



TALKING SIGNS

in Turners Falls

Page 6

Montague selectboard chair Patricia Pruitt moderates a working session with (l-r) Mass DoT engineers Rich Massey, Bao Lang, and district highway director Al Stegeman on Wednesday in town hall

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YEAR 8 – NO. 26

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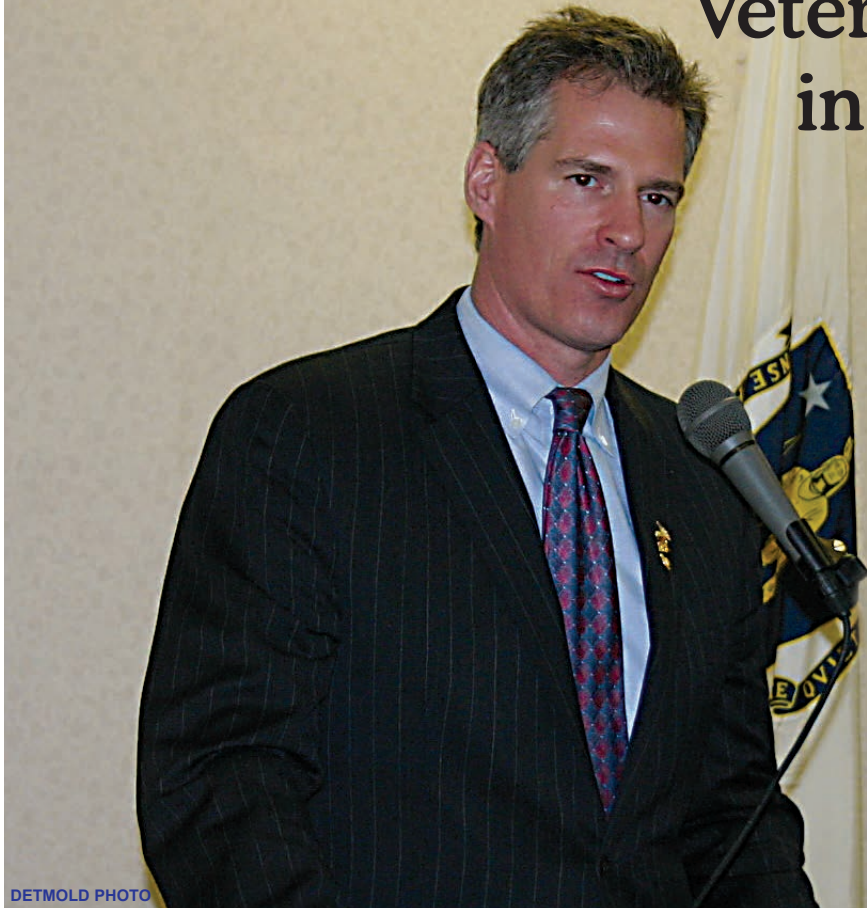
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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

APRIL 1, 2010

SENATOR BROWN DEDICATES NEW Veterans Center in Greenfield



“Resources are scarce. People are hurting. Governments aren’t spending money as they should.”
– Senator Scott Brown

Senator Scott Brown at the dedication of the new Veterans Resource Center in Greenfield on Monday

BY DAVID DETMOLD GREENFIELD – John Kerry couldn’t make it, but newly minted Massachusetts senator Scott Brown was on hand to dedicate the new veterans resource and referral center at 114 Main Street in Greenfield on Monday afternoon. Brown, a lieutenant colonel in the Massachusetts National Guard, is a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee.

The spacious new veterans center takes the place of the cramped town hall office annex where veteran agent Charles Loven has worked, in an office shared with three town planning employees, to bring services to veterans in Greenfield and Leyden. Until now.

“This center will provide one stop shopping for veterans in Franklin County,” to access the services available to them, declared Loven, as a large crowd of veterans, local legisla-

tors, and Senator Brown looked on. The new center was made possible by a \$7,500 grant from the Vietnam Veterans of Massachusetts, to cover rent and utilities for one year. Greenfield mayor Bill Martin, himself a Vietnam vet, was instrumental in securing that grant.

Mike Chalifoux, vice president of the Vietnam Veterans of Massachusetts, traveled over from see **BROWN** page 7

At GMRSD, the School Nutrition Bill won’t Change the Menu Much

BY DAVID DETMOLD GILL-MONTAGUE – Last month, the Massachusetts Senate unanimously approved a school nutrition bill, following on similar legislation in the House, to ban high calorie sodas, salty or sugary snacks and deep fat fried foods, set nutritional standards for all foods sold in schools, incorporate more fresh fruits and vegetables, and encourage schools to buy and use local produce. The bills, which governor Deval Patrick supports, are being touted as a major front in the battle against childhood obesity.

But Jim Loynd, director of food services for the Gill-Montague Regional School District said the new regulations, which will begin to take affect in the 2012 academic year, will have very little impact on the GMRSD, because those guidelines have already been largely implemented in the four kitchens under his supervision in the district schools.

“In the eight years I’ve been here, this staff has worked their keisters off to change the way we’re doing things,” said Loynd at an interview at his office on March 19th. “When I came here, the menu see **MENU** page 13



Ellen Blanchette photo
Jim Loynd, director of food services for the Gill-Montague Regional School District

Crochier Runs for Selectboard



Randy Crochier

BY DAVID DETMOLD GILL – Randy Crochier, of Munns Ferry Road, is running for the three-year selectboard seat being defended by incumbent Nancy Griswold. The town election in Gill takes place on May 17th.

Crochier, who has worked at the Farren Care Center in Montague City for the last 5½ years, has served on the town of Gill’s board of health for many

years. He said he has been considering a run for selectboard for some time; he has lived in Gill for 18 years.

“I don’t think there’s any one thing that triggered my decision to run,” said Crochier. “The way the financial situation is everywhere right now, you have to be used to working with little or nothing. I work in a business that has strict budgets.”

He added, “We have to look at everything through a new set of eyes, and be willing to find out why we’re spending money on anything. Ask the questions and don’t be afraid of the answers.”

Crochier said another maxim he would live by as a selectboard member is, “Put good people in charge and then stay out of their see **CROCHIER** pg 5

Griswold to Defend Three-Year Seat on Selectboard

BY DAVID DETMOLD GILL – Nancy Griswold is running for a second term on the Gill selectboard. The Oak Street resident, who also serves on the board of assessors, said she decided to run again because the town is in a tough financial position, and, “There are some things I’d like to see through.”

Referring to results from a study of the major town departments conducted by the Human Resources Services firm, Griswold said, “I’m very anxious to hear what the consultant has to say. We’ll have a guideline going forward.” Though if any suggested changes to the way police, fire, or highway services are delivered would cost the town more money, Griswold warned, “We

might not necessarily be able to implement them right away.” Still, “In a small town, having someone totally objective look over our needs and wants, that’s very important.”

Regardless of the outcome of that study (results will be presented at a public hearing on Tuesday, April 27th at town hall) Griswold said the major see **GRISWOLD** pg 5



DETMOLO PHOTO
Nancy Griswold

Boutwell Enters Three-Way Race for Selectboard

BY DAVID DETMOLD MONTAGUE – Chris Boutwell (D) has entered the three-way race for a three-year seat on the Montague selectboard.

Also in the running for the seat being left open by Patricia Pruitt, who is stepping down after two terms on the board, is Rachel Roy (R), and Margaret Pyfrom (D) (see **MR VIII #24** for more on Roy and Pyfrom’s candidacies). The annual town election takes place on Monday, May 17th.

Boutwell, the chair of the Montague board of health and a longtime member of the Trustees of the Veterans Memorial, ran for a seat on the selectboard six years ago, but lost out to Pruitt.

“I’ve always been interested in the town moving

forward,” said Boutwell this week. “I don’t think there’s any question about my record of public service for the town of Montague. I want to continue giving back and moving forward.”

Boutwell said he has served Precinct 4 on town meeting for “close to 20 years,” served the soldiers’ memorial committee for 18 years (as they raised funds and successfully completed construction of the new memorial park on Avenue A), and said, “I’ve been the chair of the board of health for so many years I can’t even remember.” In that post, Boutwell said he has been a consistent advocate for the town to maintain a public health nurse, who has primarily seen to the health needs of the town’s see **BOUTWELL** pg 5

PET OF THE WEEK

Huggable



Nena

My name is Nena and I'm a two-year-old female domestic short hair cat in need of a good home. I'm a pretty, all-black girl with gorgeous yellow eyes and such a sweet face too. I'm one of those marvelous cats who loves people and loves hugs. Yes, hugs! If you need a hug, you need look no further! For more information on adopting me, please contact the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society at (413) 548-9898 or via email: info@dpvhs.org.

Great Falls Middle School Students of the Week

Grade 6
Seth Rider
Nadia Hasan

Grade 7
Alexandra Wing-LaClaire

Grade 8
Cooper Grace

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CARNEGIE LIBRARY NEWS

Early Earth Day Party

BY LINDA HICKMAN
TURNERS FALLS – The Carnegie Library will be celebrating Earth Day early this year with an Earth Day Party on Saturday, April 10th, at 10 a.m.

Children of all ages are invited to make cool crafts with recycled materials. The program is free, and all of the materials will be provided. For more information, call 863-3214.

LEVERETT LIBRARY NEWS

Raise Your Sleuthing I.Q.

Mystery writer and psychologist Roberta Isleib will present a talk on Sunday, April 11th at 7 p.m.

Lovers of the mystery genre and would-be authors alike will enjoy learning the secrets of mystery writing – how to create crime fiction characters with believable motives, secrets,

pasts, and pathologies.

Roberta Isleib is the author of two mystery series, the latest of which features a psychologist who writes an advice column.

Leverett Library is located at 75 Montague Road. For more information call (413) 548 9220 or get directions at www.leverettlibrary.org.

WENDELL LIBRARY NEWS

Youth Programs and Poultry

Kids Movie Night on Saturday April 3rd at 6:30 p.m. This program is free. The film is *The Fantastic Mr. Fox*, rated PG.

Teens and Tweens (TNT) program meets Sunday, April 4th from 2 to 5:30 p.m. Hang out and play games. Help with the final teen area design plans.

After School Crafts and Play with Miss Deb, for 1st graders and older on Wednesdays in April from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. This program is free. Deb will offer a different

craft each week. Join for one or more sessions. Please register by calling the Wendell Library at 544-3559.

The How Tos of Raising a Family Flock on Wednesday, April 7th at 6:30 p.m. This program is free. Informational session including slide show and lecture by Nina Keller for those considering chickens or just starting out.

All programs are sponsored by the Friends of the Wendell Free Library.

Cholesterol Screenings Offered at BFMC

GREENFIELD – Baystate Franklin Medical Center will hold a Cardiac Risk Cholesterol Screening on Wednesday, April 14, from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. in Conference Room B. Participants must fast for 12 hours prior to being screened.

Test results will be forwarded to participants and their primary care providers. The cost for the screening is \$7; pre-registration is required. To register, please call Baystate Health Link at (413) 773-2454 or (800) 377-HEALTH.

SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES – April 5th to 9th

GILL/MONTAGUE Senior Center, 62 Fifth Street, Turners Falls, is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Congregate meals are served Tuesday through Friday at Noon. Meal reservations must be made a day in advance by 11 a.m. Messages can be left on our machine when the center is not open. Meal site manager is Becky Cobb. Council on Aging Director is Roberta Potter. For information or to make meal reservations, call (413) 863-9357. Call the senior center for information on any programs.

Monday, April 5th
10:00 a.m. Senior Aerobics
10:45 a.m. Easy Aerobics
1:00 p.m. Knitting Circle

Tuesday, April 6th
9:00 a.m. Walking Group
10:00 a.m to noon Brown bag, No Yoga
12:45 p.m. COA meeting
1:00 p.m. Canasta
1:00 p.m. Painting

Wednesday, April 7th
10:00 a.m. Senior Aerobics
1:00 p.m. Bingo

Thursday, April 8th
10:00 a.m. Coffee and Conversation
10:00 a.m. CDH Clinical Trials, No Tai Chi

1:00 p.m. Pitch
Friday, April 9th
10:00 a.m. Senior Aerobics
10:45 a.m. Easy Aerobics
1:00 p.m. Scrabble
1:00 p.m. Writing Group

ERVING Senior Center, 18 Pleasant St., Erving (Old Center School, 1st Floor), is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. for activities and congregate meals. For info and reservations, call Polly Kiely, Senior Center Director, at (413) 423-3308. Lunch is daily at 11:30 a.m., with reservations 24 hours in advance. Transportation can be provided for meals, shopping, or medical necessity.

