



ONE HATCHED!

Another on the way, we hope
see page 7



THE OCCASIONAL DINER
Ristorante DiPaolo Reviewed
see page 11

LAKE PLEASANT MILLERS FALLS MONTAGUE CENTER MONTAGUE CITY TURNERS FALLS GILL ERVING WENDELL

Year 4
No. 27

50¢

The Montague Reporter

REPORTER@MONTAGUEMA.NET

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

APRIL 13, 2006

Gill Agriculture Committee Forms

BY DAVID DETMOLD

Eighteen Gill residents gathered around a long trestle table on the top floor of town hall on Monday night, April 10th, to form a steering committee for the proposed Gill agriculture commission. Tim Storrow led the discussion, beginning with a review of bylaws from other Massachusetts communities that have formed agriculture commissions recently. The appointed volunteer commissions, established by vote of town meeting in most communities, are "designed to provide a forum for farmers to have a voice in the community, to keep agriculture a viable activity in the town and in the state." Storrow also said towns that have set up agriculture commissions earn points on the state's Commonwealth Capital ranking, making them

more competitive for state grants and agricultural protection restriction (APR) financing.

Cliff Hatch, of Upinngil Farm, said a few friends of agriculture in Gill had already persuaded the selectboard to put an article on the warrant for the May town meeting this year. In preparation, they decided to hold a public meeting to discuss how the commission should be formed, how many should be on it, whether a majority of its members should be full-time growers, and what its mission should be. They sent out letters to 40 town residents who were identified as having a stake in agriculture, and 16 of them turned out.

Selectboard chair Phil Maddern, who was attending another meeting on Tuesday, was one who received the invita-

see GILL pg 10

Ted Lewis Seeks 13th Consecutive Term on Wendell Selectboard

Running for his 13th consecutive 3-year term on the Wendell selectboard, Ted Lewis faces no formal opponent in the May 1st election but apathy. "I want people to get out and vote. Even if they don't agree with me, I want them to vote. That's what people are losing their life for, the right to vote. If you don't like what I've done, write somebody in." Voters tried that last time he ran, when political newcomer Charlise Baleno gave Lewis a run for his money. But no candidates have surfaced to oppose him so far this spring. Still, Lewis said, "If I get beat, that's the voters' wish. But when only 20 - 25% of the people turn out to the ballot box, that's terrible."

If Lewis wins another term, as seems likely, by the time the West Road resident completes his next three years in office he will have been a member of the Wendell select-

board for 39 years. At that point, Lewis will be one year shy of being able to claim to have spent half his life serving the town as selectman.

Though the town clerk says he is already the longest serving selectman the town of Wendell has ever had, Lewis is modest on that point. "I didn't come in to get longevity. I just like people. I grew up here; my father (Arthur Lewis) was a selectman for 15 years. We were Grangers; we help people."

Growing up with only six families on the entire length of West Road (now one of the more thickly settled neighborhoods in town) Ted married his next door neighbor, Marjorie Powling, a Wendell native who served the town as ballot clerk for many years. She passed away in 1999. Their son lives in Mississippi; he's a welder. One daughter, a nurse, lives in town; the



JOSH HEINEMANN PHOTO

Ted Lewis has served the town in numerous official capacities, from assessor to highway boss to selectboard.

other daughter lives in Pembroke.

Thinking back on how the town has changed since he was a lad, Lewis said, "It was all farms and sawmills back in the 40s. At the end of West Street, Mr. Fiske had a big dairy farm, with a huge barn. It was the most beautiful place in Wendell. Some kid from Leverett burned it down."

"In the 60s," Lewis continued, "everyone was breaking up their land and selling it for house lots. In the 70s was when the big influx came in, that was before we had zoning," with minimum frontage and acreage.

Lewis opposed the introduction of zoning in Wendell, in his early years on the selectboard,

see LEWIS pg 8

THEATER REVIEW

FIRST MONDAY IN OCTOBER

presented by The Country Players, at the Shea Theater

BY DAVID DETMOLD
TURNERS FALLS - Dressed in judicial robes, Country Players' Marvin Shedd welcomed the Shea Theater audience to "Sit back and watch the judicial branch of your government at work." The date was Saturday, April 8th, but the play was *First Monday in October*, and the subject matter was the inner workings of the United States Supreme Court. We want to thank the Country Players for continuing to break the mold at the Shea by staging plays that do not necessarily have immediate name recognition and the huge drawing power of the song and dance pro-

ductions that normally fill the billboard. Trouble is, for drama, the back-room bickering of Supreme Court justices and the momentous appointment of the nation's first female associate justice to the High Court are not exactly edge-of-your seat fare.

The play's title refers to the prescribed opening date of Supreme Court proceedings, and it deals with Large Ideas, so be



Kip Fensh as Justice Daniel Snow and Sharon Weyers as Judge Ruth Loomis in First Monday In October. Performances will be April 14th and 15th, 8:00 p.m. at the Shea.

warned. It ain't no Barefoot in the Park. But it does a nice job of boiling down big controversies, like the government's role in censorship or the power of corpora-

see PLAY pg 10

Bids for New Town Offices, Library Come in High

BY JOSH HEINEMANN
WENDELL -

The Wendell selectboard met with the building committee for the new library and town office buildings, along with project manager Mark Sullivan, and George Dole representing architect Margo Jones on Wednesday, April 5th, to discuss what to do now the bids for these projects have come in high by a total of close to \$250,000. After hours of exchanging ideas, disagreeing, arguing one way and the other, the joint committee voted four to one to accept the general contractor's bid

from Handford Construction of Springfield and to make up the difference with a combination of value engineering, (which means taking cheaper alternatives) and increased borrowing.

That summation makes the evening's discussion seem simple, but it was not.

Selectboard member Dan Keller said he thought the July 2005 special town meeting had authorized the town to borrow as much as \$1.3 million, and that the bids were judged high on the basis of \$1.2 million in borrowing. He said that his memory of the

finance committee discussion at that meeting showed that the worst likely tax effect of \$1.3 million in borrowing would be \$2.21 / \$1,000. Keller said the stabilization fund has \$180,000 on hand, of which \$27,000 was earmarked at the September special town meeting for Swift River School capital improvements and other things, leaving about \$150,000.

Librarian and building committee member Rosie Heidekamp said that financial advisor Lynn Ludwig said the town could reasonably see WENDELL pg 8

PET OF THE WEEK

Satiny



Black Fire

Black Fire is a year old black and white cat who loves petting, chirping and purring for attention. She loves rolling around, snuggling, and kissing! This black and white cat has short satiny fur and dark dark gold eyes. She's lived with other cats so she'd be willing to share you as long as you give her the attention she would love so much to have. Black Fire has lived as an indoor only cat in the past and would be best remaining that way. For more information on adopting Black Fire please contact the Dakin Animal Shelter in Leverett at 548-9898 or via email at info@dakin-

ERVING LIBRARY NEWS

Zoomobile Visit

ERVING Public Library will host the Southwick Zoo's Zoomobile on Wednesday, April 19th at 6:30 p.m.

The Zoomobile provides outreach educational services in animal ecology. They will bring a menagerie of exotic animals

including snakes, a lizard, a tortoise, a bush baby and others.

This family program is funded by the Erving Cultural Council.

For additional information, please call the library at 413-423-3348.

CARNEGIE LIBRARY NEWS

Ladies Night Out



PHOTO: LINDA HICKMAN

BY LINDA HICKMAN

TURNERS FALLS- Michelle Rubin (left) of Greenfield and Beverly Whitbeck were among the dozen people who made grapevine wreaths at the Ladies Night Out program at the Carnegie Library on Tuesday,

April 11th. Suzanne Kretzenger of Hunting Hills in Montague provided materials and instructions. Bev facilitates the programs. The informal group meets the second and fourth

Tuesday evenings of each month at 6:30 p.m. The next session will be held on April 25th, and will feature a surprise craft. Participants may also bring whatever project they are working on. For more information, call 863-3214..

FACES & PLACES



DETMOLD PHOTO

"Slow, Turtle Crossing" Main Road in Gill

CORRECTION

Due to an unfortunate error during the layout of last week's paper, the final sentence of the story on teens and local residents rallying support for the Turners Falls skate park was partially omitted. For the record, the quotation from Jessica Harmon that ended the article should have read as follows. "I am the mother of a two-and-a-half year old, with another baby on the way. I'm here tonight because I read an article describing the teens who want this skate park, how they are looking for a sense of safety and community, a place that is theirs. I really want my children to have that in this town when they grow up."

Easter Egg Hunt

An Easter egg hunt will be held Saturday, April 15th from 10 a.m. to noon at Diemand Farm, 126 Mormon Hollow Road in Wendell. Crafts, egg coloring and baby animals will be featured. Call (978) 544-3806 for more information.

Montague Community Cable Annual Meeting
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Frog Fun at the Library

BY LINDA HICKMAN- The children at the Carnegie Library Preschool Story Hour on Wednesday, April 12th, enjoyed a special treat. Beth Bazler of Northfield Mountain



PHOTO: LINDA HICKMAN

Recreation and Environmental Center brought frog eggs, tadpoles, and a frog as well as hands-on activities. The Community Partnerships for

Children sponsored the program. The Story Hour meets every Wednesday at 10:15 a.m. For more information, call 863-3214.

Writers Wanted

The Montague Reporter
 is looking for writers to cover news events, arts, features, etc.
 Please call 863-8666

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SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES April 17th - 21st

MONTAGUE Senior Center, 62 Fifth St., Turners Falls, is open Mon. - Fri. from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. for activities and congregate meals. Make meal reservations a day in advance by 11 a.m. Messages can be left on the machine when the center is closed (863-9357). Mealsite manager is Chris Richer. The center offers a hot noon meal weekdays to any senior. Transportation to the center can be provided. Special trip coordinator is Jean Chase. Make trip reservations by calling 772-6356. Payment and menu choice is due three weeks prior to trip.

- Monday, 17th**
 Closed for Patriot's Day
- Tuesday, 18th**
 9:30 a.m. Aerobics
- Wednesday, 19th**
 10:15 a.m. Senior Aerobics

- 12:45 p.m. Bingo
- Thursday, 20th**
 1 p.m. Pitch
- Friday, 21st**
 10:15 a.m. Senior Aerobics
 11 a.m. PACE Aerobics

ERVING Senior Center, 18 Pleasant St., Erving (Old Center School, 1st Floor), is open Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. for activities and congregate meals. For information and reservations call Polly Kiely, Senior Center director at (413) 423-3308. Lunch daily at 11:30 a.m. with reservations a day in advance by 11:00 a.m. Transportation can be provided for meals, Thursday shopping, or medical necessity by calling Dana Moore at (978) 544-3898.

- Monday, 17th**
 Closed for Patriot's Day

Please Join Us...
Community Garden Clean-Up
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Sheffield School students marched in an Earth Week parade to the Great Falls Discovery Center on Tuesday morning.

Women's Resource Center Offers Programs in Turners Falls and Greenfield

The Turners Falls Women's Resource Center (TFWRC) now offers our peer to peer, trauma informed, empowerment model of programs and services at 479 Main St. in Greenfield. This program, The Women's Center Greenfield SP Site, is made possible through a collaboration involving The Turners Falls Women's Resource Center, the Western Mass Training Consortium and NELCWIT which is called The Western Massachusetts Women's Resource Initiative (WMWRI) with funding from the department of Public Health.

Both sites provide a safe, welcoming non-clinical drop-in and activities center for women where we seek to create opportunities for connection and growth, increasing confidence and leadership capabilities through participation in a variety of activities.

The Women's Center Greenfield SP Site is open to women during drop-in hours: Mondays and Saturdays from 9:30-4:30 with Open Art on Mondays, 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and Drop-in Beading every Saturday from 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m. and ATRIUM program (Addictions and Trauma Recover Integration Model) will

be starting soon. ATRIUM is a 12 week program structured to address key issues linked to trauma and addiction experiences, such as anxiety, self-harm, depression, anger, physical complaints and ailments, sleep difficulty, relationship challenges and spiritual disconnection.


The Turners Falls Women's Resource Center at 41 Third St., Turners Falls offers a Resource Library, Clothing Exchange, Information Referral Services and DSL internet-connected computer lab. The Turners Falls site is open to women for drop-in on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. and Wednesdays, 5-8 p.m. Drop-in programs include Kripalu Yoga, Tuesdays, 9-10 a.m. and Open Art, Thursdays, 10 a.m.-noon.

A free movement group,

SafeArt Movement with Tracy Penfield will be held on May 17th, and June 14 from 12:45-2:15 p.m. It is suggested that women interested in this program arrive at Green River Yoga, 158 Main St., Greenfield by 12:35. This healing program is designed to help survivors of trauma reclaim their bodies.

An eight week walking group will be starting in May. Wellness Walkers: Every step counts, will start on Thursday, May 11th at 10:30 a.m. Before walking, there will be a talk about the benefits of walking with pointers for walking comfortably and safely. After attending for three weeks, participants will receive a free pedometer.

For information about upcoming programs, call Christine at 863-2455 or email christine_mcs@crocker.com.



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Last Gym Show for Jan Roe at Swift River

BY JOSH HEINEMANN

NEW SALEM - One of the three teachers who started teaching at Swift River School when it first opened is retiring at the end of this year.

