Enhances educational experience
MCLA's new science center underscores for the college’s programs in the sciences, mally dedicated last October, was designed in North Adams.

Massachusetts College of Science and Innovation

The region's economic development ef-

orts are expected to be bolstered by the recent opening of the Feigenbaum Center for Science and Innovation. In conjunction with completion of the center, MCLA has also reinstated its chemistry oriented society.

The 65,000-square-foot facility houses the college’s biology, chemistry, environmental science, physics and psychology programs, and the college’s Berkshire Environmental Resource Center. In conjunction with completion of the center, MCLA has also reinstated its chemistry major program.

“In a sense, we’re providing incubator space for three new businesses within our store.”

BY JOHN TOWNES

Berkshire Organics has a retail store and also delivers baskets of fresh food to homes and other sites throughout Berkshire County. It specializes in organic and other sustainable produce, meat, dairy, groceries, bread and baked goods. The business also sells other sustainable personal and household products.

While Berkshire Organics also carries some products from outside the area, its primary emphasis is on food from farms and other producers in Berkshire County and adjacent regions. It currently has arrangements with over 50 farms.

“The business operates in a 4,000-square-foot section of a building at the corner of Williams Street and Dalton Division Road on...

continued on page 14

MCLA’s new science center underscores economic importance of STEM disciplines

BY JOHN TOWNES

The region’s economic development ef-

orts are expected to be bolstered by the recent opening of the Feigenbaum Center for Science and Innovation, on the campus of Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA) in North Adams.

The Feigenbaum Center, which was for-

mally dedicated last October, was designed to create a modern, central facility at MCLA for the college’s programs in the sciences, technology, engineering and math. These disciplines – also known as STEM subjects – have become an educational prior- ity in Massachusetts to prepare students for careers in the life sciences and other scientific and technical fields, which are considered to be vital career opportunities in this technol- ogy-oriented society.

The 65,000-square-foot facility houses the college’s biology, chemistry, environmental science, physics and psychology programs, and the college’s Berkshire Environmental Resource Center. In conjunction with completion of the center, MCLA has also reinstated its chemistry major program.

“It’s all about innovation,” said Dr. Mary Grant, president of MCLA. “This new building is a chance for MCLA to step it up in the STEM disciplines.”

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Full house at Berkshire Organics

BY JOHN TOWNES

Berkshire Organics, a market and delivery service in Dalton that specializes in fresh, sustainable food and other healthy products, is about to enter a new growth spurt.

The six-year-old business, owned and operated by Aleisha and Brian Gibbons, is expanding the space for its market and other operations at 813 Dalton Division Rd.

In the process, Berkshire Organics is also providing a new home and sales outlet for a handful of other businesses that produce related products.

“This will increase the offerings available to our customers here, and it also will provide the expertise of the owners of those other businesses,” said Brian Gibbons.

Berkshire Organics has a retail store and also delivers baskets of fresh food to homes and other sites throughout Berkshire County. It specializes in organic and other sustainable produce, meat, dairy, groceries, bread and baked goods. The business also sells other sustainable personal and household products.

While Berkshire Organics also carries some products from outside the area, its primary emphasis is on food from farms and other producers in Berkshire County and adjacent regions. It currently has arrangements with over 50 farms.

The business operates in a 4,000-square-foot section of a building at the corner of Williams Street and Dalton Division Road on...

continued on page 14

HOTEL ON NORTH

Developers plan boutique lodging venue as part of downtown revival

BY BRAD JOHNSON

The revitalization of downtown Pittsfield is a gradual process – one characterized by fits and starts, as each new component comes to the fore after long periods of behind-the-scenes planning and preparation.

The latest project to pop onto the scene holds the promise of adding an entirely new element that will complement other commer- cial and cultural initiatives that have taken shape in recent years.

At a Feb. 4 press conference and commu-
nity information session, plans were formally unveiled for an upscale, 45-room boutique hotel to be developed within two historic buildings at 273-297 North St.

Also announced at the well-attended event – which drew a veritable who’s who of local elected officials, community leaders, downtown business operators and property owners – was the collaboration between two prominent Berkshire families that will drive the project forward through its development, start-up and ongoing operation.

The project, to be known as Hotel on North, is being developed by MM&D LLC, whose principals are David Tierney III and his wife Laurie. David is president of the family business David J. Tierney Jr. Inc., a well-established construction and develop- ment enterprise in Pittsfield. Laurie, who is serving as managing partner for MM&D, is a real estate professional with the Kinder- hook Group.

Joining the Tierneys to announce plans for Hotel on North were members of the Fitzpatrick family, owners of the iconic Red Lion Inn in Stockbridge, and operators of The Porches Inn in North Adams.

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Branch Manager Joseph Lotano (left), Commercial Banking Relationship Manager Steven Munger (center) and Berkshire Retail Market Manager Daniel Kinney (right) are among the staff members that customers may encounter and interact with at NBT Bank's newly opened Pittsfield Financial Center at 54 North St.

‘CENTERS OF INFLUENCE’

NBT opens office in downtown Pittsfield

BY BRAD JOHNSON

NBT Bank has taken a stake in downtown Pittsfield with the opening of a new financial center at 54 North St.

According to company officials, the new office can be seen in general as part of NBT’s ongoing expansion within the Berkshire market, while its specific location and functionality reflect the bank’s desire to be an active part of downtown’s revitalized commercial and cultural hub.

“This represents the next step in our development in Berkshire County,” said Daniel Kinney, NBT’s retail market manager for Berkshire County.

Noting that the Pittsfield Financial Center is a full-service banking location, offering teller and lobby services, a walk-up ATM and night depository services, Kinney said the office also serves as a hub for other banking services such as commercial lending and wealth management.

“Quite frankly, we needed a place to put our people that would provide convenient access for our customers,” said Kinney.

For example, the new office will serve as a base for NBT’s team of commercial banking relationship managers, Steven Munger and Kevin Bisaccio. Kinney said they will be available to work with customers in the new downtown location as well as at other NBT branch locations.

“We were looking for a location that would be suitable for a different office model and banking experience,” said Kinney.

On lower North Street, those centers of influence include not only the long-established role as the city’s commercial hub but also the more recent emergence of a vibrant cultural and entertainment scene.

In that respect, Kinney noted that the new NBT office is positioned directly across from the Beacon Cinema, which has been an important factor in boosting downtown activity since its opening four years ago. The office is also just a few blocks’ walk from the Colonial Theatre and Barrington Stage Company’s main stage, two other linchpins of downtown’s cultural scene.

According to Kinney, being positioned among these important commercial and cultural venues makes a statement about the role NBT wants to play in the community.

Doller agreed, noting that the bank has compiled a good track record with downtown offices that have been established in proximity to major cultural redevelopment projects.

“It’s something we’ve had success with in other markets,” Doller said, noting NBT’s opening of commercial offices near restored historical theaters in downtown Utica and Schenectady, N.Y. “We have found that it works well to bring together our commercial services in these areas that act as a hub for people coming to downtown for variety of purposes.”

While these downtown locations — including the new Pittsfield office — tend to have their own limitations in terms of ready access to parking and an absence of drive-through banking services, Doller and Kinney noted that these conveniences are generally available at other nearby branch offices. Moreover, they said, NBT’s financial center model is intended to play a different role in terms of the types of services provided and the transactions conducted there.

At the new office on North Street, for example, the layout and configuration do not follow those of a conventional branch office. “It’s more of a series of suites,” said Kinney.

Instead of a traditional teller line, customers are able to sit down at desks with NBT staff to handle their banking business. There is also a large conference room available for situations involving multiple parties.

Kinney stressed, however, that all types of banking transactions can be conducted at the Pittsfield Financial Center. “It’s by all means a full-service office,” he said. “But it’s also a different approach to delivering some of these services.”

Kinney and Doller noted that technology has changed the way many customers handle their banking needs, generally resulting in more transactions being done electronically and fewer requiring in-person visits to a given branch office.

For those transactions best suited to personal visits, Kinney said, the new downtown Pittsfield office provides a comfortable setting to conduct business with NBT’s staff.

“It’s more of an opportunity to sit down and work one-on-one with Doller,” said Kinney. “It’s similar approach to what we have used in some other locations.”

The 2,500-square-foot space is being leased from the building’s owner, Allegro Real Estate, which is also in the process of redeveloping the neighboring Onota Building for mixed commercial and residential uses, along with other downtown projects.

“We worked very closely with Allegrone to adapt this space to our needs,” said Kinney, noting that Allegrone handled renovations required for the project.

The Pittsfield Financial Center has a staff of seven, led by Branch Manager Joseph Lotano (who also manages the bank’s Merriill Road branch).

The office, which opened quietly on Jan. 22, will host a Chamber Nite networking event with the Berkshire Chamber of Commerce on Feb. 19.

Kinney noted that a formal grand opening celebration is being planned for April 3. The event will be held across the street at the Beacon Cinema. For information on attending, call the Pittsfield Financial Center at 413-448-6162.◆
After establishing a Pittsfield store in 2011 and becoming an Apple authorized reseller the following year, Mad Masc has taken the next step in its long-range growth plan. The locally owned computer sales and service company recently announced that it is opening a new shop in Williamstown.

The new branch, slated for a storefront at 36 Spring St., will also sell Apple products and accessories. It will also be a service center.

“Our plan has been to have three branches in the county, including one in southern Berkshire County,” said Scott Kirchner, president and co-owner of the company along with his wife Carol Cortez.

“Apple also encourages its authorized sellers to go into additional sites,” he continued. “When we became an authorized Apple reseller, we decided the time was right to open another store. We chose to go to Williamstown next. We’re also looking at possibly opening a branch in Great Barrington over the next year.

Mad Masc (413-445-5588 or www.mad-macintosh.com) sells and services Apple branded products, including Macintosh computers, iPads, iPods and accessories. It does not at this time sell iPhones.

It is also an authorized dealer of other brands of related accessories and peripheral equipment including Sonos, Canon, Griffin and LifeProof.

Kirchner said they have done some renova-
tion to the Spring Street space, which they are leasing from Williams College, to adapt it to their format and uses. They plan to open in late March or early April.

Kirchner said that the Williamstown store will be a full-service operation that is similar to its Pittsfield one.

“It’s slightly smaller, but we’ll offer the same range of products,” he said. “People will be able to leave off their computers for servicing and pick them up there.”

He noted that the business has a staff of eight in Pittsfield. He estimated that the Williamstown branch will have four or five employees. In addition, some people will be working at both locations, he said.

