

Belchertown, Granby & Amherst

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Artist makes a 'Splash'

Holesovsky published in nationally acclaimed watercolor book

By Debbi Strauss
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BELCHERTOWN – Gretchen Holesovsky has been painting in watercolor for 33 years, and this year one of her all-time dreams came to fruition. Earlier this year, Holesovsky learned that her painting entitled “Dramatic Encounters” had been chosen to appear in *Splash* Vol. 10: *Passionate Brushstrokes*. The watercolor book published by North Light Books, is recognized around the country by watercolor artists.

“It was like receiving an Oscar,” said Holesovsky, who painted the piece of a surreal-looking landscape of curves and color about three years ago. The scene was actually of an area of a beach in Old Orchard, Maine. Holesovsky’s husband, Thomas, captured the scene in a photo.

“He’s very much a part of what I do,” said Holesovsky. “I liked the rock in the distance and how it takes your eye there. I like that the ocean left little trinkets behind. And these rocks – you don’t see these rocks in this formation every day.”



Turley Publications photo by DEBBI STRAUSS

Gretchen Holesovsky’s work was published in this year’s edition of ‘*Splash*.’

Holesovsky said that her technique in this painting, called dry-brush realism, involved a lot of pushing lifting and scrubbing.

“It is a lot like the sea,” she said. Holesovsky is no stranger to praise for her work. She has received numerous awards, has exhibited throughout the country and has earned signature memberships to several watercolor societies, associations and leagues. However, to be published in the same book as some of her mentors – James Toogood, John Salminen, Robert O’Brien and Mike Mazer – gives her a particular thrill and honor, she said.

“This is a juried project. You send in your slides and just wait and hope yours is chosen,” said Holesovsky. “Then, once you’re chosen, you have to write about it, and that is also juried.”

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Turley Publications photos by ELLIOTT BURKE

Janet Minney of Twin Willows Farm assists Regina Haines in choosing fresh produce at the Belchertown Farmers Market that happens on the common every Thursday from 2 – 7 p.m. For more “fresh” photos, see page 33.

Take a look at what’s funny...and not

Hamilton speaks out on 18th Annual Ko Festival of Performance

By Debbi Strauss
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BELCHERTOWN – Even the name of the festival seemed to “fall” into place 18 years ago, when Sabrina Hamilton, of Belchertown, and three friends decided to work together in an ensemble. Hamilton said the hardest part about getting the program together was selecting a

name. They finally decided to throw the I-Ching, a hexagram commonly used in readings. What came up was the 49th hexagram, Ko.

“It means a revolution in the sense of a snake shedding its skin or a phoenix rising from the flame,” said Hamilton. “What’s left is something new and rigorous. That meaning

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Many hands make much work light

With His Hands, church receives new life

By Elliott Burke
Correspondent

SHUTESBURY- After years of sitting nearly dormant, the Federated Church of Shutesbury is bustling with activity once again. These days there is a different congregation filling the old church on the weekends.

Workers and volunteers are filling the pews of the sanctuary and crowding the common meeting room. They’re stripping it of the old, worn out furnishings in order to give it a new look and hopefully restore it to its former glory, which includes bringing in new members. Dust and nostalgia float thick in the air as the workers remove the faded wallpaper,

thread bare carpeting and tired, aged support beams, gradually replacing them with a fresh new face and renewed hope and promise.

The story of the Shutesbury Church is one of faith in action. From the humble beginnings of serving as a town meeting house, which would stand as a beacon on a hill, the church has weathered many a storm and age. Even before the existing structure was



Turley Publications photo by ELLIOTT BURKE

May the circle be unbroken: Everyone joins in a moment of prayer and reflection.

PLEASE SEE **CHURCH**, PAGE 35



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FROM THE FRONT

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built the local religious communities were without a place to meet for seven years until a group of Baptists, Congregationalists and Universalists merged together to build a common meetinghouse to be split between the three faiths. After some deliberation it was agreed that the new structure should be built in the center of the town, in accordance with New England tradition. The foundation was laid where it has stood on Town Common Road for 180 years.

Four years ago the congregation of the church had drastically dropped to only two members. The church has been hit hard by diminishing attendance and the economic support that comes from a thriving congregation. The structure of the building had grown weak, the steeple had started to lean, and talk began circulating that the town was interested in using the building. At an August 2007 selectmen's meeting, the board discussed concerns about the deteriorating state of the church and whether it was serving a useful purpose to the community. Mary Dihlmann, one of the two remaining parishioners, told her friend Rev. John Blunt, the pastor of Valley Life Church in South Deerfield, about the problems the church has been going through. They both attended the meeting. While nothing significant was decided about the future of the church at that time, Blunt raised a call to action to members of the community and a small group of people began meeting each week at the church for bible studies, potluck meals, to watch films, and for special holiday services. They've been meeting faithfully for the past two years, praying that some help would come.

