



KIDS A GO-GO

at Leverett Crafts and Arts

Page 11

Eshu Bumpus, left
Marilyn Sylla, right

LAKE PLEASANT MILLERS FALLS MONTAGUE CENTER MONTAGUE CITY TURNERS FALLS

The Montague Reporter

YEAR 8 - NO. 28

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

APRIL 15, 2010

Recycled Renaissance at Sheffield School



Sheffield Students Perform in a Native American-inspired Drumming Circle on April 8th at the Recycled Renaissance, with Mary Yellow Bird Chaffee (right), Abnaki Tribe, a resident of Montague, leading the circle.

BY DAVID DETMOLD
TURNERS FALLS – Recycling met the Turners Falls Renaissance at the Sheffield School Art Gallery opening last Thursday. The opening, which took place in the gymnasium and hallways, was mobbed with proud parents taking photos of their artistic youth posed in front of their self portraits, three dimensional dioramas of scenes from Pakistan and Afghanistan

– where the Sheffield Pennies for Peace rathathon will donate more than \$70 toward school building efforts – worm factories, pictures of tractors and landfills, all sprinkled with recycled bits of garbage in a remade Op Art vision that looked like an art teacher's recombinaant raid on the dumpster behind Andy Warhol's Factory, with Doritos trading places with Cambell's Tomato Soup among the

chief articles of adornment.

Audrey O'Keefe, a first grader, stood in the hall in front of her portrait as her mother, Chanda, took her photo. Audrey explained that art teacher Nancy Meagher had "helped her a little bit with the eyes," but other than that, she had conceived and executed the *pièce de résistance* herself, right down to the cat food trays chopped up for legs, string hair-do,

and potato chip bag clothing.

In the auditorium, fifth grader Michelle Leh displayed the inner workings of a three-layered worm factory, where blind invertebrates tunneled through cafeteria leavings to turn out a high-quality compost for the school's community flower garden. "These worms are helping with the recycled Renaissance," said Leh, see **RECYCLED** pg 8

Montague Makes Plans for a Native American Park

BY DAVID DETMOLD

The Montague select-board voted two to one on Monday in favor of establishing a Native American Cultural Park, and to work with Native tribes to develop a cultural tourism program in Turners Falls under the auspices of the town's arts and economic development RiverCulture project.

Significant battles took place in the area during the King Phillips' War – sometimes called "the Forgotten War," in American History texts – and the fact that the culture and folkways of Northeastern tribes are generally less familiar than Western tribal cultures could make the proposed park in Turners Falls not only a regional, but also a national and international destination for tourism, said town administrator Frank Abbondanzio.

Abbondanzio outlined a ten-year plan for taking the plan from drawing board to ribbon cutting, beginning with a \$195,000 display of Native environmental practices scheduled for inclusion at the Great Falls Discovery Center in the coming budget year.

The vote comes nearly six years after the select-board initiated a Reconciliation Ceremony with the Narragansett Indian tribe, to recognize the tragic significance of the site of the massacre of Native Americans that took place across the Connecticut River on May 19th, 1676.

At that ceremony, the town of Montague and the Narragansett Indian tribe pledged to support each other "to foster an awareness of the importance of this special place – the Connecticut River and the Great Falls – to the indigenous peoples whose roots can be traced back as far as 12,000 years ago," according to a letter written on behalf of the citizens of Montague, preparing to celebrate their town's 250th anniversary, by then select-board chair Patricia Allen.

In a document signed by the selectboard on May 19th, 2004, and co-signed by Narragansett Medicine Man Lloyd Running Wolf Wilcox and Chief Sachem Matthew Seven Hawks Thomas, the town of see **PARK** pg 9

Controlled Burn Brings Down Beauchesne House

BY DAVID DETMOLD

MONTAGUE CENTER – In the end, it was built stronger and lasted longer than many thought. But on Sunday morning, the multi-leveled architectural wonder that scrap material maven Rodney Beauchesne called home for many years burned to the ground, as firefighters from five communities looked on and learned.

"We started at the top, so it would burn slow," said incident commander John Greene, Montague Center fire chief, discussing the strategy for the controlled burn, the first in Montague in many years. "If we'd started at the bottom, it would have been so big we'd have to worried about those lines baking."

Greene was pointing to the utility and telephone lines running along the east side of Main Street as he made this comment.

As it was, after members of the Montague Center fire department set fire to bales of hay on

the third story (or was that the fourth story?) and left the building for the last time at 9:14 a.m. on Sunday morning, the glorified log cabin cum plate glass palace went up like a torch, with flames bursting through the roof in less than three minutes, sending billowing columns of black smoke towering into the village sky.

Windows cracked like pistol shots. Soon the entire top of the building was an inferno of fire, and the flames began climbing down through the odd rooms and half levels of the homestead seeking more fuel.

By the time it had engulfed the bottom level, temperatures inside the building were probably in excess of 2,000 degrees, melting metal, and burning all the scrap material Beauchesne had gathered over years of labor and cobbled together to build his home.

Well, not quite all of it. In fact, Mike Skalski, the Ashfield contractor hired by the Franklin Land Trust to clean up the property

before the burn, trucked 15 seven-ton loads of compacted garbage out of the house and barn and outbuildings, and from the heaped up mounds and buried caches of material scattered around the land.

Skalski, watching the blaze from Main Street, said, "I took fourteen refrigeration units, 22 TV sets, 320 tires of various sizes, and a truckload of hazmat material out of here."

You never know what will come in handy some day.

Montague Center attorney Sam Lovejoy was the prime mover behind the effort to clean up the property, burn down the house, and return the property to a natural state. Shortly before nine, he crossed the property carrying a golf club he'd picked up along the way, one of Beauchesne's many cast-off treasures.

"I'm here to win the Masters,"

see **BURN** pg 8



LAWRENCE PETERS PHOTO

Rodney Beauchesne's House was the scene of a controlled burn on Sunday, used for training purposes by half a dozen local fire departments

PET OF THE WEEK

Sweet as a Cookie



Oreo Delgado

My name is Oreo Delgado and I am a one-year-old male Manx mix cat looking for a good home. Don't gobble me up! I'm not that kind of Oreo! However, I am black and white and sweet all over! I get along with all people, so I'm sure you and I will get along great. Do you like kids? Me too! My previous family had a lot of kids, and they were so fun to play with! I need a nice home where I can romp and play and hang out. Please come meet me and find out if your family is the right one for me. I'm sweet just like a cookie! For more information on adopting me, please contact the Dakin Pioneer

Valley Humane Society at (413) 548-9898 or via email: info@dpvhs.org.

GIANT TAG, BAKE & RUMMAGE SALE

Saturday, April 17th
8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

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MONTAGUE LIBRARY NEWS

School Vacation Week Programs

BY LINDA HICKMAN

MONTAGUE – As usual, the Montague Public Libraries have plenty to offer during the April school vacation week. There are four programs for children, and craft project kits free for the taking all week at the Carnegie Library. High speed internet is available in all three Montague libraries, and there are diverse books and movies for all ages and tastes.

None of the libraries will be open on Patriots Day, Monday, April 19th. On Tuesday, April 20th, there will be a Make and Take program at the Carnegie Library at 10 a.m. for children of all ages with Ruth and Linda. Projects will include making beaded jewelry, robots and musical instruments.

Tuesday afternoon from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. there is the Millers Falls Library Club. Children of all ages are invited to share a story, snacks and make crafts

with Linda. Story Hour for young children is Wednesday morning at 10:15 at the Carnegie Library with Ruth. Music and Movement for young children is Thursday morning at 10 a.m. at the Montague Center Library with Tom Carroll and Laurie Davidson. All week, the silver Art-to-Go Box with free craft kits will be available in the children's room of the Carnegie Library.

The Carnegie Library will be open Tuesday and Wednesday 1 to 8 p.m., Thursday 1 to 5 p.m., Friday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The Montague Center Library is only open Wednesday due to the Monday holiday, 2 to 5 and 6 to 8 p.m. The Millers Falls Library is open Tuesday and Thursday, 2 to 5 and 6 to 8 p.m.

For more information, call the Carnegie Library at 863-3214.

WENDELL LIBRARY NEWS

School Vacation Week

Movie Night will feature *Where the Wild Things Are*, rated PG on Saturday April 17th at 6:30 p.m. Free.

This adaptation of Maurice Sendak's classic children's story follows Max, a disobedient little boy who is sent to bed without his supper. Max then creates an imaginary forest world populated by the wild things, exotic monsters and ferocious creatures who embrace Max as their ruler. This version is rather dark compared to the children's book, and will have more meaning to older children and adults.

Wii games for 6- to 9-year olds on Tuesday, April 20th from 3 to 4 p.m. and Wednesday April 21st, from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. Wendell teens will assist the younger kids in playing some of the Wii video games designed for

children such as MarioKart and We Ski and Snowboard. Four children can play at a time. Games last about 5 to 10 minutes, so children can rotate turns.

Make May Baskets with Miss Deb on Wednesday, April 21st, 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. Children of all ages can drop in and decorate May baskets to give to their parents and share with the community on May Day. The project will continue the following Wednesday.

Perhaps no place in any community is so totally democratic as the town library. The only entrance requirement is interest.

– Lady Bird Johnson

SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES – April 19th to 23rd

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

Monday, April 19th

10:00 a.m. Senior Aerobics
10:45 a.m. Easy Aerobics
1:00 p.m. Knitting Circle

Tuesday, April 20th

9:00 a.m. Walking Group
10:30 a.m. Yoga
1:00 p.m. Canasta

Wednesday, April 21st

10:00 a.m. Senior Aerobics
11:00 a.m. CVS "Pack Your Bag"

Thursday, April 22nd

No Tai Chi
1:00 p.m. Pitch

Friday, April 23rd

10:00 a.m. Senior Aerobics
10:45 a.m. Easy Aerobics
1:00 p.m. Scrabble
1:00 p.m. Writing Group

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

Monday, April 19th

9:00 a.m. Exercise

The 5th Annual Cave Hill Classic

5 mile run, 2 mile walk

Saturday, April 17th

9 a.m. rain or shine

Register online at
cavehillclassic.com.

Same day registration is available.



Support the Leverett Peace Pagoda. There is no set fee. Participants are asked for a meaningful gift. Parking at the Pagoda. Music on site and t-shirts for participants.

Great Falls Middle School Students of the Week

Grade 6

Sarah LaCoy

Grade 7

Felicia Craver

Halle Harvey

Grade 8

Kolbe Martineau

Turners Falls Sports Booster Club

7th Annual Fundraising Event presents

A Comedy ESP/Hypnosis Show

Starring Jim Spinnato

Saturday, May 1st

at the French King Entertainment Center

Tickets \$15, Doors open 7:30, Show at

9:00 p.m. DJ Dancing Later

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JOE PARZYCH PHOTO

Arilee Demakis and Sarah Pauliot standing on the gate to the fish ladder. They are on a field trip to the Discovery Center.

Elks Award Night Honors Murph Togneri

The Montague Elks held their annual awards night on Saturday, March 13th. Exalted Ruler Joe St. Peter awarded Paul Houle as Elk of the Year; Steve Dacyczyn, Lodge Esquire, as Officer of the Year; and John Leary, Blessed Sacrament Church, as Citizen of the Year. Grand Exalted Ruler's Outstanding Service Certificates were given to Bob and Penny Martineau. In addition, Exalted Ruler Appreciation certificates were awarded to: Bob Braun, Steve Saharceski, Shelley Kelleher, Judy Hastings, Kate Mitchell, Bev Reid, Chip

Kalinowski, Russ Brown, Mary Brown, Judy Dacyczyn, and Pamela Lester.

The final award was of the evening was given as a memorial in honor of charter member Francis "Murph" Togneri Sr., whose member number was one hundred. St. Peter had this to say: "Murph was the original Youth Activities Committee chairman for many years, and was the committee adviser until his death. Murph was a prominent man in the community and in this lodge.

"In the lounge there is what the members call an island. Murph and his buddies called it the 'Old Timers' Island.'" St. Peter asked Murph's son, Fran Togneri, Jr., also a long time member of the lodge, to the podium to accept the award. The award was twofold, one a dedication of the Island to Murph and the second a sign to hang over the Island commemorating it as the Francis "Murph" Togneri, Sr. Memorial Old Timers' Island.

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JESSICA HARMON ILLUSTRATION

Local Briefs

COMPILED BY

DON CLEGG – The Great Falls Discovery Center, 2 Avenue A, invites you to join in for **Park Serve Day 2010** on Saturday, April 24th from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m. During this statewide day of volunteer service, volunteers and staff will work together to beautify the grounds of Discovery Center for the season. This event would be a great opportunity for citizens that attend the Downtown Turners Falls Improvement meetings to lend a helping hand.

A **Polish Luncheon** will be held at Thomas Memorial Golf & Country Club in Turners Falls on Sunday, April 25th. The menu includes homemade pierogi, golabki, kapusta, kielbasa, ham, mushrooms, beets and a dessert table. Cocktails will be served at noon and the luncheon starts at 1 p.m. For more information on the luncheon or other events, check out tmgcc.net.

The **Montague Farm Zen House** had great success with their first free community meal on Saturday, April 10th. More than 85 people attended. A second community meal is scheduled for May 13th from noon to 3 p.m. with free transportation provided. The plans for that day include visiting alpacas, kite-making, improv games, puppetry make-n-take, and seed-planting activities, in addition to another great free lunch. For more information con-

tact the Farm Zen House at Karen@zenpeacemakers.com, or call (413) 367-5275.

Fame is lurking just around the corner for all you would-be singing stars, as **Valley Idol** returns to the Shea Theater, 71 Avenue A in Turners Falls. Audition Night takes place on May 7th, and we can only hope the lawyer with the seeing eye dog and the lumberjack outfit returns to reprise our favorite Harry Chapin song.

Past years have seen over 40 contestants compete for the honor of being the next "Valley Idol". Admission for this first night is just \$3 at the door, and there is no better entertainment value anywhere, we guarantee you. For more information and registration contact the Shea at www.theshea.org or call (413) 863-2281.

The *Valley Advocate* has determined the winner of the "Best Neighborhood Bar" category in the readers' poll – the **Rendezvous**, located at 78 Third Street in Turners Falls.

Congratulations to the "Voo"! We hope readers of the *Advocate* will visit Turners, not only to discover a great neighborhood bar, but a great neighborhood, with many other fine establishments, community theater, concerts, and nature programs. *Send items for local briefs to reporter-local@montaguema.net*



KAREN WILKINSON ILLUSTRATION

BY NEIL SERVEN

GREENFIELD – When it comes to pluralizing words, most people get the basic stuff right. Quite often it comes naturally: one house becomes several houses and one child becomes numerous children. Some classes of words are trickier to pluralize than others, however.

Many people know that words that end in certain letters require a spelling change when pluralized. Words that end in *s*, *x*, *z*, *ch*, and *sh* require you to add an *e* before the *s*: lenses, crosses, boxes, waltzes, beaches, marshes. Words that end in a *y* following a consonant require you to change the *y* to *i* before adding *es*: parties, babies, flies, melodies, aristocracies. Proper nouns ending in *y*, however, simply add an *s*: the Kennedys, Toyota Camrys.

Note that words ending in a *y* following another vowel don't require any additional spelling change: days, boys, forays, trolleys.

Many words ending in *f* or *fe* require changing the *f* to a *v* before adding *s* or *es*: knives, leaves, shelves, scarves. This rule is not universal, however: serif is pluralized simply as serifs and carafe as carafes, while many dictionaries recognize the plural of wharf as either wharfs or wharves and the plural of dwarf as either dwarfs (as in Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs) or dwarves. Words ending in double-*f* don't require a change at all: playoffs, mastiffs, cuffs.

The rules are a little less stringent for nouns ending in *o*. My eighth-grade English teacher once told me that there are only four words ending in *o* that require you to add an *e* before the *s*: echoes, heroes, potatoes, tomatoes. I'm not sure it's as cut and dried as that in practice, though: words like volcano, zero, and domino appear frequently enough both with *s* and *es* that most dictionaries show either spelling as standard. No *e* is needed if the *o* is preceded by another vowel: stereos, folios, kangaroos.