Kirchner said the new store will serve the local community in Williamstown as well as students and staff of Williams College.

He also expects the store to draw customers from nearby communities. “We want to serve all of northern Berkshire County, including customers in North Adams, Adams and other communities where it is close and more convenient to go to Williamstown than to Pittsfield,” he said.

Kirchner said that the business moved its offices and service operation into a 1,200-square-foot office at www.mad-macintosh.com.

Kirchner noted that the company’s expansion in Pittsfield has been successful. “It’s met and exceeded our expectations,” he said. “We have a very good base of customers. I think they appreciate the personalized service we offer, and are loyal to the idea of supporting a local small business as an alternative to the big-box stores.”

Beyond current and future Berkshire locations, the company’s expansion has included service operation into a 1,200-square-foot office on East Housatonic Street in Pittsfield years ago. It previously operated out of an office along nearby River Road. After graduating from that school in 2009, she earned a master’s degree in sports marketing at the University of Las Vegas in Nevada.

She worked in marketing for a fitness business in Boston, and then at the New Hampshire Motor Speedway. She decided to return to North Adams, and learned of the chamber position from a friend.

McDonough said that her primary responsibilities include recruitment, member services and working with the chamber’s board to organize events and programs.

“My background is in business development,” said McDonough. “I’m focusing on building the chamber’s membership base. That also includes providing services and benefits to provide added value to being a member. We want to be a major resource for local businesses and the community.”

McDonough noted that the chamber currently has about 50 members, and her goal is to reach at least 100 members by the end of the year. She added that while its primary focus is on North Adams, the chamber also is reaching out to other nearby towns such as Adams and Clarksburg.

McDonough said that one emphasis of the chamber is on training and educational activities to assist businesses. “For example, we’re planning to hold an upcoming tech summit, to help businesses learn how to take advantage of new technologies,” she said.

The chamber is also planning to sponsor a home expo this spring. It also develops marketing campaigns to jointly promote local businesses.

Another focus is on providing networking and social opportunities. In recent months, the chamber sponsored a business-exchange event at the offices of MountainOne Bank and another at the chamber’s new office.

“Right now we’re hosting these gatherings on a quarterly basis but our goal is to hold them monthly,” said McDonough.

McDonough encouraged anyone who is interested in information about the chamber and membership to contact her at 413-281-2461. The North Adams Chamber also has a website in conjunction with the city’s tourism office at www.explorenorthadams.com.
Business Info Fair looks to build on 2013 debut

BY BRAD JOHNSON

Bigger and better are the key words for the second annual Business Info Fair being presented on March 5 by the Southern Berkshire Chamber of Commerce (SBCC).

The event—which is billed as “a one-stop information gathering experience for locally available products and services”—was first held in 2013 as an outgrowth of the occasional informational seminar and workshops organized by the chamber on specific topics such as health insurance or marketing.

“We like doing these seminars, and people who attend find them to be useful,” said Betsy Andrus, the chamber’s executive director. “But sometimes they are very narrow in focus, and that can make it a challenge to get people to put them on their calendars.”

So, she and others at the SBCC decided to establish a new event that would broaden the appeal by broadening the scope of information that’s available to attendees.

“We wanted to put out as much information as we could,” Andrus said. “For business people, we wanted to say, ‘Here’s a good shot for you to get all access to these businesses and services on a one-stop basis.’”

According to Andrus, that goal was achieved with the inaugural event in 2013, at which attendees visited with 26 participating businesses at information tables set up in the ballroom of the Comfort Inn in Great Barrington.

“Last year, we had no idea what to expect,” said Andrus, noting that the ballroom turned out to be a tight fit, with some overflow spilling out into the hallway. “Based on that turnout, we knew we needed to select a larger space this year.”

The venue ultimately chosen and booked for the 2014 event is the gymnasium at the Berkshire South Regional Community Center. “This is an ideal location for us,” said Andrus. “It gives us room to grow.”

In that respect, Andrus said she anticipates having around 30 to 35 businesses participating this year—providing information about services such as accounting, advertising, banking, consulting, graphics, insurance, photography, printing, signage, wealth management and web development, among others.

(Shesaid that businesses interested in participating can still make arrangements to do so up to a week before the event. A 10-by-10-foot booth costs $50 for SBCC members and $150 for non-members. Call 413-528-4284 for details.)

Along with more business exhibitors, the 2014 Business Info Fair will have an added draw in the form of a hospitality tent that is being sponsored collectively by some of the smaller businesses participating in the event.

Andrus said the idea for the tent came from Maxine Carter Lorne, a chamber member and consultant, who saw it as a way for some of the smaller businesses to make a bigger splash at the fair.

“Not all vendors are going to be able to have the big displays that some of the larger businesses can do,” said Andrus. “The hospitality tent is away for some of the smaller businesses to get a little more exposure and recognition.”

The hospitality tent will feature a selection of beverages including beer and wine, accompanied by light snacks and other refreshments. “We think this will add a nice touch to the fair,” said Andrus.

The Business Info Fair will run from 4:30 to 7:30 p.m. Attendance is free and open to the public.

Cultural kick-off

While the stage is set for the March 5 Business Info Fair, Andrus said plans are just beginning to take shape for another new event on the chamber’s calendar later this spring that will focus on the cultural side of the regional economy.

Still lacking an official name for the event, Andrus said plans are in the works for what she described as a “cultural kick-off” to be held collectively by and for the many organizations and institutions among the SBCC’s membership that are involved in performing and visual arts and other aspects of the summer cultural scene.

She noted that many local cultural organizations hold their own small events—a cocktail party or other such gathering—to mark the start of their respective seasons.

“It occurred to me that if somebody orchestrated this altogether and did one big kick-off for the busy season, it would have a lot more impact,” said Andrus.

Going through the chamber’s membership, she identified some 40 cultural organizations that might fit within such a collective kick-off event, and has been canvassing these members about their interest in participating.

“We’re getting a lot of initial support and enthusiasm for the idea,” she said. “Just like me, people are wondering why we haven’t done something like this before.”

Based on early feedback, Andrus said that the preferred format is trending toward a casual affair, with catered refreshments, entertainment and even a “dessert-off” competition in which attendees can sample desserts prepared by participating restaurants and vote for their favorites.

While plans are still tentative, she said a date in early May is being targeted for the event, at a venue yet to be determined.

Andrus said chamber members interested in participating in or helping to organize the cultural kick-off should contact her at 413-528-4284 or at betsy@ southernberkshirechamber.com.

Plans are taking shape for another new event on the chamber’s calendar that will focus on the cultural side of the regional economy.

Business Info Fair will run from 4:30 to 7:30 p.m. Attendance is free and open to the public.
The Berkshire Pulse has announced that its current fund, Simple Gifts Fund, is accepting applications for programs, grants, and grants to programs. The foundation will accept applications to the Simple Gifts Fund until March 15. That fund has awarded grants in the past to nonprofit organizations, cultural institutions, and individuals. Applications and guidelines for those two programs are available at www.berkshirepulse.org.

The Berkshire Pulse was established in 2007 as a private, non-tax-exempt, 501 (c) (3) charitable organization. The fund seeks to provide a source of financial assistance to programs, grants, and grants to programs that serve Berkshire County. The fund is currently accepting applications for grants in the following categories:

- Support for arts and culture
- Support for education and youth services
- Support for environmental and community programs
- Support for human services and health care
- Support for civic engagement and community development

Applications are encouraged from nonprofit organizations, cultural institutions, and individuals. The fund seeks to provide funding for programs that serve Berkshire County and that align with the fund’s goals and priorities.

Applications are available at www.berkshirepulse.org. The deadline for applications is March 15, 2014. For more information, contact Maeve O’Dea, BTCF program director, at 413-229-0370 or Maeve.O’Dea@berkshiretaconic.org.
Berkshire Medical Center (BMC) is accepting applications until May 1 for two scholarships for students who will pursue careers in the healthcare field. The Kermit Gordon Scholarship will be awarded to Berkshire County college students enrolled in medicine, dentistry, nursing, pharmacy or health science programs. BMC is also accepting applications for nursing scholarships awarded through the former Henry W. Bishop and St. Luke’s nursing schools. These scholarships will help pay tuition and expenses for those pursuing an associate’s, bachelor’s, or master’s degree in Nursing, or a Master of Science in Nursing. Application forms may be obtained from the Berkshire Health Systems Education Department, 165 Tor Court in Pittsfield, or from county high school guidance counselors. For more information, call the BHS Education Department at 413-447-2132. Berkshire County Arc is accepting applications until March 21 for its 2014 scholarship award program for high school seniors pursuing undergraduate education in fields related to human services. An independent panel of community members will select the winners and determine the amount of each award up to the scholarship maximum of $1,500. The awards are made possible through fund-raising efforts including Berkshire County Arc’s Annual Golf Classic. Applications are available through area high school guidance offices or by contacting the Berkshire County Arc office at 499-4241 ext. 244.

A group of students at Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA) who major in athletic training are gaining additional hands-on experience in the field through a service learning project at A1 Pitching Academy in Adams (February 2014 BT&C), where they will focus on injury prevention techniques. With A1’s clientele—most of whom are high school students aged 14 to 18—MCLA students will be exposed to athletes of a different age group than they are used to working with, according to Dr. Peter Hoyt, director of MCLA’s athletic training education program. A1’s owner Jonah Baylis described the arrangement with MCLA’s athletic training students as a plus for his clientele. “I knew from the get-go that the opportunity would be phenomenal for my clients here at A1,” Baylis said. In addition to the six upperclassmen who will gain hands-on experience at A1 Pitching Academy, MCLA freshmen who major in athletic training will gain observational experience as an atoll of this collaboration. For more information, go to www.mcla.edu/athletictraining and www.a1pitchingacademy.com.

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BUSINESS TIP:

Fish
do not live in clear water.
By John Townes

William Monterosso’s life has come full circle geographically, and the Pittsfield native wouldn’t have it any other way. Monterosso recently returned to the Berkshires after being hired as director of the BerkshireWorks Career Center, a position formerly held on an interim basis by John Barrett III.

In January Monterosso started in the job at BerkshireWorks, which is the county’s officially designated one-stop employment services center and a primary workforce development resource.

Monterosso grew up in modest circumstances on Onota Street in Pittsfield. The 1982 Taosica High School graduate left the Berkshires after graduation and did not return here to live until now. As an adult, he lived and worked in several places, primarily in West Virginia.