In addition to teaching gym and after school gymnastics for 30 years at the school, Jan Roe has also coordinated, rehearsed and run the annual gymnastics show. For years the show was held at the Mahar gymnasium, but when Swift River got its own gym, the show moved to New Salem.

Before teaching at Swift River, Roe taught at Mahar, and before that at Hicksville, NY. She taught three generations of at least one New Salem family, and the gym show has been as much part of the school calendar as the first day of class.

Among her graduates are Cara Chadbourn, who won a sports scholarship and is ranked 10th nationally in her floor routine, and Tom Soule who has worked with the *Cirque du Soleil*. She has worked with students of all skill levels, including those



Jan Roe

with physical and neurological challenges.

Tuesday evening's Gym Show was attended by parents, neighbors and many graduates of the school, and veterans of the Gym show. One small performer was overheard saying, "I'm not shy; I'm in the gym show!" There were children wiggling and talking while on the sidelines, but totally focused while doing their routines. After the show, students and faculty, led by music teacher Ed Hines, sang a rousing chorus of "Happy Trails to You," for Roe. Following that, there was a reception in her honor.

Death and Dying Workshop in Lake Pleasant

The National Spiritual Alliance is sponsoring a workshop entitled "Death, Dying and the Grief Process" Saturday, April 15th, from noon to 4:30 p.m. at the Thompson Temple across from the post office in Lake Pleasant. Workshop facilitator is Rev. Cori Lovering, TNSA president and a retired nurse.

Peter Cottontail's EGGstravaganza

Saturday, April 15 - 10:00 am
Unity Park, First Street, Turners Falls



Children ages 4 to 12 are invited to take part in this great community tradition! We will enjoy face painting, egg decorating, bake sale, pictures with Peter Cottontail (\$1 per picture) and our 2nd Annual Egg Hunt, where kids will have the challenge of finding well over 3,000 candy and toy-filled eggs that will be placed around the park.

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Katrina and Disaster Planning

BY PAM HANOLD

TURNERS FALLS - Kathleen J. Tierney, director of the Natural Hazards Center and professor of sociology at the University of Colorado at Boulder, addressed the Environmental Lecture Series at UMass on Monday, April 10th. Her topic, "Disaster Readiness in the US: Katrina and the Shape of Things to Come," turned out to be unexpectedly thought-provoking, with implications for folks in Western Massachusetts and beyond.

Katrina, the sixth largest hurricane ever in the Atlantic Ocean and one of the strongest to hit land in the US, produced a 10 - 30 foot storm surge that hit 200 continuous miles of coastline, generating 36 confirmed tornados inland. Katrina destroyed 416,000 housing units and caused major damage to another 85,000 units. A million people were displaced. Direct costs from the storm are estimated at \$125 billion and climbing. The storm claimed 1,319 confirmed dead, with more bodies being found every day. Katrina is one of the largest catastrophes America has ever experienced.

In terms of understanding these events and planning for the future, it is important to understand the differences between emergencies, disasters, and catastrophes.

Emergencies occur locally, generating a local response of professionals who use established plans to respond, with little happening that was unforeseen.

Disasters impact a bigger area and require help beyond local recourses. Some of the consequences are foreseeable, but there are unexpected events requiring extensive public response in addition to the professional, planned response. There are additional major recovery challenges that extend into the future.

Catastrophes affect a huge area, requiring a federal as well as a professional response, and requiring a huge civilian involvement. The emergency response system is overwhelmed and paralyzed. Long-term consequences are massive, with totally unforeseen cascading effects.

The public does well in responding to all three kinds of

At the Crawford Bar and Grill



"Talk about intelligence leaks... I always said, 'Show me the man that leaks intelligence and I'll show you a man who is guilty of the trust of the American people.' Turns out now, as far as intelligence goes, I'm the Leaker in Chief..."

events, but there is a small but important group that panics in disasters and catastrophes. Referred to as "the elite," these are people who fear social disorder, fear the poor and minorities, and are obsessed with looting and property crimes. These fears lead to a willingness to use deadly force and act on rumors and prejudices, which includes diverting effort from search and rescue to property protection and coercive policing. All of these occurred in the days after Katrina hit land, including many rumors reported as facts that have all turned out to be false.

Tierney stated clearly there are no effective, national proce-

dures for responding to catastrophes. Public documents dealing with the issue state in general terms what they would like to see happen rather than setting out plans of action for dealing with specifics. For example, the national emergency plan requires cities to plan for 15 possible events, 13 of which are terrorism scenarios rather than natural disasters like Katrina.

Referring to the possibility of a flu pandemic, Tierney said communities need to inform themselves as to the specifics of what that endemic would be like and what they can do for themselves. Planning needs to include using and protecting

volunteers. The importance of having citizen involvement in the planning is the most critical factor of all because of the crucial role the public plays in disasters and catastrophes.

Her talk pointed out once again the value in knowing our neighborhoods and each other. I don't predict doom and gloom, but I have been through tornados and floods myself and have a general dislike of unpleasant surprises. I prefer to be ready to respond if necessary, and glad when it is not. I believe active, involved communities are not only more fun to live in, but they are safer places, too.

Vermont Yankee Power Boost on Hold - Again

BRATTLEBORO - For the second time in less than a month, Vermont Yankee officials have had to put on hold a power boost because of indications that a key component is being strained.

On Thursday afternoon, April 6th, Entergy Vermont Yankee's engineers implementing the plant's Power Ascension Test Program reached the halfway point of the third planned five percent boost, and determined that a frequency of main steam acoustic noise had reached a level that forces them to stall the increase until additional data can be gathered and analyzed.

"By holding at this power level, we are ensuring we maintain ample margins to ensure plant reliability. The power ascension process continues to be deliberate, measured and controlled. We will maintain the

plant output at the current power plateau until the additional analysis is completed," said Jay Thayer, Entergy Vermont Yankee site vice president, in a statement.

Since March 4th, Vermont Yankee has completed three power increases for a total increased output of 12.5 percent - out of a planned 20 percent boost - from VY's originally designed 540-megawatt level.

Further analyses will be used to verify that the acoustic signals measured at this power level will have no short- or long-term impact on the reliability of the steam dryer at the next higher power level.

"We expect Entergy to be exhaustive in assessing the data," said Neil Sheehan, a spokesman for the NRC's regional office.

From the 4/7 Vermont Guardian, www.vermontguardian.com

LETTER TO



THE EDITOR

We Must Stand by Our Principles

Wiretapping extends beyond personal privacy, infringing on our nation's soul.

Following the terrorist attacks on 9-11 President Bush declared a global war on terrorism.

Now, a little more than four years later, the war continues. But are we winning? Are we honoring the democratic values and human rights that the military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan were ostensibly designed to defend? The short answer is NO! We are losing to those who oppose our values and seek to deprive us of our rights.

Just a short six days after 9-11, Congress started the retreat from liberty by passing the 300-page Patriot Act, approving the President's request to grant the executive branch access to virtually any information about anyone at anytime. Under the act the government no longer needs to show probable cause or obtain a warrant. All it needs to invade a private citizen's home without notice is alleged suspicion of intent to commit a crime.

Recently the President condoned warrantless wiretapping as a useful tactic in "The War on Terror."

More is at stake than simply

personal privacy rights or the US image abroad. The soul of our nation is at stake! Due process of law can't be a privilege reserved for a select few. It must apply to either all or none. Now that this basic right has been compromised, we are all at risk.

The accused may be spied upon, held uncharged without counsel, and tried in secrecy based on nothing more than the government's suspicion of criminal intent. Any person may now be suspected of planning subversive acts and denied their rights. Government espionage aimed against its own citizens threatens due process of law for all Americans. The right to a fair trial is the cornerstone of American democracy. If we compromise our liberty, we will have already lost what we supposedly are fighting to defend.

We must stand by American principles, even if that means abandoning the current administration. An America without liberty is a nation without purpose, without a soul, and is not worth defending at all.

- Rosalie Rosser
Wendell

We welcome your letters.

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GUEST EDITORIALS

No Coincidence on Capital Projects

BY GREG GARRISON

MONTAGUE - It is no coincidence that the feasibility studies for the library, senior center, parks and recreations department, and police station follow the release of the Request for Proposals (RFP) for the town's permitted landfill. These capital improvements are not new requests. The police station alone has been substandard for decades. All of these capital projects have been studied before, but the town and its citizenry have not found the will or commitment to make the tough financial choices to get past the dreaming stage. But now they have the revitalized landfill option.

It is true that selling the operating rights to the permitted town landfill will provide the needed income stream to construct and amortize these capital projects. Without the landfill revenue, the town and its residents would be forced to make tough financial decisions to appropriate the necessary

monies to finance a new police station and community center. I doubt that even the state's release of additional lottery revenues will provide an income stream sufficient to compete with a landfill contract. Many town residents will look at the landfill as the right solution at the right time because they have already concluded that the impact of an expanded landfill within its residential neighborhoods is a cost easily borne to achieve the benefit of the desired facilities. It is a cost/benefit analysis that does not value each resident equally.

In opposition to the landfill are those residents who feel the impact will dramatically change their quality of life and impact them financially. Some of those residents live on the boundaries of the proposed landfill or along the traffic pattern of the trucks that will bring the waste materials to be dumped. This is a NIMBY (Not In My Back Yard) reaction, because for some residents it

will literally be in their back yards. The landfill development will have a significant impact on a select group of our community and future generations. It is after all a constructed environment that needs to be double lined, regulated by the Environmental Protection Agency and have ground water sensors installed to protect our health and environment. They do not impose those guidelines on a community-friendly development. Regardless of the constraints imposed on the landfill operations by the RFP, there will be a significant impact, of a magnitude no one can truly identify.

Coincidentally, some residents of Lake Pleasant are currently opposing the expansion of the town's airport. Why? Because an expanded airport is a quality of life issue. They do not see the investment to expand the runway as beneficial to the community or their way of life. In their view the costs outweigh the benefit.

Hypothetically, I wonder if the residents of Lake Pleasant would sacrifice their quality of life and land values for the rest of the town if the airport expansion would guarantee the town a contracted reoccurring income from a regional airline sufficient to build the town's public safety facility. We could restrict the air traffic from nine to five and limit the daily activity to fifty aircraft per day. I imagine that their reaction would be: NIMBY.

During his power point presentation, Police Chief Zukowski showed a picture of the new public safety building in Lunenburg, MA. The town of Lunenburg with a population of just under 10,000 people managed to plan, develop and finance a public safety building, library and a new grade school. The combined cost for these capital projects is approximately \$20.8 million dollars. All of this expense, excluding a \$3.2 million dollar grant, is borne by every prop-

erty owner in the community. They did not segregate a portion of their residents to carry the burden for the rest of the community. This is an example of a community that can make the tough financial choices, not a community focused on myopic financial solutions and town members that decry citizens that utter NIMBY but proclaim DAMBY, (Don't Assess My Back Yard).

In weighing our obvious needs we must look at the sacrifice of our fellow neighbors and the well being of our community. Our desire to see our town prosper should not be borne by a small segment of our community. I hope that the capital improvements committee, town meeting members, selectboard and town residents can fully review all available options before considering an option that will devalue one town resident to improve the quality of life for the other.

Don't Criticize; Get Involved!

BY DOUG DZIADZIO

MONTAGUE - It's no coincidence that the Capital Improvements Committee focused on developing a prioritized list of capital projects in the last couple of years. My concern as a member of the CIC was it was important for the community to understand what some of the largest long-unmet capital needs in town were, and what their potential costs might be. Along the way we had long, public discussions with the Police Department, Senior Center, Parks and Recreation, and Libraries on the potential for developing

proposals to meet their capital needs at minimum cost to the town.

In what I see as a spirit of cooperation, various study committees for combined facilities formed. They should be commended and encouraged, not criticized. I understand that each group also had a series of public meetings where ideas started to gel and led to the presentations at town meeting. While I appreciate many of the sentiments that were raised at town meeting regarding the formation of new committees and the funding of new studies, I think this is probably the best

process we can hope for to gain a wider understanding of various proposals with greater community input.

While I speak for myself, I think I can say with some confidence the CIC didn't move forward with these ideas as part of some conspiracy to paint the landfill proposal in a better light. In fact, I think the individual members of the committee reflect many of the same concerns and skepticism the community as a whole shares.

As someone who is on a couple of committees in town, I'm often surprised at the lack of public participation in public

meetings, unless it's something that personally affects you. It seems that only after a small, dedicated group of volunteers does the best job they can, do people come out and criticize or comment on what they've done. I, for one, would love to see some of the energy that is expressed in the valid, often insightful feedback on pages such as this be directed towards greater involvement in the process - the town and its committees are always looking for volunteers.

Even knowing the dire capital needs of the town, I'm not yet convinced moving forward

with the landfill makes sense. I guess I need to know more about a specific proposal before I make a judgment, and I think that is the process we're following, however messy it's turning out to be. As for the airport, I've come to support the proposed improvements there, if somewhat reluctantly. If only we were back in the 50s and had a chance to decide if we want to create an airport. Unfortunately, we're not, and the questions we have to answer in maintaining or closing the airport have very different consequences and costs.

