**Pastaria NoCo**

Traditional Italian dining returns to former La Veranda

BY BRAD JOHNSON

The owners of Hops & Vines restaurant in Williamstown have built a solid business over the past few years serving what they describe as modern American cuisine with a new twist on comfort food.

Now, they are taking on a new venture – known as Pastaria NoCo – in neighboring North Adams that will focus on satisfying local residents' appetite for traditional Italian cuisine.

“We felt there was a lack of Italian dining options in north county,” said Robert Beuth, chef and co-owner at Hops & Vines.

“So, when we began looking at ideas for a second venue, that was the direction we wanted to go in.”

Beuth and his partners, Gil Rubenstein of New York City and Jane Patton of Williamstown, put that plan in motion with their purchase in January of a building at 896 State Rd., that for many years housed a well-regarded Italian restaurant known as La Veranda.

That restaurant, operated by the Sicilian family of North Adams, closed several years ago, and has housed a handful of different eateries since then. Most recent among them was Espana, a Spanish-themed tapas restaurant that was operated by owners of Coyote Flaco, a popular Mexican restaurant in Williamstown.

When Espana closed last year after just a few years of operation, Beuth and his partners saw an opportunity to return the building to its former Italian dining heritage.

“One thing that Espana was on the market, we looked into it and saw that it was a good fit for us,” said Beuth.

continued on page 22

**Brisk business at new youth drop-in center**

BY BRAD JOHNSON

The Rev. Ralph Howe and members of his congregation at the First United Methodist Church of Pittsfield are on a mission to expand the church’s outreach to the community while also addressing some vital needs of the city and its residents.

The Hub also gives teens access to another important resource that, according to Howe, is too often missing in some of their lives: adults who can lend a helpful ear on issues they may be confronting.

These adults, including paid staff members and volunteers, are on hand at The Hub to oversee basic operations and ensure that a safe and trouble-free environment is maintained. They are available to assist teens with homework or other activities.

“The Hub also provides a supportive environment for young people from all backgrounds.”

continue on page 10

**Public voice for Schumacher Center’s sustainable economic policies**

Former Commissioner of Agriculture Greg Watson takes new issues-oriented role at Berkshire-based organization

A prominent figure has joined the staff of the Schumacher Center for a New Economics, the Great Barrington-based organization that established the BerkShares local currency, among other projects.

Greg Watson, former Massachusetts Commissioner of Agriculture, is the Schumacher Center’s new director of policy and systems design.

Watson has served twice as commissioner of agriculture, until this January in the administration of former Governor Deval Patrick and previously in the administrations of Governors Michael Dukakis and William Weld from 1990 to 1993. In 2006 the Boston Globe Magazine named him to its list of “Bostonians Changing the World.”

The Schumacher Center, based at a rural site on Jug End Road in South Egremont, is a nonprofit organization originally founded as the E.F. Schumacher Society in 1980 by social scientists Michael Dukakis and William Weld from 1990 to 1993. In 2006 the Boston Globe Magazine named him to its list of “Bostonians Changing the World.”

The Schumacher Center operates a library, sponsors lectures and supports theoretical research and practical application of concepts, such as BerkShares, which is designed to
Each year, the students of St. Joseph High School volunteer over 2,500 hours of community service!

Please support the Catholic Schools of Pittsfield at our 5th Annual Evening with the Stars Benefit Gala

Friday, May 8, 2015
Crowne Plaza
One West Street, Pittsfield

Master of Ceremonies
Kevyn O’Hara, Class of 1967
Writer, Storyteller and Photographer
6:00 p.m. Complimentary Cocktail Hour
7:00 p.m. Dinner, Induction Ceremony, Silent & Live Auctions

The Class of 2015 Inductees
Patricia Begrowicz
Timothy Connolly, Class of 1973
Rev. James Joyce, Class of 1964
Vincent Marro, Class of 1969
Anne Neibit, Class of 1938

With a Special Tribute to Lillian Quinn

Tickets are $100 each. Call (413) 443-9686 or email icommarlot@stjohashigh.org

Sponsorship opportunities are still available. Deadline for ads or placement in our event program book is April 13th!
Freeing up scarce spaces with Spot Saver campaign

BY BRAD JOHNSON

A new program is taking shape to address the perennial problem of too-few parking spaces in downtown Great Barrington, a situation exacerbated by the ongoing Main Street reconstruction project in the town center.

The goal of the new “Spot Saver” campaign is to get employers and employees at businesses downtown out of the habit of taking up scarce spaces with their own cars, which too often leaves a scant few for customers and other visitors to search for, according to Betty Andrus, executive director of the Southern Berkshire Chamber of Commerce and a member of the town’s parking task force.

Andrus explained that, as part of ongoing studies of the problem, a tally was taken of all the primary and secondary parking spaces downtown. When adjusted by the number of employees and owners at downtown businesses who need daily parking for their own vehicles, she said, “We came up with only 21 spots left. That’s insane.”

The Spot Saver solution—a two-pronged proposal that first looks to identify any under-utilized dedicated parking spaces held by downtown businesses and property owners, and then arrange to temporarily convert them to permit-only parking for other downtown employees during the next construction season.

“We contacted property owners near downtown and asked if they would give up any of their own spaces,” said Andrus. “We were very forward with them about this problem.”

This initial outreach effort identified 67 spots near or adjacent to downtown. For example, RBC Wealth Management agreed to contribute 10 spaces in its parking lot off Castle Street.

Another four spaces

were made available by Days Inn, three came from Town Hall, and about a dozen have been designated along the circle drive in front of the former Searles School off Bridge Street, among others.

With this allocation of parking spaces in hand, the next step was to get downtown employers and employees to commit to using only the Spot Saver spaces. “We asked them to make a pledge not to park in prime spots, but to take a few extra minutes to find a Spot Saver space,” said Andrus.

Signage was created to identify these spaces as designated for Spot Saver participants, who are being provided with Spot Saver decals in return for their pledge to steer clear of other downtown spaces.

For those signing on for the program, the benefits include having a place to park their car without worrying about the potential for being ticketed—a possibility that will soon increase, according to Andrus, as new downtown parking time limits are implemented and enforced this spring.

Participants, however, will still face the challenge of actually securing one of the Spot Saver spaces, which are available on a first-come basis. “They may have to drive around for a few minutes to find an open space,” Andrus acknowledged.

She also noted that some downtown businesses with Town Hall and larger lots have provided paid parking on a monthly basis. The campaign is alerting people to those locations as another option to meet their parking needs.

Andrus added that, even with the Spot Saver program, parking will still be at a premium during the next phase of downtown road construction. “It’ll be a challenge,” she said, “but we only have so many options available to us, and we’re hoping that this will make things a little better than they would have been otherwise.”

Excuses provided at no charge

Just in case you need an excuse to treat yourself to something special, there’s good news: we’ve got plenty of them for you! In fact, we have as many excuses for you as we do pieces of beautiful jewelry! So relax. Come see us. And let us pamper you with something special made out of gold, platinum, and sparkling gems. You don’t even need an excuse!

M. EDWARD
Jewelers
STOP & SHOP PLAZA, MERRILL ROAD, PITTSFIELD
442-6911
www.medwardjewelers.com

Go green with our Recycled Bags

These great cleaning cloths, available by the pound or in bulk, are made from recycled fabric

USES
• Commercial cleaning wipes
• Auto mechanics
• Manufacturing
• Building trades
• Shop towels

BENEFITS
• Absorbent
• Durable
• Made from recycled fabric
• Washable and reusable

For prices, call (413) 442-0061

BUSINESS EXPANDING?
CALL
ALNASCO
Four excellent Pittsfield properties!
703 WEST Housatonic STREET
HAWTHORNE MILLS
413 448 8287
ALNASCO.NET

Berkshire Trade & Commerce
Williamstown seeks input on development priorities

BY READ JOHNSON

Williamstown residents have an opportunity for the next few weeks to weigh in on what they feel the town’s economic development priorities should be.

Through May 1, they have been invited to participate in a survey that has been put together by the recently formed Williamstown Economic Development Committee (EDC). The survey includes a few questions that ask residents to numerically rank the importance of various measures of economic growth (such as more jobs, more businesses, more visitation, etc.) and various methods for achieving that growth (marketing to prospective business, better Internet access, improved local and regional public transportation, etc.).

The bulk of the survey, however, involves open-ended questions on economic development issues where residents can share their thoughts and ideas in more detail. For example, it asks: “What are the top reasons to participate in a survey that has been put together by the recently formed Williamstown Economic Development Committee?” and “What are your suggestions for improving our retail and business districts?” among others.

“We included these two types of questions so that we could get a general sense of what [residents’] priorities are, but also more detailed feedback and ideas,” said Andrew Hogeland, a member of the town’s select board.

Hogeland, a retired attorney who was newly elected to the select board in 2014, said he and fellow rookie selectable Hugh Daley, had focused during their campaigns on the idea that the town needed to be more proactive in promoting economic development.

After winning their seats as selectmen, they put together a draft plan for the formation of a new committee that would be tasked with identifying and implementing economic development initiatives within the town.

“At the end of 2014 the Williamstown Economic Development Committee was formed, and met for the first time in January,” said Hogeland, who is among the committee’s eleven members. Other members, all appointed by the select board, include town business owners and professionals, as well as representatives from Williams College and the Clark Art Institute.

“To help shape its own future efforts, Hogeland said, the EDC first wanted to get an understanding of residents views and opinions on economic development issues. “We felt that we needed to reach out across the entire community,” he said. This led to the formation within the EDC of an outreach work group (of which Hogeland is also a member), and the development of the survey project.

“We felt the survey would help us to accomplish several goals,” said Hogeland. “We would learn the priorities of residents, we would get their ideas, and we would get public engagement in the process.”

The EDC’s outreach committee crafted the survey over the first few months of the year and had a final version done in time for about 3,000 paper copies to be mailed out with town property tax bills in March.

“Having sessions in both the morning and evening should make it easier for people to attend and participate,” said Hogeland.

Whether on paper, online or through the public forums, the feedback from residents will then be analyzed and utilized by the EDC as it begins the process of drafting an economic development plan for the town.

As to what shape that plan will take and how it will be utilized, Hogeland said it’s still too early in the process to know. He added, however, that it will include specific action items for the town to pursue.

“The committee as a whole hasn’t discussed how substantive and detailed the report will be,” he said. “But the committee and the selectmen are clear that they want this to be more than a three-ring binder that sits on the shelf.”

Local food scene subject of tours, tastings, videos

BY JOHN TOWNES

The cuisine of Berkshire County is gaining some video visibility that is intended to draw more attention to the region’s food tourism market and farm-to-table movement.