Despite the time and distance that separated him from the Berkshires, Monterosso noted in a late January interview that he has always maintained a connection to his hometown, and that he constantly had a desire to return here to live. He added that Berkshire County has a combination of positive qualities that he has not found elsewhere.

“I never fell out of love with Berkshire County, and I came back to visit whenever I could,” he said.

He noted that the area’s assets are not always appreciated by people who live here.

“I still have many friends here, and the most common question they’ve had is, ‘Why the hell did you want to come back?’” he said. “My response is, ‘Why would anybody want to leave?’ I was afforded the opportunity to leave and did. But I’ve been to many places, and no place has given me the same sense of peace as the Berkshires.”

On a professional level, Monterosso said the job at BerkshireWorks represented a good fit for his background and experience in employment services and workforce development.

“I’ve worked in different aspects of employment services and workforce development at many levels and settings, from direct services to administration and management,” he said. “I’ve also worked with people in all walks of life. My goal is to bring that experience and new ideas to make a positive impact here.”

In conversation, Monterosso conveys the enthusiasm of someone for whom workforce development, employment services and economic revitalization are not merely abstract concepts or bureaucratic goals.

“I have to reach out to secondary education and work with schools to develop a talent pipeline,” he said. “I was one of those poor kids who had no passion for academics when I was young. I was only interested in sports and having a good time. I didn’t realize the value of education until I was out of high school. So I recognize how vital it is that we show kids while they are in school how education directly links to jobs and their lives in real ways.”

He sees that as both an ongoing challenge and one that is especially important today.

“Kids have been badly influenced by TV and the media,” he said. “Either they think they can leave high school and very quickly make $50,000 a year or they believe they have no chance in life. That is especially difficult for kids whose families have been infused with despair over generations, and who don’t have positive role models.”

Monterosso also conveys a strong sense of empathy with the unemployed.

“A lot of adults give their heart and soul to a company,” he said. “But one day they go into work and are told they don’t have a job anymore. That pulls the rug out from under them.”

While such situations are often traumatic and difficult, Monterosso noted that in some cases they can also be a blessing in disguise.

“It can be a chance to do something they really wanted to do,” he said. “Our job is to help them find that.”

Background fits mission

BerkshireWorks is charted by the Berkshire County Regional Employment Board Inc. and is a partnership between the Berkshire Training and Employment Program and the Massachusetts Division of Career Services.

As the county’s designated career and workforce development center, BerkshireWorks provides employment-focused programs and services for job seekers and current workers, including employment listings, counseling, job placement, career workshops and support groups and other services, in addition to handling unemployment claims.

It also provides services for employers including access to workers and placements, training, tools and information and access to training programs and other services to assist them in meeting their workforce needs.

Monterosso has a background in many related aspects of this, including on-the-line and executive work with public employment and workforce programs, juvenile justice and vocational services for the disabled.

After leaving high school, Monterosso enlisted in the Marines and served from 1983 to 1987. He then attended Glenville State College in West Virginia, where he earned degrees in business and marketing.

He had a brief career in the corporate sector, working for Lever Brothers (now Unilever) until he made a shift in 1990, when he and his former wife had a child.

“I decided it was more important to be a good father than to spend all my time chasing money,” he said. “I became a juvenile probation officer in West Virginia, a job he held until 1997. Then he became the director of a criminal adolescent facility there.”

“That was really the start of my current career,” he said. “Being a probation officer is largely about the workforce, and getting young people to relate to the idea of working at an honest job.”

Monterosso went on to a position working with adults at the Workforce Investment Board in West Virginia.

He subsequently became director of Ross IES, an employment services company that works on contract with public and community organizations.

He has also provided technical assistance to the one-stop career center program of Virginia’s Dept. of Labor.

From 2010 to 2012 served as executive director of the Workforce and Education Center for the state of Kentucky.
His most recent job was as executive director of the West Virginia Association of Rehabilitation Facilities.

Monterosso said his return to the Berkshires was sparked by a listing for the job at BerkshireWorks on the Internet.

“There was just idly looking at online job boards for positions one day, and I saw the listing for BerkshireWorks,” he said. “It was an executive position in my field that was in busted Pittsfield. It was a perfect opportunity to get back here. So I immediately dusted off my resume and sent it in.”

He was appointed to the quasi-public agency by Pittsfield Mayor Dan Bianchi in a review process that also included Mayor Richard Alcombright of North Adams and other local officials.

“Dynamic resource”

Monterosso said that his first priority has been to orient himself, get to know the staff of BerkshireWorks and meet with officials, businesspeople and others in the community. He said he is learning about the situation here and the priorities of the region in terms of workforce development and the economy.

Regarding his general goals, Monterosso said he wants to build on the existing services of BerkshireWorks for workers and employers, as well as its role in overall economic development.

“A basic purpose of economic development is to create economic strength in the region that will help people to have a good quality of life,” he said. “BerkshireWorks is an important part of that.”

He said he has been impressed by the quality of the staff at BerkshireWorks.

“I’ve been blessed in this position, because the staff here has years of experience, and there is a passion among them about what they do,” he said. “My job is to empower them, and make it possible for them to do their jobs as effectively as possible.”

Monterosso said one organizational goal is to reduce red tape and to encourage productive interactions within the staff and departments of BerkshireWorks, with an emphasis on service to its clients.

“You don’t want to have a staff segregated into individual silos,” he said. “We’re a cohesive unit that meets the needs of business, and also has strong relationships with employers, educators, local leaders and everyone in the community.”

He said that includes providing assistance to individuals who are currently unemployed and also those who have jobs but are seeking to advance themselves.

“We’re not the unemployment office,” he said. “We’re a career center. That means being a dynamic resource for everyone who is seeking employment, whether they currently have a job or not. In addition to helping them find positions, we’re also here to help them find training and other resources to help them advance.”

Prior to the arrival of Monterosso, BerkshireWorks was involved in some controversy about delays and other problems related to recent changes in the state system for processing of unemployment benefits.

“Our mission is to develop a workforce that meets the needs of business,” he said. “They are our number one customers, because without business there are no jobs.”

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“Our mission is to develop a workforce that meets the needs of business,” he said. “They are our number one customers, because without business there are no jobs.”

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**Hotel on North continued from page 1**

Led by Nancy Fitzpatrick, who in her comments noted that the relationship between the two families dates back to the Tierneys’ chief operating officer, respectively, of a new capaci ty as chief executive officer and jousting for brand positioning in the Berkshire market. Finn explained that these projects – which include brands asso ciated with Hilton and Marriott, among others – do not represent potential clients for MSHG. Rather, he said, they may give owners of other independent hotels in this market more reason to consider enslavement to chain hotel operations. “We’re looking to be a management, sales and marketing force for hotels in Berkshire County as well as regionally,” he said, explaining that these projects – which include brands associated with MSHG and its services as hotel developers.”

On the other hand, there is the current wave of chain hotel projects being put forward by local developers in what has become an increasingly intertwined jousting for brand positioning in the Berkshire market. Finn explained that these projects – which include brands associated with Hilton and Marriott, among others – do not represent potential clients for MSHG. Rather, he said, they may give owners of other independent hotels in this market more reason to consider enslavement to chain hotel operations. “We’re looking to be a management, sales and marketing force for hotels in Berkshire County as well as regionally,” he said, explaining that these projects – which include brands associated with MSHG and its services as hotel developers.”

**Main Street Hospitality Group debuts with downtown project**

BY BRAD JOHNSON

At the conclusion of a story in the November 2013 issue of BusinessWest, “Finn agreed, noting that fast-track growth is not envisioned for the hotel’s development and operations. ’Before we go elsewhere, we want to invest our time and talent on our home turf. ’”

As with any new venture, there is the potential for a project to go off the rails, but Finn noted that the Red Lion’s experience in providing management to the project, it is perhaps the most comfortable relationship between the two families and the mutual respect they have for each other’s business prowess and accomplishments that speaks most clearly of the promise of this collaboration. Finn noted that despite the Feb. 4 announcement, David Tierney touched on that subject, describing how his firm’s work on a 350-room, four-star hotel project on Berkshire County’s Route 7, “Pittsfield is a great opportunity for us to show what we can do with Main Street Hospitality Group.”

**Speculative stage at this time, the potential for inclusion of a boutique hotel operation within the former Eagle Mill complex in downtown Pittsfield.”**
Bruce Finn, who is relinquishing his managerial duties with The Red Lion to take on new role with MSHG (see related story), echoed those remarks in a separate interview, noting that the Tierneys’ work for The Red Lion through the years fostered a level of trust and respect that led to their collaboration on Hotel on North.

While this collaboration has now been manifested in early 2014 with announcement of the downtown hotel concept, their efforts on this front go back several years and have involved consideration of a number of downtown locations.

“Together, we have looked at many places over the past seven years,” said Finn. “It goes back that far.”

David Tierney credited Nancy Fitzpatrick with being the impetus for their collective efforts dating back to 2007. “Nancy felt it was important to have a quality hotel downtown,” he said.

Despite the economic interruption known as the Great Recession that took hold in 2008, the Tierneys and Fitzpatricks continued to pursue their goal of a downtown hotel, giving close consideration to a handful of potential properties.

Among these, Tierney noted, was the former main office of Berkshire Bank at 24 North St. Prominently located on Park Square, the building had several of the attributes desired for the type of boutique hotel envisioned by Fitzpatrick. But, ultimately, other factors such as its size, internal configuration and absence of on-site parking caused them to turn away from that option. “We came very close to doing this,” Tierney commented.

More recently, another opportunity arose when the two-building complex at the corner of North and Summer streets was put on the market by Lawrence Rosenthal, who, along with partner Joyce Bernstein, had purchased and renovated the property as the headquarter for Link to Life through the years. The building had been used for Link to Life became vacant in 2011. While the restaurant line-up revolved on the lower floor, the upper levels that had been used for Link to Life became vacant when that business was sold to an out-of-area concern. Following the sale of Link to Life, Rosenthal put the downtown buildings on the market, where they attracted the attention of MM&D.

“The same basic goal is envisioned for Hotel on North, although its location in the heart of downtown suggests a more direct and tangible connection to the city center, in addition to its symbolic bridging of downtown’s past and future,” said Laurie Tierney. In December 2012, MM&D purchased the complex for $1.35 million and quietly began behind-the-scenes work with The Red Lion contingent on the concept and plans for Hotel On North.

Eclectic elegance

In some respects, the vision and concept for the downtown hotel project is similar to that which drove development of The Porches over a dozen years ago.