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Jean Donovan, CRS, ABR
 BROKER

Teens Tackle Issues of Racism, Homophobia

BY DAVID DETMOLD

TURNERS FALLS - With immigrants - legal and illegal - turning out by the hundreds of thousands this weekend in cities around the country to rally for immigration reform, it is obvious America is on the verge of coming to terms with its changing identity. Are we a country of immigrants made strong by the talents and strengths of its growing ethnic diversity, or are we a protectionist society willing to guard what we've got with a 2,000-mile wall between San Diego and Brownsville, Texas? While questions like these are sorted out nationally, in the heartland the changing demographics of America continue to be sorted out on the local level, even in the corridors and lunchrooms of rural high schools here

in Franklin County.

On Tuesday, April 11th, 300 high school students and educators gathered for a day-long conference at the Great Falls Middle School called, "Youth Take Action to Make a Difference." One of the major themes dealt with in the assembly and play that kicked off the day's workshops - and the theme of many of the workshops themselves - was racism.

The play - Delayed Opening - put on by the Franklin Tech Conflict Resolution Theater Group, dealt with class and gender conflict at a rural high school. It focused on the interactions of a group of students at school and at an after school party, and was notable for how mean most of the characters were to each other. Even charac-

ters who were supposed to be best friends put each other down routinely, as when one girl tells her boyfriend, "I'm not going to sleep with you," and her girlfriends shout out in harmony, "Too late for that!"

But most of the vitriol was reserved for one transgendered youth named Marcus, who called himself, "A guy trapped in a female's body," and Spence, a Latino who bears the brunt of racists remarks only to turn around and dis Marcus for her sexuality, and her friend Tyler for being gay. The play ends with a lot more healing than some of the students who spoke up in the talk back session afterwards or in the Fighting Racism workshop that followed may experience in real life.

The play's director, Court Dorsey, said, "Adults never know as well as young people what's going on in a school. We are really lucky these young people are honest and willing to say what's going on."

Sitting on the edge of the stage after the show, one of the cast members said, "There are a lot of homosexuals in our school. We thought we might as well put it out there. There's a lot of verbal abuse... people will say, 'Fag,' or 'Spic,' just to be cool. They don't think. Words hurt, even if you're just trying to be cool."

The young man who played Kevin, a kid into hate music (his favorite CD is by a band called Bucket of Filth) and white supremacy, was asked how common those attitudes are in his school. He answered, "Our school has a very low percentage of colored people. You hear it all the time, 'I can't stand black people; I can't stand Hispanics.'"

"Because whites are such a large majority, that plays a large

role in it," answered another youth. "There are only about six colored people in my school."

At that, a white teenager stood up in the audience and said, "You have no idea how dated that word 'colored' is." She said the proper term to use these days is 'people of color.'

A young Latina woman replied, "I'm fine being called Latina, Hispanic, colored person. I don't think it is for a person of another race to be offended for me."

A young black woman echoed her remark. "I don't think people of color find that offensive. We called white people 'white', and that's a color too."

Later, in the Fighting Racism workshop facilitated by two Latina teenagers, Marilyn Lorenzo of Turners Falls and Adriana Lara of Greenfield, 18 white youths and 10 students of color broke down into small groups to create working definitions of racism, roleplay situations where racial discrimination is a common element, and discuss personal stories of how racism has affected their lives.

One white teenager said, "My dad is a racist. He uses the N-word. But out on the tobacco field, he's best friends with the Mexicans."

He went on to say, "I think hicks cause the most racism."

Lorenzo challenged him. "What's a hick? A hick is just

another stereotype."

He replied, "A hick is someone with cow manure on their boots, who chews tobacco and uses the N-word. You can tell if someone is a hick by looking at them. My school is full of hicks. They go around saying, 'Yeah, I'm a hick; I'm a racist.'"

The young man said he lived in Leyden Woods, where, "All my friends are people of color. I'm not racist. Everyone should be treated equally."

A young white girl from Greenfield High said, "In my school, everyone says, 'You're a fag,' or 'You're a Jew.'"

Among the working definitions of racism the groups of teenagers came up with are these. "Any form of discrimination used against any group of people to gain power," and "A system favoring a supreme race that limits opportunity to an individual based on their race," and "Discrimination based on skin color, ethnicity or other background, which can include acts of hate and violence."

It's too bad they have come to understand the definition of racism so well, but there was a sense, from the positive way in which these young people worked together on the stage and in the workshop, that they will come to a better understanding of how to live in a multi-racial society soon enough.

MCTV Schedule CHANNEL 17

April 14th-20th

9:30 p.m. After The Storm

Eagle All Day From 6 a.m. to 7 p.m.

10:30 p.m. From The Archives

Tuesday, April 18

7 p.m. Montague

Friday, April 14

6 p.m. From The Discovery Center

9:30 p.m. Women in Science

7 p.m. Montague

Selectboard From 4/10/06

10:30 p.m. From The Archives

9:30 p.m. Montague

Update: Pat Carlisle

10:30 GaiaVision

Wednesday, April 19

7 p.m. Selectboard

Saturday, April 15

6 p.m. From The Discovery Center

9:30 p.m. Montague

8 p.m. GMRSD School Committee From 4/11/06

Update: Pat Carlisle

10:30 p.m. Teachers At Sea

9:30 p.m. Women and HIV

Thursday, April 20

7 p.m. GMRSD School Committee From 5/11/06

Sunday, April 16

6 p.m. Skate Park Meeting

9:30 p.m. Skate Park Meeting

8 p.m. Landfill Proposer

Debrief

11 p.m. GaiaVision

9:30 p.m. Montague

Update: Board of Assessors

10:30 p.m. GaiaVision

Local producers, or people who have ideas for shows or events they would like to videotape, please contact MCTV at 863-9200.

Monday, April 17

7 p.m. Skate Park Meeting



Harvey Kellyhouse and John Zebrowski at the scene of a Taylor Hill accident in this vintage Montague police photo.

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NOTES FROM THE MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

New Industrial Park in the Works

BY PATRICK RENNICK - For years, Montague town officials have discussed the need to find a way to expand the area of the industrial park, or start a new one. Land on the opposite side of Millers Falls Road owned by Northeast Utilities has long been eyed as an ideal location for that expansion. Town planner Robin Sherman gave the selectboard good news on Monday, April 10th, saying she and representatives of the Montague Economic Development Industrial Corporation sat down last week with executives of Northeast Utilities and Western Massachusetts Electric Company to start the process of developing a new industrial park on Millers Falls Road. Sherman said NU and WMECo are "willing to make 100 acres of land on Millers Falls Road available for industrial development, and they're committed to working with the town and the nonprofit WestMass Area Development Corporation to investigate the feasibility of the new industrial park and start the design and permitting process."

is very limited space available in other industrial parks around the county. It's really critical we start the planning now so that when our businesses - or other businesses around the county - have the need to expand we will have the capacity available."

Sherman made the announcement as part of an update to the board on advances the town has made in implementing the June 2004 Economic Development Plan. Among other areas of progress she noted were advances in government infrastructure, like a new town website and a central municipal phone system, a feasibility study for redeveloping the Strathmore Mill, which she said she has been handing out to interested parties, and planning for re-use of the old Cumberland Farms building at 38 Avenue A as a possible cultural center, integrated with the neighboring Great Falls Discovery Center.

While funding for that building's renovation is being sought, Sherman got the board's approval to move the newly hired Turners Falls cultural coordinator, Lisa Davol, into the Cumberland Farms building on

a temporary basis. Davol, who has been hired with MassCultural Council Adams Grant funds to coordinate the River Culture economic development project for Turner Falls, is working with a steering committee of artists and residents to set up a community association to promote the downtown as a destination for cultural activities and tourism centered on the town's proximity to the Connecticut River.

Sherman said the town is working with Senator Stan Rosenberg and Congressman John Olver to secure funding to renovate the interior and exterior of the Cumberland Farms store so "it doesn't look like a convenience store. We could use the center to showcase the cultural history of the Connecticut River," which would complement the work of the neighboring Discovery Center, which showcases the natural history of the river, Sherman said.

In other news, a decision has been made to split the Montague building study committee into two separate groups, one for the police station, and the other for a multi-purpose community cen-

ter. The former members of the building study committee will continue serving, but they will be divided between the two new committees.

"There will be some seats opened up on both committees," town administrator Frank Abbondanzio told the board.

"If a village feels unrepresented, there will be spaces available," said selectboard chair Allen Ross.

At the March 23rd special town meeting, precinct representatives approved \$25,000 for a feasibility study for a new police station or safety complex, and \$65,000 to study the feasibility of building a joint-use complex to be shared by the main branch of the Montague public library, the Gill-Montague senior center, and the parks and recreation committee.

Water Pollution Control Facility superintendent Bob Trombley presented a bid of \$4800 for a new roof on the administration building of the treatment plant, with an added

cost of \$400 for each extra visit the Worcester-based contractor makes to the site. He claimed a third bid was not required by statute, due to the dollar amount of the project. Trombley came to this conclusion after discussing the construction bid with the Inspector General's office.

"The pricing of materials is very favorable this year," said Trombley. "The amount for the project would normally be much more"

A special proclamation was made by the selectboard for April 13th through May 31st, to be known as Senior Fitness Weeks. The Montague Senior Center will put on a variety of events throughout those weeks, including today's health fair at St. Anne's. Belly dancing lessons, yoga classes, and a nutrition speech are also planned.

"We're not talking about making people competitive marathon runners," said selectboard member Allen Ross. "But

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Throwing the Book at 'em

Friday 3-31 8:05 p.m. - After a motor vehicle stop on Millers Falls Road, [redacted] was arrested and charged with operating a motor vehicle under the influence of liquor, and a marked lanes violation.

Saturday 4-1 11:33 p.m. - After a motor vehicle stop in front of Brooks on Avenue A, [redacted] was arrested and charged with being a minor transporting alcohol and miscellaneous motor vehicle equipment violations.

11:59 p.m. - Officer observed a suspicious motor vehicle in Brooks parking lot. [redacted] was arrested and charged with domestic assault and battery.

Sunday 4-2 7:13 a.m. - Report of an assault at a G

Street address, [redacted], was arrested and charged with domestic assault and battery.

Thursday 4-6 12:44 a.m. - Report of a suspicious motor vehicle on Davis Street. A 14-year-old juvenile male was arrested and charged with having an obstructed license plate, failure to stop for a police officer, unlicensed operation of a motor vehicle, failure to stop or yield, reckless operation of a motor vehicle, speeding, and using a motor vehicle without authority (2nd offence).

10:22 p.m. - After a motor vehicle stop on Avenue A, [redacted] was arrested and charged with operating after license was revoked, for being a habitual traffic offender, having no inspection sticker, possession of a class B drug, and failure to stop for a police officer.

Friday 4-7 7:05 p.m. - After a motor vehicle stop in front of the post office on Avenue A, [redacted] was arrested and charged with unlicensed operation of a motor vehicle and traffic sign violations.

Sunday 4-9 5:07 p.m. - Walk-in to station reported a domestic disturbance at a 2nd Street address. [redacted] was arrested and charged with domestic assault and battery, malicious destruction of property under \$250, possession of a class D drug.

Tuesday 4-11 4:38 p.m. - Report of a domestic disturbance at a Winthrop Street address in Millers Falls. [redacted] was arrested and charged with domestic assault and battery.

EAGLE WATCH

Our First Eagle Baby

BY PAT CARLISLE GREAT FALLS - Please take a peek at our first eagle baby! The chick was first seen on Monday, April 10th, and we're watching closely for a second hatch on the 13th or 14th.

Again this year our local access MCTV Channel 17 shows live nest activity from the Barton Cove eagle nest from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. Greenfield's GCTV Channel 15 offers many surrounding towns eagle nest

in Turners Falls. The center is open on Friday and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., with extended hours during school vacation week. There is also a website where the eagles can be observed: www.nu.com.eagles/default.asp.



Our eagle babies are adorable! They are fed fresh fish brought to the nest by their parents and grow and change daily. We watch every year as they

watching from 6 to 8 a.m. All folks who do not have local access television can watch our eagle family at the Great Falls Discovery Center

grow, test their wings and all too soon, leave the nest. Consider this your invitation to view the eagles at Barton Cove!

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WENDELL continued from pg 1

bring the stabilization fund as low as \$60,000. Keller brought up library fundraising, and Margo Culley of the Friends of the Wendell Library said the Friends did not have the money yet but were expecting a possible large contribution.

Building committee member Jerry Barilla summed up the financial situation by saying the committee is looking to cut \$160,000 from the construction budget. Papers that made their way around the room listed various ways to cut construction costs, but no firm numbers were given for each option. Tom Wetherby, who works in contractor sales, George Dole and Mark Sullivan were able to give some estimates. These options included reducing the wall studs from 2 x 8 to 2 x 6 and so reducing insulation, eliminating the scissor trusses, high ceiling and cupola at the town offices, eliminating air conditioning, eliminating one toilet in the library that would not be clustered with the other plumbing, eliminating some fill, having the town do the finish paving at the town offices, substituting sheet vinyl flooring for tile, and changing the interior door style. Heidekamp has that list among her papers at the library.