The Red Lion Inn has created a video, a New Berkshires Food Scene: The Red Lion Inn’s Taster’s Guide, as part of a broader promotional initiative that includes self-guided Taste Tours of the region and a Local Makers’ Tasting Menu offered at the inn, which features items from the artisan food producers included on the tours.

The four-minute video is sponsored by the Stockbridge hospitality landmark in collaboration with Berkshire Farm and Table, an organization that promotes the region’s food culture. It was produced for FED Guides by Find. Eat. Drink. – an online guide to culinary activities.

The video, the taste tour and the tasting menu are an outgrowth of the inn’s active involvement in food tourism, according to Angela Cardini, who is both an organizer of Berkshire Farm and Table (a nonprofit collaboration of supporters of food tourism in the Berkshires) and a marketing consultant whose clients include the Red Lion and other food-related businesses.

She explained that the Red Lion sponsored the video, and put together the taste tours and special menus as a way to promote the inn, the local food economy and food tourism in the Berkshires.

The video offers a brief food tour of the Berkshires hosted by Red Lion Inn Executive Chef Brian Alberg, along with excerpts of interviews with chefs and members of the region’s food scene.

In addition to the Red Lion, it features The Meat Market, Terrapin Brewery in Great Barrington; Neadel Restaurant in Lenox; Monterey General Store in Monterey; Six Depot and Cafe in West Stockbridge; Berkshire Mountain Distillers in Sheffield; and Mill River Farm in New Marlborough.

The video, which is featured in The Berkshires section of the FED Guides website (www.fedguides.com/series/the-berkshires), the video can also be viewed at https://vimeo.com/121481106.

FED Guides showcases cities and regions around North America, Europe and the Caribbean, focusing on restaurants, bars, coffee shops and other food-related attractions for travelers, which are recommended by star chefs, bartenders and sommeliers.

In conjunction with the video, the Red Lion is promoting Taste Tours. These are self-guided tours that people can take of food and beverage producers within a short drive from the inn. Tastings or low-cost samples are available to visitors at stops along the tour.

The suggested stops include The Meat Market, Big Elm Brewing in Sheffield, Berkshire Mountain Distillers, Mill River Farm, and Six Depot Rouster. For Taste Tour details, visit www.redlioninn.com/chefs-tasting-tour/.

To enhance the tour experience, the Red Lion also offers a three-course, prix fixe Lo- cal Makers’ Tasting Menu, available during dinner hours (with the exception of Saturdays and holidays).

The menu is created by Alberg and features ingredients from the producers on the tour and other local sources (a vegetarian option is available). The three-course meal is $50 per person and does not include beverages, tax or gratuity.

Berkshire food and chefs will also be gaining television exposure in Canada, in a separate project involving Berkshire Farm and Table, the Red Lion and Alberg.

Along with other chefs from the region, Alberg has been preparing themed meals and giving demonstrations of Berkshires cuisine at the James Beard House, a culinary educational center in New York City, for a number of years.

Two years ago, a Canadian production company filmed preparations for one of these dinners, the Berkshire Cure-All, for a reality TV series, Chefs at the James Beard House, to be broadcast on the Gusto food network in Canada. In addition, the Red Lion has purchased time to show 60-second commercials for the inn during the series.

The Berkshire Cure-All segment was slated to debut on April 18. For details, visit gustotv.com.
**Family YMCA’s event is at 292 North St. in Pittsfield from parents improve their children’s lifestyles. The Pittsfield event for kids and families in the surrounding area, to kick YMCA and the Northern Berkshire YMCA. Free community Anthony Center at Berkshire Community College in Pittsfield.

April 25: [www.berkshireahec.org/training-events.]

**Shred It Day**

**Community Shred Day**

**May 2:** Spring Flag Program, presented by the Williamstown Chamber of Commerce. Sponsored by the Berkshire Environmental Action Team (BEAT). For more information and **Shred It Day** sponsorship information, contact Danielle Thomas at dthomas@thebeatnews.org or 413-230-7321.

**May 9:** Pittsfield Farmers’ Market Season Opening. First Street parking lot, near p.m. Free. For more information, visit berkshirematters.org.

**May 13:** National Foster Care Month, MSB will donate a portion of their profits to support the 5th annual National Foster Care Month, MSB will donate a portion of their profits to support the Massachusetts Foster Club. For more information, visit fosterclubmass.org.

**May 19:** Lenox Farmers’ Market Season Opening. Market in Williamstown, with information on energy efficiency (Center for EcoTechnology) from 1 to 2 p.m. at Wild Oats Market in Williamstown.

**May 30:** Pittsfield Farmers’ Market Season Opening. First Street parking lot, near p.m. Free. For more information, visit berkshirematters.org.

**June 3:** Pittsfield Farmers’ Market Season Opening. First Street parking lot, near p.m. Free. For more information, visit berkshirematters.org.

**June 9:** Sheep to Shawl Festival at Williamstown Bed & Breakfast. Contact the inn at 413-528-5442.

**June 10:** Lenox Farmers’ Market Season Opening. Market in Williamstown, with information on energy efficiency (Center for EcoTechnology) from 1 to 2 p.m. at Wild Oats Market in Williamstown.

**June 16:** Lenox Farmers’ Market Season Opening. Market in Williamstown, with information on energy efficiency (Center for EcoTechnology) from 1 to 2 p.m. at Wild Oats Market in Williamstown.

**Community Leasing Information:**

**Cell: 413-464-4211**

**info@harschrealestate.com**

**www.harschrealestate.com**

**High-visibility area of Pittsfield zoned for commercial, retail and professional use.**

- 3 retail store fronts with parking for 12 • $224,500
- 3 retail store fronts with parking for 12 • $224,500
- 3 retail store fronts with parking for 12 • $224,500

**Call Paul Harris today for details.**
LIKE ANY GOOD ENTREPRENEUR, Rob Navarino loves what he does and does not mind taking a plunge. Owner of The Chef’s Shop on Railroad Street in Great Barrington, Navarino “always knew” that he wanted to have his own business. In 1991, after “paring his” dots in the corporate world, he snatched an opportunity to fulfill his dream, and started a little store he originally called BerkShares Cottage. Though as first Navarino intended to supply goods for the whole home, he found that what customers really wanted was a good supplier of kitchen equipment. Since he has always enjoyed cooking, that suited his tastes. Once he found that niche, he says, “it just clicked.” Twenty-four years later, Navarino is still a part of the economic fabric of the Berkshires.

Navarino has no trouble explaining what sets The Chef’s Shop apart from normal kitchen retailers. “People are interested in the things that really works the best, not just the things with national brand names or huge advertising budgets. We have a very utilitarian assortment and offer new services that, for any product in the store, we will meet or beat the lowest price anywhere.” Right now, he adds, prices are even better than usual because the Shop is holding an annual March Madness clearance event.

Assistant manager Clea Fowler is careful to note that products and prices matter, but people matter more. The masterminded behind many demonstrations that take place at the Shop, Fowler takes pride in the unique environment. “Many customers ask about employment, and the staff can offer to their customers. In a locally owned store, we can find employ- ees who know you, can anticipate your needs, answer your questions, and who include sponsoring a young woman with a six-week work experience, serving as a corporate sponsor, and participating us host employer, among others. For information, contact Heather Williams, BCBBRE youth employment program director at 413-322-5107 ext. 151.

The Berkshires Athenaeum now offers library patrons the option to borrow a KillA Watt Kit which assists homeowners in understanding and controlling their energy use. The kit includes a KillA Watt meter for measuring the electrical draw of household appliances. For information on energy efficiency measures as well as saving tips and programs available through many other sources, visit the Berkshires Athenaeum. For further information, visit the Circuit board during regular library hours.

Adams Community Bank has announced a definitive agreement for the purchase of Lenox National Bank. Under the terms of the agree- ment, the state chartered mutual savings bank will acquire Lenox National for $14.3 million in cash. Shareholders of the closely held Lenox National Bank will receive $1.383.85 in cash per share. The combined bank will have approximately $460 million in assets, $375 million in deposits, and a branch network. 

The transaction will expand our footprint in Berkshire County and is a strategic step in our continued pursuit to create a high-performing community bank focused on relationship banking in the best sense of the term.” The companies expect to close the deal in the first quarter of 2015. Approval from the Year: Resolution, Impact, and Under 40 Change-Maker. An online nomination form is available at www.berkshires. com, with nominations due by July 24.

With a $100,000 gift from the Steven and Claudia Perels Family Foundation, New Eng- land Public Radio plans to open a news bureau in Pittsfield by this summer. The gift will also allow WFCR, the Berkshires’ independent public radio station, to hire a full-time Berkshire County News reporter for three years. WFCR is establishing the bureau through a partnership with Berkshire Community College, and funding has been included to hire BCC students as paid interns. The bureau will be located at one of BCC’s downtown Pittsfield locations. WFCR will be the second radio station that carries content from National Public Radio to have a news bureau in Pittsfield. WAMC in Albany, N.Y., also known as Northeast Public Radio, now operates a news bureau in the Berkshires for years.

The Berkshire Jobs4Youth 2013 Berkshire County Youth Employment Campaign, co- sponsored by the Berkshire County Regional Employment Board, BerkshiresWorks Career Center and the Berkshire County Chamber of Com- merce, is seeking the support of employers to participate with opportunities for jobs and career development for summer. The possibilities in- clude sponsoring a youth worker with a six-week work experience, serving as a corporate sponsor, and participating as host employer, among others. For information, contact Heather Williams, BCBBRE youth employment program director at 413-322-5107 ext. 151.

The Berkshires Athenaeum now offers library patrons the opportunity to borrow a KillA Watt Kit which assists homeowners in understanding and controlling their energy use. The kit includes a KillA Watt meter for measuring the electrical draw of household appliances. For information on energy efficiency measures as well as saving tips and programs available through many other sources, visit the Berkshires Athenaeum. For further information, visit the circuit board during regular library hours.

The Pittsfield Parade Committee has an- nounced the kickoff of its fund-raising drive for the 2015 4th of July Parade. Those interested may contribute online via PayPal by visiting www. pittsfeldparade.com or by mailing contributions to:  Pittsfield Parade Committee Inc., PO Box 150, Pittsfield, MA 01202. There is a variety of sponsorship options, which offer promotional opportunities in the parade and its publications, ranging from a banner to inclusion in the ad for the Parade Committee’s annual auction. The goal of the Parade Committee is to raise $85,000 this year, which the committee estimates will be the amount needed to continue being in the parade that applications are available at www.pittsfeldparade.com and are due by May 15. For more information, call 413-447-7793 or visit www.pittsfeldparade.com.

