

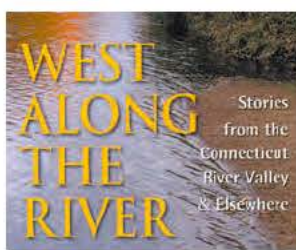


ELEGANT ENIGMAS

Gorey at the Atheneum

Page 8

Grand Jete, used by permission



IN PRINT

The Collected Columns of David Brule see Page 16

LAKE PLEASANT MILLERS FALLS MONTAGUE CENTER MONTAGUE CITY TURNERS FALLS

The Montague Reporter

YEAR 9 - NO. 22

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

MARCH 3, 2011

Leverett School Committee Balks at Another Level Funded Budget

BY DAVID DETMOLD - Driven partly by the rising cost of heating fuel brought on by instability in the Middle East and North Africa, the Leverett school committee Tuesday night instructed school administrators to draft a preliminary FY'12 budget with a \$15,519 (.9%) increase from last year.

Last week, the select-board had reiterated a request that the school committee present a level funded budget, but after working their way through more than \$20,000 in cuts to office supplies, maintenance, summer program services, textbooks and instructional materials, physical plant operations, special education contracted services, professional development, audio visual materials, and other items, the committee drew the line at .9%.

The school committee made the point that unlike the regional upper school budget, which has increased by 5.7% over the last three years, with an additional 3.6% increase (\$42,982) proposed in

Leverett's assessment for FY'12, the Leverett Elementary School (LES) has maintained an essentially level funded budget at \$1.69 million since FY'09.

Given contractual step increases for teachers and staff and typical annual increases in utilities and other fixed costs, level funding a school budget generally requires cuts from year to year, and for Leverett Elementary this has also held true.

Last year, for example, the school committee decided, over the protest of parents, to give up the Spanish language immersion program - saving \$18,000. This had been among the programs that had attracted school choice students to the Leverett Elementary School, each student bringing with them about \$5,000 in state aid.

Now, due mainly to increasing enrolment from students who live in Leverett, the number of school choice students at LES is declining, from 27 to a projected 24 for next year, principal Anne Ross see **LEVERETT** pg 9

Greenhouse Lettuce Takes Root at Turners Falls High School

Salad Bar "Suspended" Due to High Cost, Poor Quality



Robin Harrington points to lettuce seedlings at TFHS

BY MARK HUDYMA - The Turners Falls High School cafeteria will soon have fresh lettuce produced by the greenhouse classes. This development comes at the best possible time, as the salad bar has been recently "suspended" due to poor quality and the rising costs of produce.

Gill-Montague food service manager Jim Loynd said cold weather

in southern states and Mexico has so affected supplies of leaf lettuce and thin veined produce that even iceberg lettuce from California - "the cheapest of produce" - has risen in price from about \$20 for a 24-head case to \$70 for a 24-head case. "Price is one thing," said Loynd. "But we were still willing to maintain the salad bar until vendors started notifying

us that they could no longer guarantee the quality. It was essentially, 'You bought it, you own it.' We can't afford to spend \$70 on a case of iceberg lettuce and throw it in the dumpster."

But a home grown solution to this problem is taking root, as the two blocks of greenhouse classes at the high school are growing several beds of lettuce

under the expert guidance of teacher Robin Harrington.

Though most of the lettuce plants in the 750 square foot greenhouse are still seedlings, Harrington said she is very excited about the project. She said the greenhouse grown lettuce at the high school will help students appreciate other local foods, while see **LETTUCE** pg 13

MAHAR Votes \$12.1 Mil Budget

BY KATIE NOLAN - The Ralph C. Mahar regional school committee voted to go forward with the \$12.1 million FY'12 budget proposed by superintendent Michael Baldassarre Tuesday night. This amount represents a 1.72% increase over FY'11.

In the proposed budget, teacher salaries will rise 4%, due to step raises only, as the contract negotiated with the Mahar chapter of the Massachusetts Teachers Association (MTA) does not provide a cost of living raise for FY'12.

According to Baldassarre, health insurance costs were reduced by approximately \$100,000 by changing to the Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association (MIIA) system, after negotiations with the MTA. Formerly, the school used a "self insurance" plan, where Mahar maintained a health insurance trust account. Staff will also pay an increased percentage share of health insurance

costs (25%) in FY'12.

Baldassarre explained FY'12 is "year two of the zero based budget" presented for FY'11. The zero based approach used in FY'11 involved comprehensive review of every department and position and documentation from staff for every proposed expenditure. According to Baldassarre, the FY'12 budget was constructed on that base, using additional information gleaned from actual FY'11 spending.

He emphasized the budget process was transparent, conducted by a leadership team of faculty and administrators, with staff involvement at all levels. In his presentation, Baldassarre said transparency was essential, because, "If our funders are unfamiliar with our process or they do not believe in it, cuts to the budget may be more catastrophic to our organization."

A public hearing on the FY'12 budget will be conducted see **MAHAR** pg 7

Come As You Are at Turners Falls High School ~ NOT YOUR AVERAGE PLAY ~



(L-R) Ken Leng, Zach Demars, Ali McKenna, Jolina Blier, Corban Mailloux and Jasmine Richotte rehearse Come As You Are.

BY ZACK BOISVERT **GILL-MONTAGUE** - March has just begun, and that means the Turners Falls High School musical is just around the corner.

But for students at Turners, the process started back in December with auditions.

In previous years, the week preceding auditions

would feature a daily announcement encouraging students to try out for the play, accompanied by the title of whichever well known Broadway musical had been picked for revival. However, this year the students got a surprise.

The announcements did go on, every morning, like clockwork. "Please excuse

the interruption," a phrase students at the high school are quite familiar with, would ring out through halls and classroom, and Ms. Bailey would give the date and time of the auditions. But no play name.

That's because this year's director, a newcomer to the school community but not to theater, wanted

to see what he had to work with before choosing a show.

Even so, Jonathan Mirin, a graduate from Boston University's creative writing program, still did know what show to choose after seeing fifty or more students try out for auditions. Over the holi-

see **PLAY** pg 7

PET OF THE WEEK Contradictive



Midnight Green

My name is Midnight Green, and I'm a two-year-old female domestic short hair cat in need of a good home. I am full of contradictions. You will notice that I have a ton of energy, yet I absolutely love sleeping. I am an adventurous girl – nothing seems to worry me. The contradiction there is that I love nothing more than hanging out and I have been accused of being a couch potato. I need a forever family that will love me and all of my contradictions. Could that be you? To find out more about adopting me, please contact the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society at (413) 548-9898 or via email at info@dpvhs.org.

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LEVERETT LIBRARY NEWS

Classic Film *Catch 22* Next Sunday

The classic movie, *Catch 22*, starring Alan Arkin, Art Garfunkel, Bob Newhart, Anthony Perkins, Martin Sheen, and Jon Voight will screen at the Leverett Library, Montague Road, at 2:00 p.m., Sunday, March 13th. The film is a faithful

adaptation of the brilliant novel by Joseph Heller, showing that even the 'Good War' is crazy. Jim Perkins will moderate a discussion after the showing. Sponsored by the Leverett Council on Aging and the committee for a Leverett Peace Commission.

ERVING LIBRARY NEWS

Craft Session and Visiting Author Francie Lin

Friends of the Library will hold a craftmaking will take place at the library on Sunday, March 6th from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. The theme of the day will be "Spring"! Please bring your ideas and artistic talents so we can turn the library into a springtime sensation. Craft supplies along with examples of craft ideas will be available.

On Sunday, March 6th begin-

Town of Wendell Election Update

Polling hours for the May 2nd town election are noon to 8:00 p.m. Nomination papers must be submitted before 5:00 p.m. on March 14th, for certification of names. Final day to withdraw name from ballot is March 30th, by 5:00 p.m.

The final day to register to vote is April 12th, from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. and 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the town clerk office. For information contact Anna Hartjens, town clerk: (978) 544-6052 or email ahartjens@wildblue.net at home.

Selectboard 3 years

• Daniel W. Keller, 28 Cold Brook Road, candidate for re-election – accepted nomination

Board of Assessors 3 years, no nominations to date

Town Clerk 3 years

• Anna M.C.B. Hartjens, 270 Wendell Depot Road, candidate for re-election – accepted nomination
• Gretchen C. Smith, 129 Montague Road, nomination papers taken out

Tax Collector 3 years

• Penny Delorey, 97 Locke Hill Road, candidate for re-election – accepted nomination

Treasurer 3 years

• Carolyn U. Manley, candidate for re-election – accepted nomination

Board of Health 3 years

• Martha Ann Senn, 2 Center Street, candidate for re-election

ning at 4:00 p.m. visiting author Francie Lin will lead a discussion of her book, the *Foreigner*, followed by a light Asian buffet. Books are available. Register by calling (413) 423-3348. This is part of the ten town reading and discussion program being sponsored by Franklin County libraries. For more information please visit on thesamepagewma.wordpress.com.

Planning Board 5 years

• Deirdre E. Cabral, candidate for re-election

Planning Board 4 years (fill vacancy), no nominations to date

Moderator 1 year

• Kathy Ann Becker, 136 Locke Hill Road, candidate for re-election

Cemetery Commissioner 3 years

• Richard A. Wilder Sr., 6 Davis Turn Road, candidate for re-election

Road Commissioner 3 years

• William G. Clough, 95 Montague Road, candidate for re-election

• Richard J. Mackey, 17 Farley Road, nomination papers taken out

School Committee 3 years (Two)

• Kevin J. Skorupa, 58 Bullard Pasture Road, candidate for re-election

• Raymond J. DiDonato, 323 Lockes Village Road, candidate for re-election

School Committee 2 years (fill vacancy)

no nominations to date

School Committee 1 year (fill vacancy), no nominations to date

Tree Warden 1 year

• Peter S. Zera, 282 Lockes Village Road, candidate for re-election

Library Trustees 3 years (Two)

• Judith N. Putnam, 1 Bullard Pasture Road, candidate for re-election – accepted nomination

• Sylvia A. Wetherby, 33 Morse Village Road, candidate for re-election

Library Trustee 2 years (fill vacancy), no nominations to date

Library Trustee 1 year (fill vacancy), no nominations to date

SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES – March 7th - 11th

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. Council on Aging Director is Roberta Potter. All fitness classes are supported by a grant from the Executive Office of Elder Affairs. Voluntary donations are accepted. For 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. Tuesday afternoon painting classes with David Sund will resume on March 15th.

Monday, March 7th

10:00 a.m. Senior Aerobics

10:45 a.m. Chair Exercise

1:00 p.m. Knitting Circle

Tuesday, March 8th

10:30 a.m. Yoga

Wednesday, March 9th

9:00 a.m. Foot Clinic by appointment

10:00 a.m. Aerobics

11:15 a.m. Friends Meeting

12:00 noon Monthly Birthday Lunch, cake by Food City

Thursday, March 10th

9:00 a.m. Tai Chi

10:00 a.m. Coffee and Conversation

1:00 p.m. Pitch

Friday, March 11th

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

MORE LEVERETT LIBRARY NEWS

Green Burial Committee Presentation

There will be a presentation on green burial by members of the Green Burial committee of the Funeral Consumers Alliance of Western Massachusetts on Tuesday, March 8th, 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the Leverett Library, 75 Montague Road.

Learn about natural burial and efforts to establish a green cemetery in Western Massachusetts.

Historic Bridge Facts

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

- It was Late November of 1937 and the water level in the Connecticut River was rising. For a time it was feared that the recently erected falsework could be washed away. The heavy steel beams that rested upon it might be lost.
- By Christmas time, about one-third of the steel had been erected. Unseasonably fair weather brought with it a drop in the water level of the river.
- Working conditions were aided by this and the schedule for the construction project moved forward unabated by a possible major setback.

More bridge facts next week!

WENDELL LIBRARY NEWS

Science Fiction, Horror Series presents *Logan's Run*

The Science Fiction and Horror film series, on Saturday, March 5th, at 7:30 p.m. presents *Logan's Run*. Welcome to the 23rd century, a perfect world of total pleasure. The only thing you can't have is your 30th birthday. On Lastday, senior citizens must go through the ritual of "renewal," where a fiery carousel spins them into oblivion. "Runners" are skeptics who seek

to escape this ceremonial execution.

Logan's Run won an Oscar for best special effects, which include the first film use of laser beam holography, and offers an ingenious insight to tomorrow. Rated PG

For more information about the Wendell Free Library visit its webpage at wendellfreelibrary.org or call (978) 544-3559.

Rally for a Coal Free Massachusetts

Greenpeace, HealthLink, and other allies will hold a rally at the State House on Friday, March 4th at noon calling for a coal-free Massachusetts with the first step of closing the Salem Harbor coal

plant by 2012. Environmentalists will call on Governor Patrick to take the lead and support locals who have been fighting to close this old, dirty plant for years. They're asking Patrick to publicly call for the closing of the plant by the end of 2012.

For more info contact David Lands, Greenpeace field organizer via email at dlands@greenpeace.org or call (614) 946-0563.

can be provided for meals, shopping, or medical necessity. Please call the Senior Center at (413) 423-3308 to find out when the next blood pressure clinic will be held.