Heidekamp said she had a source for used shelving that could save \$40,000 out of the \$60,000 budgeted for that item, but the town would have to move it and store it. She sug-

gested the town look to save money on furniture, fixtures, and equipment that might be paid for later with grants or contributions from the Friends. She said these construction projects are past the conception stage, and are beginning their birth process, and those in the room and in the town are now acting as midwives in a birth that is not starting easy.

Barilla said he leaned toward eliminating air conditioning to save a significant amount of money, also because air conditioning is an extravagant use of energy that feeds into our national consumption.

Sullivan pointed out that each dollar saved through value engineering was cost to the contractor, and translated to a smaller savings to the town. Dole said Handford's bid was \$200,000 lower than the next bid, and they have a reputation for being hard to bid against. Sullivan suggested signing the contract with them, and then locking building committee members and Handford people in a room and letting them out only after an agreement is reached. He suggested, "It can be done."

Committee member Jim Slavos said he was against gutting the town office plans to save as little as 50 cents for every dollar taken from the budget, and suggested getting new bids for the library, and working with Margo Jones to create a smaller, simpler town office building. He failed to see possible savings

through value engineering on the scale needed, and he thought that reducing contingency money at this point was asking for trouble.

Selectman Ted Lewis said he was as much afraid of borrowing as anyone, but he thought that if bids went out again, new bids would just come in higher. Wetherby agreed saying, "I can't see cutting the town office size or rejecting the bids hoping that new bids will come in lower." Delaying will cost more. Lewis mentioned increasing interest rates, and Keller said delaying the start will increase cost by bringing construction into the winter months. The vote was taken and passed four to one to increase borrowing from \$1.2 million to \$1.3 million, and Keller said he would talk with John Ryan about help on the (30-page) application for a USDA loan.

In other business, Lewis asked town coordinator Nancy Aldrich if she had any word from the electric company about connecting power to the temporary office trailers at the highway garage. She had not, but she said telephones were scheduled to be connected Friday, April 7th. She said she could continue to work at the current office building, and go visit the trailers several times a day to respond to messages until the trailers were hooked up to electricity and she could move her computer. By Tuesday of the following week, April 11th, power and phone lines had still not been hooked

up, as wrangling about down payments continued with the utilities.

A warrant of five articles was signed and a date set for a special town meeting at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, April 20th. Article one would authorize additional money for the septic system, article two would pay a ZBA legal fee, three and four change articles from the annual town meeting, and five is to enact any other legal business.

Sharon Gensler had arranged to use the town hall at that same time (Thursday, April 20th) for the last of a three part NOFA film series she has been showing at the senior center. The senior center will be closed then, so the selectboard agreed to contact her and ask her to change the date of the movie.

Town moderator Kathy Becker expects to be away in June and asked that the annual town meeting be held earlier this year. Finance committee chair Michael Idoine feels he will not be ready that early; Keller said

there would be no numbers from the state until June, and selectboard member Christine Heard added that the town meeting has been held in June for several years now. No date was set.

Dog officer Maggie Houghton met the selectboard because of ongoing dog complaints from one neighborhood, where she said complaints were not simply about dogs, but about larger conflicts between the neighbors. In answer to Keller's question, Aldrich said the town's mediation budget had \$30 in it. Heard thought maybe the selectboard should meet the parties, and Lewis suggested an executive session because of the personalities and names. But Houghton said one party is unable to attend Wednesday evening selectboard meetings. Then Heard asked Houghton to suggest mediation not paid for by the town, and the selectboard asked Houghton to give the names involved to Aldrich so she could contact them to



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE WENDELL POLICE LOG

Campers Allowed

Wednesday, 3-22

Abandoned car reported on Cold Brook Road. Hampshire College student camping in State Forest.

Friday, 3-24

Car vs. deer accident on Montague Road.

Saturday, 3-25

Campers reported on Old Egypt Road. Have permission.

Sunday, 4-2

Neighborhood disturbance reported at Mountain Laurel trailer park. Officer spoke with both parties.

LEWIS continued from pg 1

but on that one, "I'm glad now I lost." His early philosophy that, "You don't do anything to infringe on the rights of your neighbors," has mellowed somewhat. So has his reflex against ever borrowing for town projects.

When he first got on the board, they used to meet in the home of the selectboard clerk, Anne Hartjens (who went on to become town clerk in 1972, the post she still fills). Shortly thereafter, Lewis said, at his insistence, the board began holding meetings in the top floor of the old fire station, so the public could attend. Now, the crowded town offices the board has shared for many years with the senior center - where other local boards stack their files in the common hallway, the tax collector holds court in a tiny cubicle, and the administrative coordinator and building inspector jockey for space in the same room as the selectboard - are soon to be a memory. The town offices are

moving to temporary quarters in trailers by the highway garage next week, in preparation for the construction of a new library, a new town office building on land purchased by the common, and a new septic system and water supply for the municipal buildings. Town meeting authorized borrowing up to \$1.3 million for these projects, which will cost in excess of \$3 million.

"I knew the town needed offices, but I never thought we'd do it this way. The town doesn't own any land, that's why we couldn't expand." Land for town buildings like the old library had been donated by neighbors, Lewis explained, and the plots were only a bit larger than the footprint of the buildings.

"We need to expand, and this is the prime time to do it. It's going to be hard."

But Lewis admitted the major municipal projects in the town center would have been a lot harder to build and pay for had it not been for the foresight and thrift of the town's finance com-

mittee, under the guidance of folks like Lee Trousdale, Dan Keller, and Ann Zak.

"When I first came on board, there was no finance committee," Lewis said. "If Ann Zak were here she would tell you, I fought that damn thing. I was wrong." He said 15 years ago, the town was in such poor financial shape it had to borrow by the end of the fiscal year just to fund the operating budget. "But Lee, he would have us sock away anything under the levy limit into stabilization, year after year, saving up for this. He looked ahead."

Asked to look ahead to priorities for his next term, should the voters grant him one, Lewis said, "I aim to get these buildings built, that is the big one." He credited the building committees with doing "a marvelous job." And, though he said he didn't expect to see this change come about in his term of office, Lewis said he intended to work toward connecting the houses in the center of town to a town sewer line down to the Erving side waste-


water treatment plant.

"I don't like these mound systems." He said homeowners were forced to spend \$15,000 to \$30,000 to meet septic requirements, and in 20 or 30 years, when the systems fail, they have to do them all over again. "I'd like to stop these ugly mounds on your lawn; I hate 'em. To me: 'Do away with 'em. Lay the pipe.'"

He said the biggest mistake the town made under his watch was awarding the contract for the new highway garage to a disreputable contractor, who cut corners on the job which the town is still making up for. He said relations with Lake Grove Maple Valley School were better in years past, before the "New York people" took over. "They used to listen to us, when we asked them to do something. These New York people, they think they're better than us." He defended the town's oversight of the D&B Landfill on Mormon Hollow Road, saying the state was in the driver's seat on that project, after the town signed off

on the permit. "A bunch of us went down to Dave Howland's office at the DEP to complain," when the operators exceeded their permit requirements, "but it did no good." He aims to work with other small towns in the STAR group to petition the state for fair payment in lieu of taxes on state land, which makes up a large percentage of Wendell's total acreage. In the recent state budget outline, Wendell was hurt badly by the loss of \$142,000 in PILOT funds, he said.

Lewis served as Wendell's first fulltime highway boss, before he became selectman. He also served as assessor, constable, and on the board of health. He knows the town like the back of his hand, and likes it pretty well. With the old families and the newcomers now blending in the school and town committees, he says, "I really think the town is working together. Wendell, for a town that doesn't offer much more than a place to live, it's got a lot of great people living in it."

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NOTES FROM THE GILL-MONTAGUE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Elementary Study Group Report Discussed

BY PATRICK RENNICK - Following the evening's regular business, an additional hour was set aside during Tuesday's (4/11) Gill-Montague school committee meeting to discuss the results of the final report of the recently dissolved Elementary Study Group (ESG).

The Elementary Study Group's charge was to "seek public input and prepare an educational impact statement for public review on the most effective elementary configuration and program for the district," according to a statement prepared by the school committee. A survey was created by a sub-committee of the study group and sent to 1000 random households in the district.

The survey's results showed the strongest values criteria for the school system to be: class size, effective and inspiring teachers and staff, varied curriculum, adequate support staff (SPED paraprofessionals, full-time nurse), a healthy and safe school climate, and community support. The survey rated the current elementary school configuration as the least favorable. The data showed that the most widely favored configuration would be a one-school model with full consolidation.

The Gill-Montague schools currently have one K-6 elementary school in Gill, one K-3 elementary school in Montague Center, a K-2 at Hillcrest and a grade 3 - 6 school at Sheffield.

"The group was presented as a way to start to organize ideas," said Marie Colton a former member of the ESG. "As a member. I did not feel that our results were in any way a final report."

Committee member Richard Colton said, "I think we all agree that the main concern here is the quality of education. This central theme seems to be lost in this study."

"We don't need to make a decision based on this," said school committee chair Mary Kociela. "I think it is clear that we can't. We may not agree on what came out, but that is where we need to move forward."

"We didn't have a professional consultant to help us," said Superintendent Sue Gee. "We are more concerned with the criteria shown, rather than the ratings."

"I had understood that public involvement was important here," said Jeanne Weintraub of Montague Center. "When and where will this happen?"

"I think that we could gather some more information and then invite the public to a meeting," said Kociela. "I think that would be a great idea." The elementary study group was placed on the next school committee agenda for further discussion.

In Other News

Gee went over the position requirements for the new positions of Principal of Secondary Education and Assistant Principal of Secondary Education. The guidelines were modeled after the present description for the principal of Turners Falls High School. Some of the new duties and responsibilities for the positions will include the use of data from MCAS and AYP test rankings to identify goals for improving student achievement and an emphasis on the importance of the continuance of middle school philosophies. Gee also suggested an additional 25 days of employment for the Assistant Principal of Secondary Education, increasing the yearly term to 210 days for that post.

"The extra days will allow the assistant to adequately support the principal," said Gee. "I have adopted this after looking at the same position in other school districts."

Under state law, a coordina-

tor position will be created for a mentoring program for teachers. The coordinator will act as a support for teachers in the district by providing professional instruction and training.

"Many teachers leave within their first three years of teaching because they lack support," said Gee. "Although the program is written into Massachusetts law, the state will not be providing us with any training or funding."

The school committee is now ready to disperse the 15 electric cars that were donated to the district. The cars will be given to the Franklin County Technical School, the Montague police, the water pollution control facility, the parks and recreation department, and highway department, the Franklin Medical Center, and one car will be shared by the Gill police and fire departments.

"I took a ride in one of the cars the other day," said Gee. "They are quite fun to ride in."

The committee was asked to approve the Jonathan Edwards Academy as a private school within the district. All of the committee members were in favor with the exception of committee member Ted Castro-Santos.

"It makes me uncomfortable that we have to vote at all," said Santos. "I am wondering about their views on science, as a Christian school. I don't really want to vote on this at all."

"What we have found in the past when reviewing Christian school curricula is that they are very careful in meeting state standards," said Gee. "It is hard to evaluate the degree to which Christianity influences the courses."

"Which they have the right to do," said Castro-Santos. "I just don't understand why we need to vote."

UMass landscape architect students have entered into a

partnership with the Sheffield and Hillcrest Elementary Schools. The 23 seniors will be completing a project that will explore options for the schools' landscapes, such as the introduction of indigenous plants. The students will present their plan on May 8th at the Sheffield school at 4:30 p.m.

Friends to Meet
The next meeting of the Friends of the Montague Reporter will be held May 15th at 7 p.m., 24 3rd St. TF

Congratulations
Harriet Booth, grade 9, of Gill, was named to the Academic High Honor Roll for the winter term at Northfield Mt Hermon.

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GILL

continued from pg 1
 tion. Maddern runs the Gill Greenery, a sprout-making business that produces 400 to 450 pounds of sprouts a week, which he distributes from Springfield to Putney to the Berkshires. He recalls, "Everyone had a cow when I was growing up" in Gill. "There were a lot of small processing plants, and a number of large dairy farms," including the Northfield Mount Hermon farm, the Flagg Farm, the Urgiels, the Hastings, Howard Jackson's, and the Zak Farm, just to name a few. Now, he can only think of two dairy farms still operating in Gill.

"It's changed a lot," said Maddern. He characterized the change as the result of "the invasion coming to Gill from the East and the South," and said the new folks moving into town "don't necessarily know what they're getting into," because now, perhaps, their neighbors keep cows that "stink," or the farmers may drop "dirt" on the road.

Another change, Maddern noted, lies in the downsizing of agricultural enterprises in Gill from large scale dairy farming to



DETMOLD PHOTOS

A farm on Main Road in Gill

smaller scale vegetable production, or greenhouse operations like his, that operates on about 3,000 square feet. "The farmers don't need millions of acres any more," said Maddern. "They're growing groceries, not grazing cows."

Ironically, if the town is not careful, this downsizing may lead to a loss of the open space that helped attract newcomers to Gill in the first place, Maddern said. He pointed to the Kuzontkoski property that lies between Main Road and Boyle Road near the Gill Elementary School. This open farmland once supported a large potato crop, but now will sprout 12 new homes, if development in progress moves forward as planned.