Greylock Marketing Group (GMG) won the top award in the Product Services Category at the Northeastern Massachusetts Economic Development Association (NEFMA) 2013 Best in Marketing Awards, GMG’s 10th win in 6 years. GMG, a full service advertising agency and subsidiary of Greyrock Federal Credit Union, received the win- ning award for the “Anywhere Banking” campaign they created for Greylock Federal. The “Anywhere Banking” campaign utilized hand-drawn imagery created by GMG’s very talented graphic designer Tom Buckley, and very fun, comic reminiscent of something you might have seen from Dr. Seuss, to promote the idea that Greylock’s e-services are as easy as “child’s play” to use,” said Robert Maxwell, vice president of marketing services for GMG. “Winning at the NEFMA awards is an honor and we appreciate the accomplishment and exemplifies the great team- work and hard work of talent working here on Greylock Marketing Group.”

The Bidwell House Museum, a 1750s New England heritage site and museum in Monterey, is offering high school students with an interest in history the opportunity to become Young Historian Scholars Intern this summer. This high school interns spend two weeks at the museum, learning about colonial Berkshire history and the Bidwell family’s history while working on projects and giving tours of the museum as a junior docent. Each high school intern receives a $200 stipend. More information is also seeking a college student for an eight-week internship. Applications are available at www.bidwellhousemuseum.org. Deadline for applications is April 30. For information, call Barbara Palmer, executive director, at 413-528-8888.

A photo exhibit currently at the Lichtenstein Center for the Arts in downtown Pittsfield seeks to capture the dignity, strength, and stamina of those trying to feed themselves and their families on minimum wage salaries or other minimal in- comes. Presented by the city’s Office of Cultural Development in conjunction with the South Congregational Church, Take Another Look features the photography of Nick De Candia, whose images focus on those affected by food insecurity, and their efforts to overcome the additional challenges and limitations is April 30. For information, call Barbara Palmer, executive director, at 413-528-8888.

Maynard Landscapes & Garden Center
320 Summer Street • Lanesboro
413-499-4545
www.maynardlandscapes.com

DESIGN, INSTALLATION & MAINTENANCE
GARDEN CENTER & WHOLESALE PERENNIALS
DECORATIVE CONCRETE RESURFACING

Call us now for:
Foundation Plantings
Patios, Walks & Walls
Pergolas, Gardeons
Tree & Shrub Deliveries

- Lawn Renovations
- Lawn/Field Mowing
- Mulch Deliveries
- Free Estimates

voir your business, we’ll watch your business
New Servies
Backup & Disaster Recovery, E-mail Filtering, Network Monitoring, Managed Print Services

Healthy IT from CompuWorks
Since 1987. 1 Penn Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201. compuworks.biz

All Year IT Needs Hardware Software Networks Support Service Web Sites
Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA) announced on March 31 that Greg Summers has withdrawn his acceptance of the offer to be MCLA’s 12th president. “Dr. Summers was deeply apologetic as he was very impressed with the MCLA community,” said Tyler Fairbank, chair of MCLA’s board of trustees in a prepared statement. “Unfortunately his family is dealing with a confluence of health issues that have recently surfaced, making it impossible for him and his family to relocate.” Summers, who currently serves as provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, had been selected by the MCLA board to succeed Mary Grant, who left the college last December to become chancellor of UNC-Asheville. He had been slated to assume his position at MCLA on July 1. Fairbank noted that Cynthia Farr Brown will continue to serve as interim president at MCLA as the board assesses its options for the future.

With a $100,000 gift from the Steven and Claudia Perles Family Foundation, New England Public Radio plans to open a news bureau in Pittsfield by this summer. The gift will also allow Amherst-based WFCR to hire a Berkshire County news reporter for three years. WFCR is establishing the bureau through a partnership with Berkshire Community College, and funding has been included to hire BCC students as paid interns.

At a March 27 meeting at Springfield Technical Community College, the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center (MLSC) announced more than $2 million in funding for life sciences related capital projects and nearly $400,000 in grants to purchase equipment and supplies for high schools and middle schools in western Massachusetts. Included in the funding is $500,000 awarded to Berkshire Community College (BCC) to launch an educational underpinning that will support the development of the Berkshire Innovation Center (BIC), to be built at the William Stanley Business Park in Pittsfield. BCC plans to purchase state-of-the-art engineering equipment and 3-D prototype printers, and develop new courses, which will help to establish a foundation to provide students with advanced learning opportunities. These opportunities will help students obtain the essential skills to undertake research and new product development that will ultimately take place upon the opening of the BIC. “We are thrilled to receive this award from the Massachusetts Life Science Center,” said Ellen Kennedy, president of BCC. “The funding for this state-of-the-art equipment will ensure that our students develop the innovative skills needed to help our advanced manufacturing and biotechnology companies thrive. This award will dramatically increase the technical abilities of our students to support the new Berkshire Innovation Center.”

Content: Lisa Noyes at ALNASC0 413 448 6537 * Lisa@ALNASC0.NET WWW.ALNASC0.NET

It’s Greylock Time.

Bring your dreams to Greylock.

Greylock means business. Whether you’re expanding, buying new equipment, or hiring more help, we’ll help you build a brighter future for your company and your employees.
The College Club in partnership with Berkshire Community College (BCC), invites artists to submit paintings for a juried art show as part of the College Club’s Centennial Celebration. A $500 award will be given for the winning entry. In addition, the painting will be hung permanently in BCC’s Jonathan Edwards Library to commemorate the College Club’s Centennial. To obtain an application and paint and painting in May 21. The art show will be held June 19. For more information, visit www berkshires org. Hard copies are available at the main desk at BCC’s Jonathan Edwards Library and the Lichtenstein Center for the Arts. The deadline for submitting an application and painting is May 21. The art show will be held June 19 through July 18 at the KoosChvts Art Gallery at BCC. An opening reception will be held from 4-7 p.m. on June 19. For more information, contact Roberta Passamonte at 413-448-8707.

The fourth annual UpBeats ArtsFestival drew approximately 7,600 people to the center from Feb. 12, a nearly 80 percent increase from last year’s attendance and the largest number of attendees since the festival started in 2012. Organized by the City of Pittsfield’s Office of Cultural Development and Barrening Stage Company, the festival featured 21 acts with 70 performances highlighting dozens of artists, actors, musicians, playwrights, comedians and performers. Berkshire Groovy, once again the lead sponsor with additional support provided by Greylock Federal Credit Union, Berkshire Eagle, Berkshire Magazine, Lamar Advertising and the Creede Repertory Theatre. The annual 10th UpBeats Festival is slated for Feb. 11-21, 2016.

U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren will serve as the keynote speaker at Berkshire Community College’s 55th Commencement Exercises, to be held May 29 at Tanglewood in Lenox. Elected to the Senate in 2013, Warren is recognized as one of the nation’s top experts on bankruptcy and the financial pressures facing middle-class families. “We are related to have Senator Warren serve as this year’s keynote speaker,” said BCC President Ellen Kennedy, “because she is uniquely situated to combat the mounting student debt crisis speak up to government to helping students realize the American Dream.” For more details, visit www. berkshire edu/commencement.

Artist-Duo Dan Smith is marking a quarter-century in business at Andrews Farmshouse Restaurant in South Egremont, where since May of 19900 has been creating seasonal cuisine with an emphasis on local and fresh to share BCC’s dedication to local food. He purchases from more than 50 farms in the Berkshires, Hudson Valley and Connecticut for his 73-seat restaurant, which, in 2013, was named among the World’s 25 Best Farm to Table Experiences by The Daily Meal. John Andrews Farmhouse has also been awarded the Trip Advisor Certificate of Excellence and the Wine Spectator Award of Excellence. To commemorate the restaurant’s silver anniversary, Smith is holding a series of special events over the course of which they have a Sous Chef Dinner featuring several of the chefs who have worked at the Farmhouse over the last two decades. Upcoming events include “Bellevue in the Berkshires” — Smith’s first solo dinner at the James Beard Foundation in New York City — April 28, with menu sourced from two dozen farms and food from the region. From May 10-17, John Andrews Farmhouse will hold 25 Classics for 25 Years Weekend, offering a colleter and casual menu that draws on the region’s rich history. The hotel is well known for his dedication to local food. The Berkshires, Hudson Valley and Connecticut for his 73-seat restaurant, which, in 2013, was named among the World’s 25 Best Farm to Table Experiences by The Daily Meal. John Andrews Farmhouse has also been awarded the Trip Advisor Certificate of Excellence and the Wine Spectator Award of Excellence. To commemorate the restaurant’s silver anniversary, Smith is holding a series of special events over the course of which they have a Sous Chef Dinner featuring several of the chefs who have worked at the Farmhouse over the last two decades. Upcoming events include “Bellevue in the Berkshires” — Smith’s first solo dinner at the James Beard Foundation in New York City — April 28, with menu sourced from two dozen farms and food from the region. From May 10-17, John Andrews Farmhouse will hold 25 Classics for 25 Years Weekend, offering a colleter and casual menu that draws on the region’s rich history. The hotel is well known for his dedication to local food.
ENTREPRENEURIAL APPRENTICESHIP

Growing up in south county, you are more likely to mention, to your surprise, a group at an independent cinema and go for a locally made ice cream than you are to hang out at the mall. Your summer job is probably with a small nonprofit, local retail shop, farm or restaurant. You are fortunate enough to be surrounded by a strong culture of independent businesses and a robust network of community banks. These local businesses are constantly giving back to the community. They purchase supplies from other local businesses; pay taxes to the town to support our roads and schools, make donations and give gift certificates to school projects and nonprofits, and support the arts to stay here, where the owners live. Community banks contribute in similar ways; they make loans to local businesses and give grants to local initiatives. Local bankers have the interests of the community at heart because it is their community, too. You might not even realize how unusual our community is until you leave Berkshire County to go to college or travel.

Despite the success of our local business community, the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission has pointed out that the Berkshire economy is experiencing a trend away from middle-class jobs and towards lower-wage jobs in the service sector. How can we offer Berkshire County’s young people the kind of economic opportunities that will allow them to stay and make a living here? Do we have to mix up a special formula of nightlife and high-tech jobs? Well, that might help. But, in fact, it might be by a question of better organizing the resources we already have – with an eye to our common purpose – to build a broad base of support for the type of businesses that we need to keep our region vibrant. This winter, a coalition of organizations from southern Berkshire County has been experimenting with one initiative that attempts to do that. Since January, BerkshireShares Inc., Railroad Street Youth Project, the Schumacher Center for a New Economics, and the Railroad Street Apprenticeship Program have partnered to offer an Entrepreneurial Apprenticeship. This winter’s Entrepreneurial Apprenticeship became apparent at Dewey Hall in Sheffield as the students presented their business plans to a group of parents, friends, businesspeople and educators. As each young person presented their idea, the imagination and courage that they brought to the program clearly underscored the students’ prize, making it 250 BerkShares total. His hope is that this year’s class will serve as a prototype for more like it. This winter’s Entrepreneurial Apprenticeship may have only counted a handful of young people among its graduates, but it also brought together a coalition of business owners, educators and citizens who proved themselves dedicated to the building of a new economic development model in the Berkshires. We have already started signing up students and mentors for next year. Add your name to the list!'