Monday, April 5th
9:00 a.m. Exercise



PHOTO COURTESY DAVID BRULE

Bridge Work in Progress on Prospect Street

TURNERS FALLS – Eighty-foot long concrete beams completed their journey from Pennsylvania on Thursday, March 18th, and were hoisted gingerly into place by a giant crane, to span the gap between the East and West ends of Prospect Street in Turners Falls. Construction on the new bridge is going smoothly, and should be complete, rejoining the severed ends of the neighborhood and open for travel by fall.

Residents who for years have had to drive the wrong way against traffic on Unity Street to reach their homes on the East end can hardly wait.

TURNERS FALLS WATER DEPARTMENT

Meter Reading begins Monday April 5th, 2010

Writers Wanted

The Montague Reporter is seeking to hire committed reporters to cover local school committee and selectboard meetings. If you aren't committed yet, we can get you committed. For details call (413) 863-8666.



LYN CLARK PHOTO

Ayana Sophia, of Turners Falls (whose poem "100" appeared in last week's Neighbors column)

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April 26-30th at Athol Public Library

May 2nd at Athol Senior Prom

READ more at www.fchcc.org or call 773-5555

Bruce's Run

BY SUE LAPAN
MONTAGUE CITY

Connecticut River Internists are planning the first annual "Bruce's Run/Walk for Hospice." The late Dr. Bruce Van Boeckel was a key founding member and the first medical director of Hospice of Franklin County. He was also one of the original partners of Connecticut River Internists.

Connecticut River Internists are holding the event to raise much needed monies to honor Dr. Van Boeckel's commitment to hospice care in Franklin County. Hospice of Franklin County offers services to termi-

nally ill patients and their families. We made a promise to Dr. Van Boeckel that we would do our part to help keep Hospice going.

The fun run (or walk) will take place on Sunday, April 18th, at 10:00 a.m. beginning at 8 Burnham Street, in Turners Falls (near the intersection of Turnpike Road and Montague City Road). We will offer both a two mile walk and 5K run. The course for both will be on the Turners Falls bike path, a beautiful place this time of year.

Visit our website to download an application form at www.ctRiverInternists.com, and thank you for participating in this important fundraising event.



JESSICA HARMON ILLUSTRATION

Local Briefs

COMPILED BY

DON CLEGG – Winterberry Farm's **Easter tradition** will continue on Sunday, April 4th from 2 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. At least five of the farm's ewes will have lambed, and there should also be baby rabbits, ducklings and maybe some goslings. You can also visit the adult poultry, rabbits, sheep and goats! There is no charge for stopping by, however donations for "Right Sharing of

World Resources" are welcome. Rain or shine.

Winterberry Farm is located at 21 Teawaddle Hill Road in Leverett.

The 69th Annual **Sugar on Snow** supper at the Montague Center Congregational Church takes place on Saturday, April 10th, with seating starting at 5:30 p.m. Reservations are suggested; call (413) 774-7256. Ripley Farms of Montague will be providing the maple syrup, and homemade donuts are baked that morning with a special recipe for "Sugar on Snow."

The rest of the menu consists of corned beef hash, baked beans, Harvard beets, coleslaw, and pickles.

Walk-ins are seated as space allows. Adult supper is \$9; chil-

dren 12 years and younger are just \$4.

The 5th Annual Four Rivers Charter School **Variety Show** will be held on Friday, April 9th at the Shea Theater, located at 71 Avenue A in Turners Falls. The show starts at 7 p.m. and doors open at 6:15 p.m.

The Great Falls Discovery Center, 2 Avenue A in Turners Falls is hosting their first Open Mic for **Children and Poetry** on Saturday, April 24th, from 1 to 2 p.m. The event is for children of all ages to come together and celebrate the 40th Anniversary of Earth Day.

Children will get to express their joy and wonder of nature and wildlife with family, friends, guests and the Turners Falls community. No registration is required, but call ahead for more information, (413) 863-3221. This premier event is just three weeks away and it is never too early to come up with an original poem or short verse.

Send items for local briefs to reporter-local@montaguema.net

Grant Awards of \$3,874 for Art, Humanities and Science

MONTAGUE – The Montague Cultural Council made grant awards ranging from \$150 to \$600 to 12 individuals and organizations ready to provide cultural activities for the benefit of Montague residents.

"This year the Montague Cultural Council saw a 40 percent increase in the number of grant applications submitted for consideration," noted Lisa Enzer, current Council chair. "We attribute this, in part, to our year-long effort to make the Council and its potential support more visible, which we accomplished with a 'Your Art, Our Money' postcard, directing interested applicants to our new website at www.montagueculturalcouncil.org."

The 12 projects funded by the Council include:

- Montague.Art.Movement (\$200) – Montague May Day Fine Art Exhibit and Sale
- The Medicine Wheel Project (\$150) – an environmental sculpture of archaic, sacred, and architectural design around which world peace and equinox/solstice events are created and celebrated
- John Root (\$419) – *Songbirds of the Northeast* at Great Falls Discovery Center
- The Country Players (\$300) – *STOMP!*, a rhythmic percussion program at Our Lady of Peace Church
- Joseph Landry (\$350) – Outdoor Classroom Nest at Turners Falls High School
- Turners Falls RiverCulture (\$500) – *Confluence*, an inaugural biennial Franklin County-wide juried fine art exhibition at The Gallery at Hallmark
- Arena Civic Theatre (\$200) – *To Kill a Mockingbird* at Shea Theater
- Catherine R. King (\$450) – Theater director's workshop at the Shea Theater
- United Arc of Franklin and Hampshire Counties (\$150) – *Picture This!*
- Montague Public Libraries (\$300) – Crabapple Blossom Family Festival Concert with *3Potato4* at Peskeomskut Park
- Old Maps (\$600) – historic map compilation and presentation at Carnegie Library
- Sheffield Elementary School (\$255) – Berkshire Botanical Garden Spring programming with first grade students


The Montague Cultural Council is part of a network of 329 councils serving 351 Massachusetts cities and towns through the Local Cultural Council program of the Massachusetts Cultural Council. Grant funds are allocated to each local cultural council by the state based on a population-size formula. Grant applications are due every October 15th. For more information about applying for a grant or Montague Cultural Council membership, contact Lisa Enzer, Chair, at enzer@earthlink.net or at (413) 367-2658.

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APRIL STOOLS

BY JANEL NOCKLEBY

TURNERS FALLS – It is time to take a stand on a very important issue in Montague's most populated village. Scoop the poop, people!

The people who don't pick up their dog poop in Turners Falls are the same people who don't give up their seats for the elderly on buses and trains. The people who don't pick up their dog poop in Turners Falls are the same people who don't pay child support. The people who don't pick up their dog poop in Turners Falls wish they were in Paris, but they are not.

They kick babies. The anti-poop-picker-uppers are the same people who don't stop for pedestrians at crosswalks. Or speed bumps. They run over people using walkers.

They are the same people who won't babysit their nieces and nephews, because they hate changing diapers. They don't vote. They have been arrested by K-9 officer Kyra for distributing crack on Canada Hill in Greenfield. They do not write letters to their legislators about their concerns. They don't have concerns.

They want disabled Americans to roll their wheelchairs in offal. The people who do not pick up their dog's poop in Turners Falls are the same people who laugh at you on the corner of Fourth and L when you pick up your dog's poop. Ha Ha!

The people who don't pick up their dog poop in Turners Falls are the same people who bully children on Facebook and

then bully adults on *montaguema.net*.

Pick up your poop, people!

The people who don't pick up their dog poop think MCAS is the entire measure of a student's ability. They forget which week's recycling to put out. Pick up your poop, people!

People. People who need people, are the luckiest people in the world.

They choose plastic over paper, and then let the bags blow away. They don't wash their hands after visiting the restroom, and they don't read signs that tell them to. They fling their cigarette butts on the ground and then greed, hatred, and collusion get involved. They believe global warming is a myth when they themselves are contributing to global warming (just like cows). They leave their fish hooks lying around the fields in Unity Park for dogs to poop on and then step on. Now that's a penalty for pooping!

The people who don't pick up their dog poop in Turners Falls laugh at their own jokes. They talk with their mouths full. They are party poopers.

They don't turn off their cell phones at the movies. They don't spay or neuter their pets or their children or themselves. Pick up your poop, people!

The people who don't pick up their dog poop in Turners Falls read *People* magazine. They tell Virginia there is no Santa Claus. They think dog poop is a soil amendment for community garden plots. Well, it isn't!

They don't deserve to have shoes. The poop should squish between their toes like chocolate taffy on an exceptionally warm summer day. People are people, so why should it be, we should pick up after our dogs so awfully?

The people who don't pick up their dog poop in Turners Falls think that health care is for sissies.

All April Fools kidding aside, poop transmits disease. Young children are especially vulnerable. And, nobody wants to walk on a poop-laden sidewalk. Scoop the poop, people!



"The accommodations aren't bad - but you have to check out by 6 a.m."

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Interfaith Thanks

On behalf of the Interfaith Council of Franklin County and our Shelter Committee, I want to offer my sincere thanks to the *Montague Reporter* for the generous donation of \$287.50, matched by Turn It Up! CDs and Movies.

Since February 1st, we have operated a warming center at the Second Congregational Church in Greenfield. Several area neighbors were able to be inside during

these cold days, and were most grateful that the warming center was available. Your contributions will aid us in these efforts.

As you know, the shelter in Montague City has had a waiting list. Some people are able to double up with relatives and friends, but others have few resources. We feel that there will always be a need for shelter for those in dire circumstances. Hopefully, this will also help folks progress

toward a more permanent solution by being in touch with those who can assist them.

The Shelter Committee is continuing to look at the whole range of issues impacting the homeless, and we are investigating ways in which we can be of greatest service, and the money we receive be put to the best use.

– Reverend Stanley Aksamit
Our Lady of Peace
Turners Falls

Wendell Donates Generously for Haitian Relief

Thanks to all for your thoughtful, responsible donations for Haitian relief. We filled a pickup truck! Many thanks to Wayne Leonard for giving of his time and truck to move all the donated items one stop closer to those in need. Organizer Mariaelena Garcia said this was one of the best collections ever.

Here is a list of some of the major items Wendell residents donated: 16 pairs of crutches; four walkers; one wheelchair; nine tarps; seven tents; school supplies; several air casts, slings and splints; boxes of assorted medical surgical supplies; food that was actually on the list and \$420, enough to buy 1235 pounds of rice!

Wendell comes through once again.

– Patti Scutari, owner
Wendell Country Store



Relief Supplies for Haiti at Wendell Country Store

Calls on Dems to Nominate Boutwell, Bourbeau

The town of Montague Democratic Caucus will be held in the town hall from 7 to 8 p.m. on the second floor meeting room on Thursday, April 8th. Those elected at the caucus will have their names placed on the May 17th town election ballot. Only town of Montague registered Democrats and unenrolled voters

will be eligible to vote at the April 8th caucus.

I encourage people to turn out for the caucus and support two town residents who I am supporting. They are:

Debra Bourbeau, our present town clerk, who is seeking reelection. Ms. Bourbeau has run that office in a professional manner, is always helpful, courteous, and goes the extra mile when asked. She is a lifelong resident of this community, and a taxpaying homeowner. She has excellent work ethics, and I urge you to vote for her.

Christopher Boutwell is running for the selectboard vacancy left by Patricia Pruitt, who is leaving the board this May. For over 15 years, Chris has served

the town of Montague board of health, and the board of trustees of the Veterans Memorial. I know of no other person who has displayed the dedication to this community that Chris has given. He is a lifelong resident of this community. The hours he has dedicated to community service are hard to match.

I know that this man, if elected, will represent all of us in the same outstanding manner he has displayed while serving on the veterans trustee board and the board of health.

I urge you to show up at the caucus and vote Chris in as our next selectboard candidate.

– Art Gilmore
Millers Falls

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Montague Reporter

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One Race for G-M School Committee

CROCHIER from pg 1

BY DAVID DETMOLD GILL - MONTAGUE - Three seats are up for election for the Gill-Montague regional school committee in the upcoming May 17th town elections: two 3-year seats in Montague and one 3-year seat in Gill.

In Montague, incumbent Joyce Phillips, of Vladish Avenue in Turners Falls, is running again, and Marje Levenson, of Turner Street in Lake Pleasant, has turned in papers for the 3-year seat

being vacated by Doug Brown.

On the other side of the river, a race is in the offing between incumbent Sandy Brown, of 58 River Road, and Jane Oakes, of 154 French King Highway, for the 3-year seat from Gill.

Nominating papers for all four candidates still have to be certified by the town clerks.

Residents of Gill and Montague can vote for candidates from both towns for school committee.

way.” Crochier served on the town’s personnel board before joining the board of health.