At the Monday night meeting, growers like Daniel Botkin, from the Laughing Dog CSA (community supported agriculture) organic farm on the other side of Main Road from the Kuzontkoski parcel sat around the table with bee-keepers and small producers like Bill Burnham, Shirley Flagg, whose farm produces corn and hay and beef cattle, Roger and Kathy Augustine, who also raise beef cows, horses, and bees, Karen Cole, who "used to be a dairy farmer" and John Duda, who said he is "the third generation on the farm," in his family. Duda said he is "hoping to keep the option open for his kids and grandchildren." Two young women who plan to open a riding stable soon on Main Road

were also there, as was Ernie Hastings, who said he had just gotten back from spreading manure on some of his land.

"I've got some unhappy neighbors," Hastings said, "If eight of 'em come into town hall complaining about the smell, they'll get supported before I do. When it comes to a dispute between a farmer and a fancy house, we need someone to stand up for the farmer."

Storrow said the agriculture commission could help mediate disputes between neighbors about farm issues, or could work on passing a "Right to Farm" bylaw in town. Duda pointed out that anyone with more than five acres already has a right to farm in town, according to the zoning bylaws, but Storrow said,

"There are not too many real bona fide active farmers" of that size in town; that many of the agricultural enterprises are now smaller operations who need a voice in town affairs too.

The group decided to set up a steering committee to meet next Tuesday, April 18th, at 7:00 p.m. at the town hall, to come up with a mission statement for the group, propose the make-up of the commission, and adopt the wording for a warrant article for town meeting. Maddern said that wording would need to be complete by the end of next



Scene at the Upinngil Farm on Main Road

week, in order to be included on the annual town warrant this May.

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PLAY
 continued from pg 1

tions to stifle innovation in the marketplace, and transforming those controversies into biting repartee between the two principals: Justice Daniel Snow, the lion of liberal dissent (Kip Fonsh) and his distaff ideological opposite, Judge Ruth Loomis (Sharon Weyers). There are other actors who are given bits of stage time, notably Chief Justice ('C.J.') James Crafford, (Phil Hayes), who veers between harried head coach and partisan player in the justices' intramural squabble, and the delightfully obsequious law clerk Mason Woods (David Grout), who lights up the stage with his every entrance, but except for these, and the occasional procession of seven staid jurists in the background, this is really a two-person performance.

The good news is that Fonsh

and Weyers are so very good. Though they are given difficult material, they work it to the hilt, and manage to make sparks fly with little more than their characters' mettle. Fonsh cuts a curmudgeonly figure in his cardigan sweater, but he invests him with an endearing egotism, a caustic, suffer-no-fools sarcasm, and finally a touch of humanity in his face-off with Loomis. For her part, Weyers manages to breathe a little warmth into the prudish, mother-knows-best conservative, rises to the bait Fonsh sets in their intellectual sparring, and parries him with wit and passion.

It may seem an odd bill of fare for a night at the theater, (the play was written by Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee, who gave us *Inherit the Wind* about the Scopes Trial and *The Night Thoreau Spent in Jail*, along with the runaway Broadway smash *Mame*),

but give it a chance, it'll grow on you.

The Country Players production, directed by Richard Martin, zigzags between drama and comedy, with Grout playing the fool amid the justices' Olympian thundering. Grout could make you laugh just by looking at you cross-eyed, and he does. There is one very funny set piece where all but one of the justices (Fonsh has better things to do, having prejudged the issue) take time to watch the object of the obscenity case on their docket - *the Naked Nymphomaniac* - in the basement screening room, with the uninvited Grout managing to sneak in the back row for an ogle or two.

If you like your civics lesson with a side of slapstick, check out the Country Players' *First Monday in October*, April 14th and 15th at the Shea.

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THE OCCASIONAL DINER

Fine Food, Relaxed Conversation at Ristorante DiPaolo

BY PAM HANOLD

TURNERS FALLS - My friends are finding that my recitation of all the reasons to come visit in Turners Falls is taking longer and longer. The most recent addition to my, "You would really enjoy...." list is Ristorante DiPaolo.

After two tasty dinners out with tolerant friends who generously shared bites and all ordered different items, I can share impressions of enough food to keep one eating out every night for a week or more.

Having eaten or at least tasted eight entrees, four appetizers, one salad, and six desserts, I can both recommend choosing your dinner from anywhere on the menu and suggest sitting within 'fork reach' of your companions if you enjoy trying new flavor combinations.

I look forward to return visits when I can eat all of the fried calamari, which was particularly wonderful, with slender slices of sweet potatoes and leeks, lightly floured and fried to a tender fresh crispness. Or maybe the entire bowl of mussels, sopping up all the sauce myself with fresh Italian bread. I'd save for later trips the shrimp and scallops in a ginger and mango coulis, the wonderful antipasto plate, and the eggplant layered with mozzarella and parmesan cheese. All the appetizers were deemed "very good," so future orders will depend on the preferences of the moment.

The one special salad order we tried, the insalata sfiziosa, with pears, beets, pine nuts and cheese in baby spinach was very good and big enough for a meal with or without an appetizer or cup of the daily soup. The ingredients were all very tasty with specific com-

pliments on the dressing.

All entrees come with a small dinner salad. Unlike many restaurants where this is very generic, this house salad added a tasty bite of hearts of palm. A nice surprise and good set-up for the entrees.

I'd like to say I particularly recommend certain entrées, but I cannot. All were quite distinct in flavor and very good to excellent choices. Pork with mashed yucca and pico di gallo, combined fresh, tender, and new flavors in a delicious way. The grilled tuna steak was consistently melt-in-the-mouth tender. A mushroom ravioli was richly satisfying - and generous enough to be one of the few entrees with some left to enjoy the next day.

Pork loin with tamarind and mushroom glaze worked well as a new taste combination, though I would have liked a bit more fruity tang if possible. Risotto con frutta di mare had a light tomato flavor, perfectly cooked risotto and very flavorful scallops, shrimp and mussels in the shell. Seafood in both the linguini dishes was tender with nicely varied sauces. The black linguini added a nice touch which one of the diners found to be so good he ate too quickly, and I got only one forkful.

Last but not least were the desserts, none of which made it beyond the table despite six 'full' diners ordering five desserts in the interest of this review. All were called very



Ristorante DiPaolo Chef Hilton Dottin and owner Denise DiPaolo

good, but the tiramisu and strawberry napoleon were agreed to be the most 'outstanding.' A milk chocolate mousse disappeared quickly.

On opening night, a dark chocolate mousse had been presented most spectacularly with caramelized spun sugar and whipped cream, though I would have preferred it slightly less sweet, with a stronger dark flavor.

Espresso coffee, strong and dark, finished the meal nicely, especially with the added bite of biscotti and citrus rind.

As was true on opening night, on our recent visit the restaurant was very full. Both times, however, the table arrangement allowed for easy, normally pitched conversation with a sense of relaxed privacy. I look forward to its availability on Monday night, when we so often find ourselves forgetting and facing a 'Closed' sign at many other area restaurants.

The serving staff is very personable without being intrusive. As a former server myself, I noticed and appreciated that they work well together pouring water and coffee where needed for all the tables - a good sign of both a cooperative attitude and put-

ting customers before personal territories.

The slow beginning service of opening night was noticeably better the second time around, though I hope for a faster initial offer for drinks once seated, and getting appetizers more promptly.

Personally, I prefer to have

any waiting time between the appetizer and entree rather than when I am first seated.

However, I expect this will improve as the staff continues working out the details and pressures of unusually busy nights.

Ristorante DiPaolo is open at 5:00 p.m., every day but Tuesday, with the kitchen closing at 9 Sunday to Thursday, and at 10 Friday and Saturday. Reservations are advised, but walk-ins are welcomed. Look for me and wave, but stay out of reach of my fork unless you like sharing.

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Inside the 43rd Annual River Rat Race

BY JOSH HEINEMANN

ATHOL - In order for any one year to stand out as a spectacular success, other years have to be less stellar. For us, this 43rd annual running of the River Rat Race, my 28th, was one of those grey background years. Katie and I were both still feeling the tail end of the March sickness, the one that hangs on for weeks, but we did manage two practices (if you can call them that). We put the canoe in the water and paddled once in the sun and wind, once under a grey sky that treated us to a sprinkle of rain and the song of redwing blackbirds.

Rat Race day began with a telephone call waking us up; we were already late. I had to make a big pot of coffee, some for now and some for Irish coffee after the race. I found wool clothing and rain gear, a dry bag to carry a change of clothing to the finish line. Got paddles, life vests, and paddling gloves; at least the boats were already loaded and tied down. Outside was 30 degrees or so, the sky was grey, but the rain had already passed through, and the wind was light.

We left home and got to the parade start in time to get into our costumes, a tree with a raccoon and a crow. For me the parade was a blur, at least partly because my costume required me to take off my glasses. I was assured by others that it was fun, and I did hear children laughing.

There was a short wait before we met our son Pete, and his partner Andrew, unloaded the boats and gear and waited for the start.

I tried to hold a canoe steady for two women who launched in front of us, but they dumped anyway and for some reason didn't bother to thank me as they walked, soaking wet, back up the bank. Then we launched.

We drifted downstream, bow facing the current and then let the current bring the bow around downstream and backed into our



These puppets, showcased in the River Rat Race parade Saturday, April 8th, were made in a series of workshops at the Millers River Environmental Center this March. Is that Josh behind the raccoon?

position, #140, or close enough, just upstream from the left turn the river makes above the Main Street Bridge. Pete and Andrew were just ahead but out of sight, #121. Everyone was friendly and chatting before the cannon, but afterwards it's every boat for itself.

The boat behind us was paddled by two serious racers and we told them, "Sure, you can shove off our gunwales," and they did just that when the cannon went off. Our start felt a bit shaky.

I had foam pipe insulation

taped along the sides of my boat to protect its finish during collisions, and it paid for itself many times in the first half mile. Just past the bridge we felt a sudden lurch to the right, giving me that heart stopping feeling that says, "This is it!" But we saved it somehow.

We passed our neighbors from Wendell, a father-daughter team who had a better starting position, (and she runs all winter!). We passed Pete and Andrew, but I learned later that was because they had been turned around once. We passed one capsized boat and two wet men just below the bridge, and another capsized boat a half mile further down, where there was no reason to dump at all. Sometimes you don't need a reason.

Otherwise we did not pass many boats, and the paddles just got heavier and heavier. Pete and Andrew passed us; we were able to keep them in sight all the way to the finish line, and a few times we started to gain on them but we never caught them.

A couple of times we were stuck side by side next to another canoe, and one of those diamond shape racing boats came in between us separating us like a



River Rats come in all shapes and sizes.

wedge splitting a chunk of wood. Thanks, we couldn't do it ourselves.

We passed a Canada Goose near the right bank. She was watching all these boats going by, and I still wonder what she thought of all of us. She stayed put.

Twice after a hard effort Kate stopped paddling (only a stroke or two she said) and the second time I told her to pull in the foam bumpers where the tape had let go and they were dragging in the water. They were slowing us down. We had an inch of water in the boat. At the finish I discovered my pants and the cuffs of my sweater were soaked, and my hands were freezing. Before the finish I didn't realize it. I just knew we weren't gaining on Pete and Andrew, or the couple on our left in the new aluminum boat.

From some places on the shore the smell of a barbecue wafted over the water. From one place on the left bank a guy shouted, "Hey #140, look back! The guy in back of the boat is not

doing anything; he's just sitting there with his paddle out of the water."

The finish line finally arrived; we put our last hard strokes to pull under it and then looked around. Our neighbors, the father and daughter team,

were right behind us and crossed the finish line before we even turned for the shore. Then came my favorite part of the race - the few minutes of milling around in the water, taking easy strokes over to the stone wall behind the Orange fire station, using the paddle only to keep the boat in place. (One year someone threw a can of beer each down to Katie and me while we were sitting by the wall.) Find a foothold in the stone wall, step out of the boat, climb onto the shore and lift the boat out. Someone on shore always helps. Once on shore I realized how cold I was.

We shared the Irish coffee, and got in a warm car to ride back to Athol and pick up my truck and Pete's car. By the time we returned to load the boats, cold had driven nearly all the people in Orange inside. The two teams rode up to our house in cars, had a cookout (but we ate inside) and planned for next year's spectacular success.

Red Sox Have New Closer

BY LEE CARIGNAN

TURNERS FALLS - Jonathan Papelbon may only be in his first full season in the major leagues, but the young power pitcher has become the new closer for the Boston Red Sox during the team's first road trip.

Going into the season it was believed the closer job was Keith Foulke's to lose. But in just the Red Sox third game of the 2006 season, in their very first save opportunity, Francona bypassed the shaky Foulke and called on the emerging Papelbon to close out a 2-1 victory over the Texas Rangers. Papelbon threw 11 pitches, eight of them for strikes. All 10 of his fastballs were clocked around 95 mph, slamming the door on the Rangers with a force the Sox haven't seen in a long

time. Papelbon already has four-saves on the young season, helping the Sox to their best season start since 1999.

No matter what the Red Sox say or how they try to soften the edges, the message at Ameritrust Field was as blunt as Papelbon's 95-mph fastball. Keith Foulke is out and Jonathan Papelbon is in. After what Manager Terry Francona went through last season with his bullpen he isn't taking any chances.