Malcolm J. Chisholm Jr.
Registered Patent Attorney
Patent, Trademark and Copyright Law
Serving Western Mass. Since 1992
P.O. Box 278, 220 Main St., Lee, MA • 413-243-0551
See our web site at www.mpjpatents.com

Thoughtful Design. Experienced Choices. Beautiful Results.
After a lifetime of caring about the landscapes here in The Berkshires, we’ve gained the experience to do it all.
Expert Design, Construction and Maintenance
Fully Insured, Free Estimates
413-442-4873
Energetic Landscaping, Inc.
Ray Jones, Jr., Since 1979
www.EnergeticLandscaping.com
The Hub continued from page 1

other school-related matters. And, said Howe, “they are there to be accessible and good listeners.”

This, he noted, is something that can be especially important to teens who may come from disadvantaged households, broken families or other challenging social or economic circumstances.

“We call it The Hub for a reason,” said Howe. “We want this center to provide an entry point – a contact point – for youth to gain access to other resources in the community.”

Lest one interpret this or any other aspect of The Hub’s mission in a paternalistic context, Howe stressed that the youth drop-in center operates on a strictly secular basis. While its goals may reflect the basic values that guide the church and its congregation, he added, The Hub itself does not serve as a portal for indoctrination into any particular faith or viewpoint.

“We’re not there to tell anyone what to do,” said Howe. “We’re there to meet the needs of youth in the community and provide a supportive environment for young people from all backgrounds.”

Howe, who took his post with the downtown Pittsfield church in July 2013, said the basic effort to expand the church’s outreach into the community had begun earlier under his predecessor, the Rev. Judith Kohatsu, during her three years of service as interim pastor.

“Before I got here, they had identified three areas where the congregation wanted to engage outwardly,” Howe said. Those included the needs of area youth, the elderly, and the economically disadvantaged – the lattermost of which often overlaps with the prior two.

These needs were familiar to Howe from his work at his prior post. “My last appointment was in Barre, VT, which is a lot like a prior two.

As key industries disappeared, left behind were “urban poverty and all the things that went with that,” Howe said. Included among these, he added, were the challenges of aging populations and a growing sector of poor, unskilled youth with very few social assets at their disposal.

Barre and Pittsfield are far from unique in this regard, he noted. “These are major factors: one, that many of the institutions that many programs at schools and other organizations had, out of economic necessity, shifted to fee-based participation.

“We saw that this tends to eliminate [participation by] a large number of youth from the community based on financial limitations and other related factors,” said Howe. “We wanted to have a program that is based not on an ability to pay, but on an open door.”

Moving forward with the initiative, the church created a separate, secular nonprofit organization, the Fenn Street Community Development Corp. (FDC), to partner with it in establishing and operating the youth drop-in center.

Given what Howe acknowledged was a less than robust financial situation for the church itself, he said it was important for both the congregation and community to be solidly behind the initiative.

“We don’t have a lot of ‘free money’ to throw at problems,” Howe commented. “We had to make sure that the congregation was committed to doing this, and we had to identify funding sources to make it possible.”

That funding support came first from within the church – both on a local basis and on a regional level through the New England Regional Conference of the United Methodist Church.

Howe said the church then looked to secular sources of funding. “I’ve been spending a lot of time writing grant proposals,” he noted. “We had to develop the institutional capacity to undertake this.”

The church also reached out to the community at large for support, an effort that paid off as the youth center project moved closer to reality through donations of goods and services by area businesses and individuals.

Separate location
First, though, a suitable location for the center was needed. Howe noted, that although there was ample space for the drop-in center at the church, which is located at 55 Fenn St., feedback from youth suggested that a site outside of the church would be better received and utilized.

“We decided to listen to kids and look outside of our building for something that was accessible to them,” said Howe. That search led to a vacant storefront a few blocks away at 243 North St., which for several decades had been home to the Fenn Street CDC contacted the building’s owner, Cava- llier Management, and arranged to lease the roughly 1,800-square-foot ground-level space and similarly sized basement at a cost the organization could afford.

“We are deeply appreciative of Cavalier’s willingness to rent to us at a very modest rate,” said Howe.
After signing on for the space in January, work began to convert it for use as a youth center. Along with other basic renovations, the main level was divided into two sections: a front area with pool, foosball and other game tables and recreational equipment; and a back section with computer stations and carrels for studying or homework activities. Downstairs, one portion of the basement was converted into a lounge with TV and video game consoles, while other space was put to use as a mini gym.

Staffing for the center was also needed. The church and Fenn Street CDC have hired Michael Williams to serve as executive director of The Hub. Howe noted that Williams also works as a youth outreach coordinator for the city under the grant-funded Pittsfield Community Connection program. “He is a great asset for youth in the city,” Howe said.

Additional paid staff members include Stephanie Bullet and Jamal Taylor, who is also a city youth outreach coordinator. They are augmented by a corps of some 18 trained volunteers from the church’s congregation.

The Hub opened on March 9 and currently operates weekdays from 2:30 to 6:30 p.m. (An official opening celebration was held March 22.) Howe noted that the goal over time is to extend the hours later into the evening and to add weekend operations “as money and volunteers are available.”

Community support
In a late March interview, Howe said the initial response to the new youth center has been very positive. “Kids started showing up since then,” he said, noting that the facility has a maximum capacity of 50.

Operations have also been smooth and largely trouble-free. “We do have rules,” said Howe. “They basically boil down to: Respect the staff, the place and each other. And, so far, that includes the food served there.” Howe noted that much of the food served is donated by area businesses and organizations – a good thing, he said, since visitors to the center have exhibited a prodigious capacity for consuming whatever’s available.

All of this support, Howe said, has allowed Fenn Street CDC and the church to keep their own costs for opening The Hub to a minimum. “Thanks to the generosity of a lot of people, our costs for getting started have been kept to about $1,500,” he said.

Within the context of overall community needs, Howe acknowledged that the youth drop-in center represents a modest step forward. Also, the extent to which its operations will have an impact on those who use the center remains to be seen. Whether it’s simply a safe and social alternative for kids to spend a few hours after school, or a place for disadvantaged youth to get access to computers and other resources they might not have at home, Howe believes The Hub will become a valuable asset to the community. “I think it has tremendous potential,” he said.

That includes the potential to “give back” to the community that has supported the initiative. Howe noted, for example, that The Hub hopes to offer youth leadership and community service programs that will give kids new opportunities to participate in – and contribute to – the world around them. “It’s about all the resources that go into helping young people to develop their own set of healthy relationships,” he said.

As noted earlier, community support has been crucial in getting The Hub up and running. This, Howe said, has included in-kind donations of goods and services for electrical work and for creation of a handicap-accessible rest room. Many of the game tables and furnishings have been donated or made available at reduced costs. And, several computers and a PlayStation 4 game console have been provided by Greylock Federal Credit Union.

The Hub also has a small food-service area where “generally nutritious” drinks and snacks are available to kids free of charge. Howe noted that much of the food served there is donated by area businesses and organizations – a good thing, he said, since visitors to the center have exhibited a prodigious capacity for consuming whatever’s available.

The cost of doing business rises every day, and the difference between profit and loss is all about managing those costs. Wheeler & Taylor Insurance is experienced in all insurance options – for both small or large businesses – from property, liability and crime to worker’s compensation and employment practices liability. We work close with you to find the most comprehensive, effective and affordable insurance to fit your needs. That’s just smart business for both of us.

Understanding that gathering knowledge is a life-long process, Carol Rapisarda, AVP Branch Officer of our Cheshire and Center Street Branches, enjoys sharing her banking knowledge with young and old alike. She teaches local high school students financial literacy so they can become independent young adults, often times seeking her out to open their first accounts. Carol also spends time educating our elderly on the latest technology and online banking practices and participates in many bank community events throughout the year.

Carol is committed to your financial success. Contact her to schedule a free annual financial checkup to help you find ways to maximize your earnings, minimize your costs and put more money in your pocket.
Greg Watson
continued from page 1

...support and strengthen the regional economy by encouraging the purchase of goods and services from local businesses and institutions.

According to a press release from the Schumacher Center, as director of policy and systems design, Watson will introduce new programs while linking together the existing educational and applied community economics programs of the Schumacher Center.

He will be a public voice for sustainable agriculture, renewable energy, new monetary systems, equitable land tenure arrangements, neighborhood planning through democratic processes, government policies that support human-scale development, citizen financing of new enterprises, import-replacement strategies, and other concepts.

Watson, who lives in Falmouth, brings a long career of involvement in these issues to the job. Among other positions, Watson served as a member of President-elect Barack Obama’s transition team for the U.S. Department of Energy.

He also previously served as assistant secretary for science and technology with the Massachusetts Executive Office of Economic Affairs, and served concurrently as deputy director of the Massachusetts Centers of Excellence Corporation.

Watson also worked for the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (the agency that administers the commonwealth’s Renew- able Energy Trust). As a senior advisor for clean energy technology within the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, he developed a process for assessing the na- tion’s first proposed offshore wind project.

As executive director of the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative, he managed a community-based revitalization plan.

In the following interview Watson discusses his background and views on a variety of issues.

~

BERKSHIRE TRADE & COMMERCE: What prompted you to take this job with the Schumacher Center?

GREG WATSON: It’s a natural fit for me. Throughout my life I’ve been involved in activities to encourage and develop new ways of providing the essentials of food, shelter and energy without destroying the natural systems that sustain life. I’ve also been engaged in initiatives to encourage economic practices that better meet the needs of people.

Those goals require challenging many of our most basic beliefs and assumptions, and developing alternatives.

The Schumacher Center has been doing that consistently for a long time. They also recognize the link between sustainable economics and the environment.

I’ve been familiar with the Schumacher Center since the early 1980s, when I first met Susan Witt and Bob Swan. We worked in the same circles and got to know each other over time.

Last year, Susan and I were both on a group tour, and she casually mentioned that if I were ever interested in working for the Schumacher Center to let her know.