And then there are words that follow their own pluralization rules. For example, you might see the word focus pluralized as foci, stadium as stadia, genus as genera, and index as indices. These are words derived from Latin, and the writer is spelling the plu-

The Rogue Editor Of Mice and Men: About Plurals

ral as it would be in that language. Same with Greek: synopsis becomes synopses and criterion becomes criteria. But a lot of writers aren't comfortable pluralizing words this way when they're used in English, so you'll still see a lot of stadiums or indexes. That's why many dictionaries show the plural forms as acceptable. And of course there are irregular plurals that are not pursuant to the word's original language, as mice for mouse and geese for goose.

Some nouns are what we call zero plurals, meaning they require no spelling change at all. Most of the well-known ones are animals (sheep, deer, tuna), plus a few words that end in *s*: species, series, means (as in "a means to an end"). And then there are mass nouns, which aren't pluralized simply because they aren't countable: mud, blood, oxygen, friendliness. Some nouns can be treated as mass nouns in one sense and count nouns in another – you don't, for example, speak of grass in the plural when you are speaking of the plant that covers the ground, but grasses works when you're talking about different species.

The majority of pluralization errors occurs when people unnecessarily insert an apostrophe

before adding on the *s*: "crocus's" instead of "crocuses," "idea's" instead of "ideas," etc. The use of an apostrophe to form a plural is pretty much restricted to a single instance: when you are pluralizing single letters (as in "There are three *a*'s in 'banana'" or "Mind your *p*'s and *q*'s"). You don't even need an apostrophe when pluralizing numerals (as in decades, such as "he grew up in the '60s").

In all other cases, if you feel tempted to insert an apostrophe between the noun and the *s* to form a plural, you should step back a moment. If merely adding an *s* to form a plural makes a word "look wrong," it may be that a spelling change is all that is actually needed.

Neil Serven is an Associate Editor for Merriam-Webster, Inc., in Springfield.

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Eagle Watch

BY PAT CARLISLE

GREAT FALLS – It's hard to be sure what eggactly is taking place at the Barton Cove eagle nest, because the video camera watching from above is still not working properly. Further repairs may once again provide live coverage of the eagle nest this season. But here is our best guess about what we think is going on up there.

We celebrated an egg being

laid on March 5th, because an adult eagle had settled low in the nest and one has remained sitting every day since.

By now, the appropriate number of days to hatch out an eagle chick have passed (35 to 37), and we are now watching a lot of nest activity. Both adult eagles have been seen on or perched near the nest all last weekend.

On Monday, April 12th, we watched actions that could mean a chick is being fed. Ralph Taylor, of the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Wildlife, has been notified, so the health check and banding of eagle babies can take place at the proper time.

The leaves are budding into leaf in the early spring warmth; soon my telescope will no longer be able to pick out the eagle nest.

A good place to watch the eagle parents flying to and from Eagle Island is from the boat ramp off Route 2 in Gill.

MCTV to Hold Selectboard Debate

MONTAGUE – Once again, the candidates running for selectboard in Montague will have an opportunity to explain their position on the issues to the voters live on Montague Community Television, at a debate scheduled to be aired live from town hall at 7 p.m. on April 29th. The show will

be rebroadcast in the weeks leading up to the May 17th town election. The public is welcome to attend and participate by posing questions to the three candidates: Chris Boutwell, Margaret Pyfrom, and Rachel Roy. For more information, call Robin Mide at MCTV, 863-9200.

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Reverse the Tax Shift

BY CHUCK COLLINS

JAMAICA PLAIN – In my community we're facing severe cuts in schools and elder services, and our local public library and community recreation center will soon close. Yet our local property taxes and fees are rising. Why are we paying more and getting less for it?

Each year as Tax Day approaches, there's a national mud fight about taxes and the proper role of government. Some argue that the middle class is overtaxed and that we don't get what we used to for our tax dollars. Others point to the practical necessity of raising revenue to reduce our national debt and make long-overdue investments to upgrade our aging infrastructure. Both sides of this debate are correct.

Middle-class households are overtaxed. For 50 years, the tax burden has shifted off the very wealthy to the middle class, and from global corporations to small business. By adding to our national debt, we're shifting taxes off of today's taxpayers onto tomorrow's workers, who will pay interest for decades to come.

This is the Great Tax Shift. It's happening in slow motion, under both Republican and Democratic presidents. It's the reason why our cities and towns are strapped and our federal debt is increasing.

Since 1960, the share of household income that middle-class households paid in federal taxes has increased slightly, from 15.9 to 16.1 percent. But the wealthiest Americans have seen their tax outlays, as a share of income, drop by almost half. The top 1 percent of taxpayers, whose incomes start at \$2 million, saw their share of income paid in federal taxes decline from 60 to 33.6 percent between 1960 and 2004.

During George W. Bush's presidency, we expanded tax cuts to Americans with incomes over \$250,000. That added another \$700 billion to the national debt. Meanwhile, Congress failed to close loopholes for global corporations, resulting in thousands of profitable U.S. companies paying no corporate income taxes – at all – between 1998 and 2008.

When rich individuals and corporations don't pay their fair share, the bill gets passed to the

middle class and our debt grows. That's hard to appreciate until things start to hit close to home. When we see our roads, mass transit, schools, and veterans' services suffer, we start to understand. Our public services have been chronically underfunded for 40 years, and all states and municipalities are grappling with budget crises.

We must reverse the Great Tax Shift, starting with three changes to our tax code:

First, Congress should maintain the middle-class tax cuts passed in 2001 that expire at the end of this year. And lawmakers should rebalance the tax code by allowing tax breaks for the rich to expire.

Second, Congress should crack down on overseas tax havens, which allow global corporations to pretend they've earned all their profits in countries like the Grand Cayman Islands and their losses here in the U.S. These loopholes create an unlevel playing field, where small businesses and patriotic enterprises compete against tax-dodging companies. Businesses that enjoy our nation's privileges – including national defense, public infrastructure, and property rights – should pay their fair share.

Third, we need a modest financial speculation tax on Wall Street transactions, including the purchase and sale of exotic financial investments such as derivatives, hedge funds, and speculative stock trades. One proposal before Congress, modeled after existing laws in England and Taiwan, would place a one-cent levy on every \$4 in transactions while exempting retirement funds and the first \$100,000 in investments. The Wall Street financiers who drove our economy off a cliff should help pay for the clean-up operation.

Together, these three measures would generate over \$300 billion a year in revenue without increasing taxes on the middle class. This revenue would both reduce the federal deficit and help states and localities avert damaging budget cuts.

Chuck Collins is a senior scholar at the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington, and a former resident of J Street in Turners Falls.



KAREN WILKINSON ILLUSTRATION

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The End of an Era

On April 11th, Rodney Beachesne's house was burnt to the ground. This is the end of the Beachesne family of Montague Center. This family has been part of this quaint little New England town for over 100 years.

We, Rodney's family, would like to express our gratitude to the wonderful members of the Montague Center fire department. Most of you knew Rodney for years and accepted him as the person he was. We would like to thank you for doing your job on April 11th with dignity, tact, and caring for our feelings during that day. We cannot thank all of you enough.

The residents of Montague Center who knew Rodney, odd as he may have been, were always kind, understanding and willing to accept him into your community. We thank you.

To the "new residents" of the village, we apologize for the eyesore of Rodney's dwellings. But if you all look in your backyards, there is a piece of Rodney everywhere. It may be windows in a shed, part of a fence or part of a wonderful treehouse. Please be careful in life who you make fun of or complain about.

Rodney's land will be turned into a wildlife sanctuary for all to enjoy. Please when you visit to fish or just enjoy the beauty of "Beau Park," think of Rodney with a smile.

Montague Center was our home for years. It's sad to see how it's not the friendly little town it once was.

– The Beachesne Family:
Sheree, Jackie, Jamie, Jesse, Duane

GUEST EDITORIAL

The New Lead Paint Law and its Effect on Contractors, Homeowners, and Small Businesses

The Perfect Storm

BY JOE GRAVELINE

NORTHFIELD – On April 22nd, all the necessary man-made conditions will converge and bring tens of thousands of small businesses in Massachusetts into the middle of some of the most difficult times they have ever experienced. Thousands will shut their doors, many after having served their local communities for decades.

With the high unemployment rate in America, overbearing new regulations regarding renovation, remodeling and lead paint, fines targeted to small contractors to the tune of up to \$75,000 a day and one of the highest concentration of homes built before 1978 right here in Western Mass, all the right conditions are in place for the Perfect Economic Storm for small contracting businesses.

On April 22nd, the Environmental Protection Agency will start to enforce a

new set of laws, embraced by the state of Massachusetts, that will govern all work done on houses built before 1978. It's called the EPA repair and maintenance program final rule – 40 CFR Part 745. Any work done on properties built before 1978 is to be considered a health hazard due to lead paint. Lead paint was used on over 68 million homes, for over a hundred years, all across America. The law is being enacted to protect children under six years old, pregnant women, and people with compromised health.

The EPA asserts that any work done on buildings built before 1978 will disturb the lead paint that was commonly found in buildings of that age group, and that the disturbance of the surfaces in these buildings during remodeling projects have been for years one of the main causes for children under six and pregnant women testing high for exposure to lead.

These new laws are far reaching, and in my judgment will affect nearly all small businesses, part of a chain of commerce that

includes the local donut shop to the local banks and grocery stores. The larger cities will not be immune from the impact of this new set of regulations either.

In a nutshell, starting on April 22nd, the EPA mandates that all persons working on properties built before 1978 take an eight-hour training and be licensed to follow a very strict set of guidelines that include work practice protocols.

Once work starts on pre-1978 buildings, the certified renovator has a number of responsibilities. First they must distribute the EPA's "Renovate Right" brochure to the property owner and have them sign the pre-renovation form in the booklet, post warning signs outside the work area, and supervise setting up containment to prevent spreading dust, for both interior and exterior projects. High-speed sanding, grinding and sawing without a special containment setup and HEPA-vac exhaust hookup for each tool will be prohibited. Open flame burning is not allowed. Once the work is completed, the regulation specifies cleaning and waste disposal procedures, which must also be supervised by a certified renovator.

Next is a multi-layered verification and record keeping trail. After cleanup is complete, the certified renovator must verify by matching a cleaning cloth with an see **STORM** pg 5

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Candidates Night

— AT THE LEVERETT TOWN HALL —

BY DAVID DETMOLD – Eight people showed up for Candidates Night, to listen as residents running for townwide office made their pitch at the Leverett select-board meeting on Tuesday. Four of them were candidates.

No races appear to be in the offing for the upcoming April 24th election, which, unique to the town of Leverett in the Commonwealth, takes place by nomination from the floor and vote of residents assembled at annual town meeting.

Before the candidates spoke, Beth Adams, a Leverett resident,

accompanied by Western Mass ACLU director Bill Newman, introduced a citizen-initiated resolution, which will also be voted on at annual town meeting, to urge Congress to repeal the ban on releasing cleared detainees from Guantánamo Bay into the United States, and to welcome such cleared detainees to settle in the town of Leverett as soon as the ban is lifted.

"I am a member of the group No More Guantánamos," said Adams, "and a witness against torture, which is why as a town member I feel called to bring this

resolution forward."

Newman said he had been involved in a similar citizen-led effort in Amherst last year, when Amherst became the first town in the nation to vote on and pass a resolution welcoming cleared Guantánamo detainees.

"The Bush administration came up with the idea of locking up the worst of the worst in a place that was lawless," said Newman. In the aftermath of 9/11, the U.S. Department of Defense offered \$5,000 rewards for people turned in as terrorists, (the equivalent of hundreds of thousands of dollars in Pakistan or Afghanistan).

"Whoever you turned in, you got \$5,000," Newman asserted, and the captives were interred without charge or recourse to trial



Nancy Talanian, Beth Adams, and Bill Newman, with No More Guantánamos, are working to pass a resolution at the Leverett town meeting on April 24th calling on Congress to repeal the ban on cleared detainees from Guantánamo being released to the United States, and welcoming cleared detainees to come to live in Leverett.

at Guantánamo Bay. "It turned into an international disaster for the U.S.," Newman said, "Seven hundred and fifty people were

locked up at one time or another at Guantánamo," and 181 prisoners still remain. "Most of them are cleared for release. They are stuck there. They cannot go back to their countries of origin due the recognized threat of torture or death. Fifteen other countries have taken cleared detainees, but the U.S. has banned them. The

see LEVERETT pg 18

STORM from pg 4

EPA verification card. If the cloth appears dirtier or darker than the card, the cleaning must be repeated. A complete file of records on the project must be kept by the certified renovator for three years. It is suggested that photographs be taken during the process to document the renovation. This is supposed to help with the potential litigation exposure the new protocol may place on contractors.

The new regulations state that all furnishings are to be removed by the contractors from the project areas and that all areas be sealed off and protected with poly sheets that are to be bagged, vacuum sealed, and disposed of in a landfill at completion of that part of any project. All workers are to wear protective clothing, including booties, gloves, hats, and masks. Each break time, the protective outfits are to be removed before leaving the protected area, rolled into themselves, and thrown away. A new outfit is to be worn upon returning to the work area after each break.

All work areas on the exterior of the buildings are to be marked off with a special bright red "lead hazard tape" 20 feet out from the buildings. The ground around the buildings are to be protected by a 6 mil poly ground cloth ten feet out from the exterior walls and no holes are allowed to be torn in the plastic ground cloth. All ladders and staging are to be set up on this ground cloth.

There is a lot more to the regulations I haven't covered, but the point is everything has changed in how contractors are expected to approach any work they do on pre-1978 homes or property, and that will have a significant impact on remodeling from next Thursday on.

The EPA has said, "Given the relatively low estimated overall average per-job cost of this final rule, which is \$35, and the relatively easy-to-use work practices required by this final rule, EPA does not expect the incremental costs associated with this rule to be a determinative factor for consumers."

The EPA also said, "It is difficult to determine with any amount of certainty whether this final rule will have unintended consequences." You think?

For every day I am on a job, I have fixed overhead expenses that have to be covered, and I need to make a profit for my skill, efforts, and liability exposure. As a window replacement specialist, I excel in moving rapidly through a job, so my business will be impacted more than most. A job I could do in one day last year will now take about four or five days to complete under the new final rules, equating to cost increases of three to four hundred percent, often tens of thousands of dollars per project. In the last week alone, there have been four out of five days when the winds have exceeded 20 miles per hour. On days such as these, all exterior work will be prohibited on pre-

1978 homes. Did I forget to mention that?

No one I have talked to can understand where the EPA's research that put a price tag of \$35 per project came from, and the EPA is not telling us.

The EPA's numbers make no sense in the real contracting world. The fines for noncompliance of up to \$75,000 a day are oppressive for small contractors and will shift the ability to shoulder this kind of exposure to only the very largest contracting companies, helping to put the little guy out of business here in Massachusetts.

I have been in the replacement window business since 1986. In that time I have replaced tens of thousands of windows in pre-1978 homes here in Franklin County. So you might say I have been up close and personal with all the mechanics of remodeling homes of that age group. Last year I had my lead level tested, and it came in below normal.

I have no doubt that children across America have become ill from lead exposure. The question is, where did they come in contact with the levels of lead that made them ill? Was it the time the electrician rewired their parents' or landlord's property, or was it from the old painted screen door they ran in and out of all last summer? Or perhaps it was from the antique Christmas decorations they would hang up each holiday, or maybe it was from the old house down the street that took twelve hours to burn to the

ground and smoked up the neighborhood for a couple of days. The EPA has admitted that toys from China have for a number of years been making children ill from lead exposure. That includes the painted cartoon drinking cups given away in some fast food restaurants for the longest time.

Folks like myself who have been exposed for decades to the hazards associated with contracting work in pre-1978 homes are coming up clean on our lead tests. Where is the lead that is harming our children coming from?

Lead poisoning can come from thousands of sources, most of which will not be addressed in these new regulations. No responsible contractor wishes to see anyone get sick from lead paint, but the fact is the EPA has targeted in this new law only a very small area in which a child or anyone could come in contact with lead.

I am upset that the review process was not brought to the attention of contractors through a letter from the state or the federal government any number of years ago when we could have weighed in on the real issues the EPA does not seem to grasp.

With seven million jobs lost in the economic downturn and the bail out of AIG and other large corporations, I see these kinds of unfunded mandates by our government as oppressive and an insult to small businesses and the working class in America. Maybe many of us will find the time to do a little fishing this year.

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NOTES FROM THE MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

Maypole Returning to Town Common



KRYSTINA SCHMITT PHOTO

The Marlboro Morris Men danced at the Community Garden on 3rd and L Street, across from La Bodega, on Tuesday night, in an annual prelude to the May Day revels on the Montague village common

BY DAVID DETMOLD – The Maypole, though it is in no way officially endorsed by the town of Montague, will nonetheless rise above the town common again this year.