Created from a row of restored Victorian-era houses across the street from the then newly opened Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (MASS MoCa), The Porches was envisioned as providing an upscale boutique lodging experience unlike anything else in the city, with eclectic and individually designed rooms, and an overall theme that drew from the city’s history while also tying in directly to its future through its proximity to MASS MoCa.

The same basic goal is envisioned for Hotel on North, although its location in the heart of downtown suggests a more direct and tangible connection to the city center, in addition to its symbolic bridging of downtown’s past and future.

As described in a press release issued in conjunction with the Feb. 4 event, Hotel on North will be an “elegant property featuring an eclectic mix of furnishings and decor to reflect its heritage as an iconic early 20th century department store in the center of downtown Pittsfield.”

The two buildings were built in 1883 and 1890 respectively by James Burns, a local merchant who established a home furnishing store in Pittsfield in the late 1870s. The buildings were named to the National Register of Historic Places in 2002.

While both buildings have been used for a variety of purposes throughout their history, the southernmost developed its own iconic status as home to the Besse-Clarke department store that operated there from 1910 to 1994.

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Early in the new century, however, this atmosphere of attrition and retribution began yielding to a more hopeful yearning for revitalization.

Despite some false starts, wrong turns and additional setbacks along the way, the various efforts and initiatives to spark new activity in the city center – from attractive urban housing options to high-profile cultural venues to more eclectic dining and retail ventures – began creating a tangible path toward revitalization. While it remains a work in progress, there is evidence that people are finding and following this path to a growing number of downtown destinations.

In this context, developers of Hotel on North see their project as becoming the next wave of activities and additional setbacks along the way, the trend toward diminished commerce in the city center. Finn said. “I think it’s high time.”

Laurie Tierney echoed those sentiments. “We are very excited about working with Main Street Hospitality on this project, which we hope will help revitalize the city that we love,” she commented.

Bruce Finn, a Pittsfield native, noted that his first job was as a busboy at the restaurant within the former Hilton in nearby Berkshire Commons complex. That property, which now operates as the Crowne Plaza, has long been the only significant lodging facility in the downtown district.

“For many years, there has been no alternative for travelers looking to stay in the city center,” Finn said. “I think it’s high time.”

As stated in press material, the alternative envisioned with Hotel on North is for “a locally operated, non-chain boutique hotel...that will enhance the ongoing redevelopment of North Street (recently named one of Massachusetts’ first Cultural Districts in 2012) and serve as a destination spot for business and leisure travelers as well as local residents.”

The reference to being a “non-chain” property is significant in the current context of local developers scrambling to establish a variety of new mid-market chain hotel franchises along the Route 7/20 corridor in Pittsfield and Lenox.

While acknowledging that chain hotels can be an important component of the local lodging scene, proponents of the Hotel on North project see the need for a distinctly different type of hospitality experience. “What we’re doing is something unique and inventive,” said Sarah Eustis. She noted, for example, that design themes utilized in the project will draw from local art and local resources while also connecting with the heritage of Pittsfield and Berkshire County.

As described in the press release, “Hotel on North is also an adaptive reuse of a historic building, which adds to its overall sense of uniqueness and distinctiveness in comparison to other hotels. Hotel on North will allow visitors to be exposed to a completely different travel experience: one that is not only positive and pleasant, but also special and one-of-a-kind.”

Among those directly involved in the adaptive reuse aspect of Hotel on North is another member of the Tierney family, David’s sister, Karen Tierney Hunt, who is serving as architect on the redevelopment project. In her comments at the Feb. 4 event, she described some of the challenges and opportunities involved in adapting the two buildings to their new purpose.

For example, she noted how existing columns in some sections of the buildings, which at first seemed to be an obstacle to some room design plans, have instead been integrated into the room features in creative ways that underscore the unique characteristics of each room. “We love our columns now,” she exclaimed.

Hunt noted that the overall design will reflect the historic nature of the buildings. The exterior of the building will remain intact, while the interior will be adorned with a vintage motif. Further, the decorations and furnishings used throughout the property will showcase an appreciation for historical accuracy.

Project financing

This adherence to historical detail represents a pragmatic marriage of thematic concept and financial consideration – the latter owing to the fact that developers hope to secure state and federal historic tax credits as part of the financing package for the project.

David Tierney noted that the estimated cost for the “sticks and bricks” aspect of the redevelopment project is $8 million, with another $3 million going toward the soft costs and other related expenses to get the hotel up and running.

In their post-announcement interview with BT&C, the Tierneys noted that the precise financing picture for the project will be taking shape over the next few months.

That includes ongoing discussions with local lenders, as well as pursuit of not only the historic tax credits but also another form of financing know as New Markets Tax Credits that are available in areas designated as economically challenged.

“The plans have been submitted for the historic portion,” David Tierney said. He explained that a determination on the federal historic tax credit comes first, with word on that expected as soon as March. If approved on the federal level, the state would then make its own determination on MM&D’s application for historic tax credits.

Should both state and federal tax credits be approved, Tierney said, the amount allocated for each would be for up to 20 percent of the qualified investment (i.e., the $8 million redevelopment cost).

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Tierney said MM&D has also begun the process of seeking the federal New Markets Tax Credits, although he noted that this process is more complex and unpredictable than with historic tax credits.

“It’s much more convoluted,” he said, noting that it involves submitting applications to one or more of the state’s Community Development Entities in the state (known as Community Development Entities, or CDEs) – any of which may or may not receive tax credits to allocate when the federal government comes out with its next round of funding guidelines in April.

“We have already applied to some of these CDEs, and we have to hope that they are among those to get funding,” he said.

While the prospects for these tax credits are uncertain, Tierney said that MM&D is currently working to ensure that one key criterion for receiving them is met. “You have to have your project ready to go,” he said. “It has to be shovel ready.”

To that end, MM&D has been moving the project through some of the initial review stages with city officials, a process that will continue over the next few months. Among items being reviewed are plans for the hotel to install a marquee above the main entrance, and to designate a curbside area in front of the hotel for valet parking service.

While approval of the tax credits is important to the project’s viability, the Tierneys said they are working on other financing scenarios should some or all of the tax credits fail to materialize.

“We’re running multiple scenarios – what it’s – on how we can fund the difference,” said David Tierney.

While optimistic that financing will take shape in one form or another, he noted that several uncertainties remain. “There’s a lot to be determined still on this project,” he
said. “We have an awful lot of balls in the air on this.”

“A lot of work has gone into these numbers,” added Laurie Tierney. “There are a lot of changes that can take place.”

While these uncertainties were acknowledged at the public announcement on Feb. 4, they were largely obscured by the energized and enthusiastic atmosphere of the high-profile event.

That’s okay with the Tierneys, who see community enthusiasm and excitement about their project as a necessary ingredient for its success. “We have to put a positive spin on it out of the box to get people excited,” said David Tierney.

They hope to maintain that excitement about the project as it moves toward the construction phase.

Tierney noted that many of improvements made by the buildings’ previous owners will be of benefit to MM&D once work begins. “Some of those renovations were very much of value to us,” he said.

In other cases, however, the improvements work the other way. For example, he noted that the aluminum replacement windows installed during earlier renovations were not selected with historical accuracy in mind. Thus, he said, the windows will all need to be replaced with ones that meet criteria for the historic tax credits.

Much of the redevelopment process will involve converting the upper floors into guest rooms and spaces for other amenities, such as a fitness room and business center.

There will also be substantial work done on the lower level, especially in creation of a new lobby area, a lounge and bar, and an area for breakfast service.

Tierney noted that some of these street-level renovations will have an impact on the two existing restaurants operating there. He noted, for example, that some of the 10,000 square feet currently occupied by Spice Dragon may need to be used for other amenities related to the hotel’s operation.

The Tierneys noted that it is their hope that the two restaurants will remain in their current locations, and that they have been in discussions with their respective owners about the project’s potential impact on their operations.

As these and other issues are resolved, the Tierneys will continue to work closely with Main Street Hospitality Group and architect Karen Tierney Hunt on final design and other aspects of the project.

When asked about the name of their development entity, the couple explained that MM&D is comprised of the initials of their three children’s names (Meaghan, Michael and David).

In that respect – and in the collaboration with the Fitzpatricks and Karen Tierney Hunt – Hotel on North is, as Laurie Tierney described it, “really a family project.”

But it is also very much a community project, she added. “Our success with this will affect all the businesses in the area,” she said. “We want to work with the community and want everyone to benefit.”

The strong turnout and response at the Feb. 4 event reinforced that point. “We had hoped for that many people,” she said. “As we pointed out, it’s about the whole community.”

Circling back to the revitalization theme, David Tierney described the project (and its high-profile roll-out) as a reminder that forward progress can still be made even in challenging times. “It’s meant to give people downtown hope that spring is coming,” he said.
the Dalton-Pittsfield line. The structure originally was a farm store operated for many years by the Burton family. Berkshire Organics is currently preparing to expand into an adjacent space in the building which most recently housed a separate convenience store.

An opening is being created between the two sections to connect them. The new section will enlarge the space for Berkshire Organics to 6,600 square feet. Berkshire Organics will also be leasing portions of this space to three new ventures, including Bake Me Pretty, a bakery owned by Kate Miller; Red Apple Butchers, operated by James Burden and Jara Stine; and nAURAlly Catering and Takeout, which is being launched by chef Aara Whitman, who previously operated Cafe Reva in Pittsfield (see related story on opposite page).

“In a sense, we’re providing incubator space for three new businesses within our store,” said Brian Gibbons. In addition, Cricket Creek Farm, a sustainable farm in Williamstown, is opening an outlet for the several varieties of cheese produced there.

The opportunity for the expansion arose when the property was recently purchased from Tom Burgner by a local real estate group, nAURAlly Catering and Takeout, which was brokered by a local real estate group, Dalton Division Development LLC. “Originally, the new owners had planned to open a convenience store in the other section,” Gibbons said. “However, we suggested to them that we also lease space that is adjacent and they agreed. We’ve started talking to people about sharing space with us, and we found these businesses.”

The work to open the space, adapt it and add equipment for the new ventures is being undertaken this winter. Gibbons said the new section is slated to be completed in April.

He noted that the other businesses will have their own sections of the store, but sales from all of them will be run up at its main cash registers.

**Started as delivery service**

This is the latest chapter in the evolution of Berkshire Organics, which was created by Aleisha Gibbons as a home-based delivery business with a $1,000 investment.