Monday, March 7th

9:00 a.m. Tai Chi

10:00 a.m. Osteo-Exercise

12:00 p.m. Pitch

Tuesday, March 8th

8:45 a.m. Chair Aerobics

12:30 p.m. Painting

Wednesday, March 9th

8:45 a.m. Line Dancing/Zumba

12:00 p.m. Bingo

Thursday, March 10th

8:45 a.m. Aerobics

Friday, March 11th

11:30 a.m. Lunch - Call the Center for details.

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



Marie Brunneau, 7, of Monson, stands in solidarity with Wisconsin public employees in Springfield on February 22nd. Protests over union rollbacks continue for a third week, nationwide.

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JESSICA LARVIN ILLUSTRATION

Local Briefs

COMPILED BY DON CLEGG - The Franklin County CDC is offering a 12-week, 36-hour class for people serious about their business. The class will show participants how to complete a business plan for starting and sustaining a business and provide an opportunity to evaluate a business idea in a supportive way. Guest speakers complement the material. The class begins Tuesday, March 8th and runs through May 31st, from 6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. at the Community Development Corporation, 324 Wells Street, in Greenfield. For more information, call 413-774-7204 x 107.

Spend a **Saturday at the movies** and you may just be helping an income eligible Northfield Mount Hermon School student go to college. On March 5th, the NMH Upward Bound Parent Advisory Council is sponsoring a 9:30 a.m. showing of the newly released animated movie "Rango," the story of a chameleon with an identity crisis, featuring the voice of Johnny Depp. The showing is at the Greenfield Garden Cinemas, 361 Main St, in Greenfield. Tickets are \$5.00 with all proceeds benefiting the scholarship fund.

Sharon Porlier called to say her long awaited reopening of the fire damaged **Box Car** restaurant is finally at hand. Porlier plans to reopen the popular Erving Center eatery on

Thursday, March 17th, for breakfast and lunch, same as always.

Mardi Gras Dinner and "**Fat Tuesday**" celebration on Saturday, March 5th, starting at 5:00 p.m. at Our Lady of Peace Parish Hall, 90 7th Street, in Turners Falls. The menu will consist of chicken and biscuits, butternut squash, peas, cole slaw, cranberry sauce, appetizers and a fabulous dessert of apple crisp with vanilla ice cream. You can enjoy all this food for just \$8.00, adults, and \$4.00, children. Call 413-863-2585 for tickets.

Baystate Franklin Medical Center's Oncology Department, in partnership with Forest Moon, will present two free eight-week yoga series, "**Gentle Yoga for Breast Cancer Survivors**." One series will take place on Sundays, March 6th - April 24th, from 4 - 5:30 p.m., in the Shelburne Falls Yoga Studio. The second series will take place at the YMCA in Greenfield, on Wednesday, March 9th - April 27th, from 11:45 a.m. - 1:15 p.m. To register for Gentle Yoga, contact Pam Roberts at 413-625-2402 or email Roberts at pamro@aol.com. For more info, visit www.forestmoon.org.

Are you ready for some Elton John music? No, Sir Elton is not coming to town, however "**Bennie and the Jets**" will be performing one night only at the Shea Theater, Avenue A, in Turners Falls on Friday, March

11th, at 8:00 p.m. "Bennie and the Jets," an Elton John tribute band (who knew?) are just back from entertaining troops in Iraq and Kuwait. So stick around, you're gonna hear electric music and solid walls of sound.

Meanwhile, **Representative Denise Andrews (D-Orange)** testified last week at a rate hearing in Boston before the Division of Health Care finance and policy about proposed cuts in reimbursement rates for adult day health services. "If adult day care services were no longer available due to rate cuts, there will be a dramatic negative impact on individuals and families I represent" Andrews said. "Many clients would have no other choice but to enter a much more costly nursing home care facility." Andrews urged the panel to maintain the current reimbursement rates and when possible in the future expand adult day care services, since they are "a lower cost and higher quality of life option for individuals, families and our Commonwealth."

The **Montague Business Association** will meet on Tuesday, March 8th, at 4:30 p.m. at About Face Computers, Avenue A and 4th Street, in Turners Falls. New Montague business owners are welcome. *Send items for local briefs to: reporter-local@montague-ma.net*

Dinosaur Tracks to Fuel Local Tourism

GREENFIELD - The Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association (PVMA) in Deerfield has been awarded a 2011 John and Abigail Adams grant of \$28,000 to support their initiative, 'Fossil Fuel for the Valley,' to develop dinosaur-track-themed tourism in the Pioneer Valley. The first projects will be in the Greenfield area, where "bird tracks," later identified as dinosaur footprints, were found on Bank Row in 1835.

"This is a chance for towns in the upper Valley to show off their part in the history of American science," said Timothy Neumann, PVMA's executive director. "It's a popular topic that can draw people from other parts of the state, and even outside the state, to come see what we've got. Kids love dinosaurs, parents love what their kids love, and dinosaur enthusiasts will go anywhere to

BY IVAN USSACH

ATHOL - The Millers River Watershed Council (MRWC) is taking a creative and community-minded approach to funding the costs of analyzing water samples from the Millers and Otter Rivers for bacteria. It's called "Adopt-a-Sample," and the idea is simple. Community residents and other watershed friends can cover the cost for laboratory analysis of a single bacterial sample for a \$25 donation.

From May to September, MRWC plans to sample both rivers twice a month at a total of 20 locations. The laboratory costs for such a sampling program quickly add up. MRWC hopes community support will make it possible to complete a full sampling program. The group received its first sampling donations last week, and is aiming to fund the cost of 100 samples by April.

"This is a great way for individuals, or businesses for that matter, to contribute in a very direct and practical way to ensuring that our local rivers do not suffer from bacterial contamination and are safe to enjoy," said

see this kind of stuff."

Activities covered by the grant include a Jurassic Roadshow in downtown Greenfield, where fossil enthusiasts will be able to bring their fossil specimens for identification by a paleontologist, and local collectors and historical societies will display their items related to the footprints. The grant also will issue a Request for Proposals for artists to create public art celebrating the tracks and mini-grants for jewelers, artists, confectioners, and historical societies to create craft items and exhibits. Other activities covered by the grant include creation of a map of places people can go to see dinosaur footprints in the Pioneer Valley; professional education for teachers; and dinosaur movies, talks, and other events.

For more info, contact: Sarah Doyle at 863-9972, or ich-norox2@gmail.com.

Watershed Council launches "Adopt-a-Sample" for Millers and Otter Rivers

MRWC president David Brule. Government testing of rivers for bacterial testing is extremely limited. "We want to make sure that people using the rivers for recreation are not at risk," Brule added.

The 20 planned sampling sites are located along the main stem of the Millers River from Winchendon to Erving, and along the Otter River in Gardner and Templeton. Donations for the bacterial sampling program can be sent to MRWC at 100 Main Street, Athol, MA 01331, and checks should be marked "Adopt-a-Sample." Anyone interested in volunteering to collect water samples should contact MRWC at 978-248-9491 or council@millersriver.net.

Energy Saving Testimonials Sought

LEVERETT - The Leverett Energy Committee invites all Leverett residents to share their experiences in reducing energy use. These testimonials will be included in a booklet on energy issues to be distributed to every household in town meeting. Please call Portia at 548-9737, or email her pweiskel@post.harvard.edu or cynthia@crocker.com, by March 15th.

Best Student Nature Essay Sought in Wendell

Mass Audubon owns many acres of land in Wendell, but as a non-profit organization, they are not required to pay taxes on their property. In recognition of this, Mass Audubon is offering a greatly reduced price for one Wendell student to attend Camp Wildwood in Rindge, NH.

Wildwood combines camp activities such as kayaking, hiking, and swimming, with the chance to learn about the environment and the natural world.

The fee for this one-week overnight program is regularly \$973; through the Mass Audubon

campership, however, the family will be asked to pay only \$50 of this cost.

In order to be considered for the campership, the selectboard asks interested students to write a 300 -500 word essay on the importance of nature. The selectboard and the conservation commission will then choose the essay that best captures the spirit of this theme.

Essays are due by March 15th. Please send them to: Wendell Selectboard, P.O. Box 41, Wendell, MA 01379. For more info, call 978-544-3395.

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Corporate Tax Dodgers

BY CHUCK COLLINS

JAMAICA PLAIN - Instead of cutting state and federal budgets, the United States should crack down on the corporate tax dodgers thumbing their noses at us.

Across the nation, states are making deep cuts that will wreck the quality of life for everyone to close budget gaps that total more than \$100 billion.

But there's a more sensible option. Overseas tax havens enable companies to pretend their profits are earned in other countries like the Cayman Islands. Simply making that ruse illegal would bring home an estimated \$100 billion a year.

The next time you read a story about some politician bemoaning that "there's no money" and "we have to make cuts," just point to artful tax dodgers in our midst.

They include some of the banks that trashed the economy but gladly took our tax dollars to stay alive after the economic meltdown. Bank of America. Wells Fargo. Citigroup.

Goldman Sachs took a \$10 billion taxpayer bailout but then gamed its effective tax rate down to one percent through what its shakedown-artist executives call "changes in geographic earnings mix." Shame on them. Pay up.

See that FedEx delivery van go by on the roads you paid for? Pay up FedEx! Don't pretend you're not making billions in the U.S. Don't lie and tell us you made all those profits on some island with more palm trees than people. We know the demand for coconut delivery isn't that big.

These corporations are heavy users of our taxpayer funded public infrastructure and property rights protection systems. They use our regulated marketplace, call upon our law enforcement system and judiciary to remedy disputes. They're protected by U.S. police forces and firefighters. They enjoy all the privileges and benefits of tax-paying citizens. They just don't pay their fair share for them.

So, ExxonMobil: the next time your gas station erupts in flames, why don't you call the fire department on the Cayman Islands? Or when someone holds up the joint,

how about calling the Luxembourg police, since that's where you claim your profits so you don't have to pay the taxes you owe Uncle Sam.

Hey, Pfizer. Without our remarkable taxpayer-funded system of patents and intellectual property rights protections, everyone and their brother would be making Viagra and undercutting your sales of little blue pills. Pay up!

Those of us who pay sales taxes and have income taxes withheld from our paychecks will bear the brunt of state and federal budget cuts in schools, public transportation, and recreational facilities. Our most vulnerable family members and neighbors will suffer thanks to cuts in mental health services, elder care, and Medicaid.

Oh yes, and children. Arizona is cutting health care for 47,000 children. California, New York, and Mississippi are cutting K-12 education funding. Hey, kids don't vote. Nor do they have corporate lobbyists. An estimated 900,000 jobs will be cut, including teachers, firefighters, police officers, and medical first responders.

Boeing, you want another contract for a taxpayer-funded military jet? Well, pay up! Pay up General Electric, Mattel, Dow Chemical, Hewlett-Packard, and Cisco. Yes, we know you pay some taxes. But look these children who are losing their health insurance and teaching aides in the eye. Tell them you're paying your fair share.

These global corporations will complain that forcing them to pay their fair share of taxes will "kill jobs." Let's be clear: the patriotic businesses that currently pay their taxes and have to compete against these tax dodgers are the employers we want. Forcing domestic banks, retailers, and manufacturers to have to compete against companies that can game the tax system undercuts U.S. jobs.

The next time you're waiting longer for a bus or train than you should, or someone you know can't get timely mental health or drug treatment services, remember the tax dodgers. The next time

see **DODGERS** pg 5



In This Sign You Will Conquer

In hoc signo vinces. That is, in this sign you will conquer.

This is what Constantine the Roman Emperor 'heard' when he 'saw' the cross in the sky, according to Bishop Eusebius, Constantine's publicist, though skeptical of the Emperor's "homousian" (editor: roughly, the 'oneness' of Jesus with God) imposed on the Council of Nicea, for he, Eusebius, could not swallow that Jesus was God.

Nevertheless, Caesar imposed the belief even unto Ana-pedo-baptism, and despite the Reformation.

Jesus was but one among the legions of victims of Roman

torture and judicial murder. They all had to tote the instrument of their torture and death to the place of execution, as if now those 'sentenced' to death, or just torture, we required to carry an electric chair or a water-board, some series of stations.

I'm not talking about the familiar fact that under the sign of the cross myriads have been killed or maimed. I'm calling your attention to the fact that the cross, the State's instrument of torture and death, was initially imposed upon us as Caesar's symbol of state power.

The author of the letter

printed in *MR IX #20* ("Not a Sign but a Symbol of Faith") missed my bottom line: the obtrusiveness of the sign or symbol on the public thoroughfare. I don't think it's even legal.

As for forcing the coop to take down the painting: the theme of the painting (see: *MR IX #12* "Painting at Village Coop Removed Following Complaint by Local Pastor") is the violation of Jesus' corpse by the Church. It is in no way an attack on Jesus. It is an attack on the Church in anger at its exploitation of the death of Jesus.

- Dan Bennett
North Leverett

GUEST EDITORIAL

BY GINI BROWN

BERKELEY, CA - The U.S. Government should consider cutting back its bloated defense budget and start facilitating a Wal-Mart agenda in the name of national security. Local governments should do their part and support this concept as part of our patriotic duty.

Here's why.

Given that everything in a Wal-Mart store comes from China, it's another given that no matter how big and mighty China becomes they are not going to send missiles our way if every town in America has at least one Wal-Mart selling their exports. That would be shooting themselves in the foot. Let's make the global economy work for us for a change.