Papelbon was expected to be a starting pitcher when the Red Sox first drafted him. He made three quality starts last season, but was quickly moved to the bullpen to help aid the struggling Sox relievers. This season, the Sox had good depth with their starting pitching, and were

forced to move the versatile Papelbon to the bullpen once again. Papelbon, who has been compared to a young Roger Clemens, will probably be a starting pitcher for the Red Sox in the future. But for now he will continue to help stabilize the Red Sox bullpen as their closer.

The Red Sox made wholesale changes over the winter, turning over their roster. Most of the adjustments were to provide help for Keith Foulke and Curt Schilling, each of whom struggled during the 2005 season. The Sox needed to get younger and healthier, and they needed to do it quickly. So they traded for Josh Beckett and signed a cast of veteran set-up men, to help free up Papelbon to possibly close, and give the

team depth in their bullpen.

There is a chance Foulke could sour on the Red Sox for the move. He is being paid closer money to now be a setup man with his base salary of \$7.25 million. The early indications suggest otherwise. Foulke said he is content to pitch in whatever role he is asked. The Red Sox have a \$135 million payroll and the highest ticket prices in baseball, so their obligation is to win as many games as possible, and to make any decision that gives them their best chance to win a game.

Foulke, who struggled all last season and his first appearances this year, has pitched better in his last two outings. On Sunday against the Orioles he had two strikeouts and retired the side in order. If he can continue to pitch

we'll
it will
give
the
Red



Sox more options in their bullpen, and take pressure off the other setup men. It also gives Terry Francona another pitcher who can close games for him.

If Foulke is going to close again for the Red Sox on a regular basis he will have to win his job back. Papelbon was the better pitcher last autumn and he continues to be the better choice. There's no way manager Terry Francona wants to start blowing games in April in hopes of rebuilding the confidence of Keith Foulke, who is coming off the worst year of his career.

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FINDING BALANCE: HEALTH TIPS FOR A HAPPY LIFE

Love Letter

BY JENNY CHAPIN

MONTAGUE - If you were to write a love letter to the one you'd looked for all your life - the one you'd dreamed about, hoped to find, and nearly given up hope on finding - what might you say?

"Dearest, Thank goodness I have found you at last. I have been looking everywhere, at the tops of rocky mountains and in low desert valleys, along the shoreline and underneath the waves, behind trees and under rocks large and small. I have been looking for years, holding the faith that I would know you when I saw you. I never gave up, even when my body was so exhausted I wasn't sure how I could go on, my heart so weary with loneliness that I thought it might refuse to keep beating. Many times I thought you were close, but then you disappeared.

"There were times when I nearly forgot I was searching. I got involved in other things, like work, or moving from one coast to the other, or friends who didn't last. I wandered for ages, confused, suffering. Trying to find my way, without knowing what the path looked like, feeling lost.

"You know how when you're 21, thirty-five seems impossibly old? Then at 35, you wish you were 25, only still knowing what you know now. And then 40 - a big deal for me, half my life behind me, with what to show for it?

"That's when it was time to go deeper. The threads were all there already, pieces of my life that made me who I am, things that happened to me and how I responded to them. I'd lived enough, finally, to begin to have a sense of who I am. I could

look at my choices and decide to keep them, change them, or make new ones. I understood that my freedom lay in consciously choosing how I wanted to be, how I wanted to express the deepest feelings in my heart, and what I wanted to give to others.

"Oddly enough, my Beloved, that is when you came to me. I gaze upon you and cannot believe my great good fortune. What joy to have your presence, complementing my own, filling the places in me that felt empty for so long. I was content to wait - although, yes, there were times I felt very impatient, and the fever of that anticipation made me crabby from wanting you near me so much! - and now, the reward for waiting, is receiving this most tremendous present.

"You are the magic that adds

sparkle to my life. You are beyond my wildest dreams. My delight is indescribable; my heart overflows with gratitude, and is submerged into a profound peacefulness."

Can you imagine that this beautiful letter was written to your own self? Though you had turned the search outward, trying to find yourself in someone else, what emerges in the search is that you are the one you've been looking for.

The qualities you find appealing in others are the best qualities in you - that is how you are able to recognize them. Not that we don't need others to be with us through the travails and pleasures of life, but we don't need others to complete



us. We spend our lives looking outside for what resides within, until the day we realize everything we need is inside, just waiting to be called forth.

Keep your heart soft and welcoming, so when the moment comes when you recognize your own self, you are ready to receive. You are just around the corner; you are already right in front of yourself.

Jenny Chapin is a certified acupuncturist, bodyworker, and yoga teacher. Suggest a topic or question for her column at jgchapin@crocker.com.

THE HEALTHY GEEZER

Acupuncture? Are You Nuts?

BY FRED CICETTI,

LEONIA, NJ - *Q. I have arthritis in my knee. I'm thinking about trying acupuncture, but my friends think I'm nuts. What do you think?*

Several recent studies show osteoarthritis symptoms can be relieved with acupuncture. One Scandinavian study reported that 25 percent of patients canceled their plans for knee surgery after acupuncture.

About 15 million Americans have tried this needle therapy. The World Health Organization recommends it for more than 40 conditions as diverse as asthma and nausea from chemotherapy. The Food and Drug Administration regulates acupuncture needles.

So, no, I don't think you're nuts.

By the 3rd century B.C., the

Chinese had documented a medical system that is based on qi (pronounced "chee"), a concept of vital energy that is believed to flow throughout the body.

Qi is said to regulate a person's physical, spiritual, emotional and mental balance. Advocates of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), say qi is affected by yin (negative energy) and yang (positive energy). When the flow of qi is disrupted and yin and yang are unbalanced, the condition leads to pain and disease, according to TCM.

Treatments that are integral to this ancient system are herbal and nutritional therapy, restorative physical exercises, meditation, acupuncture and remedial massage.

To correct the flow of qi, acupuncture uses superfine



ILLUSTRATION: JESSICA HARMON

metal needles inserted into the skin at more than 2,000 "acupoints" along pathways known as "meridians." It is believed that there are 12 main meridians and 8 secondary meridians. The points can also be stimulated with heated herbs, magnets, mild electrical current, manual pressure, low-frequency lasers, or even bee stings.

Most acupuncture patients feel little or no pain as the needles are inserted. Some people are energized by treatment, while others feel relaxed. Improper needle placement, movement of the patient, or a defect in the needle can cause soreness and pain during treatment.

Relatively few complications from acupuncture have been reported to the FDA. However, inadequate sterilization of needles and improper administration have led to complications. When done improperly, acupuncture can cause serious problems such as infections and punctured organs.

Western scientists don't know how acupuncture works. However, studies show that stimulating acupoints causes multiple biologic responses. For example, this stimulation can prompt the release of the body's

natural pain-killing endorphins.

If you are interested in acupuncture, ask your doctor about it. Healthcare practitioners can be a resource for referrals to acupuncturists. More medical doctors, including neurologists, anesthesiologists, and specialists in physical medicine, are becoming trained in acupuncture.

About 10,000 acupuncturists practice in the United States. Most are state-regulated. About 4,000 doctors have completed a recognized acupuncture training program.

Look for an acupuncture practitioner who is licensed and credentialed. And, check with your insurer before you start treatment to see whether acupuncture will be covered for your condition.

If you have a question, please write to fredcicetti@gmail.com


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Help Wanted

Montague Parks and Recreation Department -Summer Playground Staff Director & Counselors

The Montague Parks and Recreation Department is currently seeking reliable, responsible, and enthusiastic individuals for their Summer Playground Staff. We are accepting applications for both the Playground Director position, and Counselor positions. The seven-week Summer Playground Program serves children from the ages of 5 - 12, and is held Mondays through Fridays from July 3 through August 18, 2006. Application Deadline is Thursday, April 21. Certification in First Aid and CPR preferred, but not required. Individuals must provide proof of legal working age. For more information, please contact the MPRD Office at 863-3216. The Town of Montague is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Wickman Hired as Next Union #28 Superintendent

ERVING - Dr. Joan Wickman, principal of the Conwell and Chester Elementary Schools in the Gateway School District, has accepted the post of Superintendent of Union #28 district schools. She was the finalist chosen by the search committee, following final public interviews on March 30th. Her salary is being negotiated. A replacement for Ann Dee Sousa, principal of the Erving Elementary School, has not been chosen yet.

On Monday, April 10th, the selectboard signed the warrant

for annual town meeting, to be held this year on Wednesday, May 3rd, at 7 p.m.

Most of the meeting on the 10th was taken up with negotiations over the size of the '07 school budget. The school committee accepted the finance committee's recommendation for \$105,000 in cuts, but decided to take those cuts entirely from the proposed secondary education budget, in the hope that special education student enrollment will not exceed the capacity of the budget. The school committee held firm on the amount

requested for the Erving Elementary School for '07, at \$1,767,615, up from \$1,668,701 in '06.

On April 3rd, members of the conservation commission met with the selectboard to discuss ways for Erving to become more proactive in preserving open space in town. The board was receptive to the conservation commission's ideas. A further discussion with a representative of the Mount Grace Land Trust and the conservation commission will be on the selectboard's agenda for April 24th.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ERVING POLICE LOG

Drinking and Driving

Wednesday 3-29

3:47 p.m. After a motor vehicle stop on Route 2, [redacted] was arrested on a default warrant and also charged with operating a motor vehicle with a revoked license.

Wednesday 4-05

11:15 a.m. After a motor vehicle stop on Route 2, [redacted] was issued a criminal complaint for operating a motor vehicle with a revoked registration, no insurance, and speeding.

Thursday 4-5

10:21 a.m. After a motor vehicle stop on Route 2, [redacted] was arrested and charged with operating a motor vehicle under the influence of liquor (4th offense), marked lanes violation, defective exhaust, and a seat belt violation.

9:00 p.m. After a motor vehicle stop, a criminal application was issued to [redacted], for no license in possession and operating after suspension of license.

Friday 4-7

11:50 p.m. After a motor vehicle stop on Route 2 a criminal application was issued to [redacted] for operating without insurance, operating after registration revocation, and operating after license suspension.

Saturday 4-8

12:10 a.m. After a motor vehicle stop on Route 2, [redacted], was arrested and charged with operating under the influence of liquor and speeding.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GILL POLICE LOG

Spring is Here and the ATVs are Popping

Wednesday 4-05

1:35 a.m. - Reported suicidal subject in the Mountain Road area. Officer responded.
9:15 p.m. - Medical assistance requested at the Northfield Mount Hermon campus. Individual transported to FMC

on a stolen motor vehicle from Gill.
5:57 p.m. - Motor vehicle accident on West Gill Road - no injuries reported. Operator was cited for traffic infractions, report taken.
10:46 p.m. - Assist Montague police with a motor vehicle stop.

Thursday 4-06

7:50 a.m. - Assisted Montague Police with a check in our town for information

Friday 4-07

9:00 a.m. - Report of a suspicious individual on a bicycle brandishing a

knife to a dog in the French King Bridge area. Officers sent to the area, no one was found.
11:02 a.m. - Report of a suspicious subject near a French King Highway business. All OK.
9:08 p.m. - Criminal citation issued to [redacted] charged with operating with a revoked registration, defective muffler, and uninsured motor vehicle.

Saturday 4-08

4:30 a.m. - A report of a bear sighted in the Center Road area, destroying bird feeders. Reporting party said they only wanted this on record, no response was necessary.

Sunday 4-09

12:49 a.m. Arrest - default warrant for [redacted]. Transported to the house of corrections for holding until court Monday.
10:30 a.m. - Report of graffiti tagging on the French King Bridge and an area business. Officer was sent and report was taken. Matter is still under investigation.

Monday 4-10

10:06 p.m. - Assisted Erving police with a possible domestic issue on Old State Road.

Tuesday 4-11

7:40 a.m. - Assisted French King Highway resident with a juvenile issue.
2:58 p.m. - Investigated an ATV complaint on West Gill Road.



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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



JACK COUGHLIN ILLUSTRATION

FRIDAY APRIL 14TH

The Country Players presents *The First Monday in October* at Shea Theater, Turners Falls, 71 Avenue A, Turners Falls, 413-863-2281, theshea.org, 8 p.m. show.

SATURDAY, APRIL 15TH

Come dance to great music of Love Bomb at Rt. 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls, 9p.m. Phone: 659-3384 www.rt63roadhouse.com 9:30pm

The Country Players presents *The First Monday in October* at Shea Theater, Turners Falls, 71 Avenue A, Turners Falls, 413-863-2281, theshea.org, 8 p.m. show.