He said if he is elected to the selectboard he would be “willing to listen with a new set of ears, not so much to what we need as to whether we can afford it.”

Crochier said, “I love everything about Gill. It’s the right sized town, with great people willing to serve, and we can always use more.”



BOUTWELL from pg 1



Chris Boutwell

seniors.

On the county level, Boutwell has been the town representative to the Franklin County Solid Waste Management District for many years, and now serves as the district’s co-chair. He has been instrumental in setting up countywide emergency dispensing sites for medical emergencies, like the EDS at Turner Falls High School, which serves Montague, Gill, Erving and Wendell.

As far as his goals in running for selectboard, Boutwell said, “I know we are definitely faced with a financial challenge. It’s going to be a very, very tough two or three years coming up. I have people asking me, ‘Are you out of your mind for running?’ But I tell them, ‘I think I can contribute.’”

Boutwell said, “The bottom line is, we need to get more business and more industry in this community to create jobs, and make business better for all the restaurants and stores, and we know this is not going to be easy.”

Though he does not favor “a full blown landfill” on the Turnpike Road site owned by the town, Boutwell pointed out that Montague has already invested “a

million dollars,” in permitting that acreage as a landfill with the DEP, and “we can’t afford to let it sit idle now.”

He said, “We need to take a serious look at a second industrial park.” Boutwell is “not one that really believes in town-owned property,” as far as the Strathmore and former Montague Center School buildings are concerned. He said, “We’re not only losing the real estate taxes on those properties, we’re pumping money into maintenance and utilities.”

But he added, “As far as the Strathmore, I’d almost like to see if we can’t divide sections off as an incubator for small business there, like they did in the 90s.”

As to the Montague Center School building, Boutwell said, “The bottom line, an in-district charter school there would keep money in the district, but if that doesn’t pan out, the only other use I see for it is housing, like the old Highland School in Millers Falls.”

Boutwell said the reconstruction of the Gill-Montague Bridge is going to pose a very difficult challenge for downtown businesses. He would like to see the timeline for completing that project accelerated if possible. “Get it done more quickly.”

Democrats who may be interested in running for nomination for any town wide seat in the Democratic town caucus on April 8th at 7 p.m. have until this Friday, April 2nd, at 5:00 p.m. to notify Democratic town committee chair Jay DiPucchio in writing or by email at here.now@verizon.net of their intent.



GRISWOLD from pg 1

balancing act confronting the selectboard can be summed up this way: “We need to be able to educate our students as best we can, and keep the services to the residents of our town at the level they’re used to getting.”

Griswold, a native of Chicopee, has wide experience in municipal and school administration. She served as the financial assistant to the superintendent of schools in Granby, worked for seven years as administrative secretary for the town of Sunderland, before moving on to the same position for four years in Buckland. She served a three year term on the selectboard in Ashfield in the late 80s, then as administrative secretary for the Wilbraham engineering department. “I’ve worked with a lot of highway superintendents, fire chiefs and police chiefs, and I’ve worked for the schools; I’ve seen the problems and had experience with budgeting on both sides of the street,” Griswold said.

“The town of Gill is a great place to live. We’re facing a lot of obstacles right now with town, state, and school financing. We need to focus on what is best for Gill, and how we can all work together to get there.”

“We don’t want to see taxes go up; we don’t want to see more overrides. That’s a very difficult balance to strike. It’s about listening to each other, and making all the pieces fit.”

The annual town election in Gill will take place on Monday, May 17th.



Pancakes from Secret Recipe

BY JOSEPH A. PARZYCH GILL - The Friends of Gill held another successful pancake breakfast at the Gill Congregational Church on Saturday, March 27th, using their time honored secret recipe.

Treasurer Terri Bourbeau said the Friends of Gill raise money to support many worthy causes. “In the past we’ve donated money for school playground equipment, fruit bas-

kets for the sick, cleaning the Gill veterans monument, we’ve donated to the Salvation Army and furnished scholarships for deserving Gill students.”

The Friends of Gill have also published a fundraiser cookbook which, sadly, does not include their secret recipe for pancakes.

This closely guarded recipe has been entrusted in the care of the dog that also guards the secret recipe for Bush Beans.



Friends of Gill (left to right) Ted Graveline, Betsy Burnham, Kathy Augustine, Bill Burnham, and Ed Golembeski prepare pancakes from their time honored recipe at the Gill Congregational Church on Saturday.

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Cooperation Pledged on Bridge Signage

BY DAVID DETMOLD

TURNERS FALLS – Thirty or more business owners, residents, and town officials gathered in the Montague selectboard meeting room Wednesday afternoon for a meeting with Mass Department of Transportation engineers and district highway director Al Stegeman to work on a plan for signage to improve traffic flow during the upcoming four year reconstruction of the Gill-Montague Bridge. The meeting was marked by a cordial, 'let's work together' spirit on all sides.

Beginning in early June, according to Mark Pelletier, senior project manager for contractor SPS New England, traffic on the Gill-Montague Bridge will be restricted to one way, heading toward downtown Turners from Gill, as the multi-year, \$40.7 million project gets underway.

DoT project development engineer Rich Massey passed out sample photographs of various temporary and permanent signs that could be used to direct traffic back to the main roads out of town, during the three year detour period, and members of the Montague Business Association shared their ideas about how temporary and permanent signs could be positioned most strategically and to the best effect. An agreement was reached to present a draft propos-

al for signage to the DOT in two weeks' time, as a basis for further discussion, and to hopefully reach agreement between the town, the MBA and the DOT so signs can be ordered, manufactured and installed in time for the start of bridge construction.

District highway director Al Stegeman said it would be possible for signs along Route 2 to incorporate the Turners Falls RiverCulture logo, to make them distinctive, and he encouraged traffic engineer Bao Lang to be flexible about what signs he would permit to be permanently installed on I-91 to direct tourists to Turners Falls.

Much of the discussion centered on the problem of the truck detour caused by the recent posting of weight limits on the short steel truss from 5th Street across the power canal to the peninsula where the Southworth Mill and the Housing Authority are located. The timing of the new weight limits on the 5th Street Canal Bridge, coming just months before much of the traffic leaving downtown Turners will begin detouring across the White Bridge to Greenfield, has complicated the picture for traffic flow during the Gill-Montague Bridge construction.

The 5th Street Canal bridge was posted for 15 tons for five axle trucks, 13 tons for three axle

trucks, and 12 tons for two axle trucks as a result of concerns about the strength of gusset plates on the bridge, following a recent inspection.

"We are very concerned about truck traffic near our mill," said John Yahres, vice president of finance at Southworth. "To the extent that bridge could be done first, we'd like you to work on that. Otherwise, we are requesting a stop light," on both sides of the mill, to allow for trucks to approach Southworth from the Greenfield side without worrying about passenger vehicles, while the truck drivers execute the complicated turning and backing pattern in the parking lot of the Housing Authority that will be needed for deliveries and shipments to come and go at Southworth.

Turners Falls Fire chief Ray Godin talked about the added response time for his department to reach the Housing Authority, Southworth, or Strathmore Mill, now that most of his fire trucks will have to take an alternative route across the 6th Street Bailey bridge, turn around in the

Railroad Salvage parking lot, and approach through the back access road to the Housing Authority.

Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority director Robin Sherman also urged a fix to bring the 5th Street bridge back up to code for trucks before the onset of next winter, at which point "we will no longer fit all our cars in our parking lot," if the Housing Authority has to keep the access road open for the fire department trucks.

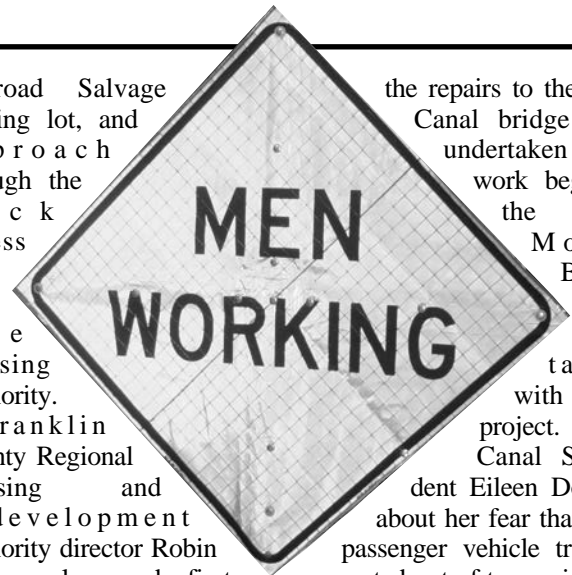
District highway director Al Stegeman said his department was currently awaiting a consultant study of the 5th Street Canal bridge to determine just what that fix will be, and whether the repair work to that span can be ordered as part of the larger project, or whether it has to be bid out separately.

Massey said it was possible

the repairs to the 5th Street Canal bridge could be undertaken prior to work beginning on the Gill-Montague Bridge, or undertaken simultaneously with the larger project.

Canal Street resident Eileen Dowd talked about her fear that additional passenger vehicle traffic being routed out of town via the White Bridge could lead to problems at an already dangerous intersection, where pedestrians and cyclists on the bike path vie with pedestrians from the Southworth parking lot and traffic from at least three directions, at a point where the girders of the 5th Street bridge obstructs clear sight lines for traffic heading into Turners.

Massey said the DoT planned to install a three-way stop light at that intersection during the course of construction on the Gill-Montague Bridge, which according to traffic models should be able to handle the expected volume without lengthy tie-ups.



NOTES FROM MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

Midweek Cycling Coming to Montague

BY BILL DRAKE – The Montague selectboard meeting on Monday was extremely short, but one item of interest came up, and was endorsed enthusiastically by the board. Midweek cycling is coming to Montague.

The Northampton Cycling Club, in conjunction with USA Cycling, will be holding a midweek criterium, a bike race held on a short course, at the Montague Industrial Park. Utilizing the six-tenths of a mile loop at the end of Industrial Park Road, the Cycling Club hopes to attract local cyclists to the 45-minute long races.

"It's an eco-friendly alternative to NASCAR," said Greg Garrison, Montague resident and NoHo Cycling Club member.

Both the central location in the Pioneer Valley and the layout of the Industrial Park's roads prompted Garrison to set up the events.

"It seemed like a great central location for a race," said Garrison. "The races are a midweek, hard effort for those who race more seriously on the weekends."

Cyclists will use the criterium to train for longer road races held typically on weekends.

"The hard start of the season is Marblehead," said Alec Donahue, of Easthampton, a board member of the NoHo Cycling Club. The 2.2 mile race around Marblehead Neck in Marblehead, MA took place this past Sunday, March 28th. "April is the beginning of the competitive season."

Garrison hopes to attract around 30 to 40 riders to take part in one of two races that will be held each week.

"There are different classes in each group, with ones, twos, and threes in the first race," said Garrison, "and fours and fives in

the second. Ones are the best racers, and fives are starters."

While anyone can race in the Industrial Park circuit, racers must be either a licensed member of USA Cycling or pay for a one-day membership. Garrison expects the race to cost \$10 for members and \$15 for those who want to pay to race the day of the event.

Races are expected to start on May 19th and run again on the 26th of May, and June 2nd, 9th, 16th, and 23rd. These criteriums are the only ones of the kind in the area. Others take place in Plymouth, MA, and Plainville, CT; another in Hartford, CT, takes place later in the season.

"There used to be a race here, when they first built the Industrial Park," recalled Garrison, "but that was a long time ago."

Those interested in joining in the cycling may contact Garrison at (413) 863-8616.

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NOTES FROM THE GILL SELECTBOARD

Hard Times

BY DAVID DETMOLD – At present rates of spending and revenue, the structural budget deficit for the Gill-Montague schools will grow to “just over \$1 million by 2015.”

That was the take away from last Thursday’s working group of Gill, Montague and regional school district officials who have been focusing on budget sustainability for the Gill-Montague schools, according to Gill selectboard member John Ward, who attended the working group meeting.

At that meeting, Ward told the selectboard on Monday, school committee member Jeff Singleton presented a scenario to eliminate the structural budget gap over five years that would require an additional \$150,000 cut in district spending and an infusion of \$200,000 from the Montague stabilization fund and Gill assessment. But that scenario assumed only a 2% cut in state Chapter 70 aid to the school district for the coming budget year, followed by gains in state aid in FY ‘12 through ‘15.

But Christine Lynch, director of school governance for the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, who attended the working group session at the Montague town hall, said those state aid projections were too rosy. According to Ward, Lynch said state aid to the district will fall by 4% this year,

and the drop in Chapter 70 aid will be even deeper next year.