“When I started this, I was focused only on deliveries,” she said. “I never dreamed the delivery business would take off as it did. Then as more retail was added, the business grew beyond my wildest dreams.”

Both Brian and Aleisha grew up in Berkshire County and live in Dalton.

Gibbons said she launched the business when she moved back from Berkshire to Dalton and was unable to find work in her original career as a teacher.

As a proponent of sustainable food and agriculture, she said she also saw a need for a delivery service to provide fresh organic produce to people who might not have time or access to the sources for these foods themselves.

She made arrangements to acquire produce from regional farmers. She also devised a system to prepare food baskets and deliver them to people’s homes. To drum up business, she also distributed fliers and set up a website (www.berkshireorganics.com).

She initially established a route with 35 customers and began making deliveries in 2008. By the end of her first summer she had 100 customers.

Brian Gibbons, who had previously worked as a landscaper and horticulturist, subsequently joined the business. Within its first year Berkshire Organics moved out of their home into a small former flower shop in Dalton.

It relocated in the next year to a small space in the Burnger Farm building, while that business was still operating but in the process of being phased out.

“We started with less than 200 square feet there, but within a short period of time it was up to 800 square feet,” said Brian Gibbons.

In 2010, Berkshire Organics took over the entire northern section of the building, which had been divided into two sections. The new project will unify those spaces again.

In a way what we’re doing now brings the building back full circle,” he noted. “It was originally one large store, and it now will be again.”

The growth of Berkshire Organics from its original focus on deliveries into a full-fledged retail market evolved over time.

“That started when the business was in its early days,” said Brian Gibbons.”When it was in the flower shop, some people asked if they could come in and pick up baskets themselves. Then the people who had been buying just kept asking for additional items. The retail side grew out of that. As we gained more space, we continued to add more groceries and other items, and it became a market.”

The business now has about 15 full- and part-time staff.

The owners noted that one key to their success has been the participation of John Schulte, a retired former president of finance at Dalton papermaker Crane. He started helping out at the store as an interest, and has become a business advisor for them.

“He has been very important, and his expertise has made our growth possible,” said Aleisha Gibbons. “He just started helping out because he liked what we were doing. It’s not every day you meet someone who is willing to do so much to help without expecting something back.”

While the retail market is growing, deliveries still represent a significant portion of the business. Brian Gibbons estimated that about 60 percent of their sales are in-store purchases and 40 percent are deliveries.

They sell an average of 200 to 300 food baskets on a weekly basis to three drivers covering eight routes throughout Berkshire County. In addition to deliveries, baskets are picked up in the store.

He noted that they have started a program with some local businesses and institutions for the delivery of fresh foods to customers of Berkshire Organics who work at those sites.

“By doing that, we can consolidate those deliveries instead of going to the each of the customers’ homes, so we offer those baskets at a discount,” he explained.

Gibbons said that the store draws on a primary customer base that includes Dalton, Pittsfield and surrounding communities.

“We also attract people from further away, including the hilltowns and places like New Lebanon, N.Y., who come to shop here,” he said.

A majority of their produce, meat and dairy products come from regional farms and producers, although they do augment that with sources from further away to be able to carry produce that is not in season. They also sell packaged items from outside the area.

Most of the produce they carry is certified organic. They also sell some food that is grown by organic principles even it has not been officially certified as organic.

“Our primary mission is to sell food that is safe and healthy,” said Gibbons. “I’d say 95 percent of what we sell is either organic or the equivalent of that.”

They also offer gluten-free alternatives for people who want that choice.

In addition, Berkshire Organics avoids food that is grown or produced with ingredients that include genetically modified organisms, also known as GMOs.

“Almost everything we sell is GMO free,” he said. “The only exceptions are [food items] from some local farms. We tell them that we prefer not to sell GMO foods. But some believe they have to use them. We want to support local vendors, so we make allowances in some cases. But we make sure that GMO food we carry is labeled so customers know.”

The couple say that handling the growth of a business that involves so many facets is demanding, but they say it is worth it.

“We work very hard, and this requires a major commitment,” said Aleisha Gibbons. “That’s fine, though, because we both believe very strongly in what we’re doing here, and we’re passionate about it.”
By John Townes

The purpose of expansion of Berkshire Organics at its retail market in Dalton involves more than just the core operations of the business owned by Aleisha and Brian Gibbons.

It is also creating a marketplace that will serve as a venue for several local culinary entrepreneurs who plan to open their respective sections this spring, when renovation of the space adjacent to Berkshire Organics' existing store has been completed.

Among them is Aura Whitman of Cheshire, who plans to open the popular Cafe Reva on Tyler Street in Pittsfield. Cafe Reva attracted a large and loyal clientele who were drawn by its combination of familiar staples and gourmet fare, along with its ambiance as a neighborhood diner patronized by a mix of local regulars and visitors from further afield.

Last year, Whitman had to close the business as the result of a dispute with her landlord over responsibility for facility upgrades required by city officials for safety reasons.

Now, Whitman is preparing to bring her culinary skills to Berkshire Organics with a new business, named nAURAlly Catering & Takeout. The business will have kitchen facilities and a counter where customers will be able to purchase full meals or specific a la carte items to go.

"We are operating Cafe Reva, and when it closed, I considered doing another restaurant," said Whitman. "But I decided that I'd done that, and it was time for a new chapter. Also, I enjoyed spending time with my kids, and this gives me more flexibility in my schedule."

She said nAURAlly Catering & Takeout will feature some of the popular items that were served at the cafe, as well as new fare.

Whitman said she will often be on site preparing food, and customers will also be able to buy items at other times. It will offer breakfast items, soups, sandwiches and other culinary specialties. Snacks and sides will also be available. She has not determined final prices yet, but she expects that sandwiches will be in the range of $7.50 while entrees will average from $8 to $10.

Whitman will be using fresh local ingredients, including products of businesses in the market and other vendors. "I've always cooked with fresh ingredients, and that is well with the market here," she said.

Whitman will also use the Berkshire Organics space as a base for her catering operations. "Catering customers will have the option of picking up the prepared food here, or we can go to their event and serve it from there," she noted.

Another New business soon to open at the market is Red Apple Butchers, which is owned and operated by Jaza Stine and James Burden, who both live in Pittsfield.

Red Apple Butchers will prepare and sell meat from pasture-raised animals from local farms. Its products will include staple such as chicken, beef and pork. In addition, they will carry specialized items such as duck and lamb, based on availability.

Stine said he and Burden started the business in response to what they saw as a need for access to meats. They have other related experience in food preparation and sales in positions at restaurants and retail vendors.

"I was thinking about opening a business when Brian and Aleisha (Gibbons) contacted me about this space," said Stine, who is also a founding member of the Berkshire Food Guild, a group of food professionals promoting knowledge and awareness of the local food system (August 2013 BT&C)

He said that he and Burden saw an opportunity for a locally oriented butcher business.

"Something like this is needed locally," he said. "There's a bit of a breakdown around here between farms that have products and the access customers have to those products. That's a role we want to fill."

Their section of Berkshire Organics will include a refrigerated walk-in space where they will store and work with the meat. "We'll receive the meat of the animals from slaughterhouses, and then we'll prepare the cuts of meat here," said Stine.

He said that they also will create and sell value-added products, such as smoked meat, sausage and bacon.

"We plan to add wholesale distribution and catering services, as well as sponsoring classes and other related activities," said Stine.

Meanwhile, in another space in the market, Kate Miller will be baking and selling cakes, cookies, cupcakes, scones, muffins and other sweet goods.

Miller is the proprietor of Bake Me Pretty. Her business has existed for several years, but her move into Berkshire Organics is an expansion into a full retail operation.

Miller has been involved in baking since she was a child, and she attended the Culinary Institute of America, where she received a degree in Baking and Pastry Arts. She has worked in restaurants in the area.

"I also started selling my own baked goods as a sideline, and this is an outgrowth of that," she said. "I do custom cakes and other baked goods for weddings and other events, as well as wholesale and restaurant business."

Miller also has had an online shop on the website ETSY (search on the site for BakeMePretty) and has a Facebook page, but this is her first real foray into on-site retail sales.

"A lot of my custom work is visually appealing and ornate, which is where the name of the shop came from," said Miller, who lives in Dalton. "I also use high quality ingredients and local eggs, butter and other products in them."

Until now, she has been sharing a commercial baking space with another food business.

At Berkshire Organics, she will have her own baking facilities, as well as a display and sales counter. Customers will be able to buy prepared items there or place special orders for custom products.

Another new section will be operated by an established business, CricketFlock Farm in Williamstown, which was founded by the Sabot family in 2002.

CricketFlock Farm is a backyard farm and sells raw milk, cheese, butter, baked goods, beef, pork and eggs. It emphasizes pasture-raised animals and other methods, with access to cheese from other farms as well as sponsoring classes and other related activities.

"We heard about what they are doing at Berkshire Organics and we thought it would be a great outlet for us," said Suzy Konecky, creamery manager at CricketFlock. "CricketFlock Farm is a natural fit for us."

She said that the arrangement also reflects the farm's current plans, and its priority of making its operation as efficient as possible. "We're growing, while at the same time we're trying to become more focused," she said.

Konecky explained that the farm's artisan cheese is sold through a network of retail stores and farmers markets as well as to restaurants and other outlets.

"We sell through many outlets," she said. "One goal is to become more efficient by selling more cheese at fewer locations. So this will be a primary outlet for us."

In addition, she said, their operation within Berkshire Organics will provide the public with access to cheese from other farms and producers in Berkshire County and Massachusettles, and nearby areas such as the Hudson Valley in New York.

Konecky said the cheese products will be available for purchase during the days and hours that Berkshire Organics is open.

CricketFlock Farm will also have a staff cheese monger there on Thursdays and Fridays to offer advice, recipes and other assistance to buyers. "We're starting with having a staff person there two days a week, but we hope to increase that to other days too," she said.

Konecky noted that she sees the concept of Berkshire Organics as a food enterprise model that she hopes will become more prevalent.

"At CricketFlock Farm we're committed to the principle that good healthy food should be widely accessible and as affordable as possible," she said. "This kind of collaboration between retail outlets and local farmers and butchers and other producers is a great way to strengthen the entire food system. I hope we'll see more of these arrangements in other locations."

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More than 100 Berkshire County companies have trained 7,500 people and received more than $7.5M...learn how to apply for these resources!
Grant noted that the interdisciplinary nature of the Feigenbaum Center is also an important aspect of its role. “It crosses many disciplines and incorporates other creative activities,” she said. “For example, a new panoramic artwork by Williamstown artist Stephen Hannock that is on display there represents the intersection between science and the arts and the creative economy.”

