00 p.m. Report of a suspicious vehicle on East Prospect Street. Same called in and advised he is on his property and is all set.

**Thursday, 3/31**  
7:05 a.m. Assisted Gill police with call of a male subject in a white car screaming for help east of the bridge on Route 2. Checked area and beyond. Nothing found.

8:37 a.m. Report of a suspicious person on East Prospect Street.

Subject was yelling and disturbing the peace. Spoke with same. Advised to stop.

2:40 p.m. Report of erratic operator on Route 2 West bound. Gone on arrival.

2:50 p.m. Report of subject selling magazines without a permit on Pratt Street. Advised same that he needed a solicitation permit.

**Friday, 4/1**  
10:59 p.m. Traffic stop. Civil citation issued for marijuana.

**Saturday, 4/2**  
8:19 a.m. Criminal application issued to [redacted] for operating a motor vehicle after a license suspension, on Route 2.

11:00 a.m. Report of stray dog at Erving Fire Station. Picked up same and brought to pound.

6:00 p.m. Tenant/landlord dispute on East Prospect Street.

**Sunday, 4/3**  
11:00 p.m. Assist state police with male subject at French King Highway bridge.

**Monday, 4/4**  
11:30 a.m. Report of tractor trailer unit digging up the lawn at a French King Highway residence. Checked area for same. Gone on arrival.

2:15 p.m. Report of vehicle crash on Route 2 in rest area. Vehicle stuck in the mud. No injuries.

7:33 p.m. Arrested [redacted] for breaking and entering into a building, breaking and entering into a depository, and larceny.

**Tuesday, 4/5**  
12:26 a.m. Report of deer vs. motor vehicle accident on Northfield Road. Deer fled the area.

### Ambush on Montague Road

**LEVERETT** - A homeless vet, a street musician, a tortured therapist, part agit-prop, part psychodrama, *Ambush on T Street* comes to the Leverett Elementary School on Friday, April 15th, at 7:30 p.m., bringing the war back home again. As Wesley Blixt wrote, "Ultimately, however, *Ambush* is about neither politics nor therapy. Nor is it entirely about war.

In the end, *Ambush* is simply about the struggle of men to re-integrate lives that have been horribly, cruelly and violently fractured; about how they struggle in isolation and addiction; and about how, eventually, they may come to struggle together with the legacy they share. That we all share.

Beyond the dreamscapes, the mutations of time and memory, the rage and the bombast, there is a simple decency to this play; a simple humanism that is almost irresistible."

*Ambush* and *T-Street* stars Leverett's own John Sheldon, Montague's Al Miller, and Wendell's maestro of conflict resolution theater, actor and director Court Dorsey. Sponsored by the committee for a Leverett Peace Commission.

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# ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



JACK COUGHIN ILLUSTRATION

Heather Maloney Band CD release show, with special guest Brooke Brown Saracino, 9:30 p.m.

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: Dan Blakeslee, indie folk rock, 8 p.m.

Burrito Rojo, Turners Falls: Zydeco Connection, 8 - 11 p.m.

Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: Mike Stetson Band, 9:30 p.m.

Montague Congregational Church, Montague: Sugar Supper, 70th Annual Sugar on Snow Supper served family style, no tax, no tip, everything made on site, 5:30 p.m.

**SUNDAY, APRIL 10th**  
Deja Brew, Wendell: Le Chéile, an Irish session with Amanda

Country, Jason Aldean ticket giveaway, 8 - 10 p.m. with Damon Reeves and the Love Thieves. Free.

**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.

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, Saturday, 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.

Deja Brew, Wendell: Ellen Cogan and John Mason, jazz, 7:30 p.m. Free.

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aprilartsweekend.wordpress.com  
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**MONDAY, APRIL 18th:**  
Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Bingo, 8 p.m.

**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.

**EVERY FRIDAY AND SATURDAY NIGHT**  
Montague Inn: TNT Karaoke.

**EVERY THURSDAY NIGHT**  
Between the Uprights, Turners Falls: Acoustic open mic, every Thursday night, Dan, Kip and Shultz from *Curly Fingers DuPree* host. All are welcome. Acoustic guitar, bass and hand percussion provided or bring your own. 8:30 - 11:30 p.m.

**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 7th**  
Rendezvous, Turners Falls: The Falltown String Band performs with special guest performers, 7:30 - 10 p.m. Free.

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: The Collected Poets Series, featuring John Hennessy and Caroline Knox, 7 p.m.

Arts Block Café, Greenfield: Marco Benevento, the future of rock piano, 9 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: The Relics, Brian Mallet and Lefty Cullen playing all your favorite oldies from the 50's & 60's, 8 - 10 p.m.