That prayer was answered in the form of "With His Hands", a faith-based, non-profit ministry of Second Baptist Church of South Hadley. Rev. Pastor Donald Bradley and outreach minister James Sinclair of Belchertown told the group about the plight of the church in Shutesbury. The members of With His Hands acted without haste and took on the project, beginning work earlier this year. They estimate to be done by October.

A crew of about 60 volunteers gathered together on June 20 to clear out the old carpeting, strip the wall paper, and scrape paint off of windows and doors while contractors of With His Hands Ministry worked on many of the trickier details of renovating the structure. They joined in a circle to pray before getting to work, and throughout the day there was plenty of good-natured joking among the noise and the sound of contemporary worship music played in the background. They all broke for meals together and shared in the satisfaction that their work is being accomplished to the greater purpose for the community of Shutesbury.

"We've all been blessed, incredibly, unbelievably blessed," said David Tetreault, board member and team leader of With His Hands Ministry. "Our mission is to give back to others this great blessing that we have received and to share with others who are in need the love of Jesus."

With His Hands Ministry functions via a "pay it forward" principle of helping others.

"We don't want people to pay us back for the work we do. We'll supply as much of the labor and cost that we can for the work and we don't expect any compensation," said Tetreault. "What we desire to see is people being taken care of and in turn doing something to take care of others who need their help."

Linda Hanscom of Belchertown said she wants to see the building she grew up near restored. Hanscom was raised in Shutesbury and attended Sunday school and youth fellowship every Sunday with her sister and brother and continued to worship there as an adult. "My mother served on numerous church boards and my father tended to the coal furnace on Sunday mornings," said Hanscom. "My great-grandfather, Emmons J. Spear, was one of the members who drafted and signed a Certificate of Organization for the Church on March 18, 1903. How could I let him down?"

That hardly seems likely. Through her work on behalf of the church – from cleaning, preparing and repairing the building, providing a thumbnail history of the church that she typed herself, connecting members of the community with the leaders of the work crews and bringing the cause of the



Turley Publications Photos by ELLIOTT BURKE

The team with a vision – Linda Hanscom, Kathy Steve, Nancy Dihlman, Joan Paczkowski, Richard Paczkowski, Leah Morton, Jake Steve, Greg Steve, Katie Steve, Pastor Mark Lawrence, Dick Scott, Pastor Don Bradley, Lee Savage, Barbara Rochon, David Tetreault, Donna Fobare



With His Hands volunteers strip the walls and pews.

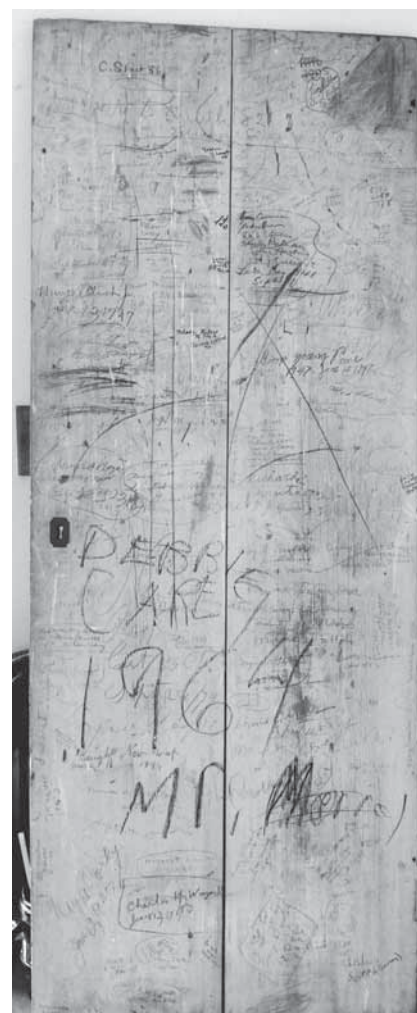
church to the attention of the media – Linda Hanscom is one of the many people making the work of rebuilding the church possible. She is one of the first people you meet when you arrive at the site as she welcomes you with a warm smile and introduces you to the others, showing you around the old church amid the bustle of activity going on. Her parents and grand parents would be proud.