The rest of the world may be getting all the blue collar jobs, or blue sari jobs, but we're still a country that likes to buy

Providing National Security While Lowering the National Debt One Wal-Mart at a Time

cheap stuff and we're probably going to be that sort of country for a long time to come, at least until we run out of landfill space. But even retired landfills can be used for building more Wal-Marts. An asphalt parking lot is ideal for capping a landfill. A town the size of Greenfield may even want to consider having more than one Wal-Mart, just for the added security it would provide.

The U.S. currently has about 3500 Wal-Marts. But there are still many exposed small towns that remain vulnerable to missile attack should China someday want to call in our debts, raise the interest rate on us, or buy up more infrastructure than we're currently willing to sell.

Any number of possible international scenarios could occur, and they often do when you no longer hold the seat of solvency or leveraging power.

What could be more beautiful than having the private sector finance key elements of our national security?

I also don't understand why people in Turners keep fretting about losing their beloved Food City due to all the Turners folk with cars taking their 'buying power' to the new Wal-Mart over the hill. As soon as Food City goes out of business who do you think is going to be waiting to take its place? Duh! That's right, Turners will have their own Wal-Mart in no time. Everyone just needs to be patient.

So why all the grumbling see **NATIONAL** page 12

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OP ED

Wisconsin and the Real World of Collective Bargaining

BY JEFF SINGLETON

GILL-MONTAGUE - Over the past three weeks, public employee unions and their supporters have built a national protest movement attacking the anti-union legislation proposed by the governor of Wisconsin, Scott Walker. The protests' colorful rhetoric has focused on the his-

toric gains for workers attributed to union organizing. These include the eight hour day, a living wage, health insurance, and the democratic right to organize and bargain. The message is clear - without the current system of collective bargaining we will return to the conditions that existed for workers a century ago.

Ironically, just as this Battle of

Wisconsin was heating up, four members of the Gill-Montague regional school committee briefly experienced the real world of collective bargaining. At a recent negotiating session, we submitted a modest proposal that the district reduce its current contribution to employee health care from 90% to 80%, saving the district about \$170,000. We pointed

out that the current payment rate is above that of most other districts. Montague's unionized town employees accepted an 80% contribution rate in 2008. We pointed to the need for savings in this area given our fiscal constraints, recently negotiated wage increases, and the long-term fiscal plan approved by the district, towns and state. We proposed to phase in the change, admittedly an economic challenge for employees, over a four-year period.

Had the meeting been televised, a cable surfer arriving in time for the union response might have thought that school commit-

tee members were in fact corporate stockholders attempting to pocket the health insurance savings. The union leadership accused us of not appreciating our staff and ignoring the many sacrifices that had been made over the past decade. It was argued that the district had somehow "taken" all the savings from joining the state health plan (GIC) in 2008 and not given any to the staff.

The discussion was dominated by a barrage of complaints, many not related at all to the proposal on the table.

The basic math of our proposal was ignored in the union response. So too was the fact that our negotiating team was composed of four school committee members who had never represented the district in a bargaining session and who were hardly "anti-union." Yet the goal seemed to be to completely alienate (or intimidate?) us while encouraging strong feelings of victimization among the staff.

The proposal on collective bargaining by Wisconsin's Republican governor Scott Walker is partisan and extreme. It eliminates representation for some groups, severely limits it for others and maintains the status quo for unions that supported the governor in the recent election. The proposal drags in extra-

see COLLECTIVE pg 11

Hang Together to Support the Rights of Workers

BY TERRY PLOTKIN

GREENFIELD - "If we do not hang together, we shall surely hang separately." Thomas Paine used these words to encourage those that stood against Britain and King George preceding the Revolutionary War. These rebels for democracy were serious people who were ready to do whatever it took to throw off their colonial status when they pledged in the Declaration of Independence "their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor."

Today, the pettiness and gridlock that is Washington has moved the stage for change elsewhere. Central and South America are on the move; real democracy is taking hold. The disenfranchised masses of the Arab world, where the common people can no longer tolerate despotism in the name of stability, are pushing hard now for social

and economic reforms. It took almost the entire society of Egypt to rise up as one to put an end in a few weeks to the dictator who had been oppressing them for over 30 years.

A teacher in Bahrain involved in the struggle for basic rights there said about the bloodshed: "We don't fear death anymore."

You can only push people so far. May they be wise enough, strong enough, and unified enough to succeed at the hard work for the democratic change they yearn for.

On to the American heartland, where the hard-fought rights of workers to organize to better and protect themselves is under assault. Under the pretext of balancing state budgets, a plan is being executed to smash the unions. At the top of the list are the teacher organizations. Wisconsin is first; many states are

planning to follow.

If the Republican governors and their backers win, it will be another hammer blow to the hopes and aspirations of the American worker.

Demonstrations alone will not save the day. The history of American labor shows that it was strikes and sit-ins, along with the support of the community, that helped workers gain their rights.

These rights, and the prosperity they ushered in, did not come easy and they should not be taken lightly. If unionized workers in Wisconsin do not respond strongly, while backing the teachers, it will come back to haunt them. If teachers and municipal workers in other states look the other way, and just go about their honorable and vital work, while doing nothing to stop this raid upon the rights of workers in Wisconsin, then we will all hang separately.

DODGERS from pg 4

your car hits a pothole or your kid's teacher loses her job, remember the corporations that are using armies of accountants to lower their tax bills.

In a democracy, if we sit back and grumble, we get what we deserve. We're chumps until we wake up and force our members of Congress to stop tax haven abuse.

Chuck Collins, a former Montague resident, directs the Program on Inequality and the Common Good at the Institute for Policy Studies. This article first appeared in Other Words.



Conyers Reintroduces "Expanded and Improved Medicare for All" Bill

WASHINGTON - Representative John Conyers, Jr. (D-Mich.), a long-time national leader for non-profit, publicly-financed universal health care, last month re-introduced H.R. 676, "The Expanded and Improved Medicare for All Act." The single payer, universal health care bill, which has been introduced since 2003, has 25 original cosponsors, and has sparked a growing national movement in support of the bill. The bill had 85 cosponsors in the 111th Congress, and has the support of over 17,000 doctors, nurses, organized labor, and many activists across the country.

"I am so pleased to announce that we have reintroduced H.R. 676, 'The Improved and Expanded Medicare for All Act' in the 112th Congress, with 25 original cosponsors," said Conyers. "The bill is almost identical to the single payer uni-

versal health care bill we introduced in the 111th Congress, but we have expanded the benefits package to include coverage of medically necessary oral surgery, nutritional, and dietary health care services," said Conyers.

"President Obama and the Democrats in Congress passed historic health reform last year. To his credit, President Obama stated in his 2011 State of the Union Address that he is open to making changes to the law, so it can be improved and strengthened. This presents a unique opportunity for supporters of improved Medicare for All to work together in a constructive way towards transitioning our for-profit and costly health care system to a high-quality, simple, and cost-effective improved Medicare for All program.

"Millions of Americans are frustrated with rising health care costs, and have a deep mistrust of

private health insurance companies. The for-profit medicine model has resulted in rationed care and created undue stress and financial hardships for millions of Americans across the nation. Americans are smart - they know improved Medicare for All works in other countries. They also know that our own Medicare program, although not perfect, is a proven and efficient method for providing health care to America's seniors.

"Perhaps this is why states like Vermont and California are very serious about transitioning towards publicly-financed universal health care programs. The Vermont State Legislature, with the full backing of Governor Peter Shumlin, will most likely pass the nation's first ever state-based publicly-financed single-payer program sometime this year. Success in Vermont could pave the way for the creation of

improved Medicare for All programs in other states, and ultimately provide for the passage of H.R. 676."

Conyers added, "Improved and expanded Medicare for All is inevitable in America. It is just a matter of when it will happen. Single-payer health care systems have successfully contained health care costs and provided quality health care in countries in Europe, along with Taiwan, Japan, and Canada. We can no longer continue to embrace the idea that private insurance companies and corporate-owned hospitals and clinics will bring down the costs of health care on their own. The time has come for deep systemic change in our health care system, and a large dose of common sense."

His statement comes at the same time as the Massachusetts Public Interest Research Group issued a release about the \$11

million bonus and severance package given to Cleve Killingsworth, the former CEO of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts, when he abruptly resigned last year: "When insurance companies pay such absurdly high salaries, the public loses faith that we can solve the problem of soaring health care costs. This package, worth \$11 million, going to one single person, equals the combined annual cost of health care premiums for almost 900 families in the state. The rising cost of health care is on the minds of just about every consumer in our state, and this disclosure reminds us that we have plenty of stones left to overturn in the effort to control costs," MASSPIRG said. For more info, contact the Western Mass Single Payer Network; Jon Weissman, chair, 640 Page Boulevard #101, Springfield, MA 01104. (413) 827-0301 x1.

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NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD**Town Counsel Advises Delay on Usher Mill Cleanup**

JOSEPH A. PARZYCH PHOTO

Patriots Environmental Owner Kurt Bussiere and Excavator Operator Gary Bond at the Usher Mill Site in 2008

BY KATIE NOLAN - Town counsel Donna McNicol met with the selectboard February 24th to consider the questions: who owns the former Usher Mill and who is responsible for cleanup costs at that property?

She also discussed a new drive-through business zoning proposal, ethics rules, and the open meeting law.

The seven-acre Usher Mill property on Arch Street in Erving Center was bought by Patriots Environmental, a salvage firm from Worcester, in 2007, shortly after the main former mill buildings burned in an arson fire. Patriots has not paid any taxes on the property since 2007, although the company did remove a good deal of salvageable material,

including southern pine supporting beams, scrap metal, intact bricks, and concrete rubble for hard-pack during the winter after the fire.

Selectboard chair Andrew Goodwin reported that town treasurer Margaret Sullivan expects the town will take possession of the property in mid-August of this year.

Situated by the Millers River, the Usher site is rich in history, starting with a grist mill in 1827. In 1918, the Heywood Wakefield Furniture Builders constructed their plant. In 1930, the Fred W. Mears Heel Company manufactured heels for women's shoes on the site until 1964. In 1964, Harry Usher Housen bought the plant and began making paper at the site as the Usher

Division of the Erving Paper Company, until approximately 1990. The plant has remained vacant since.

McNicol explained that taking possession of a property for back taxes involves three steps: placing a lien on a property; tax taking and then filing with the registry of deeds that the tax taking has been done; and one year after the tax taking, foreclosure of the right of redemption. Until the right of redemption foreclosure is complete, the tax-owing owner has the right to pay the back taxes and penalties and resume possession.

McNicol said because the town has completed the second step, "In some ways, Erving is now the

see ERVING pg 10

NOTES FROM THE GILL SELECTBOARD**Gill May Get By with Level Funding**

BY DAVID DETMOLD - If the price of diesel and heating fuel doesn't escalate too fast, too far; if no major piece of equipment breaks down, if town departments bring in level funded budgets as requested and do not bring in any additional surprises in the way of unanticipated capital requests, and if no further cuts in state aid occur between now and town meeting day, the town of Gill may be able to fund its operating budget and pay its school assessments and still have about \$50,000 left over, town administrator Ray Purington told the selectboard on Monday.

"It's not as bad as it could be," said Purington, "considering free cash has dropped \$30,000," from last year, "new growth is down [an estimated \$13,000], state aid has dropped [at least \$17,000, possible \$24,000] and local receipts are lower," [by about \$7,000].

Selectboard member Ann Banash called Purington's rough draft of expenses and revenues for FY'12, "a good start." She added, "We may be looking at level funding being OK."

The selectboard has also asked town departments to submit budgets with a 10% decrease from last year's spending, in case the expense and revenue picture worsens.

It is all too soon to tell, naturally, and even this scenario depends on town departments being able to

keep as close as possible to level funding for the second year in a row, after many years of cuts. Last year, town employees were given a 3% cost of living increase, and those raises were kept outside the request for level funding for departments. This year, Purington said, the personnel board has recommended a 1.3% COLA for employees, and departments will be asked to submit a level funded budget including those raises, which would total about \$450 for the fire department, and \$1900 for both the police and fire department.

Additionally, Purington said last year town meeting approved a special article for \$14,000 in police part time salaries, and there is no telling, yet, how part time police salaries will be approached in this year's budget.

The town is experiencing some breathing room, according to Banash, because the Gill-Montague schools have agreed to level fund their budget for the second year in a row.

"It makes a huge impact," said Banash, speaking of the level funded school budget. "In the days of \$100,000 increases in their assessment, we would be looking at a \$50,000 deficit in our budget right now."

The town will experience \$23,000 increases in assessments for both the Gill-Montague schools and the Franklin County Tech

School, due to increases in the percentages of students from Gill attending those two districts.

This will be offset slightly by a \$21,000 drop in building inspection fees for the Franklin County cooperative inspection program, now that building projects at Northfield Mount Hermon have largely reached completion.

Despite the heavy snow and persistent ice this winter, Purington reported that highway superintendent Mick LaClaire is still within the budget for snow and ice removal and overtime pay. "He's doing a great job managing the roads, and managing the budget for us."