That prediction lined up with reports from state senator Stan Rosenberg’s municipal conference in Northampton on March 27th, attended by governor Deval Patrick, education secretary Paul Reville, and town and school officials from Hampshire and Franklin counties.

According to Ray Purington, Gill administrative assistant, who went to that conference, the consensus opinion coming from the governor and state legislators is that state aid will fall by 4% for the coming fiscal year, and be followed by worse cuts in 2012.

Purington said, “There’s a \$2.7 billion budget gap in Massachusetts now. There are signs the economy is beginning to improve, but the state lost \$4 billion in revenue during the recession, over half of that from losses in capital gains taxes.”

Purington said the Commonwealth still faces a \$250 to \$300 million gap in the state budget for the current fiscal year. But there are no plans to pass that along to cities and towns in the form of further cuts in state aid before the start of the next fiscal year on July 1st, Purington said.

He added the state budget forecast is complicated by two statewide ballot questions which will go before the voters in November: whether to repeal the tax on alcoholic beverages

(which would deprive the state of \$100 million in revenue in the second half of FY ‘11 if passed) and whether to roll back the state sales tax from 6.25% to 3%, which would cause \$1 billion in budget cuts between January and June of 2011 if the voters approve.

“There are tough times ahead,” summed up Purington. “These ballot questions could make it tougher.”

Selectboard member Nancy Griswold said, “It’s very difficult for people to have the extra taxes when things are going up everywhere. On the other hand, we have to do something to stabilize state government, so municipal government can survive.”

She added, “If you want to drink alcohol, you pay taxes on it.”

Looking ahead to Gill’s budget making season, the selectboard picked Tuesday, April 27th as the date for a presentation of findings from a study conducted by consultant Sandy Stapczynski, from Human Resources Services, Inc. on the make up and operations of the town’s big three departments: police, highway and fire.

On Monday, fire chief Gene Beaubien was asked to wait on a number of departmental purchases totaling about \$15,000, for four new sets of turnout gear, replacement hose, and other needed items, until the results of the study can be heard. Beaubien argued that the money for these purchases had already been approved and appropriated in his

FY ‘10 budget.

The board granted Beaubien’s purchase order requests for pump tests on two fire engines and annual service for the ‘Jaws of Life’.

In general, the selectboard told Beaubien, all departments will have to anticipate doing “less with less,” while the state and local budget downturn continues.

Beaubien said he is seeking a waiver from the Mass Department of Transportation to use the 5th Street bridge over the power canal in Turners Falls if called for mutual aid at a fire at the Housing Authority, the Southworth Mill, or the Strathmore Mill. He will have to get the department’s fire trucks weighed at Lane Equipment in order for the DoT to rule on the waiver. Beaubien said the DoT turned down a similar request for all but one of the Turners Falls fire department’s trucks. The other Turners fire trucks will have to cross the 6th Street Bailey Bridge, turn around in the parking lot of the former Railroad Salvage building, and come across the parking lot of the Housing Authority to respond to any fires at those three locations, now that the 5th Street bridge over the canal has been posted for 15 tons.

In other news, the selectboard picked **Monday, June 21st** at 7 p.m. as the date for this year’s **annual town meeting**. If there is more business than can be discussed and decided in one night, the meeting will be continued to Wednesday, June 23rd at 7 p.m.

The board signed a contract on March 25th to receive a \$150,000 grant for energy improvements in town buildings, including replacing the boiler at the Gill Elementary School, from the state Department of Energy Resources. Purington said an audit of lighting fixtures at the elementary school would take place this week, in preparation for possible efficiency upgrades.

The board accepted the resignation of part time reserve police officer Peter Lapachinski, with regret. Lapachinski is taking a fulltime position on the Montague force.

The board viewed with a certain amount of skepticism a new, state-mandated \$290 “Men Working” sign, two of which the town is required to purchase for the highway department. The old “Men Working” signs are no longer good enough. The new signs have a flexible metal base, and two large orange flags protruding from the top of the otherwise familiar-looking diamond shaped sign.

Gill will spend \$3,700 to clean out catch basins, and \$2,160 to sweep the streets in the near future.

A West Gill Road resident is discussing with cemetery commissioners the possibility of donating 100 feet of wrought iron fencing for the West Gill Cemetery. The selectboard welcomed the idea.

The Gill highway department is eagerly anticipating delivery of their new front end loader by the end of this week.

BROWN from page 1

North Adams to observe the dedication. He spoke before Brown.

“I was drafted in 1968,” said Chalifoux. “I’m not a supporter of war. But if we’re going to have wars, the people who send people over there should take care of them.

“Why are we doing this?” he asked, referring to the grant his organization gave to open the new center in Greenfield. “Because the state and federal government aren’t.”

Chalifoux continued, “It’s horrible we have to come out and raise our own money to take care of our veterans.” Centers like the new office in Greenfield, “are going to keep us alive,”

Chalifoux declared. “Vietnam veterans are dying at a rate you would not believe.”

Chalifoux denounced “political hacks,” for cutting spending to veterans outreach centers and hospitals.

“It has to be said,” he added. “We have to take our country back. We have to get some of this money that’s being wasted and thrown away and get it down here where it does some good for the people.”

Bernie McClosky, a Vietnam Veterans of Massachusetts board member from Springfield was more soft spoken, but just as pointed, as he related an anecdote about a Vietnam veteran “freezing to death on the steps of

City Hall in Springfield” not so long ago.

Mayor Martin said, “We’re looking for targeted programs for permanent housing for veterans in Massachusetts,” and said the center would help Franklin County vets access services not only in housing, but also in education, employment and health.

“The whole economy is dying for more jobs. We need to have a path to employment outlined for veterans so they can move seamlessly from serving their countries to working for their families and communities.” And he called for “vocational rehabilitation for disabled vets,” and access to continuing education at UMass and G.C.C. for all area

veterans.

Scott Brown spoke last. He said, “Resources are scarce. People are hurting. Governments aren’t spending money as they should be. All veterans are asking for, is give us the rights and liberties we’ve earned.”

Brown complimented Greenfield for putting the new veterans center “on the forefront of the main drag.”

Senator John Kerry initially confirmed he would be present at the dedication, but canceled at the last minute.

After the ceremony, veterans agent Leo Parent, who looks after services for all country veterans outside of Loven’s district in Greenfield and Leyden, said,

“One of the best things about this referral center is it is going to affect all veterans in Franklin County, and even in the Brattleboro and Keene area. We’re hoping to have different human service providers come in once a month, set up tables, set up their wares, so veterans will have one-stop shopping to see the services that are available for them. Food stamps, fuel assistance, health care benefits, you name it, we want to make sure our veterans are aware of what’s coming to them.

Parent estimated there are 5,000 veterans in Franklin County.



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Local Nature Notes *April: Things to See, Hear, and Do*

BY JEN AUDLEY

TURNERS FALLS – This month the new moon falls on the 14th and the full moon on the 28th. Look for Mercury and Venus rising in the west after sunset and staying close together in the night sky from April 1st to the 10th. See shooting stars from the annual Lyrid meteor shower before dawn on the 22nd.

This week's rain and warmer temperatures should rouse frogs, toads, and salamanders from their winter torpor. Spring peepers were heard already in Amherst and Greenfield in March – listen for them this weekend!

American toads and gray tree frogs should join the nocturnal chorus later this month. Watch out for salamanders crossing wet roads in April – these silent creatures venture out just once a year, so it's a special treat to see them.

Learn more about Massachusetts' amphibians and reptiles at www.massherpatlas.org.

The shoots of daylilies and Japanese knotweed and the new

leaves of dandelions and stinging nettles are some of spring's first wild edibles. If you want to try these or other wild foods for the first time this year, do a bit of



Yellow Spotted Salamander

reading or internet research first so you know how to harvest and prepare them safely. And remember – don't eat anything that's been nourished by dog poop, road salt, or lawn chemicals!

A trio of birds more often seen than heard reappear in our region over the course of this month: first American woodcocks, fol-

lowed by ruffed grouse, and towards the end of the month, whip-poor-wills. Whip-poor-will numbers have declined dramatically statewide in the last few

decades, but several nature-watchers on www.montaguema.net have heard them calling in our area in recent years.

Eastern phoebes should reappear soon, and will begin nesting by May. These flycatchers say their name – “fee bee” – and pump, or “wag” their tails. Tree

swallows should return by mid April. Look for them catching insects above the water of the Turners Falls canal. Barn swallows will be back by the end of the month. These are the birds that build mud nests inside barns and other structures. Look for them flying low over grassy fields.

Thanks to the recent time change, sunset comes now at about 7:10 p.m., and not until 7:40 p.m. at the end of the month. The sunrise comes earlier each day – now around 6:25 a.m., by the end of the month at 5:40 a.m.

Learn more:

Sky Dance: Woodcocks at Twilight

April 14th, 7 to 9 p.m. (Rain date April 15th)

A spring ritual not to be missed! This Northfield Mountain Education Center program will begin with an indoor introduction, followed by a walk to watch the flight of the woodcock. Bring a blanket to sit on and

binoculars if possible. For ages 10 and older. Free. Pre-register by calling (800) 859-2960.

All about Vernal Pools

April 15th, 7:00 to 8:30 p.m.

Join Scott Jackson of the UMass at the Great Falls Discovery Center in Turners Falls for a talk about the wonders of vernal pools. During the talk we'll see Scott's award-winning photos of animals that depend on vernal pools for their existence, such as wood frogs and spotted salamanders. Free.

Park Serve Day 2010

April 24th, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

The Great Falls Discovery Center invites you for the Department of Conservation and Recreation's Park Serve Day 2010. During this statewide day of volunteer service, volunteers will work together to get the Discovery Center's grounds ready for summer. This event is for all ages. Call (413) 863-3221 for more info.

THE ROAD LESS TRAVELED

There's More Blooming at Smith than Bulbs

BY RICHARD ANDERSEN & DIANE LYN

NORTHAMPTON – Kids don't photograph themselves. Think of all the photographs taken of you as a child. They were all taken by adults. And the ones that were placed in albums were chosen because they represent you in the ways the adults who took the pictures wanted you to appear. In other words, all our childhood photos are images conveying other people's views of who we were.

That these images may also confirm the religious, social, and political views of those who held the cameras becomes resoundingly evident in *Kin and Kindred*, an exhibit of prints, paintings, and photographs currently on display at the Smith College Museum of Art.

A lot of childhood images – from chubby cherubs to impoverished innocents to the kinds of white, middle-class, Leave-it-to-Beaver clones that populated television sitcoms in the years following World War II – are repre-

sented. Some come with narratives that are as thought-provoking as the works they explain.

An equally impressive range of artists has also been assembled, with Mary Cassatt and Henri Matisse among the most notable. There's even an unintentionally disturbing portrait by Erastus Field, *Montague Reporter* writer Fran Hemond's talented ancestor and an inspiration for recent works by local artist Louise Minks. In Field's nineteenth century portrait of a family, the dead appear alongside the living. All the faces look the same, however, and none of them look happy. Very Post-Modern.

The purpose of the exhibit is to present the different ways children have been historically represented, but the various works also encourage us to ask what these kids and their families were really like. And what about today's youngsters? How are their images being crafted, and for what purposes are they being manipulated? What agendas do the digital photos of our own

children serve? Are there any among them who insist on striking poses that prevent their identities from being co-opted? What can be gleaned from our own photos? What do they say about us? To what extent are we, in our own ways, as manipulative and possibly even as didactic as so many of our forebears?

Not many children appear in the permanent collection exhibited two floors above *Kin and Kindred*, but the range is greater both in quality and quantity. It's easily among the best teaching galleries in the country. In fact, so many greats are included, it's easy to overlook some of the near-greats. Consider, if you can find it, Edouard Vuillard's *Interior at L'Etang-la-Ville* from 1893. Also called *The Suitor*, it takes Seurat's technique of “pointillism” to a new level – an accomplishment Vuillard would never again achieve as he became increasingly more conservative over the next 47 years of his life.

After you've visually feasted



Edouard Vuillard's Interior at L'Etang-la-Ville or The Suitor, 1893

on all of the above – or perhaps before – take a walk across Smith's lovely campus. It was designed by Frederic Olmstead – the same fellow who gave us Central Park. Last month, at the annual spring bulb show, you could see what happened to Crocus after he died from unrequited love, and discover what happened to Hyacinth after Zephyr cut off his head with a

discus. Then, of course, there were the less dramatic but decidedly more splendid tulips. “Tulip” means “turban” in Dutch. The name was inspired by the turbans worn in the country where tulips originated: Turkey. You only have to see one to discover why in 1625 – the heyday of Tulipmania – a speculator paid the equivalent of \$30,000 for only three bulbs!