At the Oct. 4 ceremony, Gov. Deval Patrick cited the contrast between the opening of the Feigenbaum Center and the federal government shutdown that was occurring at the time in Washington, D.C. Patrick cited the role government has in helping to improve their lives, and he pointed to the Feigenbaum Center as an example of what can be accomplished when the executive and legislative branches of the state government, local institutions, and the private sector work together towards that end. “Growth will come from the blend of education, innovation and infrastructure,” he said. The new facility is also a boost for the city of North Adams, noted Mayor Richard Alcombright in remarks for the opening. “This center over time, will become a catalyst for economic activity, development and job creation in the city and greater region for many years to come,” said Alcombright. MCLA is part of the state’s public university system and is the designated liberal arts college in that system. Grant noted that about one-third of the students at MCLA are enrolled in STEM majors. “Science is a big part of what we do,” she said. The new center is expected to enhance the college’s ability to attract students. As the state liberal arts college we already have a statewide pull, and this will add to that,” she said. “You can already see it when students tour the campus during open houses. They look at the building and say ‘Wow’!”

The Feigenbaum Center is the first newly publicly funded building on the campus in 40 years. Funding was provided through $5.4 million in capital funds, dedicated to the project from the state’s Fiscal Year 2008 Higher Education Bond Bill, and $1.7 million in additional funds from MCLA. In fiscal year 2008, the governor increased funding for higher education capital projects through a five-year capital plan. Shortly afterwards the administration obtained passage of a $2.2 billion, 10-year higher education bond bill that included the funds for the MCLA center and other projects around the state. (Today, higher education investments represent more than 10 percent of Massachusetts’ entire bond cap, up from 3 percent in fiscal year 2007.)

The facility’s name reflects a related $5 million private pledge from the Feigenbaum Foundation to establish a new endowed fund that focuses on innovation and leadership at MCLA in honor of Armund Feigenbaum and his brother, the late Donald Feigenbaum. The Feigenbaum founded and led the General Systems Company, a worldwide quality management systems business based in Pittsfield.

Enhanced educational experience

On a practical level, the facility was designed to accommodate the needs of faculty and students on a comprehensive basis. One emphasis is on fostering integrated, research-intensive curricula and hands-on discovery.
“The expanded space enhances the experiences of faculty and students in many ways,” said Christopher Himes, assistant professor and STEM program manager at MCLA. “It provides students and faculty with access to new state-of-the-art equipment and facilities.”

The center includes auditorium space, two classroom lecture halls and nine flexible modern teaching laboratories. The labs were designed to be suited for multiple purposes, with equipment and facilities for class experiments, student research projects and other learning experiences, noted Himes. “They can be used for classroom work and activities, and they can also be lecture spaces,” he said.

In addition, there are other areas in the buildings for students to pursue their academic work. “There are a number of study spaces,” he said. “These are areas where students can meet and work in groups on projects.”

The Feigenbaum Center also addresses the ability of faculty to conduct research projects. “Another improvement is that the center contains dedicated research space,” said Himes. “In the past, when faculty members were conducting research projects, they had to share the teaching labs with classes. So they’d have to take their work down for classes. But now, with areas allocated specifically for research, they can leave their work out without it being disrupted.”

Himes added that the consolidation of STEM academic programs in one location has other benefits. “Having all of the major sciences now housed in one building allows for increased interaction across departments,” he said.

In addition to its role for the students and staff at MCLA, the Feigenbaum Center is also intended to provide a regional science resource center for the community, including K–12 educators and students and the programs at Berkshire Community College (BCC). “Students from other schools were already visiting our facilities,” said Himes. “The new space allows us to increase that outreach and bringing in more outside school groups to give them the opportunity to experience and use the teaching labs.”

It also enables greater collaborative research and other partnerships between MCLA and businesses in the life sciences and other sectors whose work involves these subjects. For example, Pittsfield-based life sciences company Nuclea Biotechnologies has formed a collaboration with MCLA, BCC and Clark University in Worcester to create a cluster of high-speed computers at the schools to conduct research. Nuclea is reimbursing the schools in return for the ability to use the computers for a portion of the time to conduct its own research.

With the new structure completed and opened, Grant said the next stage in the overall project will be to re-purpose the spaces in the other buildings on campus that are being vacated by the programs that are moving into the facility. “Having completed the move, part two of the project will be to convert Bowman Hall for other uses,” she said, noting that these may include expanded art programs as well as supplemental space for sciences. “In addition, we’re also exploring new uses for Venable Hall.”

The Bowman Hall project is expected to be undertaken this spring, she added.

Asia Andrews (center), a senior at MCLA, is flanked by Gov. Deval Patrick and MCLA President Mary Grant as she wields the scissors at the Oct. 4 ribbon-cutting ceremony for the newly completed science center (shown below). In his comments at the event, Patrick pointed to the Feigenbaum Center as an example of what can be accomplished when the executive and legislative branches of the state government, local officials, institutions and the private sector work together. “Growth will come from the blend of education, innovation and infrastructure” that the project represents, he said. (Photos courtesy of MCLA)
Great Barrington

Town giving sack to (most) plastic bags on March 1

BY JOHN TOWNES

Disposable plastic shopping bags at the check-out counter are about to become relics of the past in Great Barrington, as the town prepares to implement a ban on their distribution in supermarkets and other retailers beginning in March.

At last year’s town meeting, voters approved a “plastic bag reduction” bylaw that prohibits retailers from providing most forms of disposable plastic shopping bags at the cash register for customers to carry away their purchased items.

As a result, merchants will have to offer customers paper bags or containers made of disposable plastic shopping bags at the cash register for customers to carry away their purchased items.

The bylaw describes its purpose as being “to eliminate usage of thin-film, single-use plastic bags by all retail establishments in the Town of Great Barrington.”

The law has targeted plastic bags because of the environmental impact of the material, which does not readily decompose when it has been disposed of.

Ultimately, however, the law is intended to encourage a shift to reusable bags.

“The intent of the bylaw is not really to replace disposable plastic bags with dispos-able paper bags,” said Mark Pruhenski, director of the town’s board of health, which is responsible for implementing the law. “The real goal is to eliminate single-use bags, and for customers to instead bring reusable bags with them when they shop.”

Enactment of the bylaw, which initially had been slated for last July and then moved to the start of the year, was ultimately pushed to March 1 to give consumers and businesses more time to make the necessary adjustments and for the town to conduct a public information campaign.

The bylaw received a strong majority vote for approval by resi-dent at the annual town meeting in March.

“It is a social policy that is widely sup-ported in the town,” said Pruhenski. “We expected there might be some push-back, but the actual reaction has been quite the opposite. Although a few people have had specific concerns, overall this is something most people in the community want.”

He added that merchants have also supported or accepted the law without protests.

Pruhenski noted that proponents also see the town’s bylaw as having wider implications. “In addition to its local application, it’s expected that thin disposable plastic bags will eventually be banned in other communities, and Great Barrington wants to lead by example,” he said.

The law specifically prohibits distribu-tion of plastic bags that are 2.5 mil or less in thickness.

“It does allow for thicker reusable plastic bags to be used, but we’re not encouraging that,” said Pruhenski. “The idea is to use bags made with other materials that are better for the environment and can be used many times, such as cloth or canvas.”

The bylaw also allows for certain exemptions from the restrictions, such as the use of plastic wrappers for items like meat, produce, dry cleaning and newspapers.

“Stores that are found to be in violation of the law will be subject to fines ranging from $50 to $200,” he said.

Pruhenski said the town will enforce the bylaw, but its goal is simply to encourage changes in behavior by stores and their customers.

“Violations will incur non-criminal fines like a parking ticket,” he said. “I expect that there will be some enforcement early on, and then it will become self-policing as businesses and shoppers adapt to the changes.”

He compared it to a ban on styrofoam containers that was initiated several years ago.

“Stores simply stopped selling their drinks in styrofoam containers so it’s an issue that almost never arises anymore,” he said. “I expect this will be the same.”

Byline: John Townes

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"Plastic bags will eventually be banned in other communities, and Great Barrington wants to lead by example."

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Great Barrington, MA

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He noted that the ban has been conducting a public education campaign, so the bylaw’s implementation to raise aware-ness among consumers and businesses of the alternative materials is not as sensitive.

Among other activities, this has included public informational sessions, posters created by students at Monument Mountain High School and an exhibit in the Mason Library. Pruhenski has also been meeting with local merchants.

He noted that mer-chants are preparing for the change, but there have not been raised objections, although the cost of paper bags is more expensive.

Merchants are following their own ap-proaches within the parameters of the bylaw. Some may charge a small fee for paper bags to help offset the costs, while others may absorb the costs themselves, or being encouraged to offer reusable cloth or canvas bags for sale to customers.

Early adopters

Two local food stores that have already made the switch are Guido’s Fresh Market and the Berkshire Co-Op Market.

The Berkshire Co-Op Market, which is a community-based, member-owned enterprise, has not used the disposable bags for 12 years. Instead it uses paper bags or allows customers to pack their own bags in the shipment boxes the co-op receives from its vendors.

It encourages customers to bring in their own reusable bags. It also sells low-cost canvas tote bags.

Art Ames, general manager, said the avoidance of plastic bags reflects the co-op’s social mission. “We originally did it because it’s the right thing to do,” he said. He noted that the co-op donates 10 cents for paper bags to encourage customers to bring their own bags, but the money raised is donated to local environmental organizations.

“We figure the extra expense of paper bags is part of the cost of doing business, so we don’t use the fee to defray that,” he said. “The donation for paper bags started as an experiment, and we’ve kept doing it. Customers didn’t mind because it is a donation.”

He said that the store’s strategy has reduced its costs over time, as customers shifted to bringing in their own bags.

“Today we buy 75-percent fewer paper bags than we did in 2008,” he said. Ames noted that the use of paper bags has become so negligible that the co-op was seriously considering eliminating the 10-cent fee before the bylaw was passed. “However, we decided to keep the fee in place for now, to support the town law,” he said.

The Great Barrington store of Guido’s Fresh Marketplace made changes to adapt to the new bylaw last summer, shortly after it was approved.

“Originally the bylaw was supposed to go into effect earlier, and we made the necessary changes last July based on that,” said Rick O’Neill, front-end manager of the store. “So we’ve already pushed out plastic bags and made the changes.”