**FRIDAY, APRIL 8th & 15th**  
**SATURDAY, APRIL 9th & 16th**

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Shea Theater, Turners Falls: Cabaret, co-directed by Jerry Marcanio and Sondra Radosh, 8 p.m. Additional shows on April 10th and 17th at 2 p.m.

**FRIDAY, APRIL 8th**  
Sloan Theater, Greenfield Community College: *The Roots of Peace Speakers Series*, featuring Paul Chappell, Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, "Why Peace is Possible and How We Can Achieve It." 12:00-1:30 p.m.

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: Coffeehouse Series: *Ramblin' Red and the Blackstone Riders*, croon cowboy tunes. 7 - 9 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: Richard Chase Group, acoustic driven originals, 9 - 11 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Chris Scanlon / The Doomsday Ladies, rock, 9:30 p.m.

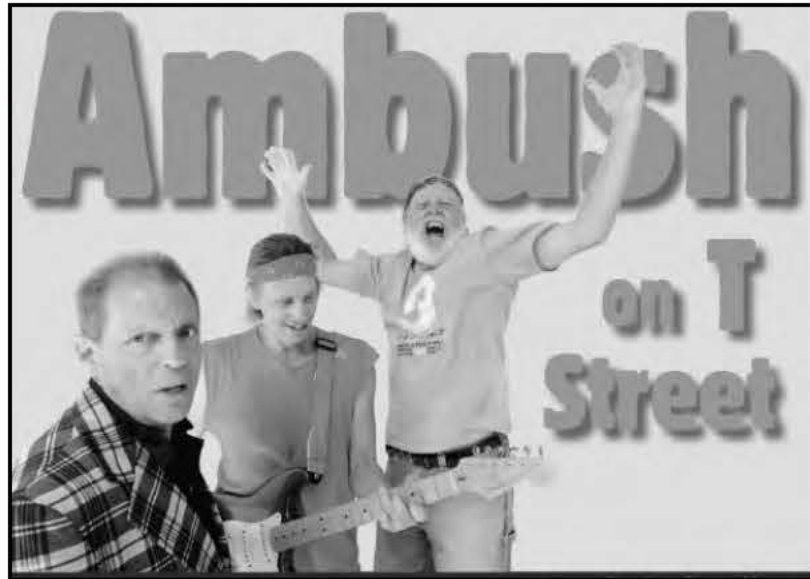
Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: *Disorderly Conduct*, 9:30 p.m.

**SATURDAY, APRIL 9th**  
*The Franklin County Spring Parade* will make a three mile loop, beginning at 1 p.m. at Sheffield School on Crocker Avenue. Then, a left onto Montague Street, and then turn left onto Turnpike Road. The parade will go past the Turners Falls High School, and take a left onto Millers Falls Road. At Scotty's Convenience Store, the parade will turn left onto High Street and end back at Sheffield. 1 - 3 p.m.

The Barnes Gallery, Leverett Crafts and Arts: 4th annual *Go, Kids Art, Go!* Celebrating the artist in every child. Featuring Tom Knights, Celtic Heels, Who'da Funk it. A day of music, dance, puppets, food, face painting, games, bake sale, raffle, and more... including Bob Hepner's Carnival Truck! 12 - 4 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Mother Turtle*, soul rock, 9 - 11 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls:



*Ambush on T Street, an original production featuring Court Dorsey, Al Miller, and John Sheldon, will be performed at the Leverett Elementary School on Friday, April 15th at 7:30 p.m.*

Bernhard, Jonathan Hohl Kennedy & Friends, 8 - 10 p.m.

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

**TUESDAY, APRIL 12th**  
Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Planet of the Apes*, on the big screen, 9:30 p.m.

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 13th**  
Deja Brew, Wendell: *Ukrainian Egg Painting with Anne Harding*, 7 - 9 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

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**RANGO PG**  
DAILY 12:15 3:15  
**PAUL R**  
DAILY 12:15 3:15 6:45 9:15  
**SUCKER PUNCH PG13**  
DAILY 6:45 9:15  
**ARTHUR PG13 DTS**  
DAILY 12:00 3:00 6:40 9:10

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### KUNST – UMWELT – NACHBARSCHAFT NEU DENKEN (Rethinking Art, Environment and Community)

BY ANNE HARDING

**GREAT FALLS** - Architectural studies professor Thom Long of Hampshire, Amherst and Mount Holyoke Colleges was at the Great Falls Discovery Center last Thursday to talk about an unusual grant-funded partnership between the European Union (in particular Hamburg, Germany), the Five Colleges and various Pioneer Valley organizations and communities.

Long's visit was the final workshop held in preparation for the "Riverscapes Learning Laboratory" to be held Friday and Saturday, April 7th and 8th at the Sovereign Bank Building in Springfield. The workshops were held in Springfield, Holyoke, Hadley and Turners Falls – all working on the revitalizing their communities. Long and his students hope to discern what defines the individual communities, identify their unique issues, recognize their commonalities and increase communication among them.