The selectboard granted a permit for the age-old pagan symbol of springtime and fertility to be planted once again on the verdant town common of Montague Center, per the request of Center Street resident Michael Muller, speaking on behalf of an amor-

phous group of Morris Men, wise women, Johnny Jump-Ups, Druids, and assorted merry-makers who converge on the town common on the Sunday closest to May 1st to Welcome in the May-O, as they have for many years.

This year the ceremony will take place on the second day of May, from 10:30 to noon. "Wear a colorful shirt," advised Muller, as he invited all and sundry to attend the springtime revel, "or you'll be invisible."

Even though the board cannot officially endorse such rambunctious goings-on as the May Day frolic, while they granted the permit to "erect a sign or other object on public property," selectboard chair Patricia Pruitt did allow, "It's a lot of fun for all ages."

Including the Middle Ages. And even the New Age. The board also approved a request for a package store license for Holy Smokes Deli at 52 Avenue A to sell beer and wine, and forwarded the request to the Alcoholic Beverage Control Commission on behalf of Leslie and Lou Ekus, deli owners.

The Ekuses say they hope to have a 'soft opening' for their new 750-square-foot deli sometime in the next month. They plan to sell local bottled beer, like the Element Brewery beer made in Millers Falls, along with a few

wines that go well with barbeque. The deli will sell hot sandwiches, side dishes, and prepared spare ribs, chicken, and other items for customers to take home for reheating or barbequing at home.

Though she said she welcomed Holy Smokes coming to downtown Turners, Jay K's owner Pam Kostanski asked the board to consider the advisability of issuing another package store license directly across the street from her establishment.

Lou Ekus said, "We will be offering a very limited selection. The package store across the street may benefit from people buying a rack of ribs and running across for a six pack."

The board approved a permit for the opening day parade for the Newt Guilbault League on Sunday, May 2nd, from noon to 1 p.m., starting at the high school, continuing down Montague Street to the ballfields on Crocker Avenue. The PowerTown Jump Team will be parachuting onto the field. All are welcome.

Tami Patnaude, speaking for the League, said they would be hosting the regional "world series for nine year olds" starting on August 6th, with participants from all the New England states.

"You all do a great job on the fields and fences," said board member Pat Allen.

NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD

Finance Committee Takes Another Look at New Senior Center

BY DAVID DETMOLD – On Monday, the finance committee met for a second time with Polly Kiely, senior center director, to discuss the proposed new \$2.4 million, 6,600 square foot senior center planned to be built on town owned land north of the elementary school off Route 63.

Last week, the finance committee split 3-2 to recommend against the new senior center. Kiely said finance committee chair Stanley Gradowski came to the present senior center, located on the first floor of the former elementary school on Pleasant Street, in Erving, to talk over the proposal some more, and invited her back to meet with the full committee for a second time on Monday.

Gradowski said, "Because of the importance of the senior center, I felt we should have a further discussion with her. We went over the whole scenario again, in a little more informal setting."

Kiely said the discussion followed the same lines as on the previous Monday, and the finance committee again voted 3-2 against the proposal, with Dan Hammock and Winniphred Stone joining Gradowski in opposition, and Dennis Wonsey and Pete Cavanaugh still voting to support the proposal.

Kiely said she was unsure why the finance committee wanted to have a second chance to talk over the proposal with her, since the members did not appear to have shifted their positions. In the previous week's meeting, Dan Hammock and Winniphred Stone joined Gradowski in voting not to recommend the proposal, which would be paid for out of a combination of \$1.25 million from free cash, \$500,000 in taxation, and \$650,000 transferred from unspent funds previously allocated for renovating the Erving wastewater treatment plant. Pete Cavanaugh and Dennis Wonsey voted to support the proposal.

Gradowski said he is, "67 years old and on crutches," and, "our votes on the finance com-

mittee may not reflect what our true feelings are. But I am looking out for the finances of the town of Erving."

Administrative assistant Tom Sharp said the selectboard had a different stance on the proposed new senior center.

"They've all said publicly, more than once, because of the financing structure and the availability of funds, they're not only putting the senior center on the warrant, they're endorsing it."

Meanwhile, the selectboard met separately from the finance committee and reopened the town meeting warrant long enough to add a resolution, at the suggestion of Union 28 superintendent Joan Wickman, asking town meeting to weigh in on an amendment to the education reform bill passed by the legislature in January. The amendment in question eased the way for a single school committee to leave a superintendency union by a simple majority vote, without consultation with other member towns in the union.

Although Wickman had asked for a warrant article calling for the repeal of the amendment, on advice of town counsel the selectboard agreed only to place the following wording on the town meeting warrant:

"Be it resolved the town request of the school committee prior to any vote to withdraw the town from participation in Union 28 that the school committee hold a public hearing on the matter."

In other news, the board signed an agreement with the town of Montague spelling out the terms by which Erving may rent Montague's sewer vacuum truck. The contract will allow Erving to rent the truck at the rate of \$125 an hour, from 6 a.m. to 2 p.m. weekdays, with Montague personnel operating the vehicle, and shields Montague from liability for any damage to pipelines, private homes, or town personnel working on or near the sewer vac.

Speaking of damage to private

see ERVING pg 8

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NOTES FROM THE GILL SELECTBOARD

School Oversight Group Foresees "Financial Disaster"

BY DAVID DETMOLD – The selectboard of Gill has endorsed a letter to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, and local legislators, calling for more active state participation to avoid "a financial disaster that affects directly the education of our children."

The letter, presented by finance committee chair Tupper Brown to the selectboard for approval on Monday, was prepared by the technical panel of the oversight group working on a plan for fiscal and educational stability for the Gill-Montague Regional School District (GMRSD). The selectboards and finance committees of Gill and Montague, along with the school committee and superintendent of schools, are represented on that working group.

The letter paints a bleak picture of the financial factors facing the school district, and sets out a number of initiatives for state legislators and DESE commissioner Mitchell Chester to consider.

At the March 25th meeting of the technical panel, the letter notes, a budget scenario was presented, showing "where the district stands today, and where it will move financially in the coming five years under currently held assumptions as to available revenues and the growth in district budgets. The result is deficits every year beginning with over \$500,000 in FY'11 and growing to more than \$1.2 million in FY'15."

The letter, which Brown said would be sent out later this week if the endorsement of the Montague selectboard and the GMRSD school committee can also be obtained, further stated, "We are particularly disappointed that the state representatives seemed unwilling to step forward and offer the active leadership that we believe is warranted, especially in light of the fact that DESE now has financial responsibility for this school district for the second year in a row."

The letter called on DESE and state legislators to increase state funding to local school districts

"such as ours," and stipulated a 3% annual increase in state Chapter 70 will be needed to attain fiscal stability, rather than the historical 1% increase the GMRSD has experienced in the past decade. It also called on the state legislators and DESE to work with the district to analyze per-pupil costs and to offer experience and expertise in reducing costs, while at the same time strengthening the delivery of education for all students. Finally, the letter called for town and district involvement in any school district regionalization plans that may be forthcoming from the statehouse, or from DESE, saying, "It is impossible for towns and districts to develop sustainable approaches to education and its financing with radical restructuring continuously looming but never clearly defined."

Brown suggested the Gill selectboard may wish to send copies of the letter to towns and cities throughout the Commonwealth, in order to stimulate a common response to what he considers to be the common problem of inadequate state aid for local districts required by law to meet state-imposed standards and federal educational requirements.

Brown praised the involvement of Superintendent Carl Ladd in the working sessions. "He has ideas for education that are extremely useful for our district," said Brown. "He does not seem to feel that only money will save the education problem."

In other news, the selectboard endorsed the conservation commission's plan to spend the entire sum remaining in their land acquisition account – \$4,547 – to help provide the local match for the state's acquisition of development rights on the so-called Kozunkowski property, totaling six buildable lots adjacent to the Gill Elementary School, for inclusion in the Agriculture Protection Restriction program.

An estimated \$12,000 to \$13,000 will be required for the local match, but French plans to contribute the rest of the local match himself through a "bargain

sale," of the development rights. Conservation commission chair Ken Sprankle is resigning his post, due to time constraints. The board appointed Paul Sievert, of Mountain Road, a professor of natural resources conservation at UMass Amherst, to take the empty seat on the conservation commission, effective April 16th.

The problems with the well at the elementary school took a new turn during the heavy rains at the end of March, when water began leaking into a basement-level storage room. The well water has been troubled with high coliform counts following heavy rains, and the town is seeking to ascertain the source of the off and on contamination.

Town administrative assistant Ray Purington said the pipe carrying the water from the well to the school appears to run through a concrete vault and sleeve before entering the basement, and either the encasing sleeve or the vault may be the source of inflow of groundwater, not only to the basement, but perhaps back to the well itself. The highway department plans to excavate the water line during the upcoming school vacation.

The selectboard directed the board of health to renew the existing contract for hauling trash and recyclables with Alternative Recycling of Leeds, but without the fuel escalator or decrease clause that has caused the company to lose money on the contract since the first few months of the present two year contract. Since that time, fuel costs have declined, and Gill has saved something on the order of \$10,000 on the \$77,000 contract.

Purington said trash sticker sales bring in about 46% (\$3500) of the cost of trash and recyclable pickup in Gill, and about \$1,000 more comes in as a reimbursement for the recycled materials.

Ivan Ussach was appointed to the town's energy commission.

The selectboard declared May 1st to 9th Gill Emu Week, at the request of DeeDee Mares of the Songline Emu Farm, to coincide with National Emu Week. Emus are large, flightless birds, raised for their meat and eggs.

Large birds like emus need large weeks, which may explain why seven days to appreciate emus is just not enough.

History Comes Alive with Old Maps of Gill



Ray Purington (foreground) examining Old Maps of Gill.

BY IVAN USSACH – In 1794, when the state of Massachusetts was less than ten years old, the legislature decreed that all towns in the Commonwealth be properly surveyed and mapped with all significant natural features.

Incorporated only a year earlier, in 1793, after a vote to separate from Greenfield, the town of Gill prepared and sent a map conspicuous for the inclusion of only one road. Marked "County Road to Bernardston," it was the precursor to what became West Gill Road.

A healthy dose of state history was just one of the many extra benefits that came with attending Dave Allen's presentation on the Historic Maps of Gill, attended by about 35 people at Gill town hall on April 6th. Allen displayed numerous maps that audience members pored over before and after his slideshow talk. Allen also passed out copies of a hand-out with many of the map images he displayed.

Allen has worked in the land surveying business in Franklin County for 20 years. A self-described "pack rat," he collects every map he comes across, and scans them onto a computer file.

The Gill cultural council sponsored his talk, and the Gill historic commission recently purchased a series of six maps from among those Allen has collected and organized.

One of the reasons people

don't know their own town maps, Allen said, is because many of them have not been available locally. His collection includes maps from the national and state archives, as well as from town records from Greenfield and Historic Deerfield.

Greenfield split off from Deerfield in 1753 for the same reason most new towns of the pre-industrial era formed – people found repeated travel to church and town meeting too long and onerous a journey. By the 1780s, Gill residents were tired of having to travel to the Greenfield meeting house, then located at Silver and Federal streets.

The earliest maps Allen showed were regional maps of New England. A 1675 map shows no sign of our area, but depicts the site of a battle that year from King Phillips War in Hadley with a small colored illustration of English and natives. The Falls Fight the following year in what is now Riverside, in Gill, shows up on some later maps.

A 1717 Deerfield map is the oldest one showing the area of present-day Gill; the surveyor approximated the Connecticut River by showing it as a straight line, with one jag.

A map from the 1740s includes the Deerfield, Northfield and Hatfield settlements, with

see MAPS pg 14

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from **BURN** pg 1
 Lovejoy told the assembled fire chiefs. "Where's the first tee?"
 Lovejoy said he'd been working on getting the proper permits for the controlled burn since last November. Before that, "it took months to get the estate and the land trust organized to transfer the property," Lovejoy added.



Jaime Beauchesne lit the ceremonial torch

Once the final cleanup is completed, the property will be acquired by the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game, to be used as an access point for fishing in the Sawmill River, which runs along the property's east boundary.

The neighboring fire departments have been using the Beauchesne property for training for several weeks. "You don't get the opportunity to train with a real house very often," noted Turners Falls fire chief Ray Godin. "Most houses are in much tighter neighborhoods."

Godin said two weekends ago, young trainees had a chance to practice rescuing heavy dummies from the upper stories, wearing all their protective gear, while smoke machines kept the house filled with dense smoke. They got to watch and learn from the controlled burn of Beauchesne's barn, which burned to the ground in about 12 minutes on the weekend of March 27th.

Ann Fisk said the last time the Montague Center department had organized a controlled burn was at the Eddy home, on the corner of Hatchery Road and Greenfield Road, about 25 years ago.

Last Sunday, neighbors clustered along South Main and Main Streets, watching Beauchesne's house go up in flames. On the other side of South Main is the empty lot where Beauchesne's father, Felix, once farmed. That farmhouse was pulled down in the '90s, in a less spectacular demolition effort.

It was Beauchesne's nephew, Jaime, who lit the ceremonial propane torch used to light up the house. He watched the fire with approximately 60 firefighters from Sunderland, Erving, Gill, Greenfield, Turners Falls, and Montague, in what became a surprisingly drawn-out and strangely somber scene.

Perhaps not a few were thinking about a man's life work and labor going up in flames.

After a while, the blaze had burned through every wall and every room, and only the main supporting timbers still stood, burning brightly. They stood for what seemed a long time.

Rodney Beauchesne died on October 14th, 2007, after a protracted battle with prostate cancer. He is fondly remembered in the village for his generous nature, the pony rides he gave to kids at Old Home Days, his prolific shopping sprees at the Montague Congregational Church auction, his idyllic walks to the Mini Mart accompanied by pet goats, his habit of showing up at various watering holes from Greenfield to Belchertown on horseback, his appreciation of beauty, especially female beauty, and his lifelong love of a good bargain, which resulted in more stockpiled building materials stashed on the floodplain of the Sawmill than could be found in a well-stocked lumberyard in North Amherst or Greenfield, and at much better prices.

Many of those materials found their way into the crazy-quilt construction of his home.

"He built it strong. Those supporting beams are like trees," said Captain John Zellman, of the Turners Falls fire department.

Thirty-seven minutes passed before the top floors collapsed through the middle of the building in a shower of sparks and a fireball of flame. There were no cheers from the crowd, who continued watching quietly, or drifted away toward home.

"The basic lesson here: 'Don't screw around with house fires,'" commented Lovejoy.

The Franklin Land Trust, the current owners of the property, are asking for community volunteers to help with a clean-up day of the debris remaining at the former Beauchesne residence on Saturday, April 24th, at 10 a.m. in Montague.

from **ERVING** pg 6
 homes, the board has not heard directly from the Trask family in some weeks, said town administrative coordinator Tom Sharp, since a private contractor working for Erving on a sewer line in Erving side accidentally caused an eruption of raw sewage through the sinks and bathroom fixtures of that residence, rendering their home uninhabitable, to date.

Sharp said the school committee plans to vote on April 27th whether to allow the Trask

family's school-aged child to complete the school year in the Erving Elementary School, since the Trask family is still being temporarily housed in a neighboring town.

The board approved a business license for a company called A-2-Z, operated by Diane Bouley of 20 Central Street, Erving side. Bouley offers ink and toner refilling and refurbishing, computer repairs and cleaning.

The board signed a reimbursement form for Chapter 90 funds to pay for \$27,401 worth

of paving and drainage work on Prospect Street extension in Erving Center.

After going over changes to the state Open Meeting Law that will go into effect on July 1st, including a stipulation to periodically review and release executive session minutes for items that no longer need to be kept confidential, the board agreed to hold an executive session on April 26th to review minutes of previous executive sessions, and release such minutes as can be made public.



Fourth grader Malik Baker-Gore, with self-portrait

singing only heightened the multi-cultural tapestry of art work on display.

Musgrave explained that Sheffield students have read more than 7,000 books and chapters so far in the school read-a-thon, and they will raise a penny for each book or chapter read to benefit the construction of schools in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Some of the student art depicted scenes from these two countries, inspired by reading a children's book called *Listen to the Wind*.