I knew I would be leaving my posi- tion with the state. I thought about it and decided to take her up on the offer.

What’s especially impressive about the Schumacher Center is that they’ve also been applying new ideas by putting them into practice and trying them out in the real world. For example, they established BerkShares as a local currency, as one way to help develop and strengthen local busi- nesses and economies.

That’s the kind of idea that if you described it beforehand, people might say, “You can’t do that. It’s impractical.” But they did it, and created a new model for local economies. Whatever the ultimate impact of BerkShares is, what’s important is that they did something innovative and followed through on it.

BT&C: You have worked in many capacities, as commissioner of agriculture, in state and federal economic develop- ment and energy agencies, as well as grass-roots community organizations. Are there common threads that have guided you in your career?

WATSON: To answer that, I should go back and explain the path I’ve been on throughout my life. It’s been an unusual journey.

I grew up in Cleveland in the 1960s. It was an area that was known for its pol- lution. It was so bad the Cuyahoga River caught fire. So I became very aware of en- vironmental issues, and developed a com- mitment to work on them, at an early age.

But, as an African American, I also felt conflicted. This was in the 1960s during the civil rights movement. Many in the Black community felt that the environ- mental movement was irrelevant. Some were even suspicious that the idea of “limited growth” was actually an effort to distract from – or even to block – the economic progress of the disadvantaged.

However, I intuitively believed that the issues of the environment and economic justice were directly related, although I couldn’t explain or articulate it at the time.

In looking for answers, I did a lot of reading and studying, and discovered people who offered alternative ways of thinking. Among them was the economist E.F. Schumacher, (the namesake of the Schumacher Center and author of the book Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered).

He, along with others like Wendell Berry (a farmer, writer and activist) and Jane Jacobs (an advocate for cities) and vision- ary ecological design scientist John Todd, shaped my thinking because they made connections across different disciplines.

They and many other people saw the linkage that exists between social values and economic and environmental systems.

I was especially influenced by Buck- minister Fuller. His book Synergetics: Explorations in the Geometry of Thinking changed my whole view of the world. He discovered the structures and systems of nature, and applied those concepts to hu- man activity.
He is mainly known today for his invention of the geodetic dome. But his ideas were very wide ranging. He challenged the whole way we think about economics, the environment and technology, and offered a different way of looking at their relationship. His ideas are more relevant than ever today.

**BT&C: You said we need to challenge many of our most basic assumptions about economics. What do you mean by that?**

**WATSON: We have to reevaluate the concept of the bottom line to include other values in addition to profits. It needs to factor in other impacts of activity, such as environmental sustainability and social and economic equity.**

We also have to revise the concept of “the commons,” which are the shared resources that are necessary to sustain life and society. We have to think more of the land and air and water as a common resource and private property. Can those be reconciled with what you are saying?

**WATSON: One of the assumptions that we have to reexamine is the idea that never-ending economic growth is necessary and inevitable.**

The difference between economic growth and development, with solar energy as the base currency.

Development is a natural process that is always occurring. It’s necessary to sustain life. In nature, sustainability of the overall system is the driving force. The earth is always undergoing change and development, with solar energy as the base currency.

But development is not about using more resources. It’s based on the wise use of existing resources, and figuring out how to make them do more with less.

That is different than thoughtless growth that occurs for its own sake, or the pursuit of profit as the sole goal.

 Resource, and the way we use them is ultimately destructive to the environment. The way we use resources when growth is the only objective. Too often in our system, we grow by extracting more resources without any concern for the consequences. Resources are used once, and then disposed of as waste and toxic pollution.

Nature is constantly recycling the resources that are available. Something is used, and then it is returned to the system to be used again. Also, the by-products of one system are used as the inputs of another. This is symbiosis.

That is in contrast to the way we use resources in nature. The overall goal is to protect and renew the systems that sustain life. But nature is not interested in the survival of any particular species. Ninety-nine percent of the species that have lived on Earth became extinct because they altered their environmental niches in ways that make them uninhabitable for them to continue living. They became extinct and were replaced by other species that adapted to the newly created niches.

Continued on next page.
-record

continued from previous page

That continual cycle of natural succession has occurred throughout the earth’s history. We humans are also subject to this pattern. We can undo ourselves by pursuing growth in ways that disregard the consequences. We can make ourselves extinct by continuing to waste resources and desecrate the natural environment. But humans are also the first species that has the opportunity to consciously avoid becoming extinct. We have the potential to participate constructively in that cycle by adapting, if we use sustainable development to survive and thrive by using resources wisely – yes, in harmony with nature.

**BT&C:** However, we have evolved a lifestyle that is based on the use of technology to maintain a basic standard of living for everyone. As we have seen this year, nature is also harsh, and we need to protect ourselves from it. Isn’t it unrealistic to expect that as a society we can give up the advantages of technology and live in a simpler, more primitive way?

**Watson:** That’s not the choice. The notion that technology and nature are incompatible is another one of those false beliefs we have to challenge. Technology is a double-edged sword. It can be part of the solution or part of the problem, depending on how we develop and use it. Technology can either hasten our demise as a species, or it can be a tool that helps us to adapt and better live within the natural world.

Buckminster Fuller addressed that directly. He looked at the structural geometry and mathematics and systems that occur in nature, and also compared and applied these natural principles to human activity. He saw nature as the ultimate technology in its designs and operations. The natural world is based on the same principles and systems as technology. Natural systems are basically the earth’s operating system. Fuller also pointed out that the designs and systems of nature can teach us how to do more with less. He illustrated this with countless specific examples, such as comparing the shapes of automobiles to objects in nature, and how they can be designed to be aerodynamically efficient. His geodesic dome was another illustration of emulating nature’s principles to build structures that are strong and efficient.

We see the positive potential of technology today in many ways. Technology is helping us develop ways to do things more efficiently. It has helped us develop energy sources such as solar power that are based on the effective use of clean, renewable resources, rather than extracting fossil fuels and disposing of them as pollution. The development of computers and online technology is another example. It allows us to share information about innovative ideas and solutions. And, the most important components of computers – chips – continue to get smaller and smaller. The emphasis is shifting from physical hardware to applications. The ultimate impact of all of this will depend on how we use these technologies. While technology can be harmful if misused, it can also provide solutions that will support more people and sustain the health of the environment without undermining the basic systems that support life.

**BT&C:** However, it can seem like we’re going in the opposite direction in many ways, and many people are discouraged. We’ve seen large corporations take over much of the economy, wealth being concentrated into fewer hands, and government and politics being controlled by powerful interests. And these powers have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo. Are you optimistic or pessimistic about the chances for positive change?

**Watson:** I define an optimist as someone who knows that options for successful outcomes exist, but is also realistic and realizes that’s not inevitable. By that definition, I’d say I’m basically optimistic. My optimism is also tinged by cynicism and anger, and a belief that we’ve got to create alternatives. There’s no guarantee we’re not going to follow the path of other species and continue to act in ways that will make us extinct. And, yes it often seems like change is unwieldy, if not impossible. Change is very difficult, especially in light of the dominant political and economic systems. But there are many people and organizations working to develop new, more sustainable and equitable ways of doing things. And they are making a difference.

I compare them to “trim tabs” on a ship’s rudder. The overall system is like a giant ship moving forward at high speed. Changing its course is very unwieldy, and you have to overcome its momentum to even begin to turn the rudder. But one way to do that is with a little trim tab on the rudder. One only needs a small amount of energy to turn the trim tab. When it turns it creates a partial vacuum which turns the rudder and changes the course of the ship.

There are many groups and individuals that are serving as trim tabs out there in society. They can serve the same purpose by helping to change large systems that appear to be unchangeable. And things like the Internet and social media are helping to connect these groups, and enabling people to communicate and spread ideas.

**BT&C:** What are some examples of this?

**Watson:** There are many, and they exist at all levels – from small grass-roots efforts, to businesses that are adopting “green” technologies and social entrepreneurship, as well as government policies. We see one example of what is possible right here, in the recent history of farming and the food system in Massachusetts. Between the end of World War II and the late 20th century, we saw the rise of industrialized agriculture and mass-market food system. We saw small farms disappearing and being replaced by corporate factory farms.

As a result, in Massachusetts, agriculture declined sharply. By the 1970s, the state was losing farmland at a rate of tens of thousands of acres a year. People said, “Farming is finished in Massachusetts.” It was widely assumed that farmland and the agricultural economy would disappear.

However, in 1974, former Agriculture Commissioner Fred Winthrop decided to do something about it. He appointed a commission that identified options that the state could undertake to save its agricultural sector. Their conclusions were published in 1976 as a 22-page document, “A Policy for Food and Agriculture in Massachusetts.” It was multifaceted. Among other strategies, it created an option for farmers and other owners of farmland to sell the development rights to their land. They could earn revenue from the sale, while also ensuring that it would always remain available as farmland.

This and other policies, and social and economic trends, began to revive farm-
The residents also convinced the city to make the unprecedented move of giving the land trust the power of eminent domain. This allowed the community to purchase the abandoned vacant parcels at fair market value. They developed plans to put the properties back into use, and worked with banks and other businesses and civic organizations.

On some of the vacant sites they established community gardens and a 10,000-square-foot greenhouse, where residents could grow their own food. They also set up a farmers market. Other sites were earmarked for other common community uses.

To encourage rehabilitation of housing on an affordable basis, they worked with banks to provide financing of housing units in buildings on the land trust sites. To prevent speculative investment and gentrification, the agreements limited the resale price of properties for an extended period of time. That’s an illustration of how communities can address these issues on a local level.

BT&C: As individuals and society, we tend to take the path of least resistance, and avoid change until it becomes absolutely necessary. As an example, we can’t seem to come to a consensus on climate change. Do you believe we can make incremental changes quickly enough to prevent possible disaster in advance?

WATSON: There is ample evidence that we are capable of changing ingrained systems into more sustainable ones.

One surprising example of this is Cuba. The educational tour I mentioned that Susan Witt and I had taken was to Cuba. I realize the United States and Cuba have many differences, and people have objections to their government and ideology. When I told people I was going to Cuba, they rolled their eyes. But, regardless of what we think of their government, something interesting happened in Cuba that we can learn from.

When the Socialist bloc collapsed, the Soviet Union stopped providing Cuba with the petrochemicals and other resources that Cuba had relied on as the basis for their economy, such as their industrialized agricultural system.

As a result, Cuba had to find new ways of doing things, without that support. By necessity, they turned to solutions such as organic farming, urban agriculture, and other sustainable methods of growing, processing and distributing food.