THURSDAY, APRIL 20TH

Larry Kopp "jazz guitar" 8-10 pm at Deja Brew Cafe 57A Lockes Village Road, Wendell. 978-544-BREW

FRIDAY, APRIL 21ST

General Information Sessions about Co-op Power and Community Ownership. Sustainable Energy! Co-op Power is a member-owned cooperative building sustainable energy resources, saving money on energy, and rooting capital in our communities. Green Fields Market 144 Main St 4 - 6:00 pm Information at Session www.CoopPower.coop; info@cooppower.coop; (413)-425-6795"

Media Arts Cinema (In the Green Trees Gallery) *Winged Migration* Open your eyes to the wonders of the natural world as you fly along with the world's most gorgeous birds through areas as remote as the Arctic and the Amazon. Witness as film crews follow a rich variety of bird migrations through 40 countries and each of the seven continents. \$8.00 - General Admission \$6.50 - Seniors/Students 105 Main St. Northfield, MA 498-2100 One Show Only at 7:30pm

SATURDAY, APRIL 22ND

Lecture by Robert J. Heiss entitled "Following the Tea Trail from China to Japan to India to Ceylon: Unique Teas from the Greatest Tea Producing Countries," and a book signing by his wife Mary Lou Heiss, author of *Green Tea: 50 Hot Drinks, Cool Quenchers, and Sweet and Savory Treats*, both at Historic Deerfield 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. in the Bartels Seminar Room, Flynt Center of Early New England Life at Historic Deerfield. Author Mary Lou Heiss, co-owner of Cooks Shop Here, will join her husband before and after the lectures to sign copies of her new book

Green Tea: 50 Hot Drinks, Cool Quenchers, and Sweet and Savory Treats.

Long-time supporter of the Zen Peacemakers, actor Jeff Bridges, will host the Massachusetts premiere of his new movie, *The Amateurs*, at the Academy of Music in Northampton on Saturday, from 4 - 6 p.m. General admission is \$20. Wine & cheese reception with Bridges and Bernie Glassman, from 2 - 4 p.m. for \$85 admission, including both reception and film screening. Sunday, April 23rd, Bridges and Glassman, will lead a day long workshop at the Maezumi Institute called, *Enlightened Film: Zen Mind, Artist's Mind*. 9:00 a.m. - till 4:00 p.m., includes screening of two of Bridges' films, followed by open dialogue. \$175 for the day. Morning film - *The Big Lebowski* and afternoon film - *The Fisher King*. Pre-Register - call 413-367-2080 ext. 4# or email laura@zen-peacemakers.org.

Nancy Rockland-Miller will perform at the Echo Lake Coffee House in the town hall, Leverett Center, 7:30 p.m. Original rockin' music by local Leverett musician. \$10/\$8 seniors. Doors open at 7:00 pm, refreshments on sale. info: 413-548-9394

SATURDAY, APRIL 29TH

Spaghetti Supper Sponsored by the Wendell Womens Club. Homemade Vegetarian or Meat Sauce, beverage, salad, and brownie with ice cream for dessert. Members of the Relay For Life Team #73, Schneiders Helpers, will be assisting the womens club members with this event. 50% of the proceeds will be donated to the American Cancer Society. 5:00 - 7:00 p.m. at the Wendell Town Hall. Adults \$6.00, Children and Seniors \$4.00. For more information and tickets call (978) 544-2928.

UPCOMING

Folk Art Family Activities - Learn about a different medium in American Folk Art each day during April School Vacation Week, April 17-21, 2006, from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. at Historic Deerfield museum. Monday, April 17 - all about powderhorns and scrimshaw; Tuesday, April 18 - make a tavern sign for your room; Wednesday, April 19 - design seed packets; Thursday, April 20 - make your own marbles, and Friday, April 21 - make a "bandbox" for your keepsakes. Also on Friday, April 21 - a special presentation at 11 a.m. and

booksigning at noon by Robert Panchyk, author of *Folk Art for Kids*. Family activities are free with admission: Youth (ages 6-21) \$5, Adults \$14, under 6 and members free. Call 413-775-7214 or visit historicdeerfield.org for more information

ONGOING

Jay Maisel's bold, graphic, saturated color images are showcased in *Retrospective*, at The Hallmark Museum of Contemporary Photography. Selected works from Maisel's career as an advertising, corporate and editorial photographer based in New York City. 85 Avenue A, Turners Falls. Hours, Thurs.-Sun. 1-5 p.m. Free. (413) 863-0009.

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MARX IN SOHO



Marx in Soho - A one man play by Howard Zinn, historian and social activist. Embedded in some secular afterlife, where intellectuals, artists and radicals are sent. Marx is given permission by the administrative committee to return to Soho, London to have his say. But through a bureaucratic mix-up, he winds up in Soho, New York. Sunday, April 22nd, 8 p.m., Memorial Hall, Bridge St, Shelburne Falls. Tickets - \$15.00 general admission \$10 students/retired/unemployed. Tickets at: World Eye Books, Boswell's Books, and at the door. Info at 413-625-6177

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3. SCARY MOVIE 4 PG13 DTS sound
 DAILY 7:00 9:10
 MAT SAT, SUN, WED 12:00 3:00
4. THE WILD PG13
 DAILY 6:45 9:00
 MAT SAT, SUN, WED 12:15 2:15 4:30
5. TAKE THE LEAD
 DAILY 6:45 9:15 PG13
 MAT SAT, SUN, WED 12:15 3:15
6. INSIDE MAN R
 DAILY 6:30 9:30
 MAT SAT, SUN, WED 12:30 3:30
7. V FOR VENDETTA
 DAILY 6:45 9:15 R in DTS sound
 MAT SAT, SUN, WED 12:15 3:15

Upcoming Events at the Great Falls Discovery Center

APRIL 5 - MAY 10 Register now for "Natural Rhythms: Healing through Nature"

A unique movement group for women, nurturing connection with the rhythms of our bodies, nature, emotion, inner healing, and one another. These themes are woven into exercises in guided movement, relaxation, creativity, and supportive sharing. This is a 6-week program beginning April 5th and will be held at the Great Falls Discovery Center. For more information, please call: Seal at 978-544-7073.

FRIDAY, APRIL 14TH

Feathered Friends . Dawn Marvin Ward of "Growing up with Nature" presents: "Spring Friends" Series for preschoolers and their caregivers. Each hour long program includes stories, songs, games, and hands-on activities all designed for the young and young at heart. Hear about a silly mixed-up bird and some of his friends! Learn some feather secrets and games! Sponsored by the Gill-Montague Community Partnership for Children with

grant funding from the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care. 2 p.m. Held at the Great Falls Discovery Center, 2 Avenue A, Turners Falls, 413-863-3221. <http://greatfallsma.org>

SATURDAY, APRIL 15TH

Rocking with the Fossils with Gini Traub of DCR . By focusing on dinosaurs and actively participating, we learn how curious, observant people contributed to our ever-changing understanding of life on earth. Program is for school-age children, their families, and the child in all of us. 1-2 p.m. Held at the Great Falls Discovery Center, 2 Avenue A, Turners Falls, MA 01376. 413-863-3221. <http://greatfallsma.org>

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 19TH

Owl Prowl , Join Silvio O. Conte National Fish & Wildlife Refuge staff for an introduction to owls program followed by a field trip where staff will demonstrate owl calling talents and you will learn about owl mating behavior. Program will be limited to 12

participants and geared toward ages 10 and up. Registration is required. 6:30 p.m. - 9 p.m. Please call 413-863-3221 Meet at the Great Falls Discovery Center, 2 Avenue A, Turners Falls, MA 01376. <http://greatfallsma.org>

THURSDAY, APRIL 20TH

Eager for Eagles!!! Come view & learn about the life cycle of the Bald Eagles on Barton Cove, 11 a.m., Great Falls Discovery Center

FRIDAY, APRIL 21ST

Jump Salmon Jump! Salmon and her fishy friends also return to our streams in the spring. How do they know where to go? Play some "fishy" games and sing some "fishy" songs. Sponsored by the Gill-Montague Community Partnership for Children with grant funding from the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care., 11 a.m. Great Falls Discovery Center

Great Falls Discovery Center
 2 Avenue A, Turners Falls
 413.863.3221

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



JACK COUGHLIN ILLUSTRATION

FRIDAY APRIL 14TH

The Country Players presents *The First Monday in October* at Shea Theater, Turners Falls, 71 Avenue A, Turners Falls, 413-863-2281, theshea.org, 8 p.m. show.

SATURDAY, APRIL 15TH

Come dance to great music of Love Bomb at Rt. 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls, 9p.m. Phone: 659-3384 www.rt63roadhouse.com 9:30pm

The Country Players presents *The First Monday in October* at Shea Theater, Turners Falls, 71 Avenue A, Turners Falls, 413-863-2281, theshea.org, 8 p.m. show.

THURSDAY, APRIL 20TH

Larry Kopp "jazz guitar" 8-10 pm at Deja Brew Cafe 57A Lockes Village Road, Wendell. 978-544-BREW

FRIDAY, APRIL 21ST

General Information Sessions about Co-op Power and Community Ownership. Sustainable Energy! Co-op Power is a member-owned cooperative building sustainable energy resources, saving money on energy, and rooting capital in our communities. Green Fields Market 144 Main St 4 - 6:00 pm Information at Session www.CoopPower.coop; info@cooppower.coop; (413)-425-6795"

Media Arts Cinema (In the Green Trees Gallery) *Winged Migration* Open your eyes to the wonders of the natural world as you fly along with the world's most gorgeous birds through areas as remote as the Arctic and the Amazon. Witness as film crews follow a rich variety of bird migrations through 40 countries and each of the seven continents. \$8.00 - General Admission \$6.50 - Seniors/Students 105 Main St. Northfield, MA 498-2100 One Show Only at 7:30pm

SATURDAY, APRIL 22ND

Lecture by Robert J. Heiss entitled "Following the Tea Trail from China to Japan to India to

Ceylon: Unique Teas from the Greatest Tea Producing Countries," and a book signing by his wife Mary Lou Heiss, author of Green Tea: 50 Hot Drinks, Cool Quenchers, and Sweet and Savory Treats, both at Historic Deerfield 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. in the Bartels Seminar Room, Flynt Center of Early New England Life at Historic Deerfield. Author Mary Lou Heiss, co-owner of Cooks Shop Here, will join her husband before and after the lectures to sign copies of her new book Green Tea: 50 Hot Drinks, Cool Quenchers, and Sweet and Savory Treats.

Long-time supporter of the Zen Peacemakers, actor Jeff Bridges, will host the Massachusetts premiere of his new movie, *The Amateurs*, at the Academy of Music in Northampton on Saturday, from 4 - 6 p.m. General admission is \$20. Wine & cheese reception with Bridges and Bernie Glassman, from 2 - 4 p.m. for \$85 admission, including both reception and film screening. Sunday, April 23rd, Bridges and Glassman, will lead a day long workshop at the Maezumi Institute called, *Enlightened Film: Zen Mind, Artist's Mind*. 9:00 a.m. - till 4:00 p.m., includes screening of two of Bridges' films, followed by open dialogue. \$175 for the day. Morning film - *The Big Lebowski* and afternoon film - *The Fisher King*. Pre-Register - call 413-367-2080 ext. 4# or email laura@zen-peacemakers.org.

Nancy Rockland-Miller will perform at the Echo Lake Coffee House in the town hall, Leverett Center, 7:30 p.m. Original rockin' music by local Leverett musician. \$10/\$8 seniors. Doors open at 7:00 pm, refreshments on sale. info: 413-548-9394

SATURDAY, APRIL 29TH

Spaghetti Supper Sponsored by the Wendell Womens Club. Homemade Vegetarian or Meat Sauce, beverage, salad, and

brownie with ice cream for dessert. Members of the Relay For Life Team #73, Schneiders Helpers, will be assisting the womens club members with this event. 50% of the proceeds will be donated to the American Cancer Society. 5:00 - 7:00 p.m. at the Wendell Town Hall. Adults \$6.00, Children and Seniors \$4.00. For more information and tickets call (978) 544-2928.

UPCOMING

Folk Art Family Activities - Learn about a different medium in American Folk Art each day during April School Vacation Week, April 17-21, 2006, from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. at Historic Deerfield museum. Monday, April 17 - all about powderhorns and scrimshaw; Tuesday, April 18 - make a tavern sign for your room; Wednesday, April 19 - design seed packets; Thursday, April 20 - make your own marbles, and Friday, April 21 - make a "bandbox" for your keepsakes. Also on Friday, April 21 - a special presentation at 11 a.m. and booksigning at noon by Robert Panchyk, author of Folk Art for Kids. Family activities are free with admission: Youth (ages 6-21) \$5, Adults \$14, under 6 and members free. Call 413-775-7214 or visit historic-deerfield.org for more information

ONGOING

Jay Maisel's bold, graphic, saturated color images are showcased in *Retrospective*, at The

MARX IN SOHO



Marx in Soho - A one man play by Howard Zinn, historian and social activist. Embedded in some secular afterlife, where intellectuals, artists and radicals are sent, Marx is given permission by the administrative committee to return to Soho, London to have his say. But through a bureaucratic mix-up, he winds up in Soho, New York. Sunday, April 22nd, 8 p.m., Memorial Hall, Bridge St. Shelburne Falls. Tickets - \$15.00 general admission \$10 students/retired/unemployed. Tickets at: World Eye Books, Boswell's Books, and at the door. Info at 413-625-6177

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Hallmark Museum of Contemporary Photography. Selected works from Maisel's career as an advertising, corporate and editorial photographer based in New York City. 85 Avenue A, Turners Falls.