In other news, the selectboard approved the first payment for the design of the pump replacement project at the Riverside Water Department's pump house. The board paid out the first \$3,125 to Tighe and Bond for the \$12,000 design bill, out of a total project cost of between \$60,000 and \$65,000. That project is expected to go out to bid shortly, and be completed by the end of the construction season this year, Purington said. Funds for the entire cost of that repair project are coming from an escrow account maintained for Gill by the Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Agency, from funds paid back from zero interest housing rehab

see GILL pg 11

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from **PLAY** page 1

days, while the students waited to hear the decision, Mirin decided not to choose one of the typical musicals from the Broadway canon, but instead a play written by Massachusetts authors Sebastian Stuart and Stephen McCauley, with songs by Narcissa Campion and Stephen McCauley.

The show, *Come as You Are*, takes place in 1948 at a vacation resort called the Average Hotel in the Catskill mountains. The

post-war economy has not been kind to the hotel, and foreclosure seems imminent.

Luckily for hotel owner, Beatrice O'Bannion (sophomore Brooke Martineau), hears news that a famous resort reviewer is visiting, and things begin to look up. But Beatrice does not think the author of the "Mushlen Guide" will enjoy his stay at the Average Hotel after touring the "poshest resorts," so the staff puts on a faux French atmosphere to fool the professional critic.

After sprucing up the hotel, now called L'Hotel Average, a plethora of zany characters each of whom Beatrice and the staff think might perhaps be Mr. Mushlen — or one of his writers — in disguise begin arriving for their vacations.

Among them are the depressed Sluggo family (junior Jesse Langknecht, senior Rachel Dillenback, and middle schoolers Hailey Black and Zach Demers), the marriage obsessed Mrs. Bouffant (junior Jolina Blier) and her bookworm niece Rosalind,

who wants nothing to do with love (senior Natasha Vaughn), a butterfly chaser with a speech impediment, Mr. Grumblerumble (Langknecht's second role), washed up actor Mr. Carrymore (junior Corban Mailloux), and Daniel O'Bannion, Beatrice's husband, who had been missing in action in the Pacific and presumed dead.

These characters wind up in wild interactions with the hotel's dynamic staff, including a hyperactive exercise coach, Flippy Dipster (junior Sam Letcher),

and an egotistical maid named Maureen (senior Sarah Crowell).

Come as You Are is filled with humor, song, and dance, a heart touching plot, illusions of grandeur and down home morals. Come as you are, and watch the annual musical at the Turners Falls High School on March 11th at 7 p.m., or March 12th at either 3 p.m. or 7 p.m., and you will not leave unsatisfied.

Zach Boisvert is a senior at Turners Falls High School



MAHAR from pg 1

ducted at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, April 5th at Mahar.

Baldassarre and school committee members also plan to present the FY'12 budget in Mahar member towns over the next few months.

The school committee voted to approve the shared cost agreement for a consolidated central administration for Orange Elementary Schools, Petersham Central School, and Mahar. These three districts have recently agreed to regionalize.

Under this agreement, the Mahar region will pay 72% of the superintendent's salary, 1% of the salary of the assistant superintendent of elementary education, and 70% of the salary of the assistant superintendent for teaching, learning, and accountability. The Orange and Petersham elementary school districts will pay the remaining percentages of costs for the superintendent and assistants.

Orange resident George Willard asked about the new position of assistant superintendent for teaching, learning, and accountability, asking, "Are we getting a little top heavy? I'd rather see people in the classroom working with the students."

Baldassarre replied this organization reflects a shifting of staff positions already in place at Mahar, Orange and Petersham.

He said the new assistant superintendent would be focused entirely on the classroom, with no responsibility for budget, facility maintenance or other non-classroom issues.

The Mahar regional committee voted to hire Petersham superintendent Patricia Martin as the assistant superintendent of teaching, learning, and accountability. The Orange and Petersham school committees had previously approved hiring Martin for the post.

Wendell and New Salem remain in Union #28 with Erving, Leverett, and Shutesbury for elementary education, and are part of the Mahar region for grades 7 through 12 only.

According to budget spreadsheets presented at the meeting, the FY'11 Mahar regional superintendent salary cost was \$117,995 and the FY'12 cost is \$133,450, representing a 13% increase in Baldassarre's salary for FY'12.

The total FY'12 regional cost for 72% of Baldassarre's time as superintendent, the 1% assistant superintendent, and the 70% assistant superintendent is \$125,059. The regional cost is the amount that will be paid by the district towns based on their share as determined by the regional assessment formula.

Interviewed after the meeting, Baldassarre said that the changes

in central administration should be neutral financially for Wendell and New Salem. He said that he doesn't view the increase in superintendent compensation as an issue, because his work responsibilities will be substantially increased in FY12. He said that salaries are reported for 220 superintendents in Massachusetts, and even with the increase, his salary is one of the bottom 40 on the list.

In the FY'12 budget, electricity costs are set at the FY'11 budgeted amount. However, Baldassarre reported he "hopes costs will go down" since Mahar won a preliminary injunction against electricity supplier Constellation NewEnergy and electricity broker New England Energy Partners. As a result of the preliminary injunction, Mahar is now free to buy electricity at competitive market prices.

Based on an automatic renewal clause in the five-year electricity contract signed in 2004, Mahar has been charged the above market rate of 13.8-cents per kilowatt hour since January 2009. Mahar sued Constellation NewEnergy and New England Energy Partners, saying the automatic renewal was invalid because Mahar wasn't notified properly.

Baldassarre said until the suit is fully settled, the school will

continue to buy electricity from Constellation, but won't be paying the additional broker's fee to New England Energy Partners. He cautioned the energy companies can appeal the ruling and the outcome of the case is still unknown.

Mahar principal Scott Hemlin announced he will resign as principal at the end of the school year, and will return to a teaching position at Mahar. He said the principal position is "more a lifestyle than a profession" and he felt he was always "bringing it home with me." He told the committee he appreciated the support he had received in the principal role, and called Mahar "a special place." Committee chair Maureen Donelan thanked Hemlin for doing a great job in his tenure as principal and expressed appreciation that he planned to continue working at the school.

Orange member Patricia Smith and Petersham member Dana Kennan agreed to share responsibility for representing the regional committee on a search committee to replace Hemlin. Baldassarre said he was looking for "motivation, inspiration, and innovation" in a principal candidate. He said the position had already been posted and he hoped to present a candidate at the April 5th committee meeting.

Baldassarre reported that he had attended his first Gateway to College National Network board of directors meeting in Portland Oregon, with expenses paid by Gateway to College. Gateway to College is a national program that helps students complete their high school diploma requirements at community and technical colleges while simultaneously earning college credits toward an associate's degree or certificate. Baldassarre is the only K-12 representative on the board of directors. Baldassarre noted that the Mt. Wachusett/Mahar Gateway to College collaboration is the most successful of the Gateway programs in the US in terms of numbers of students graduating. He said that Massachusetts is providing funding for two new Gateway programs in the state and the Mt. Wachusett/Mahar program is being used as a model for the new programs.

Baldassarre shared a 'preliminary thought' with the committee. He told the committee members that some school districts are creating a development office charged with generating positive press for the district and soliciting donations and funding. Smith said she felt targeted fund raising for specific programs or projects would be more effective than generic fund raising.



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The Road Less Traveled

New American Wing Takes Flight in Boston

BY RICHARD ANDERSEN & DIANE LYN - Dubbed the Art of the Americas Wing, this spectacular addition to the Museum of Fine Arts cruises over 121,000 square feet with stops at 53 galleries, integrating more than 5,000 works of painting, sculpture, drawing, furniture, musical instruments, textiles, costumes, and more. Four floors explore the art, history, and culture of North, Central, and South America from the earliest Olmec art in 1,000 BCE to the latest treasures of the twentieth century, all in a beautifully designed building that is as much a masterpiece as any work it contains.

There are many old friends here: John Singleton Copley's portrait of Paul Revere (looking a lot like Bob Hope) and the Gilbert Stuart likeness of George Washington (the one that appears

our dollar bill). But there's also the new. Next to the portrait of Revere is the silver-smith's historic "Sons of Liberty" bowl from 1768, and in the same room as the portrait of



Sully's "The Passage of the Delaware" took two weeks to prepare and hang.

Washington is a monumental painting in which Gilbert repeats the dollar bill representation as Washington prepares to mount a horse. Washington's posture, the museum's wall text points out, closely resembles that of the ancient Roman statue known as the Apollo Belvedere, thought in Gilbert's time to be one of the most beautiful works of art ever created. The focal point of the gallery, however, is Thomas Sully's "The Passage of the

Delaware" (1819). It's so big the ceiling had to be raised to accommodate it.

The highlight of the museum's nineteenth- and early twentieth-century holdings has always been its collection of extraordinary works by John Singer Sargent. But there are additions here as well. On either side of his 1882 masterpiece "The Daughters of Edward Dorley Bait" are the two adult-size Chinese vases that appear in the painting. The most innovative installation for this period, however, is something old: a densely packed gallery that looks as it would have had we visited the museum in 1890. Based on the way exhibitions were mounted in London and Paris, the walls of the gallery are filled from ceiling to floor with paintings. The largest and most important works are hung "on the line" at eye level, while those of lesser-known painters were "skied" toward the ceiling. Because artists relied on them to increase the size and visual weight of their works, frames were major players in the action, and while those paintings with

big frames may have distracted viewers from focusing on a single work, visitors to the European galleries could play the game of deciding whether their tastes were superior to those of the judges'.

What defines twentieth-century art? Many historians tell us it's the triumph of abstraction over more recognizable representations of the physical world, but you wouldn't know that from the works collected here. While giving Jackson Pollock, Alexander Calder, and others their Abstract Expressionist due, the inclusion of many more works by George Bellows, Edward Hopper, Andrew Wyeth, and Scott Prior emphasizes the continuing popularity of the realist tradition. Other artists, such as Georgia O'Keefe, neither abandon realism nor wholly embrace abstract expressionism. Rather, they explore the many different ways artists have chosen to represent pieces of the huge jigsaw puzzle of life today.

Finally, there's the view of Boston from the fourth floor: a work of art in itself.

Gorey Details at Boston Athenaeum

BY RICHARD ANDERSEN & DIANE LYN - If you've watched the falling masonry and wilting ladies that have introduced the public television Mystery series for the past 30 years, you're familiar with the work of Edward Gorey. Terrible things may happen to the people who inhabit his drawings, but Gorey creates just the right emotional distance between us and his characters, so we're never compelled to feel sorry for them. It's almost as if they are getting what they deserve, but we're never sure why.

Edward St. John Gorey started drawing at the age of two and taught himself to read at three. In high school, he had the highest numerical score on his region's college-board exams, and after serving in the U.S. Army during World War II, attended Harvard University on a full scholarship. When not studying, which was most of the time, he drew cartoons, composed poems, designed sets, and wrote plays with the likes of John Ashbery

and Frank O'Hara for the Poets Theatre. Occasionally, he made the Dean's List. His highest achievement, however, may be the pictures he drew on the envelopes he sent to his mom in Chicago. One has a figure about to be strangled.

In 1952, Gorey was offered a position in the art department at Doubleday in New York, where he wound up illustrating over 100 books. He wasn't there a year, however, when he published one of his own: *The Unstrung Harp*, a 64-page novella about the struggle to be creative. A forerunner to today's popular graphic novels, it was dubbed a "minor masterpiece" by *The London Times*. Top critic of the time Edmund Wilson gave his approval shortly afterwards in *The New Yorker*, and Gorey's career as a macabre funnyman was officially launched.

Shortly after arriving in New York, Gorey became a big fan of George Balanchine and the New York City Ballet. He credited the choreographer with being a

major influence on his work - some of his creations even wear ballet slippers - and saved the ticket stubs from every ballet and opera he attended. These thousands of tickets were deposited in a good-sized bucket now on display at the Gorey Museum on Cape Cod.

There are few biographical details in the Gorey drawings and poems being exhibited through June 4th at the Boston Athenaeum, but the 180 collected works provide a satisfying overview of the artist's 50-year career. The works include selections from his most famous books: *The Gashlycrumb Times*, *The Unstrung Harp*, and *The Gilded Bat*. Occasionally, a self-portrait appears. You can recognize Gorey by the beard, fur coat, and hipster sneakers he often wore to the ballet and opera.

By the time he died in 2000, Gorey had become an animal rights activist. He renounced his fur coat, adopted dogs and cats, and even allowed a family of raccoons to live in his attic in

Yarmouth Port. In his will he established a charitable trust for all living creatures, including

bats, insects, and invertebrates. His spirit lives on in the works of Tim Burton.



Mr. C(lavius) F(rederick) Earbrass is, of course, the well-known novelist.
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MARY AZARIAN WOODBLOCK

Farm Neighbors Gillbilly Family Ties

BY STEVE DAMON - When my lovely bride and I moved to Gill, Pat Hawkins of Boyle Road referred to us as "Gillbillies." I'd never heard the word before. That was 2002. I'm just starting to feel like a Gillbilly. Gary Stevens is most definitely a Gillbilly.

Doreen, moved to Gill in the mid 80s, and now live on the farm, within feet of his dad and step-mother, their daughter and son-in-law, and the plot of land where their son's clan hopes to someday build a house. Definitely Gillbillies.

I often call this area of Gill "Stevensville." I'm waiting patiently for this to catch on, as the Stevens family continues to grow. You just never know who's related to the Stevens family...