So, they have become experts at doing things in a more environmentally sustainable way. Hopefully, with the new openings between the United States and Cuba, there will be opportunities to exchange ideas and information with the people of Cuba. Ideally, if we look beyond our conventional ways of thinking, and open our minds and adopt sustainable alternatives, we can choose to make changes before we have lost that choice.
MS IN THE WORKPLACE:

Seminar to discuss complex disease in terms of issues it creates for employees, employers

BY JOHN TOWNEE

For those who have the disease, Multiple Sclerosis (MS) is a personal challenge, with complex and varied symptoms that can be highly obvious or all-but-invisible or many degrees in between.

MS is also a workplace issue when it affects an employee’s ability to perform on the job.

On May 13, the MS Support Foundation, a nonprofit organization based in North Adams (see boxed story), will present a free public seminar on the subject of “Multiple Sclerosis in the Workplace.” Leading the discussion will be Dr. William Goodman, PsyD, a neuropsychologist with Stracuna Associates in Williamstown, where he

provides counseling to people with MS as well as clients with ADHD and other neurological conditions.

“Last winter, I talked with patients about the impacts of MS on their lives, the subject of work is always near the top of the list,” said Goodman, who is a medical advisor to the MS Support Foundation. “The purpose of the program is to educate the community about how people experience MS in the workplace, as well as discussing both the employee’s and employer’s concerns and points of view.”

The seminar (at which a free dinner will also be served) will take place from 6:30 p.m. at the Williams Inn in Wil-

liamstown. It is open to patients, families, employers, co-workers and others who are af-

fected by MS, and to interested members of the public. To register, call 413-664-2117.

MS is a neurological disease. Inexact causes are still the subject of research, but it is gener-
ally considered to be an autoimmune disorder in which a person’s immune system believes it is being attacked by foreign elements and responds in ways that damage the central nervous system. This damage, including lesions in the brain and spinal cord, creates the symptoms and effects of MS.

The symptoms are varied. MS can impair one’s vision and/or speech; it can affect the ability to walk and perform other mechanical functions; and it can cause extreme fatigue, pain and other uncomfortable sensations.

The disease also can affect cognitive functioning, causing difficulties in commu-

nication, concentration and attention.

One of the complexities of MS is that it is unpredictable. It affects people with varied combinations of symptoms, and differing degrees of severity at different times.

“Everyone with MS has their own version of it,” said Goodman. “The disease affects each person in individual ways.”

He added that the outward manifestations of MS are also diverse.

“One person with MS can do very well in their job, while another person may be struggling. Also, a person with MS may be very high functioning for many years, but eventually they find that they can’t do things that they used to be able to do easily.”

“Some people have a relapsing and remit-

ting version,” he said.

The other form is progressive, in which a person experiences continual symptoms that become worse over time and eventually cause permanent and severe disability.

“Goodman noted that MS is frequently is first manifested in younger people. ‘Often it is diagnosed when people are in their twenties and thirties,’ he said. ‘A person with MS may be able to function without substantial difficulty for many years, but later in life it begins to interfere more seriously.’

Affect on work

Because MS takes so many different forms, there are no simple answers for how it will affect a person’s ability to work and perform the responsibilities of their employment.

“One person with MS can do very well in their job, while another person may be struggling. Also, a person with MS may be very high functioning for many years, but eventually they find that they can’t do things that they used to be able to do easily.”

There is a very wide spectrum,” said Goodman. “One person with MS can do very well in their job, while another person may be struggling. Also, a person with MS may be very high functioning for many years, but eventually they find that they can’t do things that they used to be able to do easily.”

In some instances, he said, a person is able to hide their condition because it does not affect their outward appearance or job performance.

“There are many people with MS who are doing really well in the job world, and they are able to hide it if they choose to hide it,” Goodman noted. However, the symptoms have to be dealt with if they become more obvious and affect an employee’s abilities on the job.

“Sometimes people are forced to disclose it when their behavior affects their ability to do the job,” said Goodman. “It can turn out well when adjust-

ments are made, and people often feel better about being able to open up about it.”

He cited the example of a schoolteacher with MS.

“She was called in by the school admin-

istrators because the parents of her students were complaining that their children thought she was coming to work drunk because of her symptoms,” he said. “So, she had to explain to the administrators that this perception was because she had MS. In that case, they re-

solved the situation by explaining the reason to the students and parents, and she was able to continue teaching.”

In other cases, however, the outcome is not always so positive, Goodman noted.

“Overall, the responses from employers are very mixed,” he said. “Employers normally want all their employees to deliver to 110 percent of their abilities. So, it can become contentious when a person is not able to work at their full capacity.”

He said employers react to the news that an employee has MS in a variety of ways.

“In some work situations, an employer will bend over backward to accommodate an employee with MS and make the neces-

sary adjustments,” he said. “But, in other situations, terrible things happen when it is discovered that a person has MS. At times, an underlying issue is that the employer will try to get rid of an employee and may make their work situation more difficult.”

The legal aspects can also be complex in those situations.

One of our case studies is currently going through the legal process.”

We hope you will be able to join us for our seminar.”

For more information, please contact Dr. Goodman at 413-664-2117 or via email at info@btaconline.com.

ALARMS

24 Hour Monitoring & Emergency Service

- SECURITY & FIRE ALARMS • CUSTOM DESIGNS • INTRUSION DETECTION
- TALKING MEDICAL PENDANTS • HEAT LOSS MONITORING • FREE ESTIMATES

326 Springside Ave., Pittsfield, MA 01201
413-445-4030 • 800-370-2525
www.alarmsofberkshirecounty.com

Berkshire Health Systems Welcomes

Steven F. Will, MD
Neurological & Spinal Surgery
Neurosurgery Professional Services of BMC
777 North St., 5th Floor, Pittsfield
413-447-2870

Dr. Steven Will, a board certified and fellowship trained Neurosurgeon, has joined the BMC medical staff and the Neurosurgery Professional Services of BMC physician practice.

He is accepting new patients in need of brain, spinal and peripheral nerve care. Dr. Will provides comprehensive adult Neurosurgical services to the Berkshires.

• Board certified in Neurological Surgery
• Fellowship trained in Spinal Neurosurgery at The Cleveland Clinic
• Medical degree from Cornell University, New York
• Residency in Neurosurgery at New York Presbyterian Hospital-Cornell Medical Center
• Previously served at South Shore Hospital in Weymouth

For an appointment with Dr. Will, ask your physician for a referral or call 413-447-2870

info@btaconline.com
People with MS have rights to reasonable accommodations to achieve their best performance. Or they might not need any changes to function perfectly well in their job. For example, he said, a person with MS may have a full understanding of situations at work, and be able to make the decisions required in their job, but they may not respond quite as immediately because of cognitive impairments. “Someone with MS may have a slower processing speed, and they need a little more time to process what’s going on,” Goodman said. “At a meeting they may have to take more notes, and they might not express themselves as easily, but they have their full intellectual capacities.”

Another challenge for some people with MS is a reduced ability to shift the focus of their attention and handle distractions. “They may have difficulty multitasking,” said Goodman.

The need for adjustments may also shift over time, based on the severity of symptoms and the periods of relapse or remission. “It’s also helpful to reduce the distractions.” For example, he said, a person with MS may need a little more time to understand the common issues and communicate.” That opens up the possibilities for helping the employee have to understand the common issues and communicate,” he said. “That opens up the possibilities for helping the employee achieve their maximum potential.”

Collaborative approach
The best outcome, he said, is when employers and employees collaborate to find the best way to adapt to their mutual benefit. “Employers need to understand what MS is, and the hidden and the obvious symptoms,” he said. “And people with MS have to figure out how best to cope with their symptoms at work. In some instances, a person may need accommodations to achieve their best performance. Or they might not need any changes to function perfectly well in their job.”

For example, he said, a person with MS may have a full understanding of situations at work, and be able to make the decisions required in their job, but they may not respond quite as immediately because of cognitive impairments. “Someone with MS may have a slower processing speed, and they need a little more time to process what’s going on,” Goodman said. “At a meeting they may have to take more notes, and they might not express themselves as easily, but they have their full intellectual capacities.”

Another challenge for some people with MS is a reduced ability to shift the focus of their attention and handle distractions. “They may have difficulty multitasking,” said Goodman.

The need for adjustments may also shift over time, based on the severity of symptoms and the periods of relapse or remission. “It’s also helpful to reduce the distractions.”

For example, he said, a person with MS may need a little more time to understand the common issues and communicate.” That opens up the possibilities for helping the employee achieve their maximum potential.”

At Lee Bank, we believe in working together to help your business grow. Let’s discuss our business relationship today.

Simple, direct and personal banking for your business.

1:1 Business Banking

Lee (413) 243-0117
Stockbridge (413) 298-3611
Great Barrington (413) 528-5531
Pittsfield (413) 445-7270
Lenox (413) 499-9922
leebank.com

MEMBER FDIC/MEMBER DIF EQUAL HOUSING LENDER

At Lee Bank, we believe in working together to help your business grow. Let’s discuss our business relationship today.

Simple, direct and personal banking for your business.

1:1 Business Banking

Lee (413) 243-0117
Stockbridge (413) 298-3611
Great Barrington (413) 528-5531
Pittsfield (413) 445-7270
Lenox (413) 499-9922
leebank.com

MEMBER FDIC/MEMBER DIF EQUAL HOUSING LENDER

At Lee Bank, we believe in working together to help your business grow. Let’s discuss our business relationship today.
BY JOHN TOWNES

For Dan Merson, trying to figure out a way to walk an unruly dog became a business—and a mission.

It all started in 2006, when Merson—who is a dedicated canine lover—was having a difficult time walking one of his five dogs using a conventional leash.

"He's a wonderful dog, but it was almost impossible to take him out for walks," Merson recalled. "He would pull and tug and resist any attempt to control him. It was miserable for him and for me."

On a visit to the vet's office to treat another of his dogs, he learned about the concept of "oppositional movement" in which animals struggle against efforts to restrain them by exerting increased effort.

"When you pull an animal, they naturally try harder to pull away from you," said Merson, who lives in Lanesboro. "That gave me the idea for a design for a tracking harness that would allow the person to guide the dog, rather than pulling it."

He refined the idea and made a harness at home.

"It worked very well, and my dog became very easy to walk," he said. "I tried it on my other dogs, and it improved my walks with them, too. I also made harnesses for neighbors, and they were very happy with the results. I realized that I had come up with a really good idea. I've always wanted to do something with dogs professionally, so I started a business making these harnesses."

That business became Walk Your Dog With Love, which he runs out of his home and a separate assembly and order-fulfillment facility in Lanesboro.

Merson said his harness utilizes an age-old concept which is common when leading other animals, but is not used in the practice of dog walking.