"Church isn't just about having a place to meet," said Kathy Steve, daughter of Mary Dihlman. "It's about community and taking care of one another. I grew up across the street from the church and was baptized here, and I've received so much from others who gave to the community through the church. There are members here who teach and work in the community. We all contribute our talents to the wellbeing of the town and the welfare of one another."

"We hope to develop a strong relationship between the church and the community. That's one of our goals, and we can't accomplish it without the help and support of others," said Hanscom. "We'd love to see it return to being a vital part of the town, and we are hopeful that once the project is complete that the town's people will be a part of the future of the church."

The next volunteer workdays scheduled are Saturdays on July 11, 18 and 25 with shifts from 8 a.m. - 12 p.m. and 10 a.m. - 2:30 p.m., and most Saturdays thereafter.

People interested in volunteering can contact: With His Hands Ministry, c/o Second Baptist Church, 589 Granby Road, South Hadley, MA. 01075. Telephone: 536-0626 or visit withhishands.org.



Portal of faith through the ages: this door includes signatures of members from as early as 1844.

OBITUARIES

Lionel Lachance, 91

BELCHERTOWN – Lionel Lachance, 91, of Pine Valley Plantation in Belchertown, was Called Safely Home on Thursday, July 2, 2009. He passed into Eternal Life from his home surrounded by the care and comfort of his loving family. He was born in Saint



Elzear Beauce, Province of Quebec, Canada on Oct. 8, 1917, a beloved son of the late Thomas and Leontine (F a u c h e r) Lachance.

He was raised in Canada and moved to Belchertown in 1956. He was

employed at the former Zero Manufacturing Company in Monson. He was a communicant of Saint Anne Church in Three Rivers. He was predeceased by his beloved son, Gaston R. Lachance who was Called Home on May 20, 2007 and his cherished granddaughter, Gretchen Lachance who was Called Home on June 12, 2009.

He leaves his beloved wife of 70 years, Laura M. (Dostie) Lachance. His 10 loving children, Helen Bellefleur and her husband, Richard of Huntington, P.Q., Canada; Gerard Lachance and his wife, Barbara of Mystic, Conn.; Marielle Peloquin and her husband, Marcel of Sturbridge; Yvon Lachance and his wife, Joyce of Palmer; John Lachance and his wife, Carol of Bondsville; Lisette Miron and her husband, Lin of Belchertown; Yvan Lachance and his wife, Rosa of Bondsville; Yves Lachance of Belchertown; Robert Lachance and his wife, Ellen of Belchertown; and Roger Lachance and his wife, Shelly of Monson. He also leaves his 23 cherished grandchildren, his 25 cherished great-grandchildren; his dear brothers and sister, Irenée Lachance of Sherbrooke, P.Q., Canada, Hervé Lachance and his wife, Mariette of Ontario, Canada, Thérèse Lachance of Montreal, P.Q., Canada and his many dear nephews and nieces.

His funeral was held on Monday morning, July 6, 2009 from the Belanger Funeral Home followed by a Mass of Christian Burial in Saint Anne Church. His burial followed the Mass at Saint Anne Cemetery on Main Street in Three Rivers. His family has requested that memorial donations be made in his memory to the Quaboag Valley Hospice, 42-B Wright St., Palmer, MA 01069.

Gina Dee (McCannon) Carter, 29

BELCHERTOWN AND FREEPORT, FLA. – Gina Dee (McCannon) Carter, 29, passed away June 4, 2009 in Freeport, Fla. Born in Northampton on July 24, 1979, she was the daughter of Gene and Darlene (Williams) McCannon.



Gina has lived in Florida for the past eight years, previously residing in Belchertown. She received her bachelor's degree in psychology at Elms Catholic College and was formerly employed at Kent

Lawn Funeral Home in Panama City, Fla. Gina was a very loving and caring mother and wife. She was dedicated to her faith and helping the elderly and less fortunate.

Gina will be greatly missed by her husband Chris Carter of Fla. along with her two children Isabella Sophia Curto and Christopher Jaydin Carter. She also leaves her parents Gene McCannon, her mother and stepfather, Billy Beatty along with grandparents Mike and Rita Orr of Belchertown, as well as many aunts, uncles and cousins. She was predeceased by her adored brother Billy McCannon in 2005.

Visitation will be held Monday, July 13 from 4 - 6:30 p.m. with a remembrance time beginning at 6:30 p.m. at the Beers & Story Belchertown Funeral Home followed by a graveside service on Tuesday at 11 a.m. at Quabbin Park Cemetery. Donations may be made to a charity of one's choice. For more information and to sign a memorial guest book online, visit beersandstory.com.