The last couple of Stevens generations have milked cows, raised chickens and vegetables. All this work was done by hand until 1948, when the farm received electricity and a tractor.

Gary Stevens keeps oxen to do much of the field work and wood hauling. The farm's major crop remains vegetables, primarily rhubarb in the spring and butter-nut squash in the fall. The vegetables are sold at Foster's

Supermarket in Greenfield and at the Uppinghill farmstand in Gill.

Stevens laments, "I don't use much of the available land on the farm." He would like to grow more squash and rhubarb, and diversify with dried beans. "I like to raise vegetables that don't take a lot of picking," said Stevens, who spends much of his day at Foster's, where he works as grocery manager.

Doreen, keeping with the family's background in food production, cooks at the Diemand Farm in Wendell.

Stevens has kept busy in town affairs as an assessor and on the finance committee for over 20 years. He was happy to serve in those capacities, and equally

happy to give them up recently. He has offered to join the town agricultural commission when a slot opens.

Back in 2002, when my lovely bride and I tied the family knot, Gary and Doreen were at the wedding. Gary is now my first cousin once removed-in-law. You just never know who's related to the Stevens family...

Steve Damon is the chair of the Gill agricultural commission. His monthly column for the Montague Reporter, Farm Neighbors, features Gill's agricultural personalities. Bill Burnham was featured in January. Gary Stevens should have appeared in February, but everything slows down this time of year. Who will be next?

LEVERETT from pg 1 said Tuesday. That decline has accelerated the depletion of the LES school choice revolving fund - which had been built up in years when the state aid for school choice students exceeded the amount required for the elementary school to provide their education.

That school choice revolving fund - which operates like a free cash cushion for LES - will be reduced to \$67,713 for FY'12, from an existing balance of \$89,313. In FY'12, the committee plans to spend about \$5,000 more - a total of \$150,000 - from school choice funds to support the operating budget than the school will take in from state aid for school choice students. School committee members said an unanticipated need - like this year's hiring, at a cost of \$18,000, of a part time English Language Learner teacher to work with two new students from the Ukraine adopted by a Leverett family - could quickly cut into the remaining school choice funds, or eliminate the fund entirely.

Adding another wild card to the budget making process, this

year both the regional school district and LES are negotiating teacher contracts, so an undisclosed placeholder has been kept in the LES budget to represent the upshot of those negotiations.

The retirement of a long-time LES fifth grade teacher will probably result in at least a \$10,000 decrease in the salary paid to fill that position permanently, Union 28 superintendent Joan Wickman said on Tuesday.

Approximately \$18,000 saved from the retirement of U-28 business manager Charlie Paulin, during the three months before his position was filled by Mike Kociela (who was introduced to the school committee on Tuesday) may also be split among the member towns, said committee chair Farshid Hajir. This could bring a \$4,500 windfall to Leverett before the present fiscal year ends, if the U-28 budget committee so decides.

In addition to line item cuts, the school committee is plugging \$25,000 in accumulated Medicaid reimbursements into the FY'12 budget - money that built up over three years, Ross said. This sum will not be avail-

able to apply to the FY'13 budget. Neither will the one-time use of a \$6,000 trust fund to support early childhood education at LES uncovered by the town accountant, money Ross said the school had long since forgotten about. That fund will also be applied, in its entirety, toward the FY'12 budget, to support the wait-listed pre-K program.

Wickman said it might be possible to "back out" some funds from line items showing surpluses in the FY'11 budget by May or June. "Anne (Ross) never ends up in the red," said Wickman. "She does an amazing job."

One area of the budget that has shown revenue gains is the school lunch program - where the introduction of a popular salad bar and other choices has led to increased sales, allowing the committee to budget \$6,500 less this year toward supporting the lunch program. Hajir credited community volunteers for improving the lunch line with local foods.

But taken as a whole, the school committee did not feel the line item cuts and use of one time revenues and school choice funds

would be enough to allow them to meet the selectboard's zero increase budget request this year.

"It is our responsibility to put forth a budget we feel it will take to run the school for a year," said committee member Kip Fonsh.

Fonsh also serves as the town's representative to the regional school committee. He and other committee members noted the disparity between the level funding of the elementary school since FY'09 and the steady rise in town assessments for the regional school over the same time period - and the projected 3.6% rise in the town's regional assessment for FY'12.

Called to comment on this disparity, selectboard chair Rich Brazeau said he was "not convinced" of the accuracy of the comparison. Brazeau said the town supports the elementary school in ways not apparent in the bottom line of the operating budget, including capital improvements to the building and health insurance for the employees.

Hajir conceded that health insurance costs had been rising more rapidly at the elementary school - perhaps twice as fast - as

at the region, where health premiums have been kept to a 3% increase in recent years. But without looking at the actual numbers, Hajir estimated that even if health insurance costs were folded into the elementary school budget, increases in the LES budget in recent years "would not come close to matching the increases to the region percentage-wise or as raw numbers."

So, is the town holding the elementary school to a different standard than the region in tough budget times?

"I think we have been fair with the school and the region and our town employees," said Brazeau, who noted the board has called on all town departments to hand in level funded budgets this year. He added, "The regional school has been taking a much more severe beating. If you go to some of their meetings, they have all kinds of reasons they need more money. We try to get them down to as reasonable a number as we can, and then we take our share."

A public hearing on the LES budget will be held on March 14th at the school library at 6 p.m.

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Cooperative Use and Welcome Center Proposed for Former Cumby's Building

BY JANEL NOCKELBY

TURNERS FALLS - Members of Montague's Economic Development and Industrial Corporation considered two proposals on Thursday, February 24th, for use of the former Cumberland Farms property, located at the corner of Avenue A and Second Street, next to the Great Falls Discovery Center.

The EDIC committee has been dormant for a few months, since Jay DiPucchio resigned as chair, but, with new proposals on the table for a piece of gateway real estate in downtown Turners, the EDIC is getting a push to

consider what to do with an aging building with a leaky roof and a complicated history. It is the EDIC's role to steer development of economically critical properties owned by the town.

MCTV, the Montague Business Association (MBA), and RiverCulture proposed renting the building (including an offer to pay to fix the leaking roof) to collaborate on a welcome center, TV studio, art, and cultural center. Meanwhile, the Montague parks and recreation and local sculptor Joe Landry proposed an installation of art outside of the building, art to be

created by children through partnerships with area schools during summer programs.

After public comment on the proposals was closed on Thursday, the EDIC voted not to accept the parks and recreation proposal (with Linda Ackerman, who sits on both the parks and recreation commission and the EDIC, recusing herself from the vote) and held off on making a decision on the MCTV/MBA/RiverCulture proposal.

The EDIC decided a more formal request-for-proposals process is needed to determine

short or long term use of the property. Town planner Walter Ramsey, who is helping to guide the EDIC through the tangled history of an old convenience store, noted that before any decisions can be made, the EDIC needs to complete "due diligence and a proper site plan" for the property. "We can't give sections of it away piecemeal" without a plan, he said.

The proposal by MCTV/MBA/RiverCulture has served to "get the ball rolling," Ramsey said. So he is now drafting official letters to the Department of Conservation and

Recreation's new commissioner, Ed Lambert, and Montague legislators, in hopes of clarifying what interest DCR has in the future of the property, if any.

Originally, the building, which was taken by eminent domain, was to have been turned over to DCR as a part of development of the Great Falls Discovery Center. But the transfer to DCR never happened, most likely due to state funds drying up for park development, Ramsey said.

Former member of the EDIC, Chris Janke, reminded attendees at the meeting, which included

see **CUMBY'S** pg 16

from **ERVING** pg 6

owner of the property," and it may be difficult to assess Patriots for cleanup costs if the cleanup is completed before the right of the redemption is foreclosed.

McNicol estimated the Usher Mill back taxes are approximately \$10,000. "Because the property is already taken, can Patriots come in after the cleanup, just pay back taxes and get the property back?" she asked.

She said there is no case law on this, and the safest course for the town is to wait to clean up the site until after the foreclosure. She said it is not clear if cleanup costs paid by the town can be added to the tax lien, and she is waiting for a response from the Massachusetts Department of Revenue on this question.

In a related matter, Usher Mill reuse committee member Gary Burnett asked the selectboard for blueprints of the hydrants and pipes that run under the building rubble. He said the underground pipes must be protected during demolition at the site in order to keep the water tank, which is still in use, from draining.

Drive-Through Businesses

Selectboard chair Andrew Goodwin asked McNicol about the drive-through business zoning article that failed at the October 2009 town meeting. Goodwin asked if the rule about waiting two years before bringing the article up again was applicable, since "At town meeting, the amendment on the floor changed the scope of the article from the west side of

town to include the east side."

McNicol said the issue of scope was "something that moderators need to pay attention to - this is a close call." She said she had talked with the attorney general's office and was told that if the planning board brings forward a significantly different article, the two-year rule will not apply. She said the 2009 article allowed drive through by right in one commercial area in town, which appears to be different from the proposed article to allow drive-throughs in any commercial area by special permit. In addition, because the planning board would be proposing the article, and not the original proponents, Ralph and Eric Semb, the two-year rule would not apply.

McNicol advised selectboard member Eugene Klepadlo, who is also a lieutenant with the fire department, to "steer clear of the fire department budget" while on the selectboard in order to comply with the state ethics rules. She also said if selectboard members attend a meeting of another town board and deliberate or participate as selectboard members, the meeting needs to be posted in accordance with the open meeting law for both the selectboard and the other board.

Erving's Sewers

The selectboard signed a contract with Tighe & Bond for initial tasks in rehabilitating the Erving's sewer lines. Repairs are expected to reduce inflow and infiltration from leaks, resulting in savings on treatment

costs. Tighe & Bond's Peter Valinski said the video inspection of sewer lines showed root infiltration and fractures in some of the sewer pipes. In-place lining of approximately 3,600 feet of piping is proposed.

Tighe & Bond estimates the complete project will cost about \$240,000. Replacement of the line on Church Street, where an 850 foot segment lacks manholes and contains stagnant water, was put on hold.

The selectboard thanked Valinski for putting together an estimate for renovating the fire pond on Maple Street, but decided not to approve work on the \$144,000 project.

Conservation commission members David Brule and Cyd Scott discussed signing the letter of agreement with the Massachusetts Forest Legacy Program for the conservation restriction for the Fellows property. In January, Verne and Caroline Fellows of Murdock Hill Road granted a conservation restriction (CR) on 132 acres of their property to the town of Erving, to be monitored by the conservation commission. The CR is a legal agreement between the Fellows and the town, in which the Fellows retain ownership but give up the right to develop their land.

Brule said one phrase in the agreement letter caught his attention: "The Erving conservation commission will assign appropriate staff and will budget sufficient funds annually to conduct the annual

monitoring..." Brule and Scott explained the conservation commission has a small budget of approximately \$2,000 per year. Brule told the selectboard the monitoring will require a GPS, laptop and digital camera. Scott said, in addition to its annual budget, the conservation commission received money from notice of intent (NOI) filing fees dedicated to use for wetland conservation. He felt the commission could buy the needed equipment with the NOI fees and use it for monitoring the CR as well.

Goodwin said costs for monitoring the CR were likely to be low, although the equipment might need replacing after several years. He advised the conservation commission to sign the agreement.

Senior Taj Mahal

The senior center building committee has selected forest green as the exterior color for the new senior center. The selectboard denied a request from the committee for \$250 to rent a van to transport committee members for a site visit to a "twin" senior center project in the eastern part of the state.


Goodwin exclaimed, "We're building them the Taj Mahal! It's not needed to spend that kind of money." He recommended the committee send several representatives in a private car to tour, take photos, and report back.

Following up on a discussion on the costs of completing criminal offender record information (CORI) checks on

town employees from the February 17th meeting, emergency management department director Luke Hartnett told the selectboard that Union #28 had a good system for completing CORI checks. Goodwin suggested the town could make a deal with Union #28, with the town foregoing raises in rent for the Union #28 office space in trade for Union #28 doing the CORI checks for the town.

The selectboard agreed to amend the fire chief's job description to include nine hours per week of office hours at the fire station, for 48 weeks per year. The board decided to vote on the draft description at its March 3rd meeting.

After rescinding an earlier vote to buy a \$4,000 copy machine for the Erving's water treatment plant, the selectboard voted to buy a \$1,499 copier instead, with a \$350 protection plan.

The selectboard ended the open meeting and went into executive session "for the purpose of considering the reputation, character, physical condition or mental health and/or the discipline, dismissal of, or to hear complaints or charges brought against a public officer, employee, staff member, or individual, where an open session would have a detrimental effect and further details would compromise the reason for going into executive session." This is the eighth time in the last fourteen meetings the board has gone into executive session. 

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Food City Donates \$1258.97 to Local Organizations



Cashiers Cody Pease (aisle 2) and Dylan Bocon (3) at work in Food City

BY DAVID DETMOLD
TURNERS FALLS - Feed your pantry, and feed your local food pantry, both at the same time. That was the offer from Food City in Turners Falls in January,

when shoppers who spent at least \$40 on groceries during one shopping trip were pleased to find the supermarket donating 1% of their cashier's receipt to a community organization of their

choice. Shoppers were able to steer the store's donation to one of three local organizations, and by the end of the month, those small contributions from the store had added up.