Customers at Guido’s now have the option of paying either 5 cents for a small paper bag or 10 cents for a larger one, or using a box from the store for free or bringing in their own bags. Guido’s also sells reusable cloth or canvas tote bags for groceries at various prices.

(“Guido’s also has a store in Pittsfield. There are plans to voluntarily implement a similar policy there, although the details and date have not yet been determined.”)

“The most part, it’s worked out well,” said O’Neill. “The only problem that comes up occasionally is the charge for paper bags. Some, for example, second-home own-ers who aren’t aware of the law are initially bothered by it until they understand the reasons. I’d say 90 percent of our customers have been okay with it.”

He sees the major challenge related to the new law as educating people about the purpose and what their alternatives are.

“The reasoning is to get people to bring their own reusable bags,” he said. “As people understand that, they make the adjust-ments and it’s fine.”

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by Deb Hastings Watson

Use the strengths you have to run your business, and create an effective team of those individuals who fill in your blanks.

By Deb Hastings Watson, owner of BusinessMarketplace (413-281-3449 or deb@businessmarketplace.com), provides website, marketing and public relations services.

New schedule, incentives for annual home expo

BY JOHN TOWNS

The Berkshire Chamber of Commerce is adding a new incentive for nonmembers to participate in its annual Berkshire Home Expo this year. Along with booth space, exhibitors who are not currently members of the chamber will receive a one-year basic membership. “It’s an opportunity for exhibitors to showcase their business to the public, and also become members for one fee,” said Danielle Thomas, events coordinator for the chamber.

The 2014 Berkshire Home Expo will take place March 8 and 9 at the Berkshire Mall in Lanesborough, with exhibits and booths set up along the mall’s main corridor. The expo usually features over 50 area businesses offering products and services related to the home, such as landscaping services, home renovations and expansions, appliances and green and solar options. Local banks will also be participating with information about financing for homeowners and home buyers.

While the expo has become an annual tradition, it is the first time Thomas and several other new staff members have taken the reins of organizing and promoting it. Another change this year is a reduction of the expo from three days to two. It previously was held Friday, Saturday and Sunday, but this year will be only Saturday and Sunday. Thomas said this was the result of feedback from exhibitors from previous years.

“Exhibitors told us that Friday night was not as beneficial to them as the weekend, because there are not as many adults in the mall then,” she said. “So we decided to focus it on Saturday and Sunday, although exhibitors will be able to spend Friday evening setting up their booths.”

She added that the chamber has also bolstered its promotion of the event. “We’re planning to shake things up at this year’s Home Expo, and we’re confident that it’s going to be a very successful weekend-long event,” said Thomas. “We’ve increased the marketing effort to draw more people than ever before.”

Thomas said that the initial indications are for a strong participation, with many new and existing exhibitors signing up.

The cost to exhibit is $399 for Berkshire Chamber members and $699 for nonmembers, which also includes the one-year base membership. For information and to sign up, contact Thomas at 413-499-4000 ext. 126 or dtomah@berkshirechamber.com.

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Bob Seward, Seward’s Tires, Inc. President
Pat Seward, Seward’s Tires, Inc. Treasurer

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SALISBURY BANK
Dawn Dewkett, RN, has been named director of the home care division of Porchlight VNA Home Care. She began in her new position on Dec. 30, 2013. An aesthetician of the Berkshires, Dewkett comes to Porchlight with more than three decades of clinical experience in home care and visiting nurse services. She most recently served as the hospice care coordinator for VNA Care Network & Hospice, where she had worked for 15 years. Dewkett also worked for a decade in the area of clinical research for Hebrew SeniorLife (HSL), Institute for Aging Research (IFAR), including three years as project director.

Kathryn Dubendorf Genova has promoted to commercial loan officer at MountainOne Bank. Based in the MountainOne Financial Center office in North Adams, she will work to grow MountainOne’s commercial loan portfolio, as well as cultivate new and existing loan relationships. Dubendorf Genova served previously as a credit analyst at MountainOne.

Ilana Steinhauser has joined Volunteers In Medicine (VIM) Berkshires as a clinical care coordinator. She earlier served as the organization’s first intern in 2006 and 2007 after graduating from Wesleyan University. Steinhauser later continued her studies, earning a master’s degree in nursing and family nurse practitioner. Prior to rejoining VIM, she served as an assignment medical nurse practitioner with a medical clinic in eastern Massachusetts.

Scott Pasquale has assumed the new role of vice president, commercial relationship manager at Berkshire Bank. In this position, he will manage commercial relationships in the Pioneer Valley area and will be based out of the bank’s East Columbus Avenue office in Springfield. Prior to coming to Berkshire Bank, Pasquale worked for TD Bank in commercial lending and has more than 25 years of experience in the financial services industry.

Bryan Waryanjee and Adam Rich are both project managers at BPVS (Berkshire Photovoltaic Services), which has achieved the Photovoltaic (PV) Professional Certification from the North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners. This certification is recognized internationally as the standard for expertise in solar electric system design and installation. Among other criteria, certificate applicants must prove they have years experience in the field and submit case studies as well as references at four PV projects they have designed and managed the installation process. Applicants must also pass a rigorous, proctored test that historically has a 30-percent pass rate. Waryanjee and Rich were the only Massachusetts applicants who passed the recent exam.

The Williamstown Chamber of Commerce board of directors has elected the following slate of executive officers for 2014. Jason Dobaney, investment advisor at True North Financial Services, has been elected president of MountainOne Bank, president; Rebecca Gold, associate broker and co-owner of Burnham Gold Real Estate, vice president; Tracy McConnon, vice president of commercial lending at MountainOne Bank, treasurer; and Bernadette Lupo, marketing and communications director at Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, secretary.

Kelli Kouak has been promoted to the new position of assistant vice president and community development officer at MountainOne Bank, where she will be the primary contact for community development lending, investments and services as defined by the Community Reinvestment Act. She joins MountainOne’s Senior Vice President, Senior Risk Management & CRA Officer Lynee Carlotto as co-chair of the bank’s CRA Committee. In addition to serving as a member of the committee, Kouak will continue to administer the community allocations and contributions process. Kouak brings more than seven years of MountainOne contributions to this appointment, including six years as executive administrator and corporate clerk.

The Berkshire Bank has appointed Josephine Iannelli as executive vice president and chief financial officer. Iannelli has served as the company’s senior vice president and principal accounting officer, and has participated in financial oversight since July 2013. Prior to joining Berkshire Bank, Iannelli had compiled 20 years of financial and banking experience with positions at KPMG Peat Marwick, KeyCorp and National City Corporation. Most recently, she provided independent accounting consulting services, specializing in finance-engineering and mergers and acquisitions for top ten national banks.

Iannelli has been appointed the new director. Lafayette will remain on in a part-time advisory capacity, Lafayette started with the foundation, the charitable arm of Berkshire Bank, in 2006 after serving as president of Berkshire Housing Development Corp. for 25 years. Since then, the bank has grown throughout Massachusetts and Vermont into Hartford, Connecticut as well as throughout Albany and into Syracuse, New York, with the foundation’s grants totaling to cover the same footprint. Gazzillo joined Berkshire Bank in July 2011 from Legacy Banks after Berkshire Bank and Legacy joined together. At Legacy, Gazzillo served as vice president, community relations, where she was responsible for overseeing the company’s charitable giving, marketing and public relations activities. At Berkshire Bank she has been assistant vice president of community relations/CRA officer and most recently assistant director of Berkshire Bank Foundation. Prior to her banking career, she worked for nine years at Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts overseeing public relations.

Berkshire Health Systems has presented Carol Siegel with the Gladys Allen Brigham Award, which honors an individual who “contributed to the growth and development of community healthcare and services with particular devotion to Berkshire Medical Center.” Siegel has served many years on the BHS Board of Trustees and is well known for her volunteer service with numerous local organizations. The award was presented at the Berkshire Health Systems Annual Meeting on Jan. 29 at the Colonial Theatre.

Berkshire Hills Bancorp Inc., the parent company of Berkshire Bank, has appointed Josephine Iannelli as executive vice president and chief financial officer. Iannelli has served as the company’s senior vice president and principal accounting officer, and has participated in financial oversight since July 2013. Prior to joining Berkshire Bank, Iannelli had compiled 20 years of financial and banking experience with positions at KPMG Peat Marwick, KeyCorp and National City Corporation. Most recently, she provided independent accounting consulting services, specializing in finance-engineering and mergers and acquisitions for top ten national banks.

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Kelly Krok has been named to the volunteer board of directors at Greylock Federal Credit Union. Krok began her career at General Electric in Pittsfield in 1981, working for GE Plastics and GE Aerospace in several human resources positions. She has been with SABIC Innovative Plastics since 2007, and played an instrumental role in supporting the HR department during the divestiture of the GE Plastics business to SABIC. Currently, she is the manager of HR operations and global mobility, as well as the Pittsfield site HR manager with SABIC.

Paul Brindle has been promoted to vice president, commercial banking team leader for MountainOne Bank’s western Massachusetts team. Based at the MountainOne Financial Center office in Pittsfield, he will continue to be responsible for commercial loan portfolio growth, as well as commercial deposit sales and affiliate referrals. Prior to joining MountainOne, Brindle served as vice president of commercial lending at Berkshire Bank, and also held a similar position at Key Bank.

Brooks Sherman, a financial advisor with The Sherman Investment Group of RBC Wealth Management, recently earned his Chartered Retirement Planning Counselor (CRPC) designation through the College for Financial Planning. In order to earn this designation, Sherman completed a required course of studies and passed a comprehensive examination incorporating application of complex, theoretical concepts to actual client situations.

Berkshire Money Management has named Zachary Marcotte as associate investment advisor representative, following his successful completion of the Series 65 examination. Administered by the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority, the exam focuses on key areas of investment expertise, including retirement planning, portfolio management strategy and fiduciary responsibilities. Marcotte, 24, has worked at the firm since 2010, and since 2012 has served as a compliance officer. In his new role, Marcotte will work closely with Berkshire Money Management’s senior investment team during a year-long mentorship as his next step toward independent investment advisor representation.

Cranwell Resort, Spa and Golf Club announced the appointment of Megan Hajduk to the position of wedding and social events manager, where she will be responsible for the sales and coordination of year-round weddings and social events at the Lenox resort. A certified wedding and event planning professional, Hajduk brings a background in wedding and catering sales through her previous sales manager positions with Le Meriden Hotel in Cambridge and Embassy Suites in Waltham.