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A Tradition of Quality at Sirums

BY JOE PARZYCH

MONTAGUE – The Sirum Equipment Open House on Saturday was a huge success, as usual. People from all over New England, young and old, came to look at tractors and equipment, watch films depicting innovative farm equipment and methods, and buy new and used tractors, equipment, parts and supplies at special prices of 5% to 15% off. Discounted hand held equipment such as chain saws, sweepers and leaf blowers also sold well.

Tables set up in the huge shop, cleared for the occasion, were laden with all manner of delicious food. Ed Sirum buys the food for the smorgasbord, which he, his employees and his wife Diane prepare and serve. A long line circled the shop space. Farmers have big appetites. By the end of the day, the mountains of food had all but vanished, leaving little more than crumbs behind.

Often, people from as far away as New York State attend the Open House at Sirum's. This year a Pennsylvania customer, who had purchased a tractor from Sirum Equipment over the telephone, came to meet Ed in person.

The Sirums have been in business since their father opened a Calso gasoline station at the Federal Street location in 1947. Tony Sirum took over and became a John Deere dealer. This coming year Sirum Equipment will celebrate their 50th anniversary as a John Deere dealer.

The family-run business has Tony Sirum as patriarch. He spends winters in Florida and checks in occasionally in the summer. His wife is also semi-retired and helps out in the parts

department when they're in Massachusetts.

Ed is the general manager. His wife Diane works in the office. Tony's son, Adam, is an assistant manager in charge of parts. Ed's son Dwayne is service manager.

The Sirum reputation has resulted in their success. Throughout New England, equipment dealers have fallen by the wayside, while Sirum Equipment just keeps getting bigger and better. Over the years, John Deere has rewarded the Sirums with trips to Europe, the Bahamas and China. In competition with John Deere dealers from all over the U.S., Canada and Australia, the Sirums have placed first in proficiency in sales to win these trips abroad.

On the trip to China, the Sirums went to see Chinese farmers at work, expecting to see all manner of farm equipment.

"All we saw were water buffalo," Diane Sirum said. "On the construction of a major highway from Hong Kong to mainland Macau, there wasn't a single piece of equipment in sight. It was all picks and shovels."

"There were men at work as far as the eye could see," Ed Sirum added. "They carried dirt in scoops holding about five gallons, hung from ropes around their necks. There must have been thousands of them, all dressed in black. A bulldozer could probably have done as much in an hour as the whole bunch of them did in a day."

Sirum's customer base has changed over the years. Dairy farmers in New England are in decline. "We still do quite a lot of business with the big dairy farms," Ed Sirum said. "But the smaller ones have mostly gone

out of business."

The Sirums even supply new horse drawn equipment, or take it in trade. From time to time, Amish farmers travel to Montague to buy used horse drawn equipment from them. Sirum Equipment has added Kubota tractors, backhoes and landscaping attachments to their John Deere line. Produce farmers, like the Teddy Smiarowski farm, are good customers. The Smiarowski farming operation is engaged in more mechanized farming, making use of labor saving equipment to cut costs and increase production.

The Smiarowski family grows several varieties of potatoes, tobacco and various varieties of produce. They depend on reliable John Deere tractors and equipment backed by good parts and service to keep their operation going. Weather dictates the time to plant, cultivate and harvest, making it important to have equipment ready to work when the time is right.

Here's a true story that exemplifies the Sirums' integrity. A new employee once drained the motor oil from a customer's bulldozer and poured new engine oil into the hydraulic reservoir instead of the engine, by mistake. When he loaded the bulldozer for delivery, he noticed the engine sounded strange and checked the engine oil level. It was empty.

Had the Sirums simply filled the engine with oil, the customer would never have known about the mistake, though it would likely have shown up later in engine failure. The Sirums informed the customer of the error and installed a new engine, no charge.

In my own case, many years ago, I once owned a Trojan



Tom Olsen (l) of Dover, PA accepts a symbolic key to the tractor he bought over the telephone after seeing Sirum Equipment's ads in the Montague Reporter. "See? It pays to advertise in the Reporter," Ed Sirum said with a smile. "It gets us customers from as far away as Pennsylvania."

loader rented out to Warner Brothers. The operator informed me the engine was going belly up on a Friday afternoon. Tony Sirum had no one working over the weekend, but found room for us in the repair shop. I took a rebuilt engine out of a bulldozer in Warwick on Saturday morning and brought it to Sirum's shop. The engine was four inches longer than the original, and the bolt holes didn't line up.

My brother and I worked all weekend, shoehorning the over-size engine into the loader. Tony came over from his house about two a.m. on Monday morning with sandwiches his wife made for us with hamburger from their freezer. When we got the engine bolted in, it wouldn't run. The carburetor was useless and we needed a fan belt. Tony found the right fan belt in the shop attic and an old carburetor out in his barn, where it had been rusting on a windowsill for years. It worked.

The engine started but made a

clunking noise. We took the engine back out and removed the oil pan to discover a connecting rod was hitting an oil line. We fixed that, and replaced the engine. By now it was daylight, and the loader was finally ready to go back on Warner Brothers' pipeline job.

Tony charged a nominal rental fee for the marathon session, with no charge for serving hamburgers at two a.m.

I went off to another construction job. Louis was employed on the night shift at the Montague Machine Company. He checked on the loader on his way home to catch some sleep. A hydraulic hose had burst. He got a replacement, installed it, and the loader was back on the job. He didn't get much sleep, either.

We were not the only ones the Sirums have helped out in similar situations. The Sirums have a history of casting bread upon the waters. It seems to have come back to them as cake.

Barriers on the General Pierce Bridge



Barriers cordoned off the work area on the General Pierce Bridge last week

BY JOE PARZYCH

MONTAGUE CITY – SPS New England began substantial work on the General Pierce Bridge last week. Unloading concrete traffic barriers from

tractor-trailer trucks to cordon off half of the bridge resulted in traffic delays. Two policemen on either end of the work area kept traffic flowing, striving for the least amount of tie-up.

the central expansion joint replacement and ancillary steelwork. The barriers' angle funnels traffic by the work area to avoid the possibility of vehicles colliding with barriers.

"We understand people's annoyance at traffic delays," superintendent Henry Mulvey said. "But we try to keep holdups to a minimum."

The excavator's operator, Peter Perkins, skillfully maneuvered the large machine in tight quarters presented by the overhead bridge trusses as he unloaded the F-type traffic barriers. The free-standing concrete segments are strung out at an angle on both sides of the work area. They protect workmen in the cordoned off rectangle so they can work safely on

The F-type barriers SPS purchased from CSI of Hudson, NH, are similar to "Jersey" type barriers developed by the state of New Jersey. The F-type barriers are designed to limit vehicle damage to today's smaller and lighter cars. In crash tests, the F-shape barriers also proved to be more successful in preventing rollover of present day vehicles, and are more effective overall. The ten foot long F-barriers are 22 inches tall, weigh 2.3 tons, and cost \$350 each.

When the repair work to the

General Pierce Bridge is complete, in two to three months, both lanes will open and the Gill-Montague Bridge will then become restricted to one lane, one way into Turners Falls, for the next three to four years, as work gets underway on that \$40.7 million reconstruction project.

There are already 175 barriers on the Gill-Montague Bridge, shielding rusty fences from traffic, and adding more than eight hundred tons of weight to the less than robust bridge.

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300th Series



300th Combat Engineer Battalion repairing the under piling of a bridge destroyed by enemy fire along the Carentan - Cherbourg Road in France - June 30, 1944.

Dispatches from Germany, March, 1945

and proceeded a short distance down the Rhine Valley to a lovely little village, where we billeted in what had been the large home of a doctor, his wife and teenage daughter. They had moved into a very small dwelling out in the back garden. Most of their belongings had been thrown out of the main dwelling, which had also served as the doctor's office by the German Army when they used it as headquarters. The US Army advancing combat forces that had gone on before we arrived had also used the house.

"I felt so sorry for this family who had lost so much in the fighting, and who had a son somewhere in the German army. The cute little

fraulein seemed so happy to have all of us there, even though we were the enemy. Our file clerk August Namken was very fluent in German, and she would hang around speaking with him, and others of us would try to carry on a limited conversation. The doctor and his wife stayed back in the far end of the garden in their little house, away from the enemy who occupied their lovely home.

"One day, Haynie Tyrus, C Company Clerk, and I, after we

had caught up with all of our paperwork, somehow secured a bottle of very good Rhine wine and took it up a winding stairway to an observation deck up above the village, and as far to the east as the river itself. Haynie and I became a bit tipsy as the level of the bottle lowered rapidly, and when the resident *fraulein* came back down the street with a few of her pretty friends, they saw us up there calling out to them and whistling at them. We all had a really good time, at a distance, while avoiding the non-fraternization rule and the wrath of Capt. Hugh D'Anna. It was mindful of the song back home, 'Standing on the corner, watching all the girls go by.'

"Too soon we all had to load up our equipment and belongings on the truck, and move out to keep up with the line companies that were providing engineering support to the armored troops, rapidly advancing deep into Germany. We loaded up in the evening and moved out during the night to catch up, passing by the destroyed vehicles and then stopping and finding a place to get some sleep before doing the



Donald Richter of the 300th Combat Engineer Battalion in dress uniform

same thing again the next day. "The battalion participated in cutting off a large portion of the remnants of the once-powerful German Army in what was called the Ruhr Pocket, in the great industrial part of Germany. It was here that we learned of the death of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, and we were all very sad over that. It was on my 21st birthday that we received word we were being transferred from the First Army to Gen. Patton's Third Army."



In Germany men from the 300th enjoy a snow fight. Louis Pellitteri center, flat on the ground.

BY BRAD PETERS AND JAN ROSS

ERVING - As we continue to follow the 300th Combat Engineers on their march to VE Day, they follow the retreating Germans into the so-called Ruhr Pocket in northern Germany. 300th Corporal Don Richter recalls some good times in Germany.

"On March 24th, 300th headquarters, including the personnel section, moved across the Rhine River over the Treadway bridge

NOTES FROM THE GILL-MONTAGUE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

G-M School Committee Approves Level Funded Budget

BY ELLEN BLANCHETTE

GILL-MONTAGUE - Voting unanimously for an austere school budget with \$800,000 in cuts, including the loss of four teacher positions, eleven paraprofessionals, an administrative assistant, the school resource officer, and one custodian (more on the custodian later), the school committee Tuesday night approved a \$16,537,788 level funded budget for the Gill-Montague Regional School District.

In a PowerPoint presentation titled "Tough Times, Tough Choices," superintendent Carl Ladd told those in attendance, "This is the leanest budget in recent memory."

Ladd warned there is no room in the budget for any unexpected expenditures, saying all it would take is one new special education student requiring an out of district placement moving into the district to upset the budget.

While Ladd offered assur-

ances the cuts would not impact the delivery of education, he warned, "Any further cuts would definitely impact classrooms."

In the public budget hearing that preceded the regular school committee meeting, concerns were raised about the large number of paraprofessional positions being cut and how that would impact the special education programs that depend on paraprofessionals.

Special education director Nadine Ekstrom said the district is looking to adopt a co-teaching model for next year. Ladd said the district will retain more than 40 paraprofessional positions, and will allocate their services according to need.

Ladd said he was doing two seemingly contradictory things, asking all administration and non-union personnel to accept no salary increases while increasing accountability. There is also no money in the budget for cost of living increases, for any staff or

teachers.

In the area of technology, the district will not be replacing any computers this year, even the older models scheduled for upgrades to stay current with new technology. Ladd said this will present problems for some new computer programs that require more capacity than the district's older computers, some nine years old, are able to provide.

On the positive side, Ladd said he was keeping his commitment to maintain arts programs in the district, emphasizing his belief in the importance of arts in education.

Timmie Smith, finance committee member in Gill, asked about reductions in the number of special education out of district placements for the district.

Ekstrom said prior to her arrival at Gill-Montague, the school district had between 19 to 21 students placed in programs outside the district. This year

there are 15 special education students in out of district placement, and the district is planning for 11 students next year.

Ekstrom said when she came to the district she decided the GMRSD should run its own in-house program instead of hiring school based services to provide for special education students.

Now, in-district special education programs allow students to maintain a connection with the community by attending a school close to home, and allow parents be more involved in their children's education.