"We will put the money to our 'sponsor a child scholarship pledge,'" said Montague parks and recreation director Jon Dobosz. The MP&R received \$242.68 from Food City's January drive, money that will help children from low or moderate income families attend summer camp or travel to Laurel Lake in Erving with the parks and rec's summer swim program. "We thank Food City and all their customers who contributed to this," said Dobosz.

Food City also donated \$360.30 to the Franklin Area Survival Center, to help with their food pantry on 4th Street in Turners Falls.

Survival Center supervisor Ed Peramba said that money would be used to buy food to stock the pantry's shelves from the Western Mass Food Bank, where each dollar will stretch further by buying discounted food in bulk.

"It will help us," said Peramba. "Demand has definitely been rising. I don't care what the government says, the economy is not improving."

Food pantry volunteer Mary Cavanaugh said, "The number of people we call walk-ins has increased dramatically," in recent months - she estimated by 40%. Cavanaugh also said the food pantry is allowing families to pick up groceries every month now, instead of every other month, in an attempt to keep up with the growing need.

But the lion's share - or kitty cat's share - of donations from Food City were directed by customers to the Dakin Animal Shelter in Leverett, which

received \$655.99. "I guess people like animals more than they like people," said John Steiner, store manager for the Turners Falls branch of the nine supermarket Food City chain, based in Lewiston, ME.

Shoppers will have another chance to prove where their charitable sympathies lie in April, when Food City repeats the 1% donation for every \$40 shopping trip, and once more allows the customers to decide where those donations will be directed. Forms available at the store until Tuesday, March 15th will even allow shoppers to choose which community organizations will be in the running to receive those donations. So pick up a form, fill it out, and help Food City give back to our community in the way that matters most to you.

"One percent may not seem like much," said Steiner, "but it really adds up."

from **COLLECTIVE** pg 5
neous and divisive issues, for example the pet conservative proposal to prohibit automatic withholding of union dues. Typically, the goal seems to be to get into a partisan battle with the Democrats, not to solve a problem.

undemocratic and unworkable. Unions demand multi-year contracts with wage and benefit increases unrelated to projected revenues. These agreements are made in secretive collective bargaining sessions that take nearly half the local budget out of the public, democratic decision-making process. Unsustainable wage and benefit increases are justified not in terms of their fiscal viability, but as showing respect for public employees.

The implication is, if you question the math of these agreements, you do not respect teachers. (Ironically, the union leadership is prone to arguing we should lay off teachers at the low end of the wage scale to finance wage increases for those at the top.)

endless hours negotiating. One result is that the bargaining process can attract those who have a personal interest in the outcome.

In the Gill-Montague district, negotiating teams have included former teachers or school committee members with direct familial and financial ties to teachers. This may not technically violate state conflict of interest laws, but it creates a bias on the negotiating team that borders on cronyism.

bargaining process. Governor Patrick has just proposed that localities either find health plans comparable to the state health group or be required to join it.

The current uproar over Wisconsin will probably take even these rather mild proposals off the table. Unions and their supporters will portray any effort to reform the current system as a one-way ticket back to the age of robber baron capitalism. But this reflects an idealized view of history.

from **GILL** pg 6
loans in town.

has met recently. Apparently, it has not.

Purinton said he had received a \$960 bill for replacing the burner at the Riverside Municipal Building, which experienced a recent breakdown, and a scarcity of replacement parts. Banash asked if the committee exploring the future use of the Riverside Municipal Building

The boiler at the safety complex has sprung a leak. The problem is not immediately disabling; the boiler may make it through the heating season as is, but Purinton warned the first estimate received for replacing the 1978 boiler would run to \$6400 plus labor.

Many collective bargaining agreements are filled with work rules that, for most employees of viable organizations, appear in job descriptions, not in contracts. The Gill-Montague district, for example, spent hours last year negotiating with the union over what time employees should come to work in the morning. This encourages an inflexible "no can do" attitude among the staff, particularly deadly in an era of educational choices for parents.

The intense frustration with collective bargaining among local officials in Massachusetts is one of the dirty little secrets of the state's liberal political culture. A few modest proposals for reform have been made. The Mass Municipal Association has long advocated that the choice of health plans and plan design (co-pays and deductibles) be taken out of the local collective

Finally, the current process requires that local officials, many of them volunteers, spend

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GILL ENERGY CORNER

Town Hall Windows Get Winserts



Workshop instructor Brian Nugent looks on as Paul Dobbs and Virginia Mullen put together a Winsert for the Gill town hall. In background, Tom Sullivan and Joan Pillsbury.

BY PAM LESTER

GILL - The Gill energy commission held a free Winsert (winter insulated window insert) workshop on Saturday, February 26th, from 1 - 4 p.m. at the Gill town hall. "Winserts" are reusable transparent panels that fit snugly

inside window jambs to add two extra layers of glazing. The workshop was presented by Brian Nugent who has been teaching people how to make Winserts for the last four years. Ten people from the towns of Gill, Montague, and Greenfield attended.

The ten Winserts made at the workshop were immediately put into use in the single glaze windows in the downstairs offices, and plans are being made to complete all of the windows at the Gill town hall.

Nugent said a properly-constructed Winsert reduces heat loss from a typical single- or double-glazed window by up to 50%,

thus more than paying for the cost of installation in less than one year. The Winserts can be used for many heating seasons, with a little maintenance from time to time.

Gill videographer Rick James captured the workshop on video. Once edited, the workshop will be linked to the Gill energy commission web page so it can be used as a resource for further education. Nugent said he volunteers his time to teach others, but he believes the message needs to be broadcast widely as the need to reduce our energy consumption is so urgent. Nugent's written instructions on building your own Winserts are also linked on the Gill Energy Commission web page.

Ronnie LaChance was one of the Winsert workshop participants. She said, "Brian's instructions were very well explained, and after getting this hands-on experience, we are planning to make Winserts for our own home. My husband is planning on stopping by town hall to see a completed Winsert to get started on making ours."

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Break In, Illegal Dumping, Threatening

- Wednesday, 2/23**
7:21 a.m. Burglary, breaking and entering on Bernardo Drive. Investigated.
10:05 p.m. Threatening, harassment on Fifth Street. Advised of options.
10:41 p.m. Threatening, harassment on Fifth Street. Advised of options.
11:21 p.m. Domestic disturbance on I Street. Investigated.
- Thursday, 2/24**
11:05 a.m. Fraud at Montague Mini Mart. Services rendered.
1:20 p.m. Illegal dumping on Bridge Street. Services rendered.
10:37 p.m. Suspicious person on Greenfield Road. Services rendered.
- Friday, 2/25**
11:39 p.m. Loud noise disturbance on Turners Falls Road. Services rendered.
- Saturday, 2/26**
12:12 a.m. Structure fire on Millers Falls Road. Services rendered.
1:35 a.m. Unwanted person on K Street. Services rendered.
10:06 a.m. Burglary, breaking and entering on Millers Falls Road. Report taken.
4:02 Threatening, harassment on Turners Falls Road. Services rendered.
5:52 p.m. Neighbor disturbance. No police service necessary.
9:14 p.m. Suspicious other at Shea Theater. Services rendered.
- Sunday, 2/27**
12:11 p.m. Annoying phone call on Linda Lane. Report taken.
7:27 p.m. Threatening, harassment on Main Street. Advised of options.
- Monday, 2/28**
7:35 a.m. Threatening, harassment at Equi's on Avenue A. Referred to an officer.
7:36 a.m. Disabled school bus at Sunderland Road and Old Stage Road. Report taken.
8:52 a.m. Suspicious auto at the Housing Authority on Canal Road. Services rendered.
1:37 p.m. Domestic disturbance on K street. Services rendered.
6:48 p.m. Repossessed motor vehicle on Montague City Road. No police service necessary.
- Tuesday, 3/1**
5:50 p.m. Unwanted person on Avenue A. Advised of options.
7:29 p.m. Threatening, harassment on Montague Street. Advised of options.

NATIONAL from pg 4 about Wal-Mart? Sure, I wish their buildings could be designed with a little more taste and feature a little less of that cold and dreary communist-era utilitarian facade. But that's a small price to pay for, well, small prices.

If Greenfield was smart, they'd get the Boy Scouts in there to plant some trees on the new Wal-Mart parking lot medians. But they should try and get that request in while things are still in the negotiating stage (if in fact they still are). Once Wal-Mart has a finalized contract with local governments they can be kind of rigid about suggestions from anyone outside the upper echelons of the 'Wal-Mart Family'.

I think a few trees would go a long way to soften that big boxy footprint, and customers will really appreciate a little shade when walking across that huge asphalt parking lot come summer.

I normally am the sort of person that roots for the underdog, but there is just no real underdog when a Wal-Mart comes to your town. Sure, there's a persistent little voice that keeps telling me it's not a good idea to put all your eggs in one basket. I can see how a few years out Greenfield and Turners will only have Wal-Mart to provide citizens with all their daily needs. Everything but shelter that is. Other than pup tents, Wal-Mart isn't exactly providing housing

last time I looked. Unless you count those piddly paychecks Wal-Mart employees use to pay their rent. But if employees are saving on all the stuff they buy at Wal-Mart then it stands to reason they'll have more money left over for rent and utilities, no?

It reminds me of the good old days of company towns for the lumber and mining industry, when people bought their stuff at the company store and the company owned the jobs, the housing and the groceries. I suspect it gave people a sense of security to have all those things sorted out for them. The only thing different is Wal-Mart doesn't let you run a tab against your pay check. Or do they?

In fact, if Wal-Mart was smart, they'd let their employees take out short term loans against their paychecks to be paid back with interest, a benefit to both parties.

I'd like to put in a plug for one stop shopping too, especially in the winter months when there's all that snow on the ground. I would think that having everything you need in one store would be a big convenience. Who needs all those little mom and pop stores? It's true, that in order to keep prices down Wal-Mart doesn't always carry top quality, especially in the clothing, hardware, and food departments. But the cool thing about buying a screwdriver set from Wal-Mart that doesn't last because

the metal tips are soft and mushy is that for next to nothing you can buy another whole set the next time you're in Wal-Mart. Which will be the next time you need a gallon of milk you used to grab from the corner market but now you can't because the corner market couldn't stay in business by just selling milk and so it isn't there anymore. But at least we can all sleep better at night knowing it was sacrificed for the noble and greater cause of national security.

Gini Brown grew up in the town of Montague and still returns to Western Mass for two months every summer to soak up the natural beauty and small town pleasures of the area.

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JESSICA LARKIN ILLUSTRATION

BY FRED CICETTI

LEONIA, NJ - Q. *What is the survival rate for ALS?*

Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS)- also known as Lou Gehrig's disease—usually strikes between the ages of 40 and 70.

Respiratory problems usually kill those with ALS in three to five years after diagnosis. About ten percent of those with ALS live more than ten years.

Some with ALS survive for many years. For example, the famed British physicist Stephen Hawking has had ALS since the 1960s. In a small number of people, ALS mysteriously stops.

ALS destroys nerve cells that control muscle cells. In most cases, the cause is unknown. As the motor neurons are lost, the muscles they control weaken. Eventually, people with ALS are paralyzed.

ALS doesn't directly affect involuntary muscles, so the heart, digestive tract, bladder and sexual organs continue to work. Hearing, vision, touch and intellectual ability generally remain normal. Pain is not a major component of ALS.

The usual early symptoms of ALS are weakness or spasms in a limb, and trouble speaking or swallowing. After the initial symptoms, the disease may progress in the following way: cramping of muscles, reduced use of the limbs; thick speech and difficulty projecting the voice; difficulty breathing.

Q. *What foods cause gas and the pain that often comes with it?*

The following are gas-generating foods:

Legumes, especially dried beans and peas, baked beans, soy beans, lima beans; dairy products such as milk, ice cream, cheese; vegetables such as cabbage, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, cucumbers, sauerkraut, kohlrabi, asparagus, potatoes, rutabaga, turnips, radishes, onions; fruits such as prunes, apricots, apples, raisins, bananas; foods containing wheat such as cereals, breads and pastries; fatty foods such as fried chicken and anything in cream sauces and gravies; and any carbonated beverage.

The following are some of the danger signs associated with abdominal pain. If you experience any of the following, get immediate medical attention:

- Sudden and sharp pain
- * Pain that radiates to your chest, neck or shoulder
- Severe, recurrent or persistent pain
- Pain that worsens
- Vomiting blood
- Blood in your stool
- A swollen and tender abdomen
- Shortness of breath
- Dizziness
- High fever

Q. *What is the chief cause of deaths from injury in seniors?*

Among older adults, falls are the leading cause of injury deaths and the most common cause of nonfatal injuries and hospital admissions for trauma. Of all fall-related fractures, hip breaks cause the greatest number of deaths and lead to the most severe health problems and reduced quality of life.

As we age, the power of our senses, reflexes and coordination diminishes. Maladies and the medicines we take for them can contribute to balance problems. Then there's osteoporosis — a disease that makes bones more likely to snap.

There are many steps you can take to prevent a fall and the possibility of breaking a bone. Here are a few important ones:

- Get your bones tested. Your doctor can prescribe medications that will make your bones harder to break.
- Regular exercise makes you stronger and keeps your joints, tendons, and ligaments flexible. Weight-bearing exercise such as walking may slow bone loss from osteoporosis.
- Alcohol impacts your reflexes and balance.
- Get up slowly from lying and sitting to avoid feeling lightheaded.