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 MAT SAT, SUN, WED 12:00 3:00
- ICE AGE 2: THE MELTDOWN**
 DAILY 6:45 9:00 PG
 MAT SAT, SUN, WED 12:00 2:15 4:30
- SCARY MOVIE 4** PG13 DTS sound
 DAILY 7:00 9:10
 MAT SAT, SUN, WED 12:00 3:00
- THE WILD** PG13
 DAILY 6:45 9:00
 MAT SAT, SUN, WED 12:15 2:15 4:30
- TAKE THE LEAD** PG13
 DAILY 6:45 9:15
 MAT SAT, SUN, WED 12:15 3:15
- INSIDE MAN** R
 DAILY 6:30 9:30
 MAT SAT, SUN, WED 12:30 3:30
- V FOR VENDETTA**
 DAILY 6:45 9:15 R in DTS sound
 MAT SAT, SUN, WED 12:15 3:15

Hours, Thurs.-Sun. 1-5 p.m.
 Free. (413) 863-0009.

Upcoming Events at the Discovery Center

APRIL 5 - MAY 10 Register now for "Natural Rhythms: Healing through Nature"

A unique movement group for women, nurturing connection with the rhythms of our bodies, nature, emotion, inner healing, and one another. These themes are woven into exercises in guided movement, relaxation, creativity, and supportive sharing. This is a 6-week program beginning April 5th and will be held at the Great Falls Discovery Center. For more information,

please call: Seal at 978-544-7073.

FRIDAY, APRIL 14TH

Feathered Friends. Dawn Marvin Ward of "Growing up with Nature" presents: "Spring Friends" Series for preschoolers and their caregivers. Each hour long program includes stories, songs, games, and hands-on activities all designed for the young and young at heart. Hear about a silly mixed-up bird and some of his friends! Learn some

feather secrets and games! Sponsored by the Gill-Montague Community Partnership for Children with grant funding from the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care. 2 p.m. Held at the Great Falls Discovery Center, 2 Avenue A, Turners Falls, 413-863-3221. http://greatfallsma.org

Great Falls Discovery Center
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Welcoming Spring as the Breakfast Club Wanes

BY FRAN HEMOND

MONTAGUE CENTER - The Breakfast Club, a winter activity that mainly provides bird food in the frozen days just past, was practically deserted when spring opened up the fields. The juncos left for the hills. The flock of American tree sparrows headed north to the Arctic, and even the chickadees liked the pickings in the meadow better than the mixed bird seed the Breakfast Club offers. The lady cardinal had not been in evidence for some time.

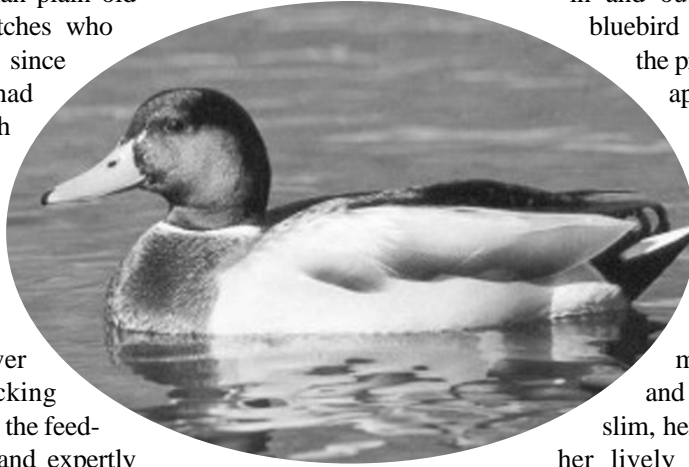
Our supply of sunflower seed had held up well and it was prudent to use it before closing shop for the summer. So the bird feeder was stocked with sunflower seed alone for the few chickadees who still produced acrobatics for their dinner.

News of fancy seed available travels fast. Both cardinals came

promptly to check out the rumor. The lady cardinal hadn't succumbed to wind and weather; she just had found a fancier food source elsewhere than plain old mixed seed. Nuthatches who had not been seen since fall and perhaps had moved further south for the colder days, appeared with enthusiasm, their sharp bills daring anyone else to share their feed.

Since sunflower seeds require cracking open, the birds leave the feeder with their prize and expertly open it up in a convenient spot. The nuthatches are off to the catalpa tree; the chickadees and cardinals and titmice to the rhododendron bush. It looked as if a tree sparrow had stayed behind his fellows who were off

to the north, but this sparrow had a streaked breast as well as the black spot and must have been an advance guard of the song



sparrows who nest here.

Beyond the Breakfast Club, flocks of robins find worms and other lawn goodies and I am reminded of Caruso, an injured fledgling robin who survived on

a hamburger diet many years ago. A newcomer, with a song I cannot identify, sounds delighted with a brief stretch of sun on an "in and out" day. And a lone bluebird sits on a wire. But the prize of this day is just appearing.

Five handsome mallard drakes have zoomed into the north pond and with them, a little brown duck. She is no ho-hum mallard. She is lively and trimmer; her neck is slim, her head held high and her lively and rather elegant aspect reminds me of Emily.

Emily is a mallard who has brought her ducklings here for some years, and taught them to dive and fly on the pond. Mallards are dipping ducks and most do not dive; but Emily's lit-

tle ones do, and maybe this mother has some hybrid background.

Our little elegant duck may be one of Emily's children. Her brown coloring and her grayish bill are a real contrast to the green iridescent heads and yellow bills of the drakes. Their red-orange feet shine brightly as they sit on the beaver-cut trees and preen and flap their wings. But despite her size and quiet aspect, she is the one who decides, while sailing around, when to scoop up a little milfoil, and when to take time out on the floating tree limbs. Truly Emily's daughter. And she ran a great afternoon party.

The next day the chickadees and titmice dominated the final days of the Breakfast Club. The lively little mallard appeared sedately on the north pond with one drake. Two others swam in the south pond. Summer is on its way!

Mapping the Plains

BY HYRUM H. HUSKEY JR. **GREAT FALLS** - Susan Russo, a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service outreach specialist at the Great Falls Discovery Center, introduced Walker Korby fondly as the "King of the Plains." The Montague Plains, that is... The occasion was a celebration of Korby's mapping project on the Plains, held at the Discovery Center on Tuesday, April 4th.

Korby is a man with a bent for fostering connections between humans and their natural environment. He grew up in Red Bank, NJ; not far from the Pinelands National Reserve. He moved to Western Massachusetts several years ago to study for his Master of Science degree in geography at UMass.

On Tuesday, April 4th, Korby presented an overview of his work on the Montague Plains Community Mapping Project, noting some of the similarities and common issues between the Pine Barrens in New Jersey and the Montague Plains.

"The Montague Plains area is

one of the largest of its ecological type in New England," said Korby, "and it shares some of the same issues and recreational usage factors" as those seen in similar natural areas in his home state. Mountain bikers, hikers, horseback riders, trackers, birders, joggers, cross-country skiers and various researchers all share use of the Montague Plains, Korby said.

Unfortunately, the area has also been misused. As Korby reminded his audience, the isolation and ease of access to the rural area has long made it a tempting dumping ground for people looking to illegally dump a wide array of trash, tires, abandoned cars, and the refuse left behind by groups of partiers.

Korby set out several years ago to accomplish three overall goals relating to the Montague Plains. First, he wanted to "create a greater sense of community connectivity" between the various users of the Plains. Second, Korby hoped to "foster a broader and deeper awareness



HYRUM HUSKEY PHOTO

Walker Korby, King of the Plains

of the Plains' importance." Finally, he sought to encourage a "shift of the general public's perception of the Plains." Korby hopes to further encourage an appreciation of the area and to foster more recreational use, while discouraging the illegal dumping that still takes place there.

As part of those goals, Korby organized the Montague Plains Community Mapping Project. The Mapping Project used volunteers, armed with GPS data collection devices, to search out and identify trash sites by volume, type, and exact location. With that database Korby was able to divide the area into designated sites, categorized by types of trash at each location,

and to create maps and removal instructions for efficiently cleaning up many of the refuse sites. Last October, Source to Sea volunteer groups were assigned to each site, along with a truck and a specific dumpster location to which trash would be removed. This coordinated plan resulted in 250 tires and two t h i r t y - y a r d dumpsters worth of trash being removed from the Plains in four hours.

"A number of cars are still there," said Korby "because trees growing up through them make removal difficult for salvagers."

The clean-up project turned out to be as much fun as it was work. Volunteers "had a ball" said Korby. "It warmed my heart, and sort of verified my belief that people really did want that sense of community connectivity" around a natural environment area.

Russo noted that the Great Falls Discovery Center encourages various types of groups to use the Montague Plains for nature education activities such as bird watching. Discovery

Center staff can assist volunteers in planning an appropriate use of the area for their group.

Korby has completed requirements for his degree, but the "King of the Plains" isn't done with the Montague Plains. He is now working on an ongoing monitoring project to sustain the Plains' environment. Korby would like to develop a group of user-monitors who would report illegal dumping, help with further trash site data collection, and assist in organizing methods to assure a consistent clean-up effort is sustained. As part of that planning, and to encourage more recreational use of the Plains, Korby distributed a general trails map at the meeting. The map outlines the various types of trails that exist on the Montague Plains, and the route of each trail.

"I would like to see less trash being dumped there each year," Korby told the group.

To further that goal, volunteers are needed June 17th, to help with a new baseline data collection on the Montague Plains' status. People interested in that project, or any related roles to promote the monitoring and recreational use of the Plains, should contact Walter Korby at Owl Eyes Land Stewardship Services via email at www.owleyes.us.

The "King of the Plains" needs your help to keep the Montague Plains green -- and clean!

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income families in Hampshire and Franklin counties, according to Doris McLeod, a nine-year Habitat volunteer, who lives in Greenfield. Last Tuesday, the heavy equipment was on site, excavating for the foundation of the first home. After years of waiting, planning, and preparation, work on the L Street project has finally begun, MacLeod said. Valley Concrete of Bernardston will donate their labor for pouring the foundation cement, in the spirit of Habitat, where much of the labor for low-cost homes is volunteered, she said.

Two single-family homes will be built at the 2nd and L site. Habitat for Humanity acquired the site in October of 2002 from owners who were not able to rehab the large existing structure, which was in uninhabitable condition. The town of Montague assisted with Community Development Block Grant money to help defray the cost of demolition, which was carried out in 2004.

"The selectboard was very supportive in getting the block grant money to help demolish the old building," McLeod said. "They were obviously thinking that to remove a derelict building and replace it with affordable housing was a wonderful vision for what needs to happen in Turners Falls. We were glad we could be a part of that and turn what was an unsightly thing into new affordable homes, which is good for the community and good for the individuals."

(For memories of the former building, where Frenchie Boivin and his family lived, see "The House on Second and L," Montague Reporter IV, #11.)

The new two-story homes to be constructed were designed by Montague resident Jeremy Toal of Turtle Island Design; who donated his services. Each will be about 1,200 square feet (20' x 30'). Habitat describes their houses as "simple, decent homes," built to be as affordable as possible. The homes are built with as much volunteer labor as possible, with much donated or discounted material. Most of the material is obtained locally, but PVH also participates in national programs through Habitat for Humanity International. Professional services are also often donated. Every avenue of savings is explored.

The family that has been selected to live at 55 L Street is Connie Forcier and her children -- Megan, age 16; Summer, 10; Akeeva, 8; and Elijah, 3. When the home is complete, they will purchase it on a no-interest mortgage. Their mortgage payments will then be re-invested in building more homes, thus continuing to increase the stock of affordable housing in the Pioneer Valley. The family that will eventually live in the second house will be chosen when that house is ready for construction, perhaps a year from now, McLeod said.

Habitat partner families are selected on the basis of need, ability to make modest mortgage

payments, and willingness to partner with Habitat. Each adult is required to put in 250 hours of "sweat equity," working to build their home or other Habitat homes.

Volunteers will be needed, both for construction and in other ways. Anyone interested in volunteering can sign up online. Visit www.pioneervalleyhabitat.org for volunteer construction dates as McLeod hopes they will begin in early May.

"We're hoping for good weather so that things will progress. Once you get a hole in the ground you don't want it filled up with mud," she said. "We hope we don't have too many April showers!"

Construction volunteers may work as individuals or as groups, on Saturdays and Sundays. Skilled supervision is provided. Youth groups should check specific information on the website. The minimum age to be on the construction site is 14. Other volunteers are needed to help select or mentor partner families, publicize events, help raise money, and get faith communities involved.

Pioneer Valley Habitat has funds available to complete the foundation, but some serious fundraising will be needed to begin the actual construction, which will be discussed at the April 11th meeting, which is open to the public.

The group needs about \$40,000 to get the house enclosed by winter. They will be approaching civic and church groups to sponsor needed items, such as joists, sheets of plywood, and framing studs

"The reason I like working for Habitat is because I like to see a real permanent solution to a problem, rather than band-aids," said McLeod. "You can keep handing out food or putting people up in temporary shelters but that doesn't change their situation. I like to be a part of a bigger project. It's a lot more work but once you've completed it, it's a really permanent, significant difference. Not to knock food pantries because I do that, too, but I like to see that kind of substantial difference."

Habitat for Humanity has built 200,000 homes nationally. Anyone interested in being a part of the project is invited to call the Habitat office at (413) 586-5430 or send email to: ed@pioneervalleyhabitat.org; or call Doris McLeod at 774-7160 or send email to dorisan-nm2@verizon.net.