Smith had high praise for Ekstrom's work, and for the savings to the district from reducing the numbers of out-of-district placements by half. But later in

see SCHOOL pg 14

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Domestic Disturbances

| Wednesday, 3/24 | Saturday, 3/27 | Monday, 3/29 |
|---|---|--|
| 9:08 p.m. Environmental incident at Railroad Salvage building on Canal Road. Services rendered. | 1:34 a.m. Domestic disturbance on L Street. Peace restored. | 10:10 a.m. Animal complaint, possible rabid Easter bunny, on Turners Falls Road. Referred to an officer. |
| Thursday, 3/25 | 7:18 p.m. Assault on Avenue A. Advised of options. | 10:55 a.m. Hit and run accident on Burnham Street. No such person can be found. |
| 1:43 p.m. Arrest of [redacted] for a fight, on a straight warrant. | Sunday 3/28 | 4:20 p.m. Walk-in restraining order. Services rendered. |
| 6:59 p.m. Arrest of [redacted] for domestic assault and battery. | 2:34 p.m. Domestic disturbance on Twelfth Street. Services rendered. | 5:57 p.m. Structure fire on H Street. Referred to other agency. |
| | 6:57 p.m. Domestic disturbance on Montague City Road. Peace restored. | |

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KAREN WILKENSON ILLUSTRATION

BY MARVIN SHEDD

BERNARDSTON – When the Red Sox take the field on Sunday to open the season against the dreaded Yankees, fans from around New England and beyond will be watching to see what this year’s team looks like.

Not everyone, though, will be cheering for the Red Sox.

I spent an afternoon recently with Ralph Gebhardt, of Bernardston, whose connection to the game goes far beyond his loyalty to his beloved New York Yankees. As we sipped a Pepsi at his home high atop Huckle Hill, he reminisced fondly about his life in baseball, back to the days when he dreamed of making it to the Big Show.

Born and raised in Brooklyn, Ralph took to baseball early. With the country in the midst of the Great Depression, Ralph and his friends had to make do with what they had. If the ball they were using rolled into the sewer, they’d just lower someone down until he could grab it. They’d play with the same ball until they tore the cover off; then wrap it with electrical tape which, Ralph conceded, often left it looking like a potato. No one cared. As long as they could hit, pitch and catch, life was good.

In the 1940s, New York City had three major league ball teams: the Giants, the Dodgers, and the Yankees. This was prior to expansion, when each league fielded only eight teams, long before teams decided the West Coast offered greener pastures. While most of his friends followed the exploits of the Dodgers, affectionately known as “dem bums,” Ralph rooted for the team from the Bronx, the perennial world champion Yankees. Each day he’d pick up the New York Daily News to check the latest stats for his

A Yankee Fan on Huckle Hill

heroes, all the time dreaming of one day making it to the big leagues himself.

Blessed with natural athletic ability and a strong arm, favorably compared to Enos “Country Boy” Slaughter, baseball became Ralph’s sport and passion. By age 15, he was playing regularly in organized leagues around the city. He played well enough to garner some attention from the New York Giants. When he was 16, he got a letter from the team inviting him to the Polo Grounds for a tryout. He didn’t get signed, but the try-out gave him hope.

His willingness to play ball, any chance he got, resulted in an encounter with a well-known celebrity of the times. When Harry James, the famous band leader came to town, Ralph’s sister, who worked for the USO, was assigned to drive him to his performance. James, an avid baseball fan, asked if there was a field nearby where he and the band could play a little ball, preferably away from adoring fans. Since not everyone in the band was a baseball player, James asked if she could line up some extras. She, of course, asked her brother, who can still remember Betty Grable, the famed pin-up girl, who was married to James, watching from the stands.

When Ralph was a teenager, his dad died suddenly, leaving Ralph’s mom to run the family restaurant. Ralph started to drift; his grades went down, and he started skipping school. Nothing serious, by most standards, but serious enough that his mother felt it best for him to get out of the city. She arranged for him to live with an aunt and uncle in Greenfield, Massachusetts, where he eventually enrolled at Deerfield Academy, catching the eye of headmaster Frank Boyden, who was impressed by his baseball skills.

After a successful career at Deerfield, he applied to Duke University, Holy Cross, and St. Johns, eventually settling on Holy Cross. The summer before he started college, however, he returned to Brooklyn to play in a series of games billed as “Brooklyn versus the World.” The games were played at Ebbetts Field, home of the

Dodgers. The Brooklyn team was coached by famed pitcher “Dazzy” Vance, who pitched for the St. Louis Cards in the twenties; the World team was coached by “Pepper Martin” who played for the Cardinals when they were nicknamed the “Gas House Gang.” The series remains one of Ralph’s most treasured memories.

Ralph played well at Holy Cross, well enough to attract the attention of a handful of major league scouts. As so often happens in baseball, however, fate intervened. During his second year at Holy Cross, in a game against Harvard, he broke his arm trying to make a “shoestring” catch. He returned to finish his college career, but lacked his prior strength in the injured arm. Still, he was good enough to attract offers from five major league teams.

Concerned about his arm, he sought the counsel of his old headmaster, Frank Boyden, who referred him to a specialist. The specialist advised that he thought he could wire it in such a way he’d still be able to play, but Ralph decided against it.

He believes he could have made it to the Minors, in fact, could have been a good minor league player, but with the injury he felt the Majors were out of reach. Tempted, but not willing to take the chance, he retired from the game, married his childhood



Ralph Gebhardt, suited up for Deerfield Academy, in the late 1940s

sweetheart, moved back to New York and took over the restaurant.

Ralph has few regrets about his years in baseball. He played

with some great guys and has a lot of memories. When the Yankees take the field on Sunday, though, he’ll think ever so briefly about what might have been.

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ASHLEY SEARS PHOTO

L-R: Phil Cox, Ashley Sears, Billie Lada, Kali Stafford, Evan Pleasant, Tia Demers, Julie Seard, Chris Klosson, Dustin Rivard, Alex Peterson, Lucas Foley, Juliana Aprileo, and Heather Batchelor.

BY JULIANA APRILEO AND ASHLEY SEARS

TURNERS FALLS – At four fifteen Monday morning, March 15th, a group of ten students (including your authors) and two teachers from Turners Falls High School headed off to Sandy Hook, Kentucky for a community service trip. Along this fifteen-hour drive, we only made five brief stops as we were eager to arrive.

When we finally got to Elliot County High School in Sandy Hook, where we would be sleeping, we were greeted by a sign that read, "Welcome Turners Falls High School Students and Teachers!" From that moment the southern hospitality began.

Frank Olsen, the father of TFHS English as a Second Language teacher Rebecca Wright, met and greeted us at the high school. The night consisted

of unpacking and getting comfortable. Then we ate at a local pizza place called Giovanni's, and got a great feel for the town.

Tuesday morning began with one of our chaperones, Mrs. Batchelor, singing a good morning song to get us ready for the day! After getting dressed, we made our way over to the cafeteria for breakfast and had our first chance to meet with the students of Elliot County.

Instantly, we were greeted and welcomed by students who went out of their way to come and talk to us. That morning we began to make friends we would grow close with over the course of the trip.

After meeting the students and giving a presentation about why we came to Kentucky, we made our way over to Laurel Gorge. There we were welcomed by what we believe were

cheesy garlic bread, salad, chocolate pie, and pecan pie. We thanked them for making us a great meal, and Missy Penix replied, "We wanted to make sure you were well fed, coming here all the way from Massachusetts."

Afterwards, Johnny led us on a tour of the gorge, where we continued to pick up trash. We could not believe our eyes; the gorge was so beautiful. The shapes of the rocks and caves were unlike anything we had ever seen. It is definitely safe to say that TFHS left its mark in Laurel Gorge.

Wednesday began with a breakfast with the students. Afterwards we made our way over to the Frontier Housing site in Morganville County. We arrived at an amazing new house, which we all learned had once been a broken-down struc-

ture. We knew there was lawn work to be done, and we got right to it. Our day was extended by an unfortunate accident of a truck getting stuck in the mud, blocking the only road for us to depart on. This kept us there for twice as long as we had expected. However, we did not let that discourage us. We kept on working.

After nine hours of hard work, we were finished with the lawn, and the truck had been successfully pulled out of the mud. The truck getting stuck was fate, because otherwise we would not have been able to finish the yard that day, and the family waiting to move in would have had to wait even longer.

That night we headed over to Frank's house where we met with his wife Ann, along with a worker from Frontier Housing named Phil and his wife Mary. Again, southern hospitality was at its finest. They made us tacos and dessert, and let us hang out in their living room as we reminisced about funny moments during the trip.

The next day was our last in Kentucky. We followed a bus full of Elliot County High students to a different Frontier Housing site. These students were all a part of the Landscaping Class. It was an amazing experience to be able to interact this way with the students, something that did not happen last year.

After a hard day of work there, we headed back to the school for dinner. Before dinner we went on a cleanup of the school, with the Beta Club, which is similar to TFHS' National Honor Society. They held a BBQ in our honor to thank us for the work we had done. Here we bonded again with these amazing students, with whom we have continued

to keep in touch.

That night we got the chance to bond even more over bowling. We headed over to Blue Ribbon Bowling, in Ashland, Kentucky. We got the chance to make up silly nicknames, and have fun in Kentucky for the last time. We felt so close to Kentucky that we all became fans of University of Kentucky's star player John Wall, who the locals could not stop talking about. We truly feel like we are now a part of Elliot County. We hope that next year some students from Elliot County can come up here and have a similar experience in Montague.

As we were packing up our things to head back on the road towards home, sadness lingered in the air. We were not ready to leave.

Kali Stafford proclaimed, "This trip has changed my life." A few of us got a little emotional because it had been such an uplifting experience, and it had such an impact on all of us in such a positive way. We not only were able to help people out, but we were able to unite two towns very far apart from each other. Also, by playing late night ultimate frisbee in the gym, sharing jokes, and a 15 hour bus ride, we got the chance to hang out with each other in a way we never had before.

We want to take the time to thank everyone who helped us get to Kentucky. Also we will be having a slide show presentation about the trip in the library at Turners Falls High School on Friday April 2nd, at 7:00 p.m. Light refreshments will be provided, and everyone is welcome.

Juliana Aprileo is a TFHS senior who also attends Greenfield Community College, and Ashley Sears is also a TFHS senior.

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JESSICA HARMON ILLUSTRATION

THE HEALTHY GEEZER: Stuttering and How to Deal with It

both of you.

People who stutter are aware of their problem and usually don't want special treatment. Give them time to speak and don't try to help them by filling in words or telling them to relax. If you interject, you can pressure them. And try not to avert your eyes or seem impatient when a person stutters.

Here are a few more tips for parents and grandparents:

- Keep your home a relaxed environment that allows many opportunities for the child to talk.
- Praise the child when he or she speaks fluently.
- Speak to the child in a slightly slowed and relaxed manner.
- If a child raises the subject of stuttering, talk openly and honestly about it.

Stuttering (also called stammering) is defined as a speech disorder in which sounds, syllables, or words are repeated or prolonged. These speech disruptions may be accompanied by blinking or quivering lips.

Some interesting facts about stuttering:

- More than three million Americans stutter.
- Stuttering affects three to four times as many males as females.
- There are no instant cures for stuttering. However, research into the possible causes of stuttering has led to progress in preventing the disorder.
- Studies show that people who stutter are as intelligent and well-adjusted as those who don't.
- Successful people who have

had to overcome stuttering include: Vice President Joseph Biden, James Earl Jones, Winston Churchill, Marilyn Monroe, Carly Simon, John Updike, Tiger Woods, Bruce Willis, Jimmy Stewart, Julia Roberts, B.B. King, Andrew Lloyd Webber, Charles Darwin and England's King George VI.

There are several types of stuttering.

The most common form of the disorder is developmental stuttering, which happens to children while they are learning to speak. Developmental stuttering runs in families. Some scientists believe this form of stuttering occurs when the ability to talk doesn't keep up with verbal demands.

Another form is neurogenic stuttering, which may occur after a stroke, head trauma, or other type of brain injury.

A third type – psychogenic stuttering – can be caused by emotional trauma or reasoning

problems. At one time, all stuttering was believed to be psychogenic, but today scientists say that psychogenic stuttering is rare.

There are a variety of treatments available. Most treatment programs for people who stutter are behavioral.

Many of the current therapies focus on learning ways to minimize stuttering such as speaking slowly, regulating breathing, or gradually progressing from single-syllable responses to longer words and more complex sentences. Most of these therapies also help relieve anxiety.

Many people find that they achieve their greatest success through a combination of self-study and therapy. Self-help groups provide a way for people who stutter to find resources and support as they face the challenges of stuttering.

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

BY FRED CICETTI

LEONIA, NJ – Q. My four-year-old grandson has begun to stutter. It upsets me and I don't know how to handle it.

It should be reassuring to you to know that about five percent of children stutter for a period of about six months. Three-quarters of these children recover before they mature. About one percent of adults stutter.