That book recalled the experience of author Greg Mortenson, who travelled to Pakistan to climb the second-highest mountain in the world, K-2, but, ill from the travails of that attempt, was cared for in a small mountain village where the children had no school. He watched them using a stick to write their lessons in the sand, and determined to raise money to help them build a school. He has now raised enough money through Pennies for Peace and other programs to build 57 schools, and with Sheffield's help, is working on number 58.

Rachel Tucker, fourth grader, said the book *Listen to the Wind* inspired her to think about helping to create "World Peace, one school at a time."

Karissa Fleming was thinking more about the waste of products that get plowed into local landfills in our country when she created her work of art: a crayon drawing of a tractor. "This piece puts together art and a tractor, in a picture frame," said the second grader. She indicated the picture frame

holding one of the little critters proudly in her palm.

Meagher received a \$100 mini-grant from the Gill-Montague Education Fund to purchase the worm factory, Leh said.

"Thanks for coming out to this spectacular show," called out beaming principal Elizabeth Musgrave, as the art house crowd in the gym allowed their

chatter to subside ever so briefly. "We have many fine artists." Cheers. "And we want to honor Mrs. Meagher, who has been working night and day," to put the show together. More wild cheering.

And then, Musgrave introduced a drum circle of students who have been studying Native American culture at Sheffield, and their pounding rhythm and

see **RECYCLED** pg 20

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PARK from pg 1

Montague and the Narragansetts pledged to “commit to a future that will continue the exchange of actions to promote understanding about and between the cultures, increase mutual vigilance for historic preservation, and deepen our appreciation for the rich heritage of the indigenous people of our region and all who have found respite, sanctuary and welcome here.”

The foundational importance of that document, and the accompanying “burying the hatchet ceremony” that took place during the Reconciliation Ceremony, was referenced by the selectboard and the representatives of the Narragansetts and the Wampanoag Tribe of Gayhead (Aquinnah) who attended Monday’s meeting.

“It’s an honor to be here once again,” said Doug Harris, preservationist for ceremonial landscapes for the Narragansett Indian tribe, “and to be part of this moment in history. The events that took place here on May 19th, 2004, are considered very powerful events, of spiritual and historical significance by our tribe. I would like to underscore that too little is known about the events that took place here,” during the period of contact with the Colonial settlers, and for the thousands of years of continuous occupation of this area by Native people before that time. “We perceive a need for historians and academics to be brought to this area, and to walk the places where the history took place.”

The Reconciliation Agreement calls for “an increase in mutual vigilance for each other’s well being,” said Harris. “From the tribal side, we perceive we have a responsibility to help you economically for that ceremony to bear fruit.”

Toward that end, in addition to academic conferences, Harris proposed semiannual commercial powwows by the Great Falls, inviting tourists and tribes from across the region, the U.S. and Canada to attend, to buy and sell their wares, and to become acquainted with the culturally significant sites in the area, as well as events like canoe races, involving “the best canoeists from the United States and Canada,” competing for prizes.

“We perceive ourselves as your partners, for better or worse,



DETMOLD PHOTO

The Montague Selectboard (clockwise from left) Patricia Allen, Patricia Pruitt, Mark Fairbrother, town administrator Frank Abbondanzio, met with Native representatives Jonathan Perry (Wampanoag), Doug Harris (Narragansett), and Elizabeth Perry (Wampanoag) on Monday in town hall to announce plans for a Native American Park and Cultural Tourism program by the Great Falls.

but the objective is to better both communities. We’re here for the long haul,” Harris added.

Jonathan Perry, senior cultural resource monitor for the Wampanoag Indian Tribe of Gayhead (Aquinnah), called the proposed Native Cultural Park, “something new, refreshing, something powerful. It should be documented the whole way through. Tribal nations, cities and states have struggled over this issue,” said Perry, referring to how to interpret past relations between the indigenous peoples of this continent and the European colonists and their descendants who forcibly took possession of the vast majority of the land and resources of North America. “The story is similar nationwide. People still tend to be caught up in the after effects,” of that history of strife and disenfranchisement. “The result is, it’s very hard to move forward.

“There are thousands of years of rich history to be celebrated here. Not just the battles and wars, but the rich history of people sharing time and space. Participating in that shared process is something that could be duplicated worldwide.”

Elizabeth Perry, cultural resource monitor for the Wampanoag Tribe of Gayhead (Aquinnah), spoke of her hope that younger people in generations to come would be “comfortable with each other, and with people of different cultures.”

Selectboard chair Patricia Pruitt also recalled the Reconciliation Ceremony, say-

ing, “It was a very important event in my life,” that took place two days after she was elected. “Little did I know where it would lead us.”

Selectboard member Patricia Allen recalled the days leading up to the 250th anniversary of the town of Montague, when it was not uncommon for town residents to call Turners Falls “cursed.”

“The feeling in downtown Turners was no matter what people did, they could never get out of this bad situation.”

Allen said she went to town administrator Frank Abbondanzio and said, “We have to get rid of the ‘Turners Falls curse.’ How do we do that?”

Coincidentally, Allen said, since the Reconciliation Ceremony, “There’s been a huge change in Turners Falls. The willingness to do things together is of huge importance. I like the plan.”

As Abbondanzio outlined it, the town of Montague will seek funding from foundations or state or federal agencies to pay for a feasibility study to outline the costs and benefits of creating a central visitors’ center for the proposed Native American Cultural Park, to be housed at the former Cumberland Farms building on Avenue A, along with the other aspects of the plan.

Abbondanzio pointed to the December 2008 decision by the keeper of the National Register of Historic Places and the National Park Service finding a ceremonial stone landscape at the Turners Falls Airport as eligible for listing in the National Historic Register,

as part of a much larger area encompassing existing eligible sites in and around Turners Falls, such as the Riverside Archeological District in Gill, Wissatinnewag in Greenfield, the Hanneman site (also at the Turners Airport) and other stone formations in Montague, Leverett, Wendell and surrounding towns, all included in the keeper’s December 2008 decision as part of a larger ceremonial landscape associated with the airport site.

“There’s a rich history here,” Abbondanzio said. “We feel the park and proposed [cultural tourism] concept can be of national and regional significance. It’s possible we can attract the kind of financing to make that a reality.”

Selectboard member Mark Fairbrother voted against the proposal “with regret,” saying, “Over the last four or five years, the goings on at the Turners Falls Airport have painted a different picture. That project is still on hold because of Native American concerns,” said Fairbrother, referring to the extension of the airport runway toward the Millers Falls Road end, blocked by the finding of the keeper of the National Register that the stone formation, on a hill the Turners Falls Airport commissioners had planned to remove and use as fill for the runway extension, was in fact a site eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

“The town was under threat of lawsuit because of Native American concerns,” said

Fairbrother. “If that project had been completed in its original form, parts of that project included the potential for more hangars at the airport. This town would have been receiving new revenues,” from people who had expressed interest in leasing new hangars, suggested Fairbrother, “revenues we will never recoup.”

He said, “Native Americans are being paid tens of thousands of dollars for their consultation,” at the airport construction project, by the Federal Aviation Administration.

“I’m here to look out for the town,” said Fairbrother. “We’re not in a good situation.”

see **PARK** page 13

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TALKING PICTURES

A Toothless Dragon



1 eagle = the pits 4 eagles = the heights

BY TODD DETMOLD

CHICAGO – Refreshingly low on the pop-culture references and fart jokes that have made so many computer animated films so far below par, DreamWorks Animation's *How to Train Your Dragon* arrives with a heaping dose of sentimentality and a cadre of adorable beasts that would make it a huge hit if not for the lame title and even-more-lame marketing campaign that pass it off as just more of the same. The product itself represents a huge leap forward for the studio in the race to be number two behind Pixar.

One major problem with the film (and I'll try not to extrapolate this into a wider point about where our culture is headed) is the humans. These characters – from their physical design and their dialogue right down to their cutesy names and B-list celebrity voice acting – just aren't up to snuff. The film attempts a shaky balance between cartoonish and realistic in its design. The characters say, "Oh my gods" (because they're Vikings) but also, "This is pretty cool!" (because riding dragons is cool). That it succeeds

to the extent it does despite these drawbacks is a testament to the overall power of the script.

The skinny hero is Hiccup; his giant father is a dragon fighter named Stoick who, as though no one looked up "stoic" in a dictionary, shouts and complains constantly about his worthless son.

One character suggests Hiccup's only value would be as a toothpick for the dragons that nightly torment the Vikings' village. Hiccup's spindly frame contrasted with that of his spherical father is a nice attempt at a visual gag, but like Hiccup himself, it falls flat.

Sick of being an endless embarrassment, Hiccup is compelled to use his blacksmith apprenticeship to construct a contraption he hopes will trap a Night Fury, the least-seen and most-feared breed of dragon. Inevitably, he succeeds, and inevitably, he can't bring himself to kill the beast. Instead, Hiccup goes back to the shop to create a prosthetic wing to replace the one he damaged and restore the creature's flight.

Hiccup dubs his pet dragon

"Toothless" (his are retractable), and the movie mines its considerable pathos from the ensuing scenes of their blossoming friendship.

The twist is the dragons are little more than overgrown, misunderstood puppies. The dragons, as opposed to the humans, are created with dimension and depth (and not just of the gimmicky, 3D-glasses variety, though some of those effects are admittedly neat). There is an abundance of imagination poured into the creation of a wide variety of dragon breeds, from fire-breathing to hut-crushing; at night the dragons are fearsome and shrouded in black, but by day they are quirky in shape and size and wide-eyed such that we, along with Hiccup, will learn to love them. They like fish but detest eel, and they love being scratched behind the ears.

How To Train Your Dragon follows a tried-and-true formula. It's about a boy with a dangerous secret who has to teach his community of ignorant elders the error of their ways. As in *E.T.* or *The Iron Giant*, the adults fear what the child knows to be a simple messenger of love (much like the way the adults in the theater treated the film: with ignorance, paying more attention to their cell phones).

Though *Dragon* does what it can to ape those classics, where it ultimately fails is in its sense of

danger.

There is no analogue to Spielberg's hazmat-suited spooks or *Giant's* communist scare; *Dragon* meekly strays from putting its protagonist in any palpable danger. Have the filmmakers seen *Up*? You're supposed to up your protagonist's stakes by putting him in danger, even in a "children's" movie. Especially in a children's movie.

This is obvious from the

dragons aren't interested in the humans. Even during the second-act reveal of the Big Bad Boss dragon, we witness a mass-feeding of ... sheep, fish, and other animals. There is one major character with a couple of missing limbs, but he is played for laughs.

To make matters worse, the dragons' lack of interest in human flesh actually creates a decent plot hole. The film isn't interested in inflating any real



"How to Train Your Dragon" is set in the mythical world of burly Vikings and wild dragons, and based on the book by Cressida Cowell.

beginning. The film opens with a spectacular dragon-on-Viking battle (most of the scenic animation in the film, from the wafting clouds to the rocky outcroppings of the Vikings' island home, is gorgeous), but we soon realize that while they set the houses on fire and steal all the sheep, the

threat to its heroes. Pete Docter drew blood in the opening minutes of *Up*, and *WALL-E* lived in a post-apocalyptic dystopia.

How To Train Your Dragon makes great strides for populist animation, but every Pixar success makes it harder and harder to catch up.

Aqua String Band to Perform at Turners Falls Gala



PHOTO COURTESY OF RON INNAONE

Aqua String Band Captain Ron Innacone

BY ELLEN BLANCHETTE – Exceptional entertainment returns to Turners Falls High this month, with a chance to see the Philadelphia Mummies' Aqua String Band at the annual Spring Gala on April 26th.

The Gala helps support the Gill-Montague Education Fund, which provides scholarships for worthy students and funds special student activities.

Any child growing up in Philadelphia knows the Mummies. They march every year in the Philadelphia New Year's Day parade, exciting crowds that stand for hours in the cold to enjoy the pageantry, music, and unique Mummies strut.

I grew up in Philadelphia, and my grandparents lived in South Philly, which just happens to be where the parade starts. How

exciting it was to see grown men dancing through the narrow streets of South Philly and down Broad Street wearing flowing silk costumes decorated with sequins and huge feather headdresses! Then there is the unique sound of the string bands. What I remember most is the combination of bells and the rhythmic strumming of the banjos.

There are no horns in these string bands, only wind instruments – saxophone and clarinet – along with accordions, violins, bass violins, and percussion instruments. The bells come from a Glockenspiel, first introduced by the Aqua's founder, Fred J. Kesel, in the early 1900s.

The Aqua String Band is the second oldest string band in Philadelphia, celebrating their 90th anniversary this April.

In an interview this week, Ron Innacone said he considers it one

of the greatest honors to be Captain of the Aqua String Band.

His father introduced him to the Mummies when he was ten years old. He began as a marching member of the Fancy Brigades. Then, at his father's suggestion, Innacone learned to play saxophone well enough to join the Aqua String band, playing with them until he graduated high school and went college.

Ten years later, as he tells it, with a degree from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania and a business of his own, he found he wasn't having any fun, and asked himself, "What is the one thing I miss?"

The answer was the joy of playing music and entertaining people as part of the string band, "making the people smile." Innacone points out that the Mummies are all volunteers, with

see **BAND** page 20

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West Along the River High Water Chronicles

BY DAVID BRULE

ERVINGSIDE – If you're from these parts, or if you've lived here attuned to the river moods long enough, you know this season is called "high water." Not the poetic "spring freshet" nor the cubic feet per second of the hydrologists. Just a sparse two-word phrase referring to the essential element here, and its current state.

Every spring season of high water has its yearly difference. They still talk about the 500-year flood one fateful March in 1936 that brought torrential rains and disastrous flooding, with ice jams blocking the Connecticut putting deadly pressure on bridges and dams, creating havoc when they finally gave way. Such high water never seen before and not to be seen for another 500 years.

But it only took two short years for another 500-year flood to occur at the time of the 1938 hurricane. Maybe we're good for a thousand years this time around.

This year, the water came up early, under warm heavy rains in March, melting snow and quickly raising the level of the river that swirls around the rocky cliff face in our bend of the river.

Someone once said of the river, "Well... it runs by here every day." That is its job after

all. It carries water away, down river to the sea, and most times keeps it away from our door.

Some folks down east along the coast didn't have an easy time of it this year. But here, in our old house that sits on the edge of an ancient flood plain, the river, one terrace below us, reclaims its prehistoric right to spread swirls and new streams of rushing water through the trees and creek paths.

In high water season, we hear the roiling rush night and day, through every open window of the house. The constant river sound comes in through the kitchen door and into the upstairs bedrooms at night. The white water flashes through the bare trees beyond the garden. In the evening, the river gleams as silver ribbons running through the woods.

In contrast to the rushing noisiness on the other side of the trees, the frog pond is quite still, though brimming full, and on its stillness, trees are perfectly mirrored like an Escher print. One could get lost, staring into the labyrinth of the real trees and the merely reflected trees upside down on the surface.

By day, dozens of frogs, the green ones and the bullfrogs, croak and paddle happily in their brief mating and spawning. An elegant wood duck pair dally in

pre-nuptial bliss on the edge of the pond, and a visiting muskrat spends time plunging to the bottom to locate succulents, stems and tubers.

The house and the yard, high and dry like Noah's Ark on the flood, edge into spring with the noisy river as a backdrop. In these warm days of early April, the morning sun creeps over this corner of the river, over the rushing water sounds. Early reddish buds on the maple give a scarlet haze to the morning air.

The birds are resuming their spring calling; over-wintering juncos linger and trill from every limb, their numbers down from the 50 or 60 here in full winter. White-throats have begun their sweet whistle of "Old Sam Peabody, Peabody, Peabody." Sometimes just shortened to "Old Sam," with no Peabody at all, as one of our Amherst poets once remarked.

Our phoebe constantly wheezes out his squeeze-toy call while seriously considering the eaves of our summer gazebo in the woods.

The morning session, which we could call "Squirrels Gone Wild," begins as two exuberant bushy tails as zany and deranged as any kittens high on catnip careen from tree base to tree base, flipping on their backs to tussle or

fight with a broken branch on the ground. The two of them do back-flips and somersaults, racing furiously to the lilacs to instantly stop and hold position in freeze-tag style before resuming a mad streaking and caroming, like a pinball game out of control. Have to check on what they're getting into back there, maybe some strange grass or weed. Or is it just spring fever?

So we have made it through one more winter, and a thankful-

rise up in song.

Our tribal friends have recently told us that in their culture, the peepers sing for the elders who have passed away this winter. It is a good way to be reminded of them.