He explained that when farmers or others are leading animals such as horses, cows or camels from place to place, they generally walk in front of the animal with an attached rope, and the animal follows their lead.

However, when people walk dogs, they do the opposite. People attach leashes to collars or harnesses in a way that is designed to be held by the person walking behind the animal. This is similar to the method of hitching up donkeys that pull sleds, or the way horses are harnessed to pull a plow or wagon behind them.

As a result, the dog leads on the walk, but it causes a cycle of oppositional pulling, especially as the dog tries to move faster or turn. The more that the person tags on the leash to control the dog, the harder the dog tries to pull away, which is physically uncomfortable as it tightens up or even chokes the dog.

As a result, the conventional process of walking a dog can be uncomfortable and awkward both for the dog and owner.

In contrast, Merson said, he bases the design of his harness on the former method of leading the animal. The collar goes around the dog’s shoulders and belly near its front legs, with the leash attached to its side to be held by the person in front of or beside the animal. The dog leads the dog in this way, instead of following it. Once the dog gets used to this, it quickly learns to follow or walk alongside the person.

This allows the owner to gently guide the dog without tugging or pulling. As a result, the walk is easier both for dog and owner, according to Merson.

In addition, said Merson, the way the harness fits onto the dog takes advantage of the dog’s lower center of gravity, which adds to the ability to control its movements comfortably and effectively.

The harness and leash are made with material that is flexible and lightweight but strong. The straps and buckles are on the outside, to add to the comfort. They have reflective coating to make the harness and dog visible at night.

"It's all designed with the dog in mind," said Merson. "I describe it as causing no choking, no pulling and more love."

He added that the harness is also convenient. Once the owner makes the initial adjustments to the size and shape of the dog, putting it on the dog before the walk is a very straightforward process. It’s “like the Apple of dog harnesses,” he said. “It’s simple, easy to use and effective.”

Expression of values

To Merson, the Walk Your Dog With Love harness is more than a product, and when he discusses it, his enthusiasm goes beyond normal salesmanship. While it is a for-profit business, he said he also sees it as a mission that has other purposes.

He noted that his motto for the company—"It’s time to lead"—refers both to the method of walking the dog harnesses encourage and to his philosophy of applying other social values in his product and the company’s operations.

"People look for the meaning of life, and I also believe it’s important to look for a life of meaning," Merson said. "My real mission is to help dogs, which I also believe is contributing to a better society.”

Although that may seem a rather lofty goal for a dog harness, Merson said it ties in with other values.

"I honestly believe that a person’s real character is expressed in how they treat animals," said Merson. "If you’re not good to your dog, that is also likely to reflect how you treat people. By helping people to improve the way they walk their dog, that’s one way to make a small contribution to our general relationship with animals."

Merson said he also applies that concept to his business.

He noted that he is actively pursuing growth, but in a manner that reflects his other goals.

"I want to expand as a business, and increase my own income and those who work for the company, but it’s not about scale," he said. "My goal is to get the harnesses out to as many people as possible, because it’s a product that’s needed.”

Unlike companies that are based in the U.S. but manufacture their products elsewhere, Walk Your Dog With Love harnesses are made in the Berkshires.

Merson said making his products here rather than in China or some other overseas location reflects his broader philosophy for his business.

"It would be cheaper to have everything done in China, and not doing that means I can’t get into the big-box stores," he said. "But that’s a choice you make. I chose to employ people here."

Merson currently has a staff of 12, including people who sew and assemble the harnesses and work with marketing, order fulfillment and other business operations.

He acknowledged that he has made some concessions to economic pragmatism.

"Initially, we bought raw webbing and did everything here, including making handmade labels," he said. "But I realized it was more economical and efficient to contract with a factory to cut the material, and then sew and assemble the pieces here."

For those elements done elsewhere, he said he makes it a point to use manufacturers in the United States as his suppliers.

While Merson has seen significant growth since the days when he started the business out of his home, he described Walk Your Dog With Love as a “micro business” that has sold about 100,000 of the harnesses since he started. He sells two versions of the basic harness. The original is made with polypropylene webbing and sells for $29.95. Another version, the “Sports Dogg,” is made with somewhat stronger nylon in a wider choice of colors for $34.80. A top-line “Fun and Fancy” version with a choice of designer patterns sells for $39.95. (There is also a $4.95 shipping charge for the first item, and $2 for each additional item.) The company also sells harnesses for the hares for $8.95.

Sales growth strategy

Merson is originally from Westchester County in New York, and was a regular visitor to the Berkshires while growing up.

He moved here full time at the time he was starting the business.

Merson said the business has continually evolved by a combination of incremental growth and trial and error.

He also has built his market through a combination of imagination, technology and old-fashioned shoe-leather salesmanship.

“When I started, I went all over the Berkshires into every store I could find, and even talked to people in the street about the harness,” he said. “I’d tell people about the harness, and, if they expressed interest in having one, I’d say ‘Aha! You’re in luck.’”

He gradually began to acquire sales venues in the region.

Another advance came when he began selling the harnesses at the Eastern States Exposition (The Big E) in Springfield, and farmers markets and other events, which significantly bolstered sales and also brought word-of-mouth references.

His real breakthrough, he said, came when he started selling his collars online at an e-commerce shop on his website (www.walkyourdogwithlove.com) and through online retailers like Amazon. This has helped him to expand his geographic market and increase sales and revenues.

“I joined the electronic frontier in 2010,” he said. “The Internet has changed everything. I have no idea how we would be selling if it weren’t for that.”

continued on page 20
Rescued pug becomes public face of senior animal support fund

BY BRAD JOHNSON

A small group of area women, operating as the Danny Boy Adoption Fund, have made it their business to support rescue programs specifically geared to senior dogs and cats.

For the past few years, they have raised money to cover the medical costs and other care needed by senior animals taken in by the Eleanor Sonsini Animal Shelter in Pittsfield. Those fund-raising efforts have included various projects and initiatives, most notably and visibly the publication of a book inspired by the group’s namesake, an elderly pug known as Danny Boy.

That book, “Danny Boy to the Rescue,” features the protagonist’s self-told “tail” of illness and old age, and being cared for at the Sonsini Shelter, and of being adopted and enjoying his last stage of life in a new and loving home.

“It’s a story that’s appropriate for people of all ages — for anybody who loves animals,” said Pittsfield resident Mary Ellen Morris, treasurer of the Danny Boy Adoption Fund.

It also happens to be a true story, written by another of the group’s members, Nancy O’Malley, a part-time resident of Cheshire, who adopted Danny Boy and brought him home with her for ongoing care. A third member of the organization, Martha Pope of Pittsfield, photographed Danny Boy in his adventures and antics during his time in O’Malley’s care. Those images accompanied and complement the text by O’Malley in “Danny Boy to the Rescue.”

Originally published in hardcover in September 2012, the book has now been revised and updated for a new soft-cover version that was printed locally by In Touch Printing in Pittsfield.

Morris noted that hardcover copies of the book from the original press run of 150, and a from a second edition that included brief profiles of animals that have been adopted through the Danny Boy Adoption Fund, were sold for $20 at the shelter and at some area veterinary offices and pet stores. All proceeds went directly to the needs of senior animals.

“Danny Boy to the Rescue” was written by another of the group’s members, Nancy O’Malley, a part-time resident of Cheshire, who adopted Danny Boy and brought him home with her for ongoing care. A third member of the organization, Martha Pope of Pittsfield, photographed Danny Boy in his adventures and antics during his time in O’Malley’s care. Those images accompanied and complement the text by O’Malley in “Danny Boy to the Rescue.”

Originally published in hardcover in September 2012, the book has now been revised and updated for a new soft-cover version that was printed locally by In Touch Printing in Pittsfield.

Morris noted that hardcover copies of the book from the original press run of 150, and a from a second edition that included brief profiles of animals that have been adopted through the Danny Boy Adoption Fund, were sold for $20 at the shelter and at some area veterinary offices and pet stores. All proceeds went directly to the needs of senior animals.

“Danny Boy to the Rescue” was written by another of the group’s members, Nancy O’Malley, a part-time resident of Cheshire, who adopted Danny Boy and brought him home with her for ongoing care. A third member of the organization, Martha Pope of Pittsfield, photographed Danny Boy in his adventures and antics during his time in O’Malley’s care. Those images accompanied and complement the text by O’Malley in “Danny Boy to the Rescue.”

Originally published in hardcover in September 2012, the book has now been revised and updated for a new soft-cover version that was printed locally by In Touch Printing in Pittsfield.

Morris noted that hardcover copies of the book from the original press run of 150, and a from a second edition that included brief profiles of animals that have been adopted through the Danny Boy Adoption Fund, were sold for $20 at the shelter and at some area veterinary offices and pet stores. All proceeds went directly to the needs of senior animals.

Although the Danny Boy Adoption Fund operates under the auspices of the Sonsini Shelter, which is located at 63 Downing Parkway on the city’s east side, Morris noted that the organization sees its rescue mission as extending beyond one facility and community.

“We call ourselves a rescue because we help animals not only at Sonsini, but throughout Berkshire County,” she said.

For now, the Danny Boy Adoption Fund has a goal of assisting at least one senior animal a month — a modest number, Morris acknowledged, but one that nonetheless makes a difference in terms of freeing up financial resources for other purposes at the shelter.

And, with each dog or cat they assist, the efforts of those behind the organization are more than compensated for. “It’s something we choose to do,” said Morris. “We get great satisfaction and take so much joy in each case where one of our senior animals finds a loving environment for the last years of its life.”

For information or to make a donation, write to: Danny Boy Adoption Fund, PO Box 4043, Pittsfield, MA 01202.
Michael Conforti, the Field and Dena Har- dyman Director of the Clark Art Institute, has announced plans to retire on Aug. 31 after more than 20 years in the position. Conforti, who has served as director of the Williamstown museum since November 1994, has been widely credited for his transformation of the Clark and is recognized as a leading innovator and advocate in the museum community. Under Conforti’s direction, the Clark has grown in both size and stature and has established an international reputation as a leader in the generation of new ideas and critical thinking in the field. Most recently, Conforti led the Clark’s $145 million capital campaign to fund its campus expansion, which opened in July 2014. The board of trustees of the Clark Art Institute has announced that Francis Oakley will serve as the interim director following Conforti’s retirement. A committee comprised of Clark board members will select an international search firm to assist in the process of identifying and interviewing candidates for a permanent director. Oakley, a former president of Williams College, is a long- time member of the Clark’s board of trustees and served as the board’s president from 1998–2005. Oakley is currently a senior fellow at the Oakley Center for the Humanities and Social Sciences at Williams and is the college’s Edward Dorr Griffin Professor emeritus of the History of Ideas.