Meanwhile, knowing how to talk to your grandson will help

MENU from pg 1

offerings included a very large *à la carte* program that involved a lot of sugary snacks: pie by the slice, chocolate chip cookies, Little Debbie snacks, and larger bags of chips. That's been replaced with a full service salad bar, which is very popular with the kids. It took off right away."

Loynd said he was surprised to find many of the male student athletes heading to the salad bar, because they can pack more food, including protein, like meat strips or cottage cheese, onto a nine inch plate than they can choosing from the other menu alternatives.

He said the lunch line now features "up to eight different choices that count as school lunch," including burgers, chicken patties, veggie burgers, and veggie pockets. He noted that morning meals now include fresh fruit smoothies made from yogurt, milk, and "whatever fruit I can get hold of."

The school district serves no deep fried foods, Loynd said, but still serves items like "pre-baked and refrigerated pizza," prepared in the North End of Boston, rather than baked from scratch in school kitchens. He noted kitchen staff at Sheffield had recently experimented with baked from scratch whole wheat pizza, which was well received by the students.

Students were not shy about

expressing opinions about the school lunch menu. Many get a hot lunch daily. "It's pretty good, and cheap," said Corban Mailloux, a sophomore at TFHS.

The price for meals at the high school is \$2.50 for students, \$3.50 for staff. Meals cost \$2.25 at the elementary schools.

Some concerns were expressed by students about a couple of standard items, including the salad bar, which many of the school's vegetarians depend on for a meal every day.

"You can't just eat lettuce wrapped in a tortilla every day," said sophomore Kat Tingle, referring to the other main vegetarian option the school offers, veggie wraps.

Among the more than a dozen students interviewed, a common request was for larger portion sizes per student, and generally for fresher, more home-style meals. Another common request was, as senior Dylan Bocon put it, "We should get more choice about what we eat, because we are the ones eating it."

Loynd said his department is facing a \$5,000 cut this year, and will likely lose \$10,000 more next year, so increasing portion sizes is probably not on the menu.

Among the students interviewed, most seemed to think the food they eat at school could be healthier for them. Many wanted to see more fresh produce

offered.

Loynd said the schools could stand to improve in the category of purchasing produce locally.

"When I first started here, the first or second week I was putting in my food order through Costa Fruit and Produce, out of Boston. I noticed we were buying apples through the wholesaler, and I thought to myself, 'That seems odd. We're sending Western Mass apples on a field trip to Boston, and then paying to ship them back to us.'" He called up David Shearer at Pine Hill Orchards in Colrain, and began buying apples direct.

Interestingly, Loynd said, because of the volume involved, there was no cost savings to the district, "but the quality of the apples went up." Since then, Loynd has added apple butter (as an occasional substitute for PB&J sandwiches) and cider to the items he purchases locally.

"We did business with the Pioneer Valley Growers Association for a while," buying root crops like carrots, potatoes and squash, "but logistical problems with availability and delivery," interfered. Now, Loynd said, he is working with the Massachusetts Farms to Schools program of the Mass Agriculture Department, which he called "a dating service that puts the supplier in touch with the schools." So, Loynd said, if "I want to buy

some yogurt or milk, can you get that to me?" the Farms to School project will seek out a local supplier who can handle the order in the required quantity and proper serving sizes.

Although Loynd admitted, "It's sometimes a hassle," trying to work with local suppliers, rather than dealing solely with the major wholesaler (at this point Thurston Foods out of Connecticut) that supplies most of the district's menu items, he insisted, "We are willing to do business with local suppliers."

In fact, Loynd has encouraged the development of one very local supplier for the cafeteria lunch line at the upper school, namely Robin Harrington's

greenhouse class, which has been growing and harvesting salad greens for the salad this past year. Loynd said he would like to see that project expand to include outdoor gardens at the middle school and high school, which could provide more produce for school lunches, and provide other benefits besides.

"You're changing the culture in the way kids eat, the way kids think about food," Loynd said. "Kids are growing and harvesting greens. They come in and see the fruits of their labor. 'I grew it, I harvested it, and now I'll find out what it tastes like.'"

TFHS sophomore Mark Hudyuma contributed reporting for this story.



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GO GREEN FAMILY

Episode 5: Zip Car Magic & Getting Acquainted with the Prius

In this continuing saga, three fictional families – the Bartletts, the Tinkers, and the Robbins-Levines – compete in a year-long contest to reduce their environmental impact. Read each weekly installment to learn what the families are up to as they try to outdo each other and win the prize for the most ecologically sustainable household.

BY JEANNE WEINTRAUB-MASON
MONTAGUE CENTER – Nell Robbins-Levine nervously held

her Zip card in front of the Toyota Matrix. Instantly, she heard a click as the doors unlocked. Spotting the keys dangling from a cord near the dashboard, she started the Zipcar up and headed off to load up the art pieces she was going to install at her exhibit at the MassNOVA Museum. “This is a lot easier than renting a car,” she decided, relieved.

Once she’d arrived at the exhibit hall, Nell climbed onto a ladder and began suspending her pieces one at a time. Constructed from dozens of white plastic

shopping bags, their ends delicately sliced and layered onto plastic forks tied together with tooth floss, together they formed an impression of clouds. Her title for the installation was Petroleum Bubble Fantasy.

After climbing down and plugging in a large rotating fan, Nell stood back to admire how the pieces fluttered gracefully in the breeze. To complete the effect, she turned on a CD, and the room filled with a resonance of tinkling and crackling – the sounds of glaciers breaking up in Greenland.

“Your exhibit reminds me of China’s announcement last year,” Linda Perez, the curator, commented from the door, “They’ve banned plastic shopping bags. I heard somewhere they’ll be saving more than 30 million barrels of oil a year.”

“We’ve all got to stop using these, Linda,” Nell explained. “Hundreds of thousands of whales and seals and turtles choke or get tangled up on plastic bags each year.”

Linda changed the subject. “So tell me, Nell, how does that Zipcar business work?”

As she explaining how easy the process was to Linda, Nell admitted to herself that Jane’s plan had worked out just fine. Before they’d started, the two of them were driving about 1,200 miles a month – and going through something like 50 gallons of gas. Since they’d unloaded the Continental and Jane had started taking the PVT bus to work, they’d only had to use the Zipcar this once. Together they’d logged just 220 miles on personal vehicles so far – and as a family, their gasoline consumption was down to 9 gallons this month.

Instead of producing a key, Gerry Bartlett pressed the “power” button to start up the family’s new Toyota Prius.

“Awesome – it boots up like a computer!” his son Connor exclaimed. A blue LCD screen popped up in the middle of the dashboard, with bar charts showing miles per gallon by the minute. His dad keyed a few numbers into the GPS, and a map appeared showing their route to the school soccer field.

“Are you sad about selling the Explorer, Dad?” asked Jayden.

“Hell, no,” said Gerry. “I only used it for commuting to work. When I bought it I thought we’d use it for family camping out west, but neither of you kids seemed interested.”

“Sorry, Dad,” said Jayden, and changed the subject. “So what did you end up paying for this?”

“Ticket price was around \$23,000, but after I traded in the Explorer, I only spent about \$15,000. That’ll come out of our Go Green account.” Then Gerry asked his kids something he’d been wondering about: “How is your mother making out with her trip-chaining? Always seemed to me she could think ahead a little more before jumping in the car just to pick up coffee.”

“Good, I guess,” Connor answered. “She does all her shopping and errands in Greenfield and Amherst on Tuesday afternoons. And she rescheduled all our doctor and dentist appointments for Tuesdays, too.”

“But, Dad,” Jayden whined, “Mom won’t drive me to the mall on the weekend. I can’t believe she expects me to just hang around here at home!”

– Continued next issue.

Visit www.montaguema.net to read about all three families and to discuss the story so far.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ERVING POLICE LOG Strangers with Candy

Tuesday, 3/23

2:20 p.m. Assisted Northfield police with arrest on Pine Meadow Road.

Wednesday, 3/24

6:25 p.m. Report of two suspicious subjects offering children candy in the Lillians Way area. Located subjects; report taken.

Saturday, 3/27

5:21 p.m. Vehicle stopped for hit and run out of Greenfield Route 2 rest

area. Turned over to Greenfield police.

Sunday, 3/28

3:00 p.m. Tree down on wires, Route 2 Farley. Local residents out of power. Electric company and Massachusetts Highway called.

6:07 p.m. Report of disturbance at Church Street park. Youth showing BB gun. Located same, spoke with parents.



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SCHOOL from page 10

the meeting, Ladd announced with regret that Ekstrom is resigning to accept a position closer to home.

Tupper Brown, chair of the Gill finance committee, also had praise for Superintendent Ladd.

“There are a lot of people who think it’s wonderful that you’ve come into the district and so quickly changed the environment,” he said.

And, while praise was being handed out, Ladd thanked the district’s grant writer, Marty Espinola, saying he has benefited the district enormously, bringing in a total of \$1.7 million in grants to the GMRSD.

Among the concerns aired in the budget hearing, Becky Forest, president of the Turners Falls Sports Boosters, questioned the elimination of a custodial position in the FY ‘11 budget. Emphasizing the importance of athletics in the schools, Forest

said she can’t count on volunteers to mark the chalk lines on the playing fields. Most adults are working when students get out of class, and the volunteers she has are already contributing by staffing concession stands and they are all stretched beyond their limit.

Forest said she didn’t see how it was possible to have the field prepared by 3:30 p.m. in time for practice or sporting events without a custodian to prepare it ahead of time.

Jenn Waldron, committee member from Gill, said she was confident a solution would present itself by the time the cuts went into effect next year.

Forest said, “We’ve got to look at our situation,” adding that students were being encouraged to take more advanced placement classes at the same time more pressure would be placed on them for responsibilities in athletics.

Business manager Lynn

Basset said the district was looking at developing a program to have students interested in sports management take over some of the field preparation duties.

After the vote approving the budget, Jeff Singleton, committee member from Montague, made a presentation to the school committee with different scenarios for dealing with the school district’s structural budget gap.

For FY ‘11, that gap is projected at \$536,213.

Singleton suggested choices need to be made to reduce this amount over time, using revenue from town stabilization funds and assessments, and district excess and deficiency funds. He said the towns are not willing to put more revenues into the district “until they see light at the end of the tunnel.”

The school committee went into executive session to continue discussions of contract negotiations for teachers and paraprofessional staff.



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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



JACK COUGHLIN ILLUSTRATION

THURSDAY, APRIL 1st
 Burrito Rojo, Turners Falls: *Francie Jones*, an Amherst-based singer/songwriter, roughly falling within the made-up genre of "Alternative Folk." 7 p.m. www.myspace.com/franciejones.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Falltown String Band*, 7:30 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Kellianna*, Acoustic Rock, 8 to 10 p.m.

THURSDAY TO SATURDAY, APRIL 1st TO 3rd
The Importance of Being Earnest, Oscar Wilde's satiric comedy about life among Britain's landed gentry, will spring to life in all its Victorian glory on the Northfield Mount Hermon stage. Thurs. at 7:30 p.m. and Fr. & Sat. at 8 p.m. in the Rhodes Arts Center. \$2 for NMH students, faculty, and staff and \$7 for all others. Reservations: playtickets@nmhschool.org.

FRIDAY, APRIL 2nd
 Burrito Rojo, Turners Falls: *Michael Orlen and Small Change*, folk, country, jazz. Orlen's songs are confident expressions of optimism with a dose of irony thrown in. He also draws on an extensive knowledge of twentieth century folk, blues, and ragtime music to choose songs that resonate in today's world, 7 p.m.

Mystery Theater & Dessert at the Montague Grange, Montague Center: *Popped Star*, a fundraiser event by the Friends of the Montague Grange. Tickets are \$25 in advance, \$30 at the door. The evening includes the performance, and white-glove table side service of decadent dessert and coffees/teas, 7 p.m. For info contact www.MontagueGrange.org or 367-2184.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *The Relics*, '50s &

'60s Rock with Brian Mallet & Lefty Cullen, 9 to 11 p.m.

The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Groove Shoes* (funk!) with Anselicious and Tommy TBA, \$3 cover, 9:30 p.m.

Montague Bookmill, Montague Center: *Bunny's A Swine, MiniBoone*. *Bunny's A Swine's* sound has been called twee-grunge (by some), awkpop (by themselves), and indie rock (by others). One of the region's most original, invigorating rock bands. New York City's *MiniBoone* plays spry, energetic, angular post-punk rock that sounds at times like a spastic, Devo/Queen hybrid. 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, APRIL 3rd
 Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Water Cycle*, a Power Point presentation of the importance of the water cycle. 1 to 2 p.m.