And just then, amid these thoughts, into the fading light, wings and lurches our favorite brown bat! She's back, somehow, miraculously. She has not died with the tens of thousands in the winter caves.



Wood Duck, by Louis Agassiz Fuertes

ly mild one at that, compared to past years, and to the rest of the country. Warm days have coaxed out early tender green, and the shadbush billows whitely in the wind, early this year. In the evening, the river pathways through the woods turn to silver again as the sun goes down.

More voices rise up in the dusk. An early woodcock has begun its calling and courting in the gleaming birch and stark alders. Hundreds of spring peepers with voices like silver bells

All alone, for the time being, our bat wings erratically over her familiar territory in the yard, between the peak of the old house and the towering maples. Exactly like last year. The joy of return is mutual, and seems to pass between us like a current.

We are thrilled and relieved to see our friend on leather wings, swooping low over our heads near the campfire before going out over the rushing river, pushing this year's high water to the sea.

KIDS-A-GO-GO AT LCA



JANEL NOCKLEBY PHOTO

Tamar Byl-Brann, at the LCA 'Go Kids Art Go' event

BY DON CLEGG

LEVERETT – The joint was jumpin' at the Leverett Crafts & Arts Barnes Gallery last Saturday, April 10th. The event, "Go, Kids Art, Go" was true to its name. Dancing, stories, singing,

drumming, drawing, body art – all the kids were a-go-go-going!

More than 30 young children followed the moves of Marilyn Sylla, of the Music of the Barmidele Dancers and Drummers. Sylla is a professor at Smith College, and the leader of this fine ensemble of performers of West African Music originating from the Ivory Coast. She has performed in Haiti, Brazil, Puerto Rico, and all over the United States. Some of the children dancing and clapping were barely old enough to stand, but it did not stop them from joining in the fun.

Soon after the music stopped, Eshu Bumpus, of Holyoke, began to captivate a floor full of children with folk tales. No tales were too scary. They centered around family and a child's imagination. Later in the day families were treated to more music and the always-exciting performance of the Celtic Heels dancers.

In between each performance everyone was see **KIDS** pg 18



JONATHAN VON RANSON PHOTO

Jenny Fyler with husband Jim Dunn and daughter Ivy

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Round Here Café Powers Up Again

BY DAVID DETMOLD

TURNERS FALLS — Last week, the MontagueMa corkboard was buzzing with the news that the Western Massachusetts Electric Company had shut off the electricity at the Round Here Café's electricity. The coffeeshop, at 111 Avenue A, owned by Nayana Glazier, had just expanded its hours to accommodate afternoon business and even dinner hour on Fridays, and Glazier was working with other business owners in Turners to prepare for the effects of detoured traffic during the next four years of construction on the Gill-Montague Bridge.

The sudden loss of electric power last Wednesday, shutting down business at the coffeeshop with customers still seated at their tables, threw a monkey wrench in years of downtown revitalization efforts and caught even Glazier by surprise.

Glazier said the cut-off came in response to an unpaid back bill of \$3,400. But there is more to the story than that.

"When we opened in December of 2008," said Glazier, "we gave the electric company a \$950 deposit. From December '08 to September '09, we never received an electric bill. We called them every single month, and they told me, 'We

don't even have a reading.'

Glazier said in her calls, which she claimed the electric company has record of, she repeatedly told WMECo, "I'm concerned you'll suddenly send me a large bill we can't handle. Can you please come read my meter?" Every month, they said, "Yes." Every month, they never came."

Glazier said she asked them if they could give her an estimate of her monthly bill. The company told her they could not do that. She said she maintained steady hours, but the company never sent anyone to access the meter, which is located in the basement of her shop.

"When they did finally come in August, they took a meter reading based on the hottest month of the year, the one month I had the air conditioner on," said Glazier, and then based the entire back due bill on that month's reading. "We received our bill at the end of September for \$4,500."

When she called to protest, the company told her, "We do see you've been calling." They agreed to a payment plan where Glazier said, "I was paying just under \$1,000 a month." She said her actual bills were averaging \$375 a month after August.

Glazier mailed in her payments on the first of every month,

until "the slow season came," at which point she switched to mailing them in on the 15th of the month instead. She claimed the company never notified her that her payments would be considered late if not received by the 13th of each month, so for February and March, WMECo considered her to be in violation of the terms of the agreed to payment plan.

"On April 2nd," Glazier said, "I received a letter from WMECo saying if no arrangements are made by April 3rd your service will be terminated. April 3rd was a Saturday, a holiday weekend."

She made her next payment that day by phone, using an electronic deposit, which the company received and credited to her account. But that did not stop WMECo from demanding the entire back due amount — \$3,416 — immediately on Wednesday of last week.

Glazier said she got on the

phone. She demanded to talk to a supervisor, and then to that supervisor's supervisor, getting bumped higher up in the system. "Every supervisor got progressively more indignant." Glazier said their basic message was,

them \$100.

WMECo spokesperson Lacey Ryan said Thursday, "We have worked hard with the customer to come up with a successful solution, and we look forward to serving this customer going forward.



DETOLD PHOTO
Nayana Glazier, (left) served customers like Cecelia Tusinski of Leyden by candlelight on Friday at the Round Here Café. Glazier said her coffeeshop lost \$2,000 during the power outage.

"Our job is only to shut you off and get all the money we can."

That message changed abruptly on Monday, after Channel 22 put a segment on their 5 o'clock news about the stand off between the small business owner and the utility company. Glazier said Attorney General Martha Coakley's office had already called WMECo on her behalf, but 15 minutes after the news broadcast, a utility representative was back on the phone with her saying they would be willing to restore her power for as little as \$2 in earnest money. Glazier sent

We follow a very strict regulatory and internal process, and work hard on our end. Discontinuation of service is always a last resort."

Yesterday, the power was back on at Round Here Café, and Glazier was preparing to reopen her business on Monday morning. She estimated she has lost about \$2,000 in spoiled stock and lost business during the past week. She said the power company agreed to make a new estimate of her back due bill, based on a monthly average of her actual usage since August.

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BY SALLY PICK — I've learned some new information about the appliance rebate. From April 22nd (Earth Day) through May 5th, or while rebate funds last, you can reserve rebates for eligible appliances online or by phone for the Mass Save Great Appliance Exchange. The phone number will be posted online starting April 22nd at 10 a.m. If you aren't able to go online to get that number, call (617) 626-7350 and ask for the reservation phone number.

MONTAGUE ENERGY CORNER

More on the Mass Save Great Appliance Exchange

If you're online, go to MassSave's website for homes, www.masssave.com/residential, and click on the brown and green icon to the right side of the page that says, "The Great Appliance Exchange." There you'll find more information about rebate amounts for each appliance type, downloadable lists of eligible appliances — including dishwashers, refrigerators, freezers, and washing machines — along with participating retailers in our area.

According to the website, "Each Massachusetts household is eligible for one rebate per product category (for a total of

up to four rebates)." You can use the rebates only to replace working appliances. The old appliances must be hauled away upon delivery of the new ones.

You don't need to choose which specific model you're buying ahead of time, though you do have to buy your appliances between April 22nd and May 5th, so it might be worthwhile shopping ahead.

Rebates are given out on a first come, first served basis, so you'd be most likely to be able to take advantage of these incentives if you make your reservations soon after the program begins on April 22nd.

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JESSICA HARMON ILLUSTRATION

BY FRED CICETTI

LEONIA, NJ – Q. *You can settle a bet for me. Who gets shoulder problems more often, athletes or seniors?*

Athletes such as pitchers, tennis players and swimmers are especially susceptible to shoulder problems because of their repetitive overhead motions. However, shoulder problems are most likely to victimize people older than 60.

**THE HEALTHY GEEZER:
Injuries to the Shoulder**

You can deduce that, as a group, old athletes are at the highest risk of shoulder injury.

Shoulder problems are so common among seniors that I am doing a two-part column on the subject. This is the first column.

Let's start with some anatomy.

The shoulder is the body's most movable joint. It is also unstable, because the ball of the upper arm is larger than the shoulder socket that holds it. In contrast to the hip joint, a conventional ball-and-socket, the shoulder joint is like a tee with a golf ball on it.

The unstable shoulder is held in place by soft tissue: muscles, tendons and ligaments.

Tendons are cords that hold

the shoulder muscles to bones. Ligaments hold the three shoulder bones to each other. The three shoulder bones are the collarbone (clavicle), the shoulder blade (scapula) and the upper arm bone (humerus).

Many shoulder injuries are caused by tissue breakdown. Common shoulder problems include dislocation, separation, torn rotator-cuff, frozen shoulder, fracture, arthritis, tendinitis, and bursitis. The rotator cuff is defined as the set of muscles and tendons that secures the arm to the shoulder joint and permits the arm to rotate.

More than seven million Americans go to a doctor with a shoulder problem each year. More than four million of these

visits are for rotator-cuff injuries.

- **Dislocation.** Dislocation occurs when the ball at the top of the bone in the upper arm pops out of the socket. To treat a dislocation, a doctor pushes the ball back into the socket. Once a shoulder is dislocated, it may happen again.

- **Separation.** A shoulder separation occurs when the ligaments between the collarbone and the shoulder blade are torn.

- **Torn rotator cuff.** Age-related wear of tendons can lead to a tear. Repeated overhead motion can also damage the rotator cuff.

- **Frozen shoulder.** Movement is very restricted in people with a frozen shoulder. Causes of frozen shoulder are: lack of use because of pain, rheumatic dis-

ease, bands of tissue that grow in the joint, and insufficient lubricating fluid in the joint.

- **Fracture.** In the shoulder, a fracture or crack usually involves the collarbone or upper arm bone.

- **Arthritis.** The shoulder can be affected by osteoarthritis, a disease caused by wear and tear, and rheumatoid arthritis, an autoimmune disease.

- **Tendinitis.** In tendinitis of the shoulder, tendons become inflamed from being pinched by parts around the shoulder.

- **Bursitis.** The bursa is a small fluid-filled sac that helps protect the shoulder joint. If the bursa becomes inflamed, you suffer from bursitis.

In the next column, we'll discuss diagnosis and treatment of shoulder injuries.

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

PARK from pg 9

After Monday's selectboard meeting, Rod Herzig, who has been a pilot at the Turners Falls Airport since 1998, and now serves as a member of the airport commission, said, "I don't believe there was a backlog of demand for hangar space. I haven't seen any demand for new hangars at the airport. There was a demand, but when [the former commissioners] raised the lease rates for the land, nobody wanted to be there."

Herzig said all the hangar space at the airport is currently leased. He acknowledged the original plan for runway expansion included a hoped for provision to spend federal dollars to build new T-hangars at the airport. If that had happened, Herzig said, "Then maybe pilots would have come in to rent the space."

Herzig added, "As far as Native Americans holding up the runway expansion, this is totally new ground. It's government to government business, and there is red tape and processes to go through. The F.A.A. is working with the tribes to establish future protocols for clearing cultural sites."

Herzig said the 200-foot extension that has been added on the river side of the runway as part of the recent \$5 million runway reconstruction project has

effectively moved the approach point for pilots further away from the ceremonial hill, so that, in Herzig's opinion, there is no safety issue for pilots approaching the runway as currently configured.

"By lengthening that runway, it takes the ceremonial hill out of the safety margin; the hill is no longer a factor," Herzig claimed.

Herzig also said the plan to extend the runway 1,000 feet closer to Millers Falls Road is still in the airport's master plan, though it would require another round of federal grant making to accomplish.

If that additional runway extension is built, Herzig said, the airport would have to truck in fill from another location, leaving the ceremonial hill intact.

On Monday, Fairbrother, a former member of the airport commission, voted against the majority of the selectboard on the proposal to seek funding for a feasibility study for a Native Cultural Park in Turners Falls, and a second proposal to work with Native tribes on the development of a Native Heritage and Cultural Tourism Program as a component of the RiverCulture project, because of his concern that the Native Americans had obstructed progress at the airport.

"The hill," at the airport, "was

determined to be a national ceremonial site, confirmed by the keeper of National Register," said Harris, in reply to Fairbrother. "The tribes have a government to government relationship with the U.S. government and all of its agencies, including the F.A.A. In the past, the F.A.A. has not had to deal with its responsibilities under the U.S. government with the National Preservation Act as it applies to tribes. Unfortunately, the F.A.A. does not have a set of protocols to deal with Native Americans. They do now."

Harris added, "A scope of work had been developed and approved," at the airport, "that did not take into account the most significant event at that airport: the determination by the keeper there is a sacred site at that airport... We don't want to hold up your airport, so you can get on about the business of your economic well being... We have learned from the clash of three cultures: the construction trades, the federal agencies, and the tribes."

Harris said, as for the F.A.A., "This is the model they will follow from now on."

Pruitt said, "While I'm disturbed my colleague is not able to vote for this at this point, I hope he will in the future."

Fairbrother replied, "So does he."

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ERVING POLICE LOG

Armed Robbery Arrests, Sick Fox

Tuesday, 4/6 3:00 p.m. Report of suspicious activity at International Paper Mill. Found to be construction company. All set. 10:42 p.m. Call from Montague Police regarding robbery that just occurred in their town. Arrested [redacted], for armed robbery, assault and battery with a dangerous weapon, and threat to	Wednesday, 4/7 3:25 a.m. Arrested [redacted], for armed robbery, assault and battery with a dangerous weapon, threat to commit murder. Thursday, 4/8 2:13 p.m. Report of erratic bus westbound on Route 2. Unable to locate. 5:27 p.m. Dog complaint at Zilinski Field.	Owner spoken with. Advised of leash law. Friday, 4/9 11:35 Report of sick fox at Erving Elementary School. Gone upon arrival. Monday, 4/12 9:35 p.m. Criminal application issued to [redacted], for failure to inspect motor vehicle and operating a motor vehicle with out a license on Route 2A.
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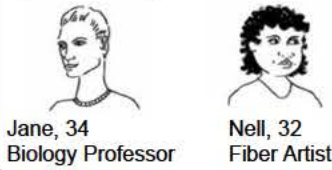
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GO GREEN FAMILY

Episode 7: Transportation Challenge - The Results

Robbins-Levine Family



BY JEANNE WEINTRAUB-MASON

MONTAGUE CENTER – Nell Robbins-Levine changed Baby Betty’s diaper on the sofa while Jane stood in front of the webcam and tuned into the Getting Around challenge results webcast. Host Sam Lively appeared on the computer screen, chewing gum and making flamboyant hand gestures as he addressed a group seated around a conference table in the WGBJ studio. Then he turned to the camera.

“First,” he said, “let me remind all you viewers that webcasting is a terrific way to bypass the transportation and energy costs of live meetings. Our families are all tuning in today through EarthConnect, our streaming media server, provider of high quality,

dependable webcasting.”

“And now, let me introduce our judges for the Transportation Challenge: Judy Newton, with Citizens for Climate Protection (CCP), Jen Hillard from the Massachusetts Sustainable Energy Society (MSES), and Walter Nivins from the MA Peak Oil Association (MPOA). We’re full of acronyms today! Jen, why don’t you start us off? Which family did well? Which family’s efforts were disappointing?”

“Well, I think you really have to hand it to the Robbins-Levines. They gave up a vehicle, and started logging half their miles through mass transit. That is the most efficient way to go, if you can swing it. And we were impressed by the number of miles Jane’s been

riding on the bicycle.”

“What about the two trades – Billy’s pickup and the Bartlett’s Explorer? Judy, would you comment on the vehicles the Tinker and Bartlett families purchased?”

“You really can’t go wrong with a Toyota Prius, Sam – they’re one of the most efficient hybrids out there. It’s hard to beat 48 miles per gallon, and a dramatic improvement over the SUV the Bartletts unloaded, which only got 13 miles per gallon.”

“How about the Tinkers-Walter?”

“Billy’s running his truck on biodiesel and veggie oil. It’s a good option for reducing carbon emissions and use of fossil fuel, although it’s important to realize that fossil fuel is used to make biodiesel – and that trees may have been

cut down to grow the soybeans for the biodiesel. The Tinkers were also wise to put some attention into their Subaru. By giving it a tune-up and making sure the air pressure in the tires was right, they increased their gas mileage by 4%.”

Sam Lively cut to the chase. “And now, let’s congratulate the family that figured out the most efficient and clean approach to transportation. Jane and Nell, you are the winners of the the first Go Green Family challenge! Will you tell us a little about what it’s been like?”