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The following real estate transactions were recently recorded at the Berkshire County Registry of Deeds. The names of all parties, if included, are correct as of the date indicated at the top of the page. All data is subject to change.

ADAMS
10 Ramkin Ave.  Buyer: Darrell Lindale • Seller: Walter Charles El + Mortgage: $47,000 • Date: 1/14/14
379 Monson Rd.  Buyer: James Balcom • Seller: Richard Lindsey • Mortgage: $42,000 • Date: 1/14/14
1 Culet Rd.  Buyer: Barry Rich • Seller: Benchmark IF + Mortgage: $58,000 • Date: 1/14/14
8 Magnolia Rd.  Buyer: Gary Givord • Seller: Nancy Wyg • Mortgage: $91,636 • Date: 1/14/14
87 Green St.  Buyer: Kenneth Latara • Seller: Jeffrey Wagner • Mortgage: $90,000 • Date: 1/14/14
12 47th St.  Buyer: Michael Scence • Seller: Donald Sommer • Mortgage: $289,000 • Date: 1/14/14
2 Somner Hill Rd.  Buyer: Delphina Rathy • Seller: Donald Sommer • Mortgage: $219,078 • Date: 1/14/14
11 Summit Ave.  Buyer: Kevin Davis • Seller: Paule Kombour • Mortgage: $139,183 • Date: 1/14/14
15 Victory St.  Buyer: Robert L. • Seller: Archie Oler • Mortgage: $113,915 • Date: 1/12/13
226 Shawkator Crk Rd.  Buyer: Christopher Mcglaun • Seller: Tantilla A + Mortgage: $80,000 • Date: 1/13/14
105-107 Main St.  Buyer: Darin Darby + Seller: Max Mcgraw • Mortgage: $319,820 • Date: 12/13/13
340 Jacobs Ladder Rd.  Buyer: Beckett Hills • Seller: A-DEP + Mortgage: $113,240 • Date: 12/13/13
707 Middle Rd.  Buyer: landmark CU • Seller: Kevin Amonco • Date: 12/30/13
61 Daly Ave.  Buyer: Anthony Pape • Seller: Marietta Del + Mortgage: $187,000 • Date: 12/30/13
52 Glazemm Ave.  Buyer: William Breyer + Seller: Ross Davis • Mortgage: $176,000 • Date: 12/26/13
9 Dalton Ave.  Buyer: Sherrif Flatter • Seller: Mark Jones • Mortgage: $150,000 • Date: 12/26/13
135 Maple Ave.  Buyer: Charles Jones + Seller: PNC Bank • Mortgage: $49,000 • Date: 12/26/13
16 Meadow St.  Buyer: John Morawiec • Seller: Victoria Brown • Mortgage: $212,000 • Date: 12/13/13
27 Park St.  Buyer: Gregory Comerson • Seller: Laura Potoc + Mortgage: $275,000 • Date: 12/13/13
139 South St.  Buyer: Sheryl Collins + Seller: David O'Connor • Mortgage: $212,000 • Date: 12/13/13
13 Park St.  Buyer: Samuel Nickerson • Seller: Raymond Fmco + Mortgage: $219,000 • Date: 12/13/13
69 Green St.  Buyer: Jeffrey Vonk • Seller: Robert Hart + Mortgage: $478,500 • Date: 12/13/13
20 Middle Rd.  Buyer: blocking + Seller: Millard LLC • Mortgage: $2,600,000 • Date: 1/9/14
10 Pine Cove Cross Rd.  Buyer: David Hoyt + Seller: Aleshun Heinze • Mortgage: $615,000 • Date: 1/11/14
108 East Rd.  Buyer: Brian Ludki • Seller: James Holstein • Price: $245,000 • Date: 12/13/13
57C West St.  Buyer: John 3 ^hnt • Seller: Roy Mod Supply LLY • Price: $127,000 • Date: 12/13/13
50 George St.  Buyer: Bruce Higer + Seller: Benjamin Amorse • Price: $175,500 • Date: 12/13/13
90 Fairview Hn.  Buyer: Jeffrey Zander • Seller: Allan Goddard Jr + Price: $319,000 • Date: 12/13/13
76 Middle Rd.  Buyer: Landmark CU • Seller: Kevin Amonco • Date: 12/30/13
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PERU
12 And St.  Buyer: Colin Galley • Seller: Michael Ram • Mortgage: $130,500 • Date: 1/14/14
14 North St.  Buyer: Giselle Moya • Seller: Giselle Moya • Mortgage: $56,000 • Date: 1/14/14
17 Garnut Mountain Ln.  Buyer: Peter Horton + Seller: Peter Horton • Mortgage: $56,000 • Date: 12/19/13

PITTSFIELD
25 Atkly Rd.  Buyer: William Ang • Seller: Ronald Wolman • Mortgage: $314,440 • Date: 12/13/13
59 Barron Mt.  Buyer: Reginald C • Seller: Ellis Richardson • Mortgage: $75,000 • Date: 12/13/13

NEW MARLBORO
17 Greenway Ct.  Buyer: Lloyd Pace + Seller: Haji Teo • Mortgage: $62,000 • Date: 1/15/14
123 Brook Rd.  Buyer: George Gallo + Seller: Richard Mariano • Mortgage: $70,000 • Date: 1/15/14
68 Forest Hill Dr.  Buyer: Michael King • Seller: Mark Smith • Mortgage: $204,000 • Date: 1/16/14
5 School St.  Buyer: Joseph Hill • Seller: Craig Magnus • Price: $60,000 • Date: 12/13/14
50 Fairview Hn.  Buyer: Jeffrey Zander • Seller: Allan Goddard Jr + Price: $319,000 • Date: 12/13/13
76 Middle Rd.  Buyer: Landmark CU • Seller: Kevin Amonco • Date: 12/30/13
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March 2014

Berkshire Trade & Commerce
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<tr>
<td>1/15/14</td>
<td>67 Eben Rd</td>
<td>Buyer: Jeremy Brandwell</td>
<td>$370,000</td>
<td>Greylock FCU</td>
<td>$370,000</td>
<td>38 Maine Park</td>
<td>Accessed from North Street and Molony Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/17/14</td>
<td>1071 Savoy Rd</td>
<td>Buyer: Tammy Guzdial</td>
<td>$215,000</td>
<td>Greylock FCU</td>
<td>$215,000</td>
<td>40 Main St</td>
<td>Access from North Street and Molony Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/6/14</td>
<td>135 Barking Rd</td>
<td>Seller: Richard Addis</td>
<td>$141,500</td>
<td>Greylock FCU</td>
<td>$141,500</td>
<td>17 Downing</td>
<td>Access from North Street and Molony Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/15/14</td>
<td>50 Sheffield St</td>
<td>Buyer: Michael McNeil</td>
<td>$140,000</td>
<td>Greylock FCU</td>
<td>$140,000</td>
<td>67 Maple</td>
<td>Access from North Street and Molony Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/24/13</td>
<td>152 Maple Grove Dr</td>
<td>Buyer: Charles Gooch</td>
<td>$333,000</td>
<td>Greylock FCU</td>
<td>$333,000</td>
<td>38 Front St</td>
<td>Access from North Street and Molony Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/7/14</td>
<td>58 Paddock St</td>
<td>Buyer: Steven Kazmier</td>
<td>$129,000</td>
<td>Greylock FCU</td>
<td>$129,000</td>
<td>47 Front St</td>
<td>Access from North Street and Molony Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/6/14</td>
<td>63 Front St</td>
<td>Buyer: Paul Gloger</td>
<td>$165,500</td>
<td>Greylock FCU</td>
<td>$165,500</td>
<td>27 Ashby</td>
<td>Access from North Street and Molony Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/31/13</td>
<td>20 New St</td>
<td>Buyer: Helen Aitken</td>
<td>$205,000</td>
<td>Greylock FCU</td>
<td>$205,000</td>
<td>28 Front St</td>
<td>Access from North Street and Molony Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/24/13</td>
<td>1820 Boardman St</td>
<td>Buyer: Daniel Odell</td>
<td>$307,500</td>
<td>Greylock FCU</td>
<td>$307,500</td>
<td>38 Front St</td>
<td>Access from North Street and Molony Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/18/13</td>
<td>140 Maple Ave</td>
<td>Buyer: Neil Kimchi</td>
<td>$150,000</td>
<td>Greylock FCU</td>
<td>$150,000</td>
<td>56 Front St</td>
<td>Access from North Street and Molony Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/30/13</td>
<td>56 Front St</td>
<td>Buyer: Lee Bolman</td>
<td>$150,000</td>
<td>Greylock FCU</td>
<td>$150,000</td>
<td>38 Front St</td>
<td>Access from North Street and Molony Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/20/13</td>
<td>110front St</td>
<td>Buyer: Charles Farber</td>
<td>$150,000</td>
<td>Greylock FCU</td>
<td>$150,000</td>
<td>56 Front St</td>
<td>Access from North Street and Molony Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/18/13</td>
<td>110 Maple Ave</td>
<td>Buyer: William Repp</td>
<td>$150,000</td>
<td>Greylock FCU</td>
<td>$150,000</td>
<td>56 Front St</td>
<td>Access from North Street and Molony Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/31/13</td>
<td>153 Maple Ave</td>
<td>Buyer: Helen Aitken</td>
<td>$205,000</td>
<td>Greylock FCU</td>
<td>$205,000</td>
<td>56 Front St</td>
<td>Access from North Street and Molony Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/20/13</td>
<td>140 Maple Ave</td>
<td>Buyer: Helen Aitken</td>
<td>$205,000</td>
<td>Greylock FCU</td>
<td>$205,000</td>
<td>56 Front St</td>
<td>Access from North Street and Molony Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/18/13</td>
<td>140 Maple Ave</td>
<td>Buyer: Helen Aitken</td>
<td>$205,000</td>
<td>Greylock FCU</td>
<td>$205,000</td>
<td>56 Front St</td>
<td>Access from North Street and Molony Street</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Loyalty? During the Great Depression, mortgage and business loan payments were suspended by the Bank and customers were allowed to run in arrears until they could catch-up – and they did.

Today – in an era where Big Banks are known for bad behavior – The Co-op still practices the responsible banking envisioned by its Founders. And, we know the value of experience therefore we feature the most seasoned lending team in the County. Plus, with assets exceeding $255 million, the Bank is now one of the best capitalized lenders in the entire Commonwealth.

Looking for a bank with character, commitment and capital? Well... it’s fair to say that history is on our side.