Program Director, Monte Belmonte, from WRSI 93.9 *The River*, speaking about his experiences working in radio and the state of the music industry. 6 p.m. at the Brick House, Turners Falls..

Burrito Rojo, Turners Falls: *Festivus*: a night music and poetry, hosted by Katie Sachs and Dakota Roberts. A celebration of music, community and the spoken word! 8 p.m.

Montague Bookmill, Montague Center: *No Eye Contact* with *The Suitcase Junket*, *Julia Read* and *Jason Nichols*. Architects of a unique sound they have dubbed "Garage Folk", the members of *No Eye Contact* draw upon a diverse range of traditional and contemporary musical influences, from Sacred Harp singing and West African kora tunes to Bob Dylan and Neutral Milk Hotel. Juggling an array of instruments and vocal parts in its live show, weaving Sastri's world-weary lyrics around sweet melodies, forceful harmonies and unorthodox arrangements. \$5, 8 p.m. www.noeyecontact.com.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *A Ghost Quartet*, Jazzy Blues with a taste of fist fight swing! 9 to 11 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Toby Goodshank*, *Watcher* and *Oweihops*,

indie folkie rockie, \$5 at 9:30 p.m.

MONDAY, APRIL 5th
 Film Showing of *In-Transition* at The Brick House, Turners Falls. 7 p.m. Tina Clarke, a trainer with the Transition Initiatives in the US and a Montague resident presents. Meet with folks from Montague and the area who have been working to help our communities become more resilient and sustainable. Donation suggested - but no-one will be turned away. www.transitionus.org.

The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: NCAA



Scott Paquette, drums; Geoff Cunningham, trumpet; Dan Lederer, guitars; Adam Scotera, sax; Mark Dunlop, bass: The Raised 5th at The Rendezvous, Turners Falls on Wednesday, April 8th.

Hoops Final Game on the BIG SCREEN.

TUESDAY, APRIL 6th
 An Interactive Historic Map Presentation by Dave Allen, land records researcher, history enthusiast, and author/publisher of *Early Maps of Greenfield, 1717-1918*, 7 p.m. in the Town Hall of Gill.

PowerTown Music invites the community to a special event at The Brick House Community Resource Center, Turners Falls. An informational meeting about PowerTown's efforts in helping to build a thriving sustainable music industry in Franklin County and creating jobs and educational opportunities for teens and young adults. Featuring: Program Director, Monte Belmonte, from WRSI 93.9 *The River*, speaking about his experiences working in radio and the state of the music industry. Music by DeAngelo Nieves and Dakota Roberts. Speakers about PowerTown's vision, the opportunities for involvement. Free, 6 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 7th
 The Rendezvous, Turners Falls, Voo Jazz 1st Wednesdays Debut: *The Raised 5th*, no cover.

THURSDAY, APRIL 8th
Jay Ungar & Molly Mason Family Band at the Montague Grange. There's a chance that this concert will sell out, so if you'd like to secure admission, make your check out to *Swinging Door Music* and send it to David Kaynor, PO Box 30, Montague, MA 01351. General admission is \$15; Grange members, senior citizens, kids, and folks of limited means: \$10.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Free Range*, rock out with Betsy, Mark and Bruce to classic rock & dance music, 8 to 10 p.m.

The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *High Country*, *Low-Fi* w/ Jeffrey Foucault and friends, 9 p.m. \$5.

The UMass Fine Arts Center Asian Arts & Culture Program presents the dance sensation *Kenichi Ebina* in *New Moves*, 7:30 p.m. in the Concert Hall. A seven times Grand Champion Dance winner. Box Office (800) 999-UMAS.

FRIDAY, APRIL 9th
 Deja Brew, Wendell: *Stop Gravity*, percussive soul, 9 to 11 p.m.

Burrito Rojo, Turners Falls: *Dan Daniels and Your No Good Buddies*, 8 p.m.

The Greenfield Community College Chorus performance of *Bach to Gospel: Choral Classics and More*. In the Sloan Theater at Greenfield Community College. Director of Margery Heins, with Amy Roberts-Crawford, accompanist, and a string ensemble, 7:30 p.m. Info: (413) 625-8461.

FRIDAY & SATURDAY, APRIL 9th & 10th
 Pothole Pictures,

Shelburne Falls: *This Boy's Life*. DeNiro & DiCaprio shine in this 1993 movie, co-sponsored by The Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association's *Big Read*. 7:30 p.m., with music before the movie at 7 p.m.

SATURDAY, APRIL 10th
 Artist's Reception for Nature Photography and Oil Painting Exhibit by Patricia Hayes at the Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls, 1 to 3 p.m. Refreshments will be served. Exhibit runs April 1st to 30th.

Free hot lunch with a family-friendly focus (puppets, hiking, music, farm) at noon at the beautiful Montague Farm Zen House - serving all families. 177 Ripley Road in Montague, near the North Leverett line. Free transportation may be available. Contact Karen Werner: 367-5275 or Karen@zenpeacemakers.com.

ONGOING
 Gallery at Hallmark, Avenue A, Turners Falls. William Wegman photographs, *Out of the Box*. On display through May 2nd. Gallery open Friday thru Sunday, 1 to 5 p.m.

HOT SPOT TEEN CENTER

MONDAYS - Drop-in, 3 to 6 p.m.
 TUES & WEDS - Ongoing Music Project, 3 to 6 p.m.
 THURS - Drop-in, 3 to 6 p.m. & Movie Night, 6 to 8 p.m.
 Free (except some trips), open to local teens. Some require permission slips.
 Info: Jared at 863-9559.
 Hot Spot Teen Center is in The Brick House
 24 Third Street, Turners Falls, 01376



www.gardencinemas.net
 Showtimes for Fri., April 2 to Thurs., April 8th
1. HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON 2D in DTS sound PG FRI, SAT, SUN 12:00 3:00 DAILY 7:00 9:30
2. CLASH OF THE TITANS 3D in DTS sound PG DAILY 7:00 9:30 FRI, SAT, SUN 12:00 3:00
3. HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON 3D PG FRI, SAT, SUN 12:00 3:00 DAILY 7:00 9:30
4. THE BOUNTY HUNTERS DAILY 6:40 9:20 PG13 FRI, SAT, SUN 12:15 3:15
5. DIARY OF A WIMPY KID PG DAILY 6:40 9:20 FRI, SAT, SUN 12:15 3:15
6. THE LAST SONG DAILY 6:30 9:00 PG in DTS sound FRI, SAT, SUN 12:30 3:30
7. CLASH OF THE TITANS 2D DAILY 6:30 9:00 in DTS sound FRI, SAT, SUN 12:30 3:30 PG13



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MARY AZARIAN WOODBLOCK

BY LESLIE BROWN

MONTAUGE CITY – More exciting news. Last week I sighted a male bluebird on a rose bush at the garden's edge!

I have never seen this bird in my small yard, only up in the pasture lands and orchards of Shelburne. However, I rushed out over the weekend to buy a bluebird house in hopes of cajoling this rare beauty to nest near my mini-orchard of three apple trees.

While bluebirds may choose to nest in a hollow tree or post, and in building nooks or cranies, many people have the success luring bluebirds to roost with specialized houses. The one I found is made of sturdy cedar with a copper-trimmed roof, designed to meet this rather picky bird's requirements. The floor is 4" x 4", with a 9" ceiling

and most importantly, a 1½" inch entry hole placed 7" above the floor.

I found this beauty on sale at the Shelburne Farm and Garden Center. That was the easy part. It is recommended that a bluebird house be mounted on a post at least three feet, but preferably six feet, above the ground. A metal pole is preferred because it deters predators and unwanted squatters.

The mounting, of course, was the challenge. As I am barely over five feet and now am also the proud owner of a new eight-foot metal pole, I'm sure I don't need to say anything more. Maybe the bluebird will take pity on this energetic exercise and plan to stay in my yard if only to acknowledge my degree of monetary and muscular investment.

The rest of that Saturday was spent at the Western Mass Master Gardeners' Spring Gardening Symposium.

I was intrigued by Pat Leuchtman's recent column in the neighboring daily on no-till gardening and wanted to learn

more, so I signed up for "Grow Food Everywhere: No-till for Backyard Gardeners," with Deb Habib. She and her husband, Ricky Baruc, are the founders of Seeds of Solidarity farm in Orange.

Habib has a passion for no-till gardening, which stems both from a desire to use any open space, whether urban or rural, for growing, and her strong belief in making these gardening projects community based. She and her husband have built no-till gardens at schools, community centers and former woodlots.

This latter challenge came when she and Ricky bought a former woodlot in Orange and determined to make it grow and become their family home.

The no-till method can be used in any setting, even one which has not previously been tilled. Ideally, you would prepare your site by laying out sheets of cardboard or thick layers of newspaper (preferably with soy ink), covering it with layers of compost, manure and straw or mulch hay. This "lasagna gardening" mimics the natural growing environment in which layers of leaves, dead branches and plant growth cover the

ground, are fertilized by animals and then seeded by trees or flowers or passing birds. Soon insect and microbial life begins as does a sort of passive composting which produces a rich growing medium.

In the garden, worms will enjoy cardboard or newspaper and will aerate the new space and fertilize it with their own castings. Initially, you will likely want to cut holes for your new seedlings. When planting by seed, raised beds or rows are recommended, and the seed should be broadcasted to produce a dense growth, which discourages weed development. Of course, there are some crops best grown in rows, but that does not rule out the no-till process.

No-till gardeners are not lazy folks unwilling to dig the earth, rake or hoe and pull weeds. The technique revolves around serious ecological and environmental considerations.

The movement began because many growers wanted to move away from methods reliant on fossil fuels via the use of tractors and other heavy equipment. Secondly, tilling the earth disturbs the microbial and insect life, interfering with natural soil enrichment and creating

the need for more fertilization. Further, we have learned that the earth naturally takes in and holds carbon, whereas tilling releases more carbon into the atmosphere.

Obviously, the whole philosophy of no-till gardening flies in the face of large scale agricultural farming, and has led many like Habib to encourage communities to participate in growing much of their own foods. I guess the current global environmental situation builds the desire of many of us to return to simpler, more natural ways, one of which is growing as much as possible of what we eat.

Sounds simple, but it requires not only opening one's mind to a new way of thinking but demands a huge commitment on the part of many. Simplifying the start of a garden may be one way to engage new gardeners in what has appeared to be a laborious endeavor. Then we'll have them hooked by the undeniable freshness and great taste of their own crops.

Not all of us are able to become gardeners, but we can all commit to buying as much local food as possible, supporting those who do.

Happy spring gardening!

Forty Pints of Kapusta and a Sold-Out Flea Market

BY JOSEPH A. PARZYCH

TURNERS FALLS – Our Lady of Czestochowa held a bazaar on Saturday, March 27th.

"It was a huge success," Father DiMascola said. "Food went especially well."

The bazaar was held in the undercroft and in an auxiliary building behind the church.

"We sold out of everything," Wanda Kozloski said. "That included 745 golumbki, 40 pints of kapusta (shredded cabbage cooked with sauerkraut and spices), and about 200 loaves of *babka* bread."

While the bazaar was a concerted effort, it was headed up by Louis Kozloski with his wife Wanda and Irene Klepadlo as his seconds in command.

Unfortunately, Louis was not feeling well, so he was unable to attend the function.

"A parishoner from

Greenfield, N.H. brought a large quantity of *bigos* (hunters' stew) usually made with game meats and vegetables including cabbage," DiMascola said. "But, in this instance it was made with pork, ham, beef and sausage, still delicious and a sell-out item. The stew is one that is traditionally made over several days, with various meats and vegetables such as cabbage. Ingredients are added over time, the stew getting richer in flavor as it progresses. *Bigos* historically originated with the Polish nobility when they went on hunts."

DiMascola sometimes bakes bread for the bazaar, but was unable to do so this time simply because of time constraints.

"The flea market sold out as usual," Wanda said. "That's always well attended. Towards the end, prices come down. People like those deals and soon

everything's gone."

The funds raised will be used for repairs to a wall in the church basement that is seeping water.

Our Lady of Czestochowa draws the faithful from a wide area. People come from Royalston, Orange, Athol, Heath, Enfield, CT, Brattleboro, VT, as well as the immediate Franklin County area.

"Some of these people drive a long distance to take part in daily



PARZYCH PHOTO

Dynamite Duo – Wanda Kozloski sells kapusta and golumbki at Our Lady of Czestochowa bazaar, while Irene Klepadlo rakes in the cash.

Mass," DiMascola said. "It's a beautiful church, and the people are friendly. They live out their faith as a spiritual community, and that is the attraction."

The community effort and festive atmosphere at the bazaar bore witness to the pastor's comments.

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