“Sure,” answered Nell, speaking carefully into the webcam. “Once we started thinking about it, we realized it was pretty doable for us to get by on one car. Having the Zipcar to use when we needed

it helped a lot, and we are really fortunate to have a fabulous bus system here in Northampton. Now we’re thinking that we’ll stash the money we’re saving in an account so we can buy a hybrid once the Corolla bites the dust.”

Jane jumped over to the webcam, and leaped into a bodybuilding pose. “And I gotta say, biking in Northampton ROCKS! Look at these muscles, baby!”

Continued next week, when the results of the Transportation Challenge will be revealed. Which family do you think deserves to win? Cast your vote at www.montaguema.net and stay tuned to find out who the Go Green Family judges selected.

MAPS from page 7

what is now Bernardston shown as “Fall Fight Town.” The Millers River is shown, named “Papaguntiquash.”

The first accurate state map came out in 1801. It was a composite of all the individual town maps that had been made. A more detailed state map was commissioned in 1830, finally appearing in 1844 as the Borden map, for which Josiah Gould made an attractive map of Gill showing every road in town, with a legend.

The 1832 Hoyt map of Gill indicated a population of 852.

Allen then showed a map from 1830 that he found at the National Archives in Washington, DC. It was for a proposed canal to be built to Northern Vermont, to bypass the rapids and fast water. The canal was never built. On this map Turners Falls is called “Millers Lower F.”

“No one in Franklin County had this map,” Allen told the audience.

At this point Allen’s presen-

tation moved into the age of published maps, beginning in the 1850s. Very detailed, they were made possible by technological advances in the printing industry. The existence of a middle-class audience to buy them was also vital to their success.

In the early 1850s, village maps appeared showing individual houses and businesses. “They sold well,” Allen said.

An 1858 Gill map showed all residences, and Allen has used it to compile an index of names that is now accessible in an online searchable database – go to vhist.com/mcc.

To bring this period to life Allen showed an illustration of a “wheel-barrow man” – one of the typical surveyors hired to walk every stretch of town roads with a wheelbarrow-mounted odometer to determine accurate mileage. They carried compasses to measure the angles of the turns in the road. Often based in New York City, these salesman types would also try to get the homeowners they passed to subscribe to the map and have

their house included – for a fee of \$5.

In the late 1850s, county maps became popular. Then the Civil War interrupted things for awhile. But by the 1870s, the “Beers” Atlases came into vogue. These were a successor to the wall maps that had been popular for many years.

I bought a copy of the 1871 Beers map of Gill for \$10 from Allen, and it was exciting to find that the house I live in is shown on the map. (You can find more online at www.old-maps.com)

Some of the most visually stunning town maps were the “birds-eye” maps made for larger towns. The Turners Falls birds-eye map of 1877 includes the “Red Bridge” that formerly spanned the river from Gill.

Eventually the U.S. government decided it needed more detailed information than was available, and began producing topographical (“topo”) maps. Massachusetts was one of the first eastern states mapped, and the “Greenfield”

quad appeared in 1895. Modern topo maps are derived from aerial photos, making them extremely accurate.

In the early 20th century, the motor car age ushered in a new series of road maps. The 1909 Richards Driving Map showed road names and mileage. County road maps appeared in 1924, though according to Allen they remained unpublished.

A local aerial photo from 1939 shows the Red Bridge still standing between Gill and Turners Falls. Allen found the originals at the National Archives. “There are thousands of them,” he said.

One last type of map Allen showed were Fire Insurance maps, which were produced only for larger communities. The 1889 map of Turners Falls included the Riverside section of Gill. On the 1914 Fire Insurance map, many of the buildings shown on the 1889 map were gone, as was a “Mill Pond.”

And so, life comes and goes, but it goes on. Allen concluded by sharing a touching

story of how he was able to use maps to find his family homestead in Pomfret, VT. He no longer has to say his great-grandmother was from “somewhere in Vermont.” He also showed map images tracing an old Gill road though time; a trace of the “Harris” road still exists by the Otter Pond in the northwest corner of town.

“These maps are for you,” Allen said. He encouraged his audience to make use of them, to learn and better understand the history of their town.

Additional historical maps of Gill will hopefully be available in the future, and Allen suggested some community members might want to get together to provide brief commentaries – similar to what Greenfield did for its popular volume of historical maps, compiled by Allen in 2003.

The presentation was recorded by Montague Community TV and has been shown several times already. For additional air dates, contact the station’s website: www.montaguetv.org.



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Public Hearing Draws 40 for Turners Fire District Ambulance Plan

BY JOSHUA WATSON

TURNERS FALLS – The Turners Falls Fire District prudential committee, chaired by Mark Allen, made a presentation at Hillcrest Elementary School on Tuesday in support of its plan to initiate ambulance services for Montague out of the Turners Falls Fire Department. About 40 people were in attendance.

Currently, when an ambulance is called from Montague, the Turners Falls Fire Department responds by dispatching a fire truck along with the two on-duty Turners Falls firefighters. While that fire truck is on the emergency call, the fire department is staffed by two other on-call firefighters, who are paid interim overtime wages for that time. The Turners Falls Fire Department now budgets more than \$30,000 annually for those services.

For that same emergency call, an ambulance from Baystate Health is dispatched, and because that ambulance is the “transporting vehicle,” Baystate

Health bills the insurance companies for the charges.

Allen argues that, by purchasing an ambulance, and dispatching its own EMT-trained firefighters in a transporting ambulance, the TFFD would receive a certain amount of billing income now lost to Baystate Health.

That income, the prudential committee says, could be as much as \$250,000 to \$350,000 per year over the next four or five years – enough to hire up to four to five full-time firefighters at the TFFD without raising taxes in Montague.

Firefighters would be hired only as the income stream justified the expense.

Allen reported that the TFFD has long sought additional staffing in order to increase its shifts from two on-duty firefighters to three.

The committee has also applied for a federal SAFER grant (Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response) which, Allen said, would provide

funds for the immediate hiring of several firefighters or paramedics, and would pay their salaries for the first two years, as long as the TFFD guaranteed to pay their salaries for a third year.

The status of that grant is still pending.

If the voters of the Turners Falls Fire District approve the plan at the district’s annual meeting next week (voters from Millers Falls, Turners Falls, and Montague City can vote), under the licensing process with the state Office of Emergency Medical Services, for six months to a year from the initiation of the plan, the TFFD would only be qualified to dispatch ambulances for “basic life support” emergencies.

Basic life support emergencies call for emergency medical technicians who have less training and often less experience than paramedics. Paramedics are dispatched for “advanced life support” (ALS) emergency calls.

After six months to a year,

once the TFFD reached its qualification status, it would be able to dispatch advanced life support ambulance services. Pending that qualification, ALS support when necessary would be provided either by Baystate or by another ALS-qualified provider for calls in Montague. Allen stated that if future billing income justified the hiring of additional staff, the TFFD would seek trained paramedics who wanted to become firefighters.

The committee estimates that, once the TFFD ambulance service was up and running, response time to Montague emergency ambulance requests would be improved by five to seven minutes.

Increased traffic on the White Bridge from Greenfield may also be a factor during the next four years of construction on the Gill-Montague bridge, as this is the preferred route for BHS to respond to calls in Montague.

Upon questioning, Allen stated the income estimated under

the plan included figures that would be billed for emergency dispatch calls in Montague Center and Lake Pleasant.

These villages have already opted out of the potential plan, according to Montague Center fire department prudential committee member Sam Lovejoy, who told the Montague select-board last week the Montague Center fire department is seeking to establish their own ambulance service district to contract with Baystate Health Service for continued ambulance service.

It remains unclear how this will affect the Turners Falls fire department’s plan. “We really do need to cover the entire population of the town of Montague in order to make the numbers work,” said Allen.

The question of whether to move forward with the plan will be on the warrant for the Turners Falls annual district meeting, scheduled for 7 p.m. on Tuesday, April 20th, at Hillcrest Elementary School.

Info Sessions Held on Conservation Development Bylaw

BY JOSH HEINEMANN

WENDELL – Two issues came up at the second of two information sessions the Wendell planning board held last week to receive public input on the proposed Conservation Development bylaw.

Over 20 Wendell residents attended the meeting on Thursday, along with New Salem planning board member Lisa Feinstein.

In a nutshell, the proposal would allow a developer to build houses closer together than the present three-acre, 200-foot frontage zoning requirement, and would allow faster development in exchange for a contractor allowing a conservation restriction on 75% of a development project’s area. The proposed bylaw aims to steer Wendell’s development to be family friendly, to maintain the town’s wooded, rural feel, to preserve Wendell’s working landscape, to maintain a viable wildlife corridor and protect large tracts of land for traditional hunting and fishing.

If the bylaw is approved at town meeting, a potential developer would have two options. A traditional three-acre, 200-foot frontage lot could be cut out of an existing parcel of land once every seven years, and a house could be built on it without special planning board approval (approval not required), as long as other bylaws are followed.

But if developers choose to have site surveys done, and present plans to put 75% of their

projects into conservation, then they would be allowed flexible use common driveways instead of a full two-lane road, will not have strict lot size restrictions, and may build shared septic systems, following state laws for capacity and quality. Such a development would allow at least the same number of houses that three-acre, 200-foot frontage lots allow. Building affordable houses, as defined by state law, creating and allowing public access to preserved land, or extending the conservation restriction (CR) to 85% of the land would yield the ability to build more houses on the remaining land.

The CR may allow agriculture, recreation, timber and cordwood harvesting, and in some situations, location of a septic system.

Last Thursday, former board of health member Gloria Kegeles questioned whether it would be possible to site houses as close as the proposed bylaw might allow, given Wendell’s soil and groundwater conditions.

Finance committee chair Michael Idoine, who worked on the committee that drafted the proposed bylaw, answered that mandated distances between wells and septic systems would have to be maintained, and could be maintained even with smaller lot sizes.

Kegeles was not convinced, and said the present board of health has reduced the required distance to the state requirement of 100 feet, a distance she felt is inadequate given Wendell’s gravel and clay soil. She said once groundwater is contaminated it is nearly impossible to clean up.

Barbara Caruso owns land that already has a conservation restriction on it, and wondered if seventy-five percent of the remainder – where development is still allowed – would now have to be set aside to meet the terms of the new bylaw. In other words, would she be penalized for the CR she has already allowed on her land.

Planning board member Patty Smythe said the committee had

not considered that situation, and pointed out the proposal was still in draft form.

Beth Erbiti asked if a CR on 75% of a property would lower the tax value of the land.

Idoine answered that most of the restricted land would be in the rear of a property, where it would already be assessed at a lower rate than a house lot. He offered the observation that houses with children actually take more from a town in services than they give in taxes, while forested land pays more in taxes than it requires in services.

The planning board projected on a screen in front of the hall an aerial view, showing woods broken into many pieces and slices by traditional house lots, and a comparison view of the same area developed according to this proposal, with a cluster of houses on one section surrounded by

trees, and a large green forested open space on one side.

Idoine displayed a spreadsheet showing how various considerations would affect the number of houses a developer would be allowed, under the terms of the new bylaw. For example, only half of the area of ponds and other locations where houses cannot be built would be counted as part of the 75% CR, so a ten-acre pond would only count as five acres of restricted land.

Draft copies of the bylaw are in an envelope at the front of the town office building, and on the town website.

The planning board hopes to have a final version of the bylaw ready for the annual town meeting. If it passes at the town meeting, it would go into effect in the new fiscal year, starting July 1st.

Wizard of Oz on the Big Screen

On Friday and Saturday April 16th and 17th, Pothole Pictures gets invaded by munchkins, wicked witches, flying monkeys, little dogs, lollipop guilds, ruby slippers, lions, and tigers, and bears – oh my! – as they present a rare BIG screen showing of perhaps the best loved, and maybe the best period, movie ever made, *The Wizard of Oz*.

Showtime is 7:30 p.m. both nights with

live music on stage before the movie from 7 to 7:30. On Friday, The Ambiguities will play literate rock and on Saturday Leo T. Baldwin sings and plays real hilltown music.

Pothole Pictures located at 51 Bridge Street, Shelburne Falls. Admission is \$6 adults, \$4 kids 12 and under. The theater is fully heated, air conditioned and handicapped accessible. For further info, call (413) 625-2896.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GILL POLICE LOG

Accidents on Gill-Montague Bridge

Wednesday, 4/7

11:24 a.m. Animal complaint on South Cross Road. Loose dogs harassing livestock.

Thursday, 4/8

2:35 p.m. Vehicle accident on Gill-Montague Bridge.

Friday, 4/9

7:49 a.m. Report of vehicle striking guardrails on Gill-Montague Bridge.

9:06 a.m. On the lookout for suicidal subject, possibly en route to area bridges.

Saturday, 4/10

3:10 p.m. Assisted

Northfield police department with a domestic disturbance.

Sunday, 4/11

7:59 p.m. Report of a disorderly person at intersection of West Gill and Main Road. Unable to locate same.

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NOTES FROM THE MAHAR SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Alternate Assessment Fails Again

BY KATIE NOLAN – The Mahar regional school committee met on Tuesday, April 5th and voted to accept the revised FY'11 budget of \$12.1 million dollars presented by superintendent Michael Baldassarre. The committee also voted to use the statutory method for assessing costs to the member towns.

Baldassarre told the committee he had pared the budget further since presenting the draft budget in March. He summarized the major changes in income and expenses for FY'11. State funding for education will be cut for FY'11, Baldassarre said.

The line item for teacher salaries will increase as a result of contractual obligations for annual raises. Insurance (retirement, unemployment, general policy, health, life, worker's compensation, medicare, and retirees' insurance) costs will increase.

Baldassarre emphasized this budget is less than "level service." FY'11 will see the loss of one full-time foreign language teacher, one full-time paraprofessional and a half-time special education administrator, along with a reduction in late bus service and library supplies.

One of the costs Baldassarre highlighted was choice and charter tuitions. He said 98 students choice out of the Mahar district to other schools, at a cost to the region of \$490,000, and 17 students go to charter schools, at a cost of \$116,000.

Sorted by town, 66 students from Petersham choice out, 23 from Orange, 5 from Wendell, and 4 from New Salem. However, Baldassarre provid-

ed graphs of the numbers of students choosing out by grade, and concluded there was a trend toward fewer students choosing out. "My hope is that with proper funding, we'll reduce the number of students leaving the district," Baldassarre said.

Jim Slavas of the Wendell finance committee spoke to the meeting, saying he was appearing, "for a third year to request an alternative assessment method" for splitting regional school costs between the four member towns. He explained that for the FY'11 budget, Wendell will pay \$9,890 per Mahar student, while Petersham will pay \$8,403 per student, New Salem \$8,390 per student, and Orange \$5,685 per student. He added that, using equal assessment, the method agreed to in the original regionalization agreement, each town would pay \$6398 per student.

Slavas said, "Each year that we've made the request, we've pleaded with this committee to become engaged and come to some shared understanding about what a fair assessment is. We know the state's idea of fairness – towns should pay according to wealth."

He said the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) uses an "aggregate wealth model," using information about the value of property and average income in a town to rate each town's wealth. According to Slavas, by this model, Orange is the poorest town in the district, Wendell the next poorest, and "New Salem and Petersham are looking good." However, he said, although Wendell is the second-poorest town in the district, it pays 20% more per student than the richest town.

Slavas noted that some Mahar school committee members had suggested Wendell is better off than other towns, as indicated by its stabilization fund of approximately \$1 million. He compared the tax rates in the member towns (\$16.85 per thousand in Wendell, \$14.24 per thousand in Petersham, \$13.87 per thousand in Orange and \$13.30 per thousand in New Salem). He said that if other towns taxed themselves at the same rate as Wendell, they would also have money to put into stabilization.

Slavas reported that Superintendent Baldassarre had come to Wendell to meet with the Wendell selectboard

and the finance committee, but, he said, "It is not Mr. Baldassarre, but this committee that must change its approach." He added, "In three years, this committee has not even assigned a subcommittee to discuss this. It is dangerous for Mahar if this issue is not addressed. Wendell is no longer backstopping the budget and it throws the appropriation amount to the third lowest town. It is unsustainable for this committee not to address this issue. It does not serve our long term interest as a community to have the Mahar budget eroded away. We have been waiting for three years for some movement from this committee. At least, let's start the conversation."

Slavas also presented a modified aggregate wealth model, that factored in the number of middle and high school children from each town. He said that the DESE aggregate wealth model is "a flat tax that does not factor in the number of students attending the school."