Jennifer Civello has been appointed director of marketing for Berkshire Family and Individual Resources Inc. (BFAIR), where she will be responsible for marketing the organization and its programs, cultivating external relationships, and responsible for marketing the organization and its programming, cultivating external relationships, and cultivating external relationships, and responsibilities. Prior to joining BFAIR, Civello served as the executive director of the Williamstown Chamber of Commerce. She is also an adjunct instructor in the sociology department at the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts.

Berkeley South Region of the Taconic Community Foundation has announced plans to step down from his long-time role as executive director of the Northern Berkshire Community Coalition (nBCC) at the end of June. Bashke founded the coalition in 1996 and over the years has inspired countless others to join him in pursuit of its mission to improve the quality of life for residents of Northern Berkshire County by organizing, supporting and empowering the community. The board of directors for the nBCC, has established a transition team to oversee the search for Bashke’s successor.

Cindy Dickinson has joined the staff of Han- cock Shaker Village as director of education. The Pittsfield resident comes to Hancock Shaker Village from the Emily Dickinson Museum in Amherst, where she has held a variety of positions since 1996, including director of education and curator. At Hancock Shaker Village, she will shape the interpretive experience for visi- tors, as well as recruit and train the educational interpreters and volunteers who engage visitors to the historic village.

Berkshire South Region of the Taconic Community Foundation has announced plans to step down from his long-time role as executive director of the Northern Berkshire Community Coalition (nBCC) at the end of June. Bashke founded the coalition in 1996 and over the years has inspired countless others to join him in pursuit of its mission to improve the quality of life for residents of Northern Berkshire County by organizing, supporting and empowering the community. The board of directors for the nBCC, has established a transition team to oversee the search for Bashke’s successor.

Cindy Dickinson has joined the staff of Han- cock Shaker Village as director of education. The Pittsfield resident comes to Hancock Shaker Village from the Emily Dickinson Museum in Amherst, where she has held a variety of positions since 1996, including director of education and curator. At Hancock Shaker Village, she will shape the interpretive experience for visi- tors, as well as recruit and train the educational interpreters and volunteers who engage visitors to the historic village.

Al Bashke has announced plans to step down from his long-time role as executive director of the Northern Berkshire Community Coalition (nBCC) at the end of June. Bashke founded the coalition in 1996 and over the years has inspired countless others to join him in pursuit of its mission to improve the quality of life for residents of Northern Berkshire County by organizing, supporting and empowering the community. The board of directors for the nBCC, has established a transition team to oversee the search for Bashke’s successor.

Cindy Dickinson has joined the staff of Han- cock Shaker Village as director of education. The Pittsfield resident comes to Hancock Shaker Village from the Emily Dickinson Museum in Amherst, where she has held a variety of positions since 1996, including director of education and curator. At Hancock Shaker Village, she will shape the interpretive experience for visi- tors, as well as recruit and train the educational interpreters and volunteers who engage visitors to the historic village.

Al Bashke has announced plans to step down from his long-time role as executive director of the Northern Berkshire Community Coalition (nBCC) at the end of June. Bashke founded the coalition in 1996 and over the years has inspired countless others to join him in pursuit of its mission to improve the quality of life for residents of Northern Berkshire County by organizing, supporting and empowering the community. The board of directors for the nBCC, has established a transition team to oversee the search for Bashke’s successor.

Cindy Dickinson has joined the staff of Han- cock Shaker Village as director of education. The Pittsfield resident comes to Hancock Shaker Village from the Emily Dickinson Museum in Amherst, where she has held a variety of positions since 1996, including director of education and curator. At Hancock Shaker Village, she will shape the interpretive experience for visi- tors, as well as recruit and train the educational interpreters and volunteers who engage visitors to the historic village.
The concept is to continually have new information on your site that just magnifies the perception that you're busy and successful. And if you don't, people will think it's not worth their time, and they'll stop coming back. If there isn't, you'll lose in the ranking department. If your company has back editions for you to read on their site – check them out!

One of many historical properties we protect every day.

Lee Audio’n Security, Inc.

Since 1970
1-800-369-3905
www.LeeAudioNSecurity.net
MA Lic #1460C • NY Lic #129002C2800

Lee Audio’n Security, Inc.

One of many historical properties we protect every day.

Lee Audio’n Security, Inc.

Since 1970
1-800-369-3905
www.LeeAudioNSecurity.net
MA Lic #1460C • NY Lic #129002C2800

Lee Audio’n Security, Inc.

One of many historical properties we protect every day.

Lee Audio’n Security, Inc.

Since 1970
1-800-369-3905
www.LeeAudioNSecurity.net
MA Lic #1460C • NY Lic #129002C2800

Lee Audio’n Security, Inc.

One of many historical properties we protect every day.

Lee Audio’n Security, Inc.

Since 1970
1-800-369-3905
www.LeeAudioNSecurity.net
MA Lic #1460C • NY Lic #129002C2800

Lee Audio’n Security, Inc.

One of many historical properties we protect every day.

Lee Audio’n Security, Inc.

Since 1970
1-800-369-3905
www.LeeAudioNSecurity.net
MA Lic #1460C • NY Lic #129002C2800

Lee Audio’n Security, Inc.

One of many historical properties we protect every day.

Lee Audio’n Security, Inc.

Since 1970
1-800-369-3905
www.LeeAudioNSecurity.net
MA Lic #1460C • NY Lic #129002C2800

Lee Audio’n Security, Inc.

One of many historical properties we protect every day.

Lee Audio’n Security, Inc.

Since 1970
1-800-369-3905
www.LeeAudioNSecurity.net
MA Lic #1460C • NY Lic #129002C2800

Lee Audio’n Security, Inc.

One of many historical properties we protect every day.

Lee Audio’n Security, Inc.

Since 1970
1-800-369-3905
www.LeeAudioNSecurity.net
MA Lic #1460C • NY Lic #129002C2800

Lee Audio’n Security, Inc.

One of many historical properties we protect every day.

Lee Audio’n Security, Inc.

Since 1970
1-800-369-3905
www.LeeAudioNSecurity.net
MA Lic #1460C • NY Lic #129002C2800

Lee Audio’n Security, Inc.

One of many historical properties we protect every day.

Lee Audio’n Security, Inc.

Since 1970
1-800-369-3905
www.LeeAudioNSecurity.net
MA Lic #1460C • NY Lic #129002C2800

Lee Audio’n Security, Inc.

One of many historical properties we protect every day.

Lee Audio’n Security, Inc.

Since 1970
1-800-369-3905
www.LeeAudioNSecurity.net
MA Lic #1460C • NY Lic #129002C2800

Lee Audio’n Security, Inc.

One of many historical properties we protect every day.

Lee Audio’n Security, Inc.

Since 1970
1-800-369-3905
www.LeeAudioNSecurity.net
MA Lic #1460C • NY Lic #129002C2800

Lee Audio’n Security, Inc.
Jane Patton agreed, noting that, for her, it represented an opportunity to address the region’s relative dearth of Italian dining venues, as well as revive the spirited atmosphere that she had enjoyed as a frequent customer at La Veranda.

Having developed what she described as an "addiction" to good Italian food and wine over the years, Patton said she had found the nearby options for satisfying that addiction to be sparse since she moved to Williamstown in 2000.

One bright spot for her had been La Veranda, which was known for its traditional Italian fare as well as its warm and friendly ambiance. "I had great memories of it as La Veranda," Patton said, adding that its closing in 2006 left a gap in the local dining scene that she feels has yet to be filled. "I’m thrilled about bringing it back to that kind of place and atmosphere that the Sicilianos were successful for so many years."

For Patton, that means a dining venue that is "casual, welcoming and family-friendly. "We want to be a place where you feel comfortable where you’re not going to break the bank if you bring the whole family." She added that establishing a warm and friendly atmosphere is an important complement to the cuisine. "I have no doubt that the food Robert will create will be fabulous," she said. "And we want the experience to match the food."

As suggested by its name, pasta will play a prominent role in the fare to be served at the new restaurant. "It’s all about our fresh pasta," he said, "made on premises with our own pasta extruder," said Beuth.

This will be seen in Beuth’s take on traditional dishes such as Classic Pasta Bolognese, Spaghetti & Clam Sauce and Rigatoni Melanzana—a half-dozen or so selections priced from $6 to $11.

The menu options expand considerably with what Beuth described as a “Make Your Own Pasta” section that allows diners to choose from seven pastas and four sauces, to which they can also add sauteed vegetables, grilled chicken or grilled shrimp. Depending on options selected, the cost ranges from $12 to $19.

Beyond just pasta, the menu also features a number of vegetarian dishes, such as Sweet Peas & Ricotta (in recent weeks in anticipation of the opening of Pastaria NoCo. Among them (below) is a lumache (below) which features a new wall opening looking into the main dining area during an early April tour of their soon-to-open Pastaria NoCo. Along with partner Gil Rubenstein, along with partner Gil Rubenstein, are branching out from their Hops & Vines restaurant in Williamstown with the new Italian eatery just across the town line in North Adams (bottom). Chef Beuth has been previewing a number of Italian dishes at Hops & Vines in recent weeks in anticipation of the opening of Pastaria NoCo. Among them (below) is a lumache pasta with Equinox Farms pea green pesto, lemon ricotta, crispy prosciutto and crispy prosciutto (photo provided by Robert Beuth).
Clayton's Solutions for Home

Once you experience life with a Clayton water softener, you’ll wonder how you ever lived without it. The soft, treated conditioned water you get from a Clayton water softener will make life easier all around your house. With soft, Clayton water you will notice a dramatic difference everywhere you use water.

• Skin and hair is smoother and hair is silkier and bouncier everywhere you use water.

Get from a Clayton water softener will make life easier all around your house. With soft, Culligan water you will notice a dramatic difference everywhere you use water.

- Skin and hair is smoother and hair is silkier and bouncier everywhere you use water.

With soft, Culligan water you will notice a dramatic difference everywhere you use water.
C’mon, admit it...when you walk inside your “local” financial institution lately, do you know the staff? When you’re reading the news about their new hires or those being promoted are you asking, “Who’s that?”

And, where’s your bank investing your deposits? Canada? Boston? Wall Street? Why not our streets? Community banks like us – The Co-op was established in 1889 – are back in vogue. Small by definition, staffed by local folks, singular in our mission to help our friends and neighbors build a better place to live, work and play.

We Feature Friendly and Familiar Faces

(We didn’t mention that our consumer and commercial lending teams are the most experienced in the county!)