Long hopes the work will allow the individual towns to consider the region as a holistic community tied together by the Connecticut River. The importance of the river is a focal point of the research for each facet being considered – arts, economics, environment and community building.

The eighteen-month program will culminate in a celebratory event to be held on Europe Day, May 9th, 2012 that will highlight the winners of a design competition and will result in an interpretive installation in each of the four towns. The goal of the installations is to cultivate an understanding of the similarities and contrasts between the Connecticut River communities

and the chosen partner community of the Hamburg region of Germany, situated on the Elbe River.

The design criteria for the completion will be determined by the Learning Laboratory results and may or may not be community specific – but Long was looking for Turners Falls specifics last Thursday. Town administrator Frank Abbondanzio talked about the ups and downs of the town's history, and highlighted its recent strides, while noting the ongoing challenges of unused industrial buildings like the Strathmore Mill.

Town planner Walter Ramsey said the reuse of the Strathmore was complicated by its location on an industrial island with restricted access, due partly to a condemned pedestrian bridge. He reminded attendees of other issues like poor canoe access to the lower river reaches, and the problem of an urban village surrounded by water with no safe place to swim. Long said poor access to the river was a common issue among all the targeted communities.

Lisa Davol of Riverculture commented on the lack of a good, accessible vantage point for viewing the historic "Great Falls," but was very positive about the other advantages of Turners Falls, including diverse cultural events that continue to draw people to town.

Sara Bevilacqua of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife drew attention to the diverse environmental programs offered by all the partners of the Great Falls Discovery Center, and the recreational opportunities of the bike trail.



JAYNE ALLEN PHOTO  
Runners in the Connecticut River Internists' annual "Bruce's Run/Walk for Hospice" on the Turners Falls bike path. This year the event will be held on Sunday, April 17th Details: 774-2400, or go to [www.ctriverinternists.com](http://www.ctriverinternists.com)

from **BUDGET** pg 7 servers a special article came from Union 28's new business manager, Mike Kociela, who they suggested was making an end run around the normal budget process.

Kociela, hired late in the budget cycle from his former position as Greenfield's town accountant, attended a budget hearing with the school committee on March 14th, where he told the school committee that items like servers are routinely handled as capital requests, not maintenance budget expense

items, in Greenfield. The school committee, attempting to bring in a budget as close to level funded as possible – in the face of rising heating oil costs – for a fourth year in a row, jumped at the suggestion.

D'Errico said the request "came out of left field," and added, "I feel this is part of the problem of Union 28's relationship with the school." He talked of "administrative obesity" at the central office, with "very well paid bookkeepers and superintendent," and an information technology specialist

"not qualified to set it up. I'm just seeing a lot of incompetence."

Brazeau said, "We've spent three months going through the budget. To bring this up at the last minute... it's nice the new business manager thinks that."

But Gibavic said, "The town's kept them at 0% for three years – that's what comes of it."

Julie Shively shared the boards' unhappiness with the process, but allowed the new servers were needed.

Eventually, the selectboard seemed willing to go along with the request, provided someone from the school committee came to their next meeting to defend it.

Although the numbers on the revenue side are not yet firm, it does not appear the town will be able to make an appropriation to the stabilization account this year without resorting to an override.

The selectboard will recommend moving \$30,000 left over from the state's reimbursement for the school building project to begin to fund a revolving account to handle the expected liability of town and school retiree health benefits.

### Snowdrops, Crocus, and Soon - Rhubarb Pie

BY FRAN HEMOND

**MONTAGUE CENTER** - All they need is a little shelter and the hardy, early spring snowdrops pop up in unison.

Here at Cold Brook Farm they seem to be protected by the old hickory tree, its brown leaves and fallen branches, from the leftover winter winds of 2011.

*Galanthus nivalis* first appears with skinny green leaves and drooping white tight buds. It will be coaxed into bloom by a bit of warmth and sun. The varied clumps make a handsome harbinger of the bright yellow daffodils that will join them as singles in the yard at Cold Brook, the second proof that spring is on its way.

The pussy willows produced their furry little catkins that delight everyone but give them little status. The skunk cabbage, too, are handsome in their purple and red finery by the edge of the pond, but do not evoke the enthu-



Snowdrop (*Galanthus nivalis*)

siasm the blossoming plants bring forth.

A granite block that sits in the sun and radiates warmth plays host to a few crocus bulbs that have blossomed next to it with vigor. The yellow and blue flowers seem to give the little plants favored position.

But then we check out the

rhubarb. It's coming! So far, only the clump in the sheltered garden by the barn is making real progress. The rhubarb by the meadow open to the winds and frost has shown no signs of life. But the hopes of rhubarb pie make the appearance of the first awkward stalks the real hope of spring in the minds of many.

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