Middle and high school age children are approximately 3% of Wendell's population, while the middle school and high school age population in the other three towns is approximately 8%. In the modified model, Wendell's assessment for Mahar would be approximately \$80,000 less than with the DESE statutory method.

In discussion of Slavas's remarks, Baldassarre said the alternate assessment he proposed had "Zero percent chance of being voted in." Alternate assessment methods require unanimous agreement from all member towns in a region.

Slavas said he proposed a three to five year phase-in of an alternate assessment method, "so it is not a shock." Michael LeBlanc of Petersham said, "It is not true that if the other towns taxed at Wendell's rate they would have money in the bank." He said he had collected town data from the state website showing that of the four towns in the region, Wendell spent the lowest percentage of its budget on education.

LeBlanc asked, "Were any other towns involved in devising the modified aggregate wealth model?"

Slavas replied, "That's why we're asking the committee to get involved."

Committee chair Maureen

Donelan of Orange asked, "Didn't we vote or ask last year for the towns to get involved?"

Dick Baldwin of Wendell replied, "The committee refused to take a firm stand. I want to ask the committee to take a firm stand now. I ask the committee to vote the alternative method. Then the town boards will get together and come up with something."

Baldwin added that Wendell sees the statutory method as "grossly unfair for us."

Speaking to Baldwin, Peter Cross of Orange said, "You want to see movement toward fairness." He continued, "If the committee voted the alternate method, it starts the process for the towns. If it's not agreeable to all four towns, we could then vote the statutory method. The worst case for Wendell would be to vote the statutory method as we have every year."

Patricia Smith of Orange said, "This issue should be explored." However, she said she did not recommend approving use of the alternate method without "hard facts on what the alternate method would mean for Orange."

Baldwin replied, "We can't proceed to find that information until we vote an alternate method. We're stuck." LeBlanc suggested the committee promote articles on town warrants establishing a committee to explore the alternate and statutory method of assessing regional education costs.

Baldassarre said, "Because there has been no dialogue, Wendell has been using its only card to be heard, by not voting the full assessment, so Orange sets the Mahar budget. In order to get three of the four

towns to agree to the budget, we need a dialogue down the road." However, he emphasized that the full amounts set out in the FY'11 budget were needed to educate the students at Mahar.

Kennan moved to use the statutory method and was seconded by Smith. Baldwin offered an amendment, for use of the alternate method, but the amendment was not accepted.

Kennan said, "Something has to change with the funding method, but the problem is not us, it's the state."

Baldwin said, "No matter how we vote, the fairness issue remains for Wendell. It will show up in the budget and in planning for regionalization. The committee needs to take a stand on the alternate method. It needs to set up a committee to address the issue with the four towns."

The motion to use the statutory method of assessment, amended to include formation of a subcommittee to investigate assessment methods, passed by a vote of 6 to 3. Donelan, Kennan, LeBlanc, Smith, Nadine Parsons of Orange, and Paul Gervais of Orange voted for the motion, and Baldwin, Cross, and Michael Yohan of New Salem voted against it.

After the vote, several members commented that the subcommittee should include town officers as well as school committee members.

In other business, the school committee decided to continue accepting school choice students, approved a facilities use policy that sets fees for use of the school building by non-school groups, and approved the policy for canine searches at the school.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Armed Robbery and Assault Arrests

Tuesday, 4/6 3:40 p.m. Domestic disturbance Main and Bridge Streets in Millers Falls. Peace restored.	Sunderland, for marked lanes violation and driving under the influence.	battery and disorderly conduct. Arrest of [REDACTED]
Saturday, 4/10 10:28 p.m. Arrest of [REDACTED] for assault and battery with a dangerous weapon, armed robbery, and threat to commit a crime. Arrest of [REDACTED]	9:49 p.m. Arrest of [REDACTED], for domestic assault and battery with a dangerous weapon.	for domestic assault and battery and disorderly conduct. 3:06 a.m. Fight by F.L. Roberts including assault with a dangerous weapon and disorderly conduct. Perpetrators gone.
Monday, 4/12 11:21 a.m. Fight at alley between Third and Fourth Streets. Unable to locate.	10:47 p.m. Suspicious person at Eagle Automotive on Second Street. No police service necessary.	
Sunday, 4/11 1:20 a.m. Assault and battery on Griswold Street. Services rendered.	Sunday, 4/11 1:35 a.m. Arrest of [REDACTED] for assault and battery in domestic assault and	Monday, 4/12 12:11 a.m. Unwanted person on Third Street. Services rendered. 5:59 a.m. Larceny at La Bodega on Fourth Street. Report taken.
Friday, 4/9 11:56 p.m. Arrest of [REDACTED]		

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The Thrill of the Rat Race

BY KATIE NOLAN

ATHOL – “There is nothing – absolutely nothing – half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats.”

– Rat
The Wind in the Willows

I don't know what calls so many of us to paddle in the Athol to Orange Rat Race. But each spring we heed the call, and turn out in droves.

There are the serious canoe racers, with fine racing boats and many trophies, of course. But the mass of entries are construction workers, high school kids, town board members, retirees, office workers, and parents with their children in aluminum, birch bark, and fiberglass recreational canoes.

We spend \$41 to register and paddle down the Millers River with hundreds of other boats in early spring, sometimes in lovely sunshine, sometimes in rain or sleet. And speaking for my team, we never finish in the top one hundred boats.

My husband Josh has paddled the Rat Race since 1978. His partner from 1978 until 1992 was Dave Walsh, our next door neighbor. That racing partnership ended in 1993, when Dave was seriously ill and his oldest son paddled with Josh in Dave's place.

Dave died before the 1994 race, and another of Dave's sons paddled with Josh that year. After that, Josh found other partners – our children, a fellow Wendell firefighter, and a brother-in-law. The children grew up and moved away, the firefighter lost interest, and the brother-in-law caught the race bug and moved on to more demanding competitions: triathlons, Iron Man contests, the Boston Marathon. Finally, in 2005, lacking other prospects, Josh asked me to paddle the race with him and I said yes, because I was ready to leave the role of spectator cheering from the shore and see how the race felt from the inside.

Josh and I are not an ideal canoe team. The bow paddler is supposed to provide the power and the stern the finesse, steering the boat. In our canoe, I paddle bow and Josh is stern. Josh is excellent at reading the water, understanding what the other paddlers will do and steering, but I'm not that strong. I'm a lazy Sunday afternoon paddler. The first year we raced, I wondered if I could even finish the six-mile course.

I insisted we practice (some years the Rat Race was the first time Josh and Dave were in a

canoe for the season). For the first several races, finishing the course was my primary goal.

This year, as an extra challenge, I came out of winter puffy and unfit. I had broken my right leg (tibia and fibula) slipping on leaves early in the winter, and spent many weeks sitting with my leg elevated, occasionally hopping short distances on my left foot using a walker for balance.

One thing about living in Wendell is that, if you're laid up, people will feed you. I ate like a queen in those initial weeks, with incredibly tasty multi-course meals appearing in my kitchen, courtesy of kind friends and neighbors. But the good food and immobility made me soft.

By the time the river was open and the serious racers had started training, I started physical therapy, stretching tight tendons and strengthening weak unused muscles. Valerie, the receptionist at the physical therapy office, knew Josh and me from other years.

“Are you racing this year?” she asked when I came for my first appointment.

I told her I intended to.

But, later that week, while we were eating dinner at our neighbor's house, talk turned to the Rat Race. The neighbor's son, Greg, said he had really enjoyed racing with his father when he was younger. Josh suddenly asked, “Do you want to race with me this year?” Then he turned to me and said, “You don't mind, do you?”

I mumbled something or other, thinking maybe I'm not in good enough shape to do it this year, and Josh wants a younger stronger partner. Greg was interested, so that was settled.

The physical therapist, Susan, has raced with her husband for years. When she asked me about the race, I told her Josh had found another partner. She told me one year her husband found a hot shot paddler for a partner and dropped her. But she had the last laugh. The hotshot quit the team the week before the race, and her husband begged her, on bended knee, to be his partner again.

As I left the appointment that day, I told Valerie, the receptionist, that Josh had found another partner. Valerie was shocked. “You don't dump your Rat partner,” she said. “Not for anything.”

For the remaining weeks of therapy, I heard stories from Valerie and Susan's practice runs – ice chunks and floating branches on the river in the early practices, the camaraderie with other practicing teams, the fools who

ventured out without lifejackets and tipped over into the

cold water. I kept thinking, Josh and Greg have never canoed together – they really should practice, at least to get an idea of each other's style.

Finally, on the weekend before Rat Race, Greg came by to say he was really too busy and would not be able to race. Josh didn't beg or bend his knee, but he did ask me to be his partner again, and I said yes.

The Wednesday before Rat Race, Josh and I went out for our only practice, putting our Wenonah Sundowner in at the finish line in Orange and paddling upstream as far as we could go, then back to the finish line. I paddled as seriously as I could, maybe trying to prove I really was in good enough shape to race this year. At one point, Josh told me he stopped paddling for a while to see what I would do. I didn't even notice, I just kept paddling.

For the start of the race, all of the boats are lined up along the shore, waiting for the cannon shot that signals the start. Starting positions are picked by lottery on Friday night at Athol Town Hall, where Tom Lozier of the Athol Lions Club announces the numbers and names of the team members to the excited crowd.

This year, he started by calling for a nine-year-old girl to stand up; she had raced last year with her father, and they were registered as a team again this year. “You're not a true local until you've done the Rat Race,” Tom said.

For the first 50 or 100 starting positions, everyone cheers if a town favorite gets a good number. By 150 or 200, the numbers aren't so good, it starts to get boring, and the crowd is quieter. By then, I usually begin to wonder, did they even receive our entry?

Valerie and her partner got a good starting position – 69. Susan and her husband got 92: not bad. When Tom got to Susan's name, he called her out as, “Everyone's favorite physical therapist.”

Josh and I got 235.

On Saturday, before the 1 p.m. start, we put our canoe into the Millers near the center of Athol and paddled to our starting position. Where we lined up on the shore with the other 230-some-things, we were so far back we couldn't see the low number boats. Our canoe was sitting on some drowned bushes.

Boat 236 was a racing boat, with a team of very fit-looking young men. They were deciding their strategy for the start, hoping to pull out quickly and get away

from the logjam of slower boats and into the serious racing.

But our Wenonah was crowded in close to their boat, so they had no place to put a paddle in the water. Josh and I found a way to move over to make more room for them, and incidentally get our boat off the bushes.

The cannon shot rang out, and everyone made a break for the middle of the river. I don't remember exactly what happened for the first few minutes of the race. There were a lot of boats banging into each other, and people paddling furiously to get out of the tangle of boats. It reminded me of a bumper car ride. I never saw what canoe number 236 did.

Early on, we kept falling in a pace with boat 286 with “Greenwood Alarms” written on the side. We'd collide, or nearly collide, move away from each other, then find ourselves locked in another tangle. The men in the boat seemed friendly and outgoing, but their boat was equipped with a car alarm, which the stern paddler would turn on at random times. Extremely unpleasant. I thought, Got to get away from these guys. But we couldn't out-

pace them.

We got caught in another tangle with Greenwood Alarms. The stern paddler said, “It will be like this at the finish; we'll be neck and neck.” And the bow man said, “But we'll beat you.”

I started paddling harder then. Pretty soon, we passed them and stayed ahead. Not far ahead, because the alarm was still sounding too close for comfort.

I heard a woman say, “Three mile marker; half-way.” There was more space between the boats now, the faster canoes way ahead and the slower ones behind us. There was open water to put a paddle in, and it made me meditative. I thought about the moral to the fable of the tortoise and the hare: “Slow and steady wins the race.” “That's wrong,” I thought. “Slow and steady gets to the finish line, but fast and steady wins the race.”

Some weeks ago, I found a copy of Thich Nhat Hanh's *The Miracle of Mindfulness* at the Free Store at the Wendell transfer station. The memorable line in that book is, “When you're washing the dishes, wash the dishes.” I said to myself, “When

see RACE pg 18



JOSEPH A. PARZYCH PHOTO

And They're Off! (Anyone seen Josh and Katie?)

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GOOD USED USABLES

LEVERETT from pg 5

purpose of this resolution is to take a moral position," on Guantanamo, and the fate of the cleared detainees there, "to remedy this wrong," Newman said.

Speaking first among the candidates, Chuck Dauchy said he wanted to continue to serve on the board of health for another three year term to "use my experience for the benefit of the town." Dauchy said during his tenure he has been involved in updating the town's septic system regulations, which are "now working well. Recently we've had to face H1N1. We set up vaccinations clinics."

Dauchy said the board is also responsible for wells, but they are letting the selectboard take the lead on addressing the issue of wells on Teawaddle Hill and Amherst Road that are downstream and possibly affected by contamination from the town's former landfill. "They are keeping us informed."

Nancy Grossman, newly appointed to the finance committee to fill a vacancy on that board, said she had decided to run for a two-year term because, "I have a degree in economics; I like dealing with numbers and figuring out how to pay for things; I believe in fiscal responsibility and also adequate funding, and how to find that balance."

Grossman, who runs a small business at River Valley Acupuncture, said, "Part of the problem is town expenses tend to go up on average 3.8% a year, more than Proposition 2½ allows us to, because a large amount of town expenses are labor-based." She added, "People are also struggling to deal with their property taxes," often on fixed or limited incomes.

Grossman, who serves on the town's volunteer fire department

noted, "The stabilization fund has not been funded adequately in the last two years. If you want good services, you have to pay for them."

She added, "Personally, I think the state really needs to figure out ways to increase revenues, like bringing the income tax back up."

Elaine Barker said she was running again for a three year term on the library trustees, her 12th consecutive run, "to make sure the town gets good value for its library dollar." She looks at library services as "continuing education" for the townspeople, and the library as the community center of Leverett, serving 50 people a day. The library makes use of "\$10 to \$12,000 worth of volunteer hours," a year, and circulates "2,500 to 3,200 books a month," figures that would be the envy of much larger communities that spend twice as much as Leverett does for their libraries.

Dawn Sacks, running for a three year seat on the school committee, said she has been involved at the elementary school for 12 years, and though one child of hers will graduate from LES this year, another is still in 3rd grade. She feels she has her finger on the pulse of the school community, has served on hiring committees at LES, and attended recent meetings on regionalization. She has a background in counseling psychology, and enjoys participating in committee meetings.

Asked her opinion on school choice, she said, "It's a complex issue. My understanding is part of why we're able to sustain some of the programs that make Leverett special is because of school choice funds, so we haven't had to make cuts other communities have."

KIDS from pg 11

treated to the antics of the Master of Ceremonies, "Happy Dan," (aka Dagen July of Shutesbury). Happy Dan entertained the families, especially the very young, with his singing, tricks, and stories. Happy Dan is a former interior designer from New York who then moved on to being a music teacher in Woodstock, N.Y. From there Dan decided "it would be better to be an entertainer who teaches than a teacher who entertains." Dan has been doing events for children for over 15 years, but funding for these sorts of programs especially those at libraries has decreased drastically since our involvement in the Middle East, according to "Happy Dan."

Throughout "Go, Kids Art, Go," EveLynn Goodhind of the Fine Arts and Healing Center motivated paper art, painting, and really messy crafts with the children that just seemed to be thoroughly enjoying themselves. Prior to the event, the entire

Selectboard chair Rich Brazeau said towns like Greenfield and Montague are losing millions of dollars to school choice. "It adversely affects those communities."

Sacks said, "It's good for families to have a choice where to send their children. A failing school system like Turners Falls or Greenfield has larger issues causing people to leave than the issue of school choice."

Peter d'Errico said, "We don't want to be part of a system where we're profiting and others are losing."

"We're contributing to the failure of the Gill-Montague schools," added Grossman.

"I understand that," replied Sacks. "It's a complex issue."

Sacks also said she felt the 5%

raise negotiated by the Union 28 school committee to help bring superintendent Joan Wickman's salary up to par with neighboring superintendents was excessive.


"I think she should step forward and not take that increase. I'd like to see the raises going to the people on the ground, working with kids."

On regionalization, Sacks said Leverett should stay in Union 28 rather than regionalize with Amherst because, "I'd like to see Leverett retain control of our school, have our own school committee, and keep the teachers that we love. Our school is such a wonderful elementary school. When I compare it to my elementary school experience, it's a world apart."

Peter d'Errico said he is run-

ning for a second three-year term for selectboard because, "I get along great with these two. I feel we're in the midst of things," and he wants to see them through.