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

LETTUCE from pg 1 reducing "food miles" — or delivery distance — of food to the cafeteria.

Harrington also believes producing their own food can give students a sense of community.

Harrington, who was on the forestry faculty at UMass for ten years, first started producing food for a school when she was working at Amherst Middle School, when she attended a presentation by Seeds of Solidarity, a program that encourages schools to produce their own food. When she

moved to Turners Falls High School, she saw an opportunity to grow not only the traditional flowers in the greenhouse, but also vegetables.

Loynd praised the greenhouse program, which started providing lettuce to the cafeteria last year. He said even with the salad bar temporarily suspended, fresh lettuce from the greenhouse will be used for vegetable pocket sandwiches. He said last year, greens from the greenhouse allowed students to try a "neat variety" of greens, including some they would not have

experienced otherwise. Loynd said approximately 25% of students chose the salad bar menu option on a regular basis, which has been offered at the high school for four years, and was also introduced at the elementary schools last year.

Harrington called the positive feedback the greenhouse program has received from faculty, "very gratifying." Students also enjoy the program, and many say they feel proud to be producing food for their fellow students. This year's class is no exception, with students eager to go to the greenhouse every day, water the lettuce, prune the tomatoes, and take care of the host of other tasks associated with keeping everything alive and flourishing.

The greenhouse class plans to continue and expand its successful annual plant sale this year. Last year, greenhouse students sold an assortment of vegetable seedlings for the growing season. This year, there are plans to include flowers as well, particularly from the shelf of irises growing in the greenhouse.

Harrington said the plant sale would most likely be held on the last Friday before Mothers Day.

The second class of greenhouse, at the end of the day, is co-taught by Jessica Vachula-Curtis, a teacher for the Life Skills class, a program for special needs students. The students from Life Skills participate fully in the class, and help tend the lettuce seedlings and other greenhouse plants.

There are also plans to plant an outdoor garden at the school, in the open space beside the greenhouse, to be maintained by the Life Skills students. Vachula-Curtis believes it is important to remember that local produce can be grown "year round," with a combined greenhouse and outdoor gardening approach.

Whether they are mixing soil or planting lettuce, the skills students learn in greenhouse class are becoming increasingly important in times of international crop failures and food shortages. Locally grown organic food, such as the lettuce seedlings students at TFHS are nurturing now, is an excellent teacher of sustainable resources and environmental consciousness.

Mark Hudyma is a junior at Turners Falls High School.

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HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GILL POLICE LOG

Accident, Erratic Operation, Suspicious Vehicle

<p>Monday, 2/21 6:45 a.m. Minor motor vehicle accident without injury on West Gill Road. 11:18 a.m. Assisted Erving police with arrest/transport on Route 2. Tuesday, 2/22 8:45 a.m. Motor vehicle accident on Main Road. Medical issue responsible for cause. Wednesday, 2/23 7:15 a.m. Reported erratic operation of motor vehicle, west-bound on Route 2.</p>	<p>Motor vehicle stopped at area of Main Road. 11:10 a.m. Assisted resident with past motor vehicle accident Thursday, 2/24 6:40 a.m. Suspicious motor vehicle, at area of Grist Mill Road. Subject was lost. Checked out ok. Friday, 2/25 7:35 a.m. Recycling truck stuck on the roadway on Mountain Road due to icy conditions. 3:05 p.m. Restraining order issued for past resident of Boyle Road. 6:35 p.m. Suspicious</p>	<p>motor vehicle at French King Bridge. Party was checked and released. Saturday, 2/26 1:30 p.m. Subject issued a criminal complaint for operating an unregistered motor vehicle. 2:30 p.m. Family disturbance handled at Boyle Road residence. Sunday, 2/27 7:00 p.m. Reported suspicious person on the French King Bridge. Checked ok. 8:30 p.m. Court process issued to party on West Gill Road.</p>
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GO GREEN FAMILY

Episode 47: Bob's Your Uncle

BY JEANNE WEINTRAUB-MASON

MONTAGUE CENTER — “You think I was kiddinya, right, mate? Well I’m dead serious about starting a climate refugee organization. We put up a web site, get a blog going, we show up at some conferences, and Bob’s your uncle!” exclaimed Brian Dubin, Gerry’s brother-in-law.

“And what exactly would this organization do, Brian?” asked Gerry Bartlett.

“Refugees need a place to go. We help them relocate. Refugees need to connect with each other — we help them to network. We can even research relocation spots for all you seppos from Arizona and Nevada who are running outta water.” Brian responded

“It’d take a lot of fundraising,” Gerry pointed out.

“It’s a piece of piss. No worries,” assured Brian.

“Ok, Brian. I’m already working on getting a web site

up for this Green Pioneers thing Ruby Tinker is starting up. Maybe I’m can get a web presence going for this refugee organization, too.”



Two weeks later, Brian and Gerry were in their newly rented office on Avenue A in Turners Falls scrutinizing a giant map of the United States labeled “Climate Change Relocation Target Areas.” Areas of projected water shortages were shaded in bright red.

“Crikey — your southwest looks like Oz! We’re looking at refugees from Nevada ta Utah down ta Texas and halfa the southeast, Gerry,” Brian pronounced, staring at the red half of the map. “Even Tampa and Atlanta stand out like dogs balls. There won’t be any water left in halfa the country for love or money in 2030.”

“Well that’s what the northeast has going for it. Plenty of water,” Gerry responded.

“Ok, Gerry, how about Western Massachusetts for relocation? I got emails from a

family in Florida and one in Arizona who’re ready to look.” “Should be okay. If you want to look nearby, we could check out property in Turners Falls, Greenfield, Athol and Orange, where housing prices are still depressed,” Gerry suggested.

“But Turners Falls and Greenfield are right on the Connecticut River and Orange and Athol are on the Millers— won’t they be under water?” Brian asked.

“Naah — only a problem nearer the coast — Saybrook, Haddam, Old Lyme, Middletown — you don’t want to be living there in 40 years.”

“Right-o. I say we look at Turners and Orange,” Brian concluded. “They both sound abso-bloody-lutey fine to me.”

Only two episodes left! Cast your vote for the winner of the Community Challenge at Montaguema.net and stay tuned next week to find out who the judges selected.

Continued next issue...

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ERVING POLICE LOG

Assist Other Police, Suspicious Persons and Vehicles

Monday, 2/21
11:20 a.m. Arrested [redacted] for operating a motor vehicle with a suspended license and for operating under the influence.

Tuesday, 2/22
4:45 p.m. Car blocking the entire lane of oncoming traffic on Pratt Street. Vehicle moved.

9:00 p.m. Suspicious vehicle at Ervingside library. Moved same along.
11:30 p.m. Dog running loose on West Main Street. Dog ran to home. Tried to speak with owner, not home.

Wednesday, 2/23
7:55 a.m. Suspicious person at Old Stage Road residence. Spoke with same. Had permission to be there.

1:10 p.m. Suspicious vehicle on Central Street. Checked same, was resident moving out.

Thursday, 2/24
9:37 p.m. Loud siren in the Forest Street area. Resident reports hearing two loud blasts. Unable to locate.

10:47 p.m. Annoying phone calls reported from River Road resident.

Friday, 2/25
7:47 a.m. Report of tractor trailer unit jackknifed on Route 63 near Prospect Street. Was gone on arrival.

8:01 a.m. Report of pickup truck spun out on Route 2 in Farly Flats. Vehicle facing wrong way. Gone on arrival.

8:36 a.m. Northfield police requested assistance with vehicle off road on Route 63 near Mountain Project. Vehicle removed.

8:52 a.m. Assisted Bernardston police with two car motor vehicle crash on Main Street. Bernardston police tied up.
11:28 a.m. Arrested [redacted] for straight warrant.

12:48 p.m. Report of upset male walking up North Street. Subject calmed down and returned home.

1:37 p.m. Report of one car motor vehicle accident. Car into sign post on Route 2, near Prospect Street. Massachusetts State Police handled it.

2:30 p.m. Blue van off the road into snow bank. Route 2 near Bridge Street. Massachusetts State Police handled it.

Saturday, 2/26
1:00 a.m. Car versus deer accident on Route 2 at Old State Road. Massachusetts State Police handled it.

8:05 a.m. Wires down on Forest Street. Wire removed and telephone company advised.

1:30 p.m. Dog complaint on Mountain Road. Owner advised.

2:40 p.m. Criminal application issued to [redacted] for operating a motor vehicle without registration or insurance.

Sunday, 2/27
9:50 p.m. Walk-in to station reports argument with his girlfriend. Wanted a welfare check. Same checked and is fine.

Monday, 2/28
1:29 p.m. Resident reported possible hit and run, unknown location. Report taken.

3:04 p.m. Report of train blocking crossing on Moore Street. Spoke with conductor and advised him of complaint.

4:30 p.m. Accidental 911 call from River Road. Found to be child playing with phone.

11:20 p.m. Tree down on Route 2. On arrival tree was removed.

Hometown Crossword Submitted by Ferd Wulkan, Montague Center

ACROSS

- Served at the Rendezvous
- “ ___ is sharing”
- Great Falls Middle School organization
- Briefs in this paper
- You can ___ 32 down from the Discovery Center
- Generally found on front page of this paper.
- Has new Friends of the Library
- ___ good ___ new
- He needs to phone home
- A recessive one might give you blue eyes
- Roman dozen
- Favorite newspaper
- Found in Deja Brew bathroom
- Crossing in Millers Falls
- Lots of us have visited this at Franklin Medical
- Needed to finance 22 Across
- Once known as Peskeompskut
- Three-toed sloth found mostly in crossword puzzles
- Turners football games occasionally end up here
- The other half of 3 Down
- What Valley Idols do at the Shea
- Montague has a Pleasant one

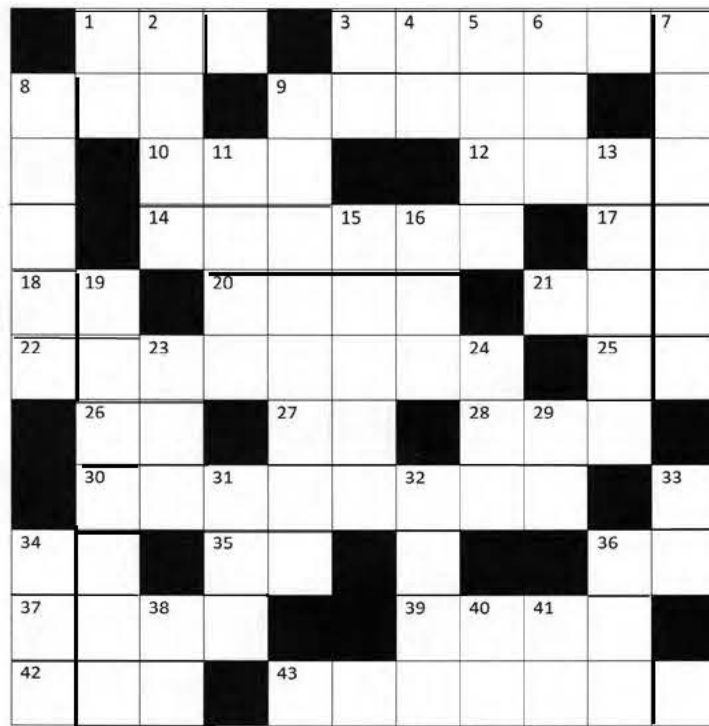
- Found at Diemand Farm
- Montague City is one

DOWN

- Most people read the Reporter ___ home
- We hate it when the TFHS sports teams do it
- Half a town worker’s salary increase (with 36 Across)
- Cools town offices in the summer
- What the Montague Congo church bells did 350 times on 10/10/10
- ___-de-France
- Irmarie Jones specialty
- What Turners Falls generate
- Home of Peace Pagoda
- Therefore
- What one does at red light on Avenue A
- Murals at TFHS
- Born in France
- House eating insect
- What our best student athletes might become
- Montague’s finest tow truck operator
- Half a 2008 presidential frontrunner (candidate?) (with 38 Down)

- A ___ easter kept our plow operators busy this winter
- Home to emus and strawberries
- David Sullivan is the new one
- Wood fire residue

- What feels sore after the Montague Road Race
- The other half of 29 Down
- Big box fighter Norman
- Kappa Alpha



Comedy at the Shea

Saturday, March 5th

FEATURING DAVE RUSSO FROM NESN’S DIRTY WATER TV, WITH CAROLYN PLUMMER.

Dave Russo headlines Comedy at the Shea. One of Boston’s most animated acts, Russo made a national splash on The E! Network show *The Entertainer*. He opened for Las Vegas legend Wayne Newton, hosted his own show in Las Vegas, and returned to Boston where he’s appeared on the NESN *Comedy All-Stars* and *Phantom Gourmet*. He also performs shows for troops regularly on USO Tours Overseas and in the United States.

Shea Theater, 71 Avenue A, Turners Falls, 8 p.m. (Doors open at 7 p.m.). Tickets \$15 in advance, \$17 on show night at the box office. Tickets at World Eye Bookshop, 156 Main Street, Greenfield, or at www.SheaComedy.com. Contact the Shea Theater box office at (413) 863-2281.