He mentioned the effort to bring broadband internet service to all Leverett residents, along with adequate telephone service, to resolve the well contamination problems near the former landfill, and the fact that the selectboard is "working closely for the first time with the finance committee and the school committee," to bring budgets into balance, and address upcoming contract negotiations at the school.

"I'm one who feels we're not out of the woods yet," in this economic downturn. "Holding onto what we've got is the word of the day." 

RACE from pg 17

you're paddling in the Rat Race, paddle in the Rat Race." That seemed to help me focus, so for a while we were all in accord, me, my paddle, the Millers River, the Wenonah, and Josh, my Rat partner.

As we neared the center of Orange, the crowds on the bank were thicker, and rock music spilled out onto the water from Mike's bar. I could see the finish banner, flying flat out in the wind coming upriver against us. Greenwood Alarms was still behind us, but not very far, from the sound of the alarm. I concentrated on keeping up my paddling pace and barely heard the yells of, "Go Katie! Go Josh!" from the shore as we neared the finish. My sister and brother and niece, who had been doubtful about their plans for the day, were on the shore. We

had a cheering section. Encouraged, we moved at a good clip until we passed the finish, two places ahead of Greenwood Alarms.

After passing the finish line, we paddled slowly, got the boat to the shore and pulled it out, with the help of a spectator. I was tired! On shore, we drank coffee from a thermos and watched the later boats come in. Josh hitched a ride with my sister to Athol to pick up his truck while I waited on the riverbank with the boat.


Most of the spectators had left the shore, but several more boats did pass the finish line. And later still, around 2:45, two more boats appeared and crossed the finish line. The four paddlers raised their paddles and yelled in triumph. I cheered back at them.

"Last place, second year in a

row!" one of them yelled happily.

Standing on the sunny riverbank, somewhat tired, I watched the spots of sunlight reflecting on the water, and felt the full Rat Race glow. I race to celebrate spring and the joy of being out on this beautiful Miller's River with my Rat partner and lots of other River Rats.

Josh and I came in at 129 out of the 265 boats that crossed the finish line. Valerie and her partner were the 58th boat in, and won the third place trophy for the women's teams. Susan and her husband came in 55th.


Greg was nowhere in sight. 

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gallery had been decorated with paints and crafts from local grammar schools and the children's art class offered at the Leverett Crafts and Arts.


This event was to be designed to be a "Celebration of Kids,"

and it certainly turned out that way. According to program director Kiran Bhowmik, more than 250 people attended Saturday's festival, which is more than in the previous two years. 



Marilyn Sylla, and the Music of the Bamidele Dancers and Drummers, at the Leverett Crafts and Arts program on Saturday

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at the Shea Theater, Avenue A in Turners Falls. For more info and to reserve tickets call the Shea Theater at (413) 863-2281, ext. 3.

Following the April 25th matinee, Attorney William Newman of the ACLU will lead a talk-back with actors and audience. Tickets also available at World Eye Bookshop, Greenfield and Jones Library, Amherst.

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



THURSDAY, APRIL 15th
Sara Thomsen in concert at the Echo Lake Coffeehouse, in the town hall, 9 Montague Road, Leverett, 7:30 p.m. \$10-12 at the door. (413)548-9394
www.sarathomsen.com.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Wailin' Dave Robinson, Tommy Filault & Co.*, blues based roots music, 8 to 10 p.m.

The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Lenny's Lounge*. Lenny Zarccone croons 50s & 60s gems, 7:30 p.m. No cover.

FRIDAY, APRIL 16th
Deja Brew, Wendell: *Kristen Ford Band*, Indie Rock, 9 to 11 p.m.

The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Lake Street Dive*, r & b, \$6 cover, 9:30 p.m.

FRIDAY & SATURDAY, APRIL 16th & 17th
Pothole Pictures, Shelburne Falls: *The Wizard of Oz*, 7:30 p.m., with music before the movie at 7 p.m.

SATURDAY, APRIL 17th
Burrito Rojo, Turners Falls: Singer, Songwriter and multi instrumentalist *Heather Maloney*, 8 p.m. Joined by *Elizabeth Lorrey*. Turners based Maloney has been traveling up and down the eastern seaboard in support of her critically acclaimed debut CD "Cozy Razors Edge," offering tales of love, self inquiry and the human experience.

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Mother Turtle: *Marsia Shuron Harris fronts the band with her distinctive voice, and what follows is a delicious mix of danceable grooves. At the Wendell Full Moon Coffeehouse on Saturday, April 17th in the Wendell Town Hall. Bring your dancing shoes and we'll raise the windows to let in the sweet spring air. 8 p.m. Open mic at 7:30 p.m.*

Greenfield. Benefit for the YMCA, 7:30 p.m. \$10, \$8 seniors, \$5 children. Tickets available at the YMCA.

Relay for Life Concert: *Six String Crush* opening with Greg Smith. Franklin County native Jeff Gilbert and his rock band from Maine will perform in memory of his sister Jillian who died from cancer at the age of 16. All proceeds will benefit Relay for Life and the local team: *Jillian's Angels*. At the Shea Theatre. 7 p.m. \$10 kids; 12 and under free.

14th Annual United Way A Cappella Festival at Greenfield High School, 7:30 p.m. Feature performances by four groups: *the Dartmouth College Aires* joined by the *Amherst Zumbyes*, the *Smith College Smiffenpoofs*, and the *Amherst College Bluestockings*. Tickets: adults \$9 at the door, seniors \$8, students \$7.

Wendell Full Moon Coffeehouse, on the common: *Mother Turtle* with special guest *Ed Byrne*. \$8 to \$15. Info: (978) 544-5557. Benefit for the Wendell Free Library. Unique and especially dance-worthy blend of soul, rock, acoustic and jazz. Come on up to Wendell for an evening of music, motion and delight. Open Mic begins at 7:30. www.wendell-fullmoon.org.

Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: *Heroes*, classic rock, 9:30 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Nexus*, harmonic eclectic rock, 9 to 11 p.m.

The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Rockit Queer* dance party, \$3, 9:30 p.m.

SUNDAY, APRIL 18th
Community Open Sing, led by Eveline MacDougall (founder of Amandla Chorus). Songs from around our world celebrating life, freedom, and fun! 3 p.m. at Green Fields Market Donations welcome; no one turned away. All ages and abilities welcome - no auditions. Info: (413) 773-8655 or youthchorusin@verizon.net.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *An Irish Session*, 8 to 10 p.m. Amanda Bernhard &

Jonathan Hohl Kennedy host this evening of celtic favorites.

The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *West County Jazz*, 7 p.m. free.

At the Bookmill, Montague Center: *Elephant Micah, Mark Trecka* and *Oweihops*, 8 p.m. \$10

MONDAY, APRIL 19th
The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *B-I-N-G-O!* Come win stuff, 8 p.m. Free.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 21st
The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Quismastah Chad's Quisnite Quiz!* Put together a team, 8 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Knitting & Crafts Night*, 7 to 10 p.m. Any craft and any skill level welcome.

THURSDAY, APRIL 22nd
Deja Brew, Wendell: *Larry Kopp, Country & City Blues* guitar with vocals, 8 to 10 p.m.

The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *The*



Six String Crush opening with *Greg Smith* at the *Shea Theater, Turners Falls* on Saturday, April 17th for a fund raising concert for *Relay for Life*, 7 p.m.

Jazz Demolition Project, Jamie "Goody" Goodrich, Jamie MacDonald & Doug Raneri. 9 p.m. \$3 cover.

FRIDAY, APRIL 23rd
The Roots of War Speaker Series: Jo Comerford, *How Federal Spending Priorities Make Us Less Secure*, at Greenfield Community College, Stinchfield Lecture Hall, 12:30 to 2 p.m. Contacts: Abbie Jenks (413) 775-1127 or Les & Susie Patlove (413) 625-9388. Jo Comerford, Executive Director of the National Priorities Project, which provides real-time data on war and national defense spending and the tradeoffs in local social welfare, education, and renewable energy which result, will provide evidence of how growing military spending is starving "Main St." services. Specifically, how the costs of the war in Afghanistan and the occupation of Iraq contribute to our recession-ridden economy and will describe what citizens can do to move the government toward a peace economy.

Friday night films at the Riverside Green School in Gill, on Route 2, at dark, outside in the rear open field the film "UP!" will be shown. Bring chairs, blankets, snacks and friends! Rain date Saturday, April 24th. Info: 863-4162.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Blame It on Tina*, Jen Spingla, Bob Rosser & Tina Horn, 9 to 11 p.m.

FRIDAY TO SUNDAY, APRIL 23rd to 25th
Arena Civic Theater presents: *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Christopher Sergei's beautifully crafted adaptation of Harper Lee's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel. Friday & Saturday at 8 p.m. Sunday at 2 p.m. Continues April 30th to May 2nd. \$13 for adults, \$11 for seniors and students, and \$8 for children ages 12 and under.

SATURDAY, APRIL 24th
Wendell Earth Day Celebration, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on the common (or town hall in case of rain) will feature local arts, crafts, and farm goods, and information from environmental groups. At noon Kellianna will sing and there'll be community potluck.

Millers River Environmental Center, Athol: *Fascinating Frogs!* 10 to 11 a.m. Join educator Rachel Roberts for a program focusing on the fascinating life cycle of frogs. Free, and geared towards families with young children. Info: roberstml@verizon.net.

At the Discovery Center, Turners Falls: Earth Day Celebration. Clean-Up, 9 to 1 p.m., then Kids' Nature Poetry Open Mic, 1 to 2 p.m. All ages and abilities welcome. We'll supply snacks and drinks to keep you energetic and hydrated. Open Mic Day for children, where kids can share their wildlife poetry with family, friends and members of the general community. Contact: Sarah Doyle (413) 863-9972 or sarah_doyle@prodigy.net.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Josh Levangie*, singing Johnny Cash tunes and many more, 9 to 11 p.m.

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

Nature Photography and Oil Painting Exhibit by Patricia Hayes at the Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls on display through April 30th.

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- 2. HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON 3D** PG in DTS sound
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DAILY 7:00 9:30
- 3. CLASH OF THE TITANS 3D**
DAILY 7:00 9:30 PG13
FRI, SAT, SUN 12:00 3:00
- 4. THE BOUNTY HUNTERS**
DAILY 6:40 9:20 PG13
FRI, SAT, SUN 12:15 3:15
- 5. HOT TUB TIME MACHINE**
DAILY 6:30 9:00
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- 6. DATE NIGHT** in DTS sound
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THE GARDENER'S COMPANION

Spring's a-Blooming



MARY AZARIAN WOODBLOCK

BY LESLIE BROWN

MONTAGUE CITY - The recent spell of unseasonably warm weather has set the yard abloom.

At first, the crocuses were slow to start. Then, almost overnight, there were daffodils everywhere in the yard and in the woods at the yard's edge. The buds on the apricots opened a day after they appeared. Next, the flowering quince and the bloodroot.

The soft blue spring sky is laced with the delicate hues of pale green, yellow and soft red as the leaves begin to open on the bushes and trees.

I'm grateful for the return to more temperate air, although it has brought punishing winds. This season is one of my favorites, and one of the shortest in New England. I don't want it to slip too quickly into summer.

Frankly, I am also behind with my gardening projects.

True, the lettuce and spinach seedlings are thriving in a raised bed. The tiny sprigs of onion and

leek are holding their own in the garden. But it's also time to plant the early root crops, which need a long season, and none too soon to plant peas.

I was, of course, overly ambitious in my seed buying in the dead of winter when every picture of luscious edibles in the seed catalogues called my name. Now that the soil has been well-watered and has dried so that it can be worked, the carrots and beets should go in.

These root crops need a long season and friable soil which will allow them to grow unhindered. I am growing an heirloom carrot called Danvers Half Long. My soil is too heavy even when mixed with soil lighteners to take on a full length root. As it is, this six to eight inch carrot requires 75 days of growing time until harvest. I also succumbed to an heirloom beet called Crosby Egyptian, which is reputed to be very sweet as well as early.

Both of these crops are headed for a raised bed because it is filled with topsoil, manure and compost, has never been tamped down by foot traffic, and can be defended from the rabbit with a low metal fence. Plant carrot seed no more than a quarter inch deep. I plan to set a furrow of about half an inch and then line it with a quarter inch sprinkling of wood ash to control

such carrot pests as carrot weevil and wire worm. If you've experienced a big problem with harvesting carrots with tunneled flesh, you might want to water the bed weekly with a thin solution of wood ash and water.

Beets, like onions, will grow in large part on the surface as they develop, but plant the seed a half inch deep to support good root development. Don't forget the side dressing of compost that enriches the soil and encourages crop growth in so many ways.

It goes without saying that it's time to plant all the peas you can eat, because they do not do well in hot weather.

In addition to the outside work, the time is ripe for starting hot weather crops like tomatoes and peppers inside. I love my little English greenhouse which constitutes planting cells, watering tray and moisture conserving lid all in one. It also has a wicking layer of blotting paper which draws the moisture up to the planting cells without over watering.

I'll be starting seven types of tomatoes this year with a wide range of size, taste and color. Two, BrandyMaster and Celebrity, are hybrids. Both sport large, meaty fruits with traditional tomato flavor, perfect for slicing or sandwiches.

I've chosen Red Zebra and Pineapple because they are bi-colored and thus beautiful for a sliced tomato platter. Both of these fruits are mild, not acidic, in

flavor.

Rose is a large heirloom tomato, a lovely pink one with meaty flesh that is quite tasty. Lastly, two small tomatoes: Amish Salad and Red Alert. Both of these varieties are new to me.

I'm ever in the search for the perfect cherry tomato. Amish Salad may be this. It is described as firm, mild and sweet, and resistant to rotting and heavy bearing. Red Alert was sent as a free trial packet. It promises small, juicy sweet fruits and has been developed to grow well in containers. This should be a good bet for kitchen gardens and apartment dwellers with limited space but plenty of sun.

All tomatoes demand full sun for as much of the day as they can get, along with consistent, regular amounts of watering, protection from weeds and some form of support like cages or poles. This crop is very season dependent. Last year was too wet and cool, so tomato plants were highly susceptible to disease. I put perfectly healthy, vibrant plants into the ground but had only a scant harvest.

Many of us wait all winter and into spring for the first fresh, vine-ripened tomato. There's no other substitute. We'll all hope for much better this year!

My plans for sweet peppers include a range of colors: red, orange, yellow, and chocolate. Don't be fooled; all peppers begin green, but if allowed to ripen will change to vibrant color

and also be all the sweeter. They are great on the grill with other vegetables and can be frozen at the end of harvest time for frying or baking come winter time.

There's so much to be done in the yard. The peonies are peeking up through the soil and the bed needs culling of old stalks. The roses are leafing out, ready to have any dead growth trimmed.

A word to the wise: when in doubt, if a rose stem is live, leave it. Some growth comes later, and you'd hate to lose any potential blooms come summertime.

The season is too short and there is never enough time. The early mornings are full of bird song, the air is fresh, and the new bloom on everything draws the eye. When the winds drop and the temperatures rise, it's tempting to pull out the lawn chair and just sit and admire it all. For spirits dulled by winter's cold and gray, the spring palette is a true tonic. Be sure to set aside some time to drink it in.

GALA from pg 10

a family tradition going through the generations, "for the people and by the people." The music and the cakewalk strut, even the costumes all grow out of a folk tradition that has come down through the ages.

The show planned for the Gala will offer a new program, with a historical view to be presented to the audience so they can learn about the string band and enjoy a great show at the same time. Innacone wants everyone in town to come. The show will be held in the auditorium at Turners Falls High School at 2:30 p.m. on Sunday, April 25th.



Second grader Karissa Fleming, and her Picture of a Tractor

from RECYCLED pg 8

with colorful crayon-work borders in the corners of the drawing.

Malik Baker-Gore, a fourth grader, used recycled bags to make the body of his self portrait, along with a cut out drawing of a long haired cat, to remember the cat he used to live with, named Sassy. His smile was just as broad in the self portrait as it was in real life, as he posed for a photo in front of his work.

Outside the school, a tired granddad, Dave Allen, from Davis Street in Turners, rested on a step while waiting for his two grandkids, who were still celebrating with the other artists at the Sheffield Gallery.

"It's a good art program they have here," said Allen. "The kids need that to express themselves." Besides, said Allen, if they keep working with recycled materials, "There'll be a lot less going into the dumpsters."

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