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MONDAY, MARCH 7th
 Hope & Olive, Greenfield: *Free Soup and Games Night*, 5 to 8 p.m. to benefit *Meadowedge Art for Children*. All welcome!

THURSDAY, MARCH 10th
 Deja Brew, Wendell: *Free Range*, Classic rock and dance music, 8 to 10 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Patty Carpenter and John Weeks*, jazz-america-blues gumbo, 8 p.m. Free.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: The Shea PYP Series presents, *The Crabgrass Puppet Theater's production of The Day it Snowed Tortillas*, 10 a.m. and 1 p.m.

FRIDAY, MARCH 11th
 Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: Coffeehouse *Ronald Meck*, who sings traditional Celtic and folk ballads. His son Adrian, joins him for toe-tapping jigs and reels, 7 to 9 p.m.

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

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Jones Trio with Snapdragon Dance Company*, 9:30 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Benny and the Jets*, Elton John Tribute Band - National Touring Company, One Show Only, 8 p.m.

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: *The Fine and Dandy Trio*, Americana folk 8 p.m.

FRIDAY, MARCH 11th until SUNDAY, MARCH 23th
 New England Youth Theatre, Brattleboro: NEYT presents Euripides' epic seaside tragedy, *Hecuba*. Friday & Saturday evening at 7 p.m. with Saturday & Sunday matinees at 2 p.m. www.neyt.org.

SATURDAY, MARCH 12th
 Arts Block Café, Greenfield: *Sweetback Sisters*, 9 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *John Sheldon & Blue Streak*, 9 to 11 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Third Annual St. Paddy's Caribbean Adventure*, Island-Irish Dance Night with an actual sandy beach, 9:30 p.m. Free.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Celtic Heels*.

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: *Adam Bergeron*, pianist, 1 p.m.

SUNDAY, MARCH 13th
 Deja Brew, Wendell: *An Irish Session*, Amanda Bernhard, Jonathan Hohl Kennedy & Friends, 8 to 10 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Benefit for Four Winds School in Gill* from 4 to 7 p.m. featuring The Maneuvers, Michael Stamm, O'Malley's Tears.

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

Greenfield's Market: *Juxtapositions: Poetry and Images and Sounds*, Poet Mary Clare Powell exhibit, reading, and music, 4 to 5 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 16th
 Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Quizmaster Chad's quiz nite quiz*, 8 p.m.

THURSDAY, MARCH 17th

Wooden Dinosaur, 9:30 p.m.

Burrito Rojo, Turners Falls: *Shockazoba*, 7 p.m.

SATURDAY, MARCH 5th
 Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: Community Reception (see *Told and Retold: Art Exhibit*, Friday, March 4th). Meet Annie Diemand from cosponsor Veteran's Education Project 1 to 3 p.m. in the Great Hall.



Great Falls Discovery Center Coffeehouse featuring Ronald Meck, who sings traditional Celtic and folk ballads, with his son Adrian. Friday March 11th at 7 p.m.

Burrito Rojo, Turners Falls: *Earth Vibes*, 8 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Comedy at the Shea, Dirty Water TV Comedy Host: Dave Russo*, 8 p.m.

The Gallery At Hallmark & The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Turners Falls Community Film Project premiere of its first film series: 6Films*. First local music and art at The Gallery at Hallmark, where 6Films will be shown. Then the celebration continues at The Rendezvous featuring music by *The Heather Maloney Band*. Red carpet (black tie optional). Buy tickets at <http://www.turnersfallsfilmproject.com/sixFilms/premiere.php>, 7 p.m. to 10 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *6Films Premier party with Heather Maloney and more*, 9 p.m.

Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: *Ruby's Complaint*, 9 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Nobody's Fat*, 9 to 11 p.m.

SUNDAY, MARCH 6th
 Montague Grange: *Mutton and Mead* follow-up audition for the following roles: Robin Hood, Friar Tuck, Four various Merry Men, The (evil) Sheriff of Nottingham, Guy Grisbourne, Two Sheriff's Deputies (bumbling & miscreant), The Tavern keeper as well as several villagers and extras, www.MuttonAndMead.com. The Festival will be held on Saturday, June 18th, 2011, on the grounds of the Millers Falls Rod & Gun Club on Turners Falls Road.

FRIDAY & SATURDAY MARCH 4th and 5th
 JaDuke Black Box Theater, Turners Falls: *Baby with the Bathwater*, 8 p.m. Also matinee at 2 p.m. on Sunday March 6.

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

FRIDAY, MARCH 4th until SUNDAY, APRIL 3rd
 Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Told and Retold: Art Exhibit by the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association/Memorial Hall Museum*. Art created by Northfield Elementary School students. Inspired by the BIG READ of Tim O'Brien's novel, *The Things They Carried*. Meet the young artists on March 5th, 1 to 3 p.m. in the Great Hall.

FRIDAY, MARCH 4th until SUNDAY MARCH 27th
 Barnes Gallery, Leverett: *Peace Talk: Art is the Children's Voice*, Exhibit of Iraqi Children's art. Reception on Sunday, March 6th 4 to 6 p.m.

FRIDAY, MARCH 4th
 Deja Brew, Wendell: *The Equalites*, Reggae Fantastico, 9 to 11 p.m.

Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: *Pressure Relief*, 9:30 p.m.

Arts Block Café, Greenfield: *Makaya McCraven*, 9 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Rusty Belle*,

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Deja Brew, Wendell: *St. Patty's Day, Bombogenesis*, bluegrass, new acoustic with some good old Irish drinking tunes thrown in, 8 to 10 p.m.

Burrito Rojo, Turners Falls: *Shag*, 7 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Paddy's Ramble*, Celtic, roots, rock, 8 p.m. Free.

FRIDAY, MARCH 18th and 25th SATURDAY, MARCH 19th and 26th
 Shea Theater, Turners Falls: Country Players present *London Suite*, 8 p.m.

FRIDAY, MARCH 18th
 Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Lenny's Lounge*, 7 p.m. Free.

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

SATURDAY, MARCH 19th
 Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Rockit Queer*, the dance party, 9:30 p.m.

Burrito Rojo, Turners Falls: *Shockazoba*, 8 p.m.

Wendell Full Moon Coffee House, Old Wendell Town Hall: *Primate Fiasco*, Richard Lent, Fingerstyle solo guitar, and Joe Laur, original songs and guitar, 7:30 p.m.

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- 3. DRIVE ANGRY IN 3D** R
 DAILY 9:00
- 4. JUST GO WITH IT** PG13
 DAILY 12:15 3:15 6:45 9:15
- 5. UNKNOWN** PG13
 DAILY 12:15 6:45
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MARY AZARIAN WOODBLOCK

THE GARDENER'S COMPANION

Rejoice, for the End of Winter is Nigh!

delight left in it.

If you are feeling demoralized by this endless winter, it's time to mark your calendar for the annual Smith College Bulb show, which opens on Saturday, March 5th and runs through Sunday, March 20th. This splendid, enormous display of over 5,000 bulbs really begins in October, when the college horticultural students pot up crocus, hyacinth, narcissus, iris, lily and tulip bulbs in pots of dirt and place them in cold storage.

Last month, these potted bulbs were transferred to the greenhouse and exposed to increasing warmth, forcing them into simultaneous bloom for this early March delight.

This century-old tradition draws large crowds of the winter weary and is best viewed on a weekday, if possible. This year will also feature three related exhibits in the Church exhibition

gallery of the conservatory: "Experiencing Plants through Art," "Photomicroscopy of Conservatory Microbes," and "Kindergarteners' View of the Spring Bulb Show."

Annually, this show also features a garden theme as well as such forced native shrubbery as flowering cherry, pussy willows and forsythia. It's also a pleasure to revisit the ongoing exhibits of orchids, the tropical and fern rooms and the arid desert spaces.

The conservatory is accessible with limited parking on College Lane as well as the main road. The bulb show is open from 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. daily and is free for the viewing, with a donation towards the cost of the bulbs encouraged.

Don't miss this annual dose of spring tonic as we face the month of March, which can bring almost any weather in New England.

The seeds of cold crops started a week ago have begun to germinate. The first is Red Fire, a

beautiful green leaved lettuce appropriately tinged with red at the edges. First seen as green hoops, pushing up the soil, these will soon sport seedlings with their first leaves. I am uncovering the flat now in full sun, and then replacing the plastic lid at nightfall to keep the moisture in.

Within the next week, all of the leafy crops, lettuce spring mix, spinach and kale should have emerged, followed by the beets, onions and leeks.

When the lid of the flat is lifted in the early mornings, a damp earthy smell enters the room, fecund and redolent of growth and the promise of harvest to come. In a couple of weeks it will be time to thin these seedlings to just a couple per two inch cell, then down to one, so that when the earth has thawed there will be strong plants ready to set out for the earliest possible harvest of salad greens.

By the second or third week of March it will be time to start the more fragile warm weather

crops, like tomatoes and peppers.

It no longer seems like an interminable wait for the garden season. Even indoors in the sun-room I'll have the pleasure of putting my hands in the dirt, of transplanting new life and anticipating edible crops.

This evolution is one of the gifts of New England. While the winters are long, we can always anticipate the change in the season to come. If the heat seems prolonged, we know the cool of autumn will follow.

It's easy to complain about the cold and the heat, the over-watering and then the drought. But that's what makes a part of being a New Englander and explains why, though we may complain, few of us stray long from this place of our birth. There is pride in enduring, and there is pleasure in the swings and changes of the seasons. There is even joy in the unpredictability.

So begins the month of March with all of its variety. Folklore says it will come in like a lion and end like a lamb. Well, we shall see. What we do know for certain is that spring is on the other side.

Happy garden starting!

BY LESLIE BROWN

MONTAGUE CITY - It would be tempting to call these late February snows Poor Man's Fertilizer, and thus a sign of upcoming spring.

Unfortunately, that is not the case, as the nitrogen enrichment of end of winter snow only comes when the late wet snow falls on open, semi-thawing ground.

This recent accumulation of another soggy six inches on top of what still amounts to three feet or so in the yard is just what it is: more snow. For most, there's no

term, Janke said.

This winter, Ramsey said he has been emptying up to seven buckets of water a week from the building, and believes the roof should be fixed right away. While the building has "no architectural significance," Ramsey said, "It is savable and it is advisable to reuse buildings in town when possible."

MCTV station manager Robin Mide described to EDIC members Andrew Killeen, Nathaniel Donovan, Linda Ackerman, and Ramsey their proposal to become a long-term tenant of the building

with public access TV studios, gallery space, offices and conference rooms for RiverCulture, MCTV, and the MBA, and a welcome center for visitors to town. Plans have been drawn up for the interior redesign of the 2200 square foot building by MCTV in an effort to "complement and enhance the offerings of the Discovery Center and encourage Turners Falls revitalization," said Mide.

Members of the EDIC and the audience all agreed the location was a "prime piece of real estate" in town, as Killeen described it. He expressed concern that any plans for the building ought to include enhancing the town's commercial economy, while others, including RiverCulture director Lisa Davol, noted that a 2004 town planning document suggested the building ought to be used for the arts and Turners Falls revitalization, and that commercial use was not allowed there.

Given the need to consult with outside agencies and to review a lot of documentation, Ackerman made it clear that "no decisions would be made tonight" on the MCTV proposal. Donovan later commented, "We're all in favor of children's



DETMOLD PHOTO

The former Cumberland Farms building in Turners Falls awaits creative reuse.

activities in town, but we're not able to move forward" on the parks and recreation proposal for an outdoor art installation, "as presently constituted."

In his presentation to the EDIC, director of parks and recreation John Dobosz said while he was reviewing activities his department provides, he saw a need for more arts and crafts related activities. After discussions with town schools and area artists, the parks and recreation commission recommended working with Landry and others during summer programming to have children make a two-sided

semi-permanent mural (incorporating the cityscape of the town and the Connecticut River) for the old Cumberland Farms site.

Landry noted how much pride area children have taken in creating art for the Youth Sculpture Park on Canal Street and other areas in town.

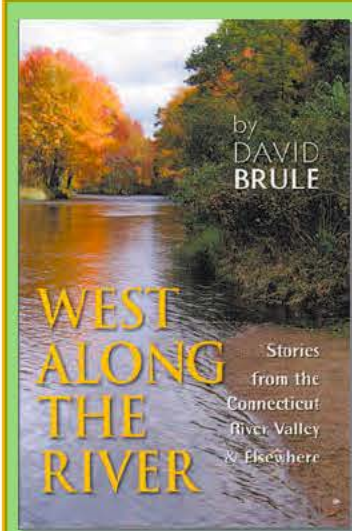
However, Davol questioned whether the proposal for a children's mural fit in with the town's strategy on public art. "Public art is for the community, not the artists, and it must relate to the community," she said.



CUMBY'S from pg 10

many concerned residents and business owners, that a memorandum of understanding exists between DCR's precursor, the Department of Environmental Management (DEM), which used to run state parks, and the town of Montague. Ramsey noted some of the planning documents for the site go back as far as 1985.

Recent tenants, the Deerfield Valley Art Association, found the leaking roof and mold build-up troubling, and are no longer renting the building. Their tenancy had always expected to be short-



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