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LAKE PLEASANT MILLERS FALLS MONTAGUE CENTER MONTAGUE CITY TURNERS FALLS

The Montague Reporter

YEAR 6 - NO. 28

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

APRIL 17, 2008

Gill to Seek Town Services Override; Eyes \$295,000 GMRSD Shortfall

BY DAVID DETMOLD - The town of Gill is struggling to make ends meet, but it's coming up short again this year. Approximately \$68,000 short, give or take. That's the approximate amount in excess of the tax levy that will be needed to keep town departments running, and that's the approximate amount of a Proposition 2½ override to be scheduled for late June or July, if voters at the May 5th annual town meeting agree.

The selectboard has yet to finalize the figure, which will go to pay for portions of departmental budgets that came in exceeding a 2½% increase from the '08 operating budget, according to a method worked out by board member Ann Banash. Even so, the \$68,000 target for an override does not include any extra money for the Gill-Montague school system, which has asked for a \$215,000 (16.4% hike) over last year's assessment to the town of Gill.

Gill's '08 assessment for the G-M schools was \$1,276,079. The schools would like Gill to provide \$1,490,838 for their 16% portion of the schools' operating budget this year. In fact, when the selectboard reached the bottom of their budget worksheet on Monday, they were



Representative Christopher Donelan, (D-Orange), talking about the likelihood of increased state aid for schools, told constituents at the Gill Town Hall on Monday, "I'm sorry folks, there is no more money." The selectboard (l-r: Nancy Griswold, Lee Stevens, Ann Banash and Tracy Rogers) seemed dubious about the news.

still \$80,000 beyond the levy limit, even with \$68,000 set aside for a "basket of town services" override, so they deducted \$80,000 from last year's school assessment, leaving a figure of \$1,196,079 in the omnibus for the G-M schools, at present.

Among the town departments whose budgets will be partially funded by the proposed override are the police (\$3,100 of their budget proposal of \$188,079 would go to override; after a cut of \$3000 in holiday pay; last year's police budget equaled \$176,117) and the assessors (\$6000 to override) and the

library (\$800 to override). Also included in the tentative override basket would be \$1000 for reserve funds, \$20,000 for a cemetery erosion project at the Center Cemetery (where Unadilla Brook is threatening to undermine and wash out as many as half a dozen graves at the rear of the cemetery), and \$36,000 to help fund operating expenses at the highway department.

The highway department will also be seeking a debt exclusion override for replacing two antique dump trucks - 18 and 19 years old - see GILL pg 9

Airport Commission Denies Racial Slur Made by One of Them

BY DAVID DETMOLD - TURNERS FALLS - Narragansett Tribal Historic Preservation Officer John Brown says he is outraged at racial slurs about "tree hugging" and "rock hugging" Native Americans made by the executive director of the Massachusetts Aeronautics Commission, Robert Welch, and Mark Fairbrother, a commissioner of the Turners Falls Municipal Airport, at a meeting at the airport office on Friday afternoon, April 4th. At that meeting, Welch brought up the delay in the \$5 million state and federally funded runway extension project at the airport caused by a dispute over Native claims about a stone formation on a nearby hill, which would be excavated under current runway extension plans. Two New England federally recognized Native

American tribes, the Narragansett and the Wampanoag Tribe of Gayhead (Aquinnah) claim the stone formation on the hilltop is an ancient ceremonial site of cultural significance to their peoples.

Welch stated to the assembled airport commissioners on April 4th that the runway project was being held up by "tree hugging Indians."

Airport commissioner Mark Fairbrother retorted, "They're not tree hugging Indians; they're rock hugging Indians."

The Narragansett Indian Tribe and the Wampanoag Tribe of Gayhead (Aquinnah), are given consultative authority under federal law for any construction project that uses federal dollars where culturally significant artifacts to their tribes are determined to be located. The tribes are see AIRPORT pg 10

THEATER REVIEW

Big Nurse Bags a Bull Goose Looney

The Country Players present

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest

Stage Adaptation by Dale Wasserman;

Directed by Richard Martin at the Shea Theater

BY DAVID DETMOLD - TURNERS FALLS - Now, in our dysfunctional matriarchy drama series, chalk up another winning entry. Following hard on the heels of the Turners Falls High School's bravura production of *Once Upon a Mattress*, the Country Players have come to town with another ripsnorter centered on a dominating mother figure, with *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, at the Shea Theater, (Friday and Saturday, April 18th and 19th, 8:00 p.m.) Only this time, the kingpin isn't just mute - he's rendered

speechless by the latest in 50s-era mind control therapy - and the royal matron is an electro-shock gurney.

The scene is a claustrophobic, *Exorcist*-green psych ward, centered on the many windowed nursing station where Big Nurse Ratched, (Sharon Weyers), perches like a spider in the center of her web. As the play opens, a swirling Rorschach light show plays on the brooding presence of the ward's longtime totem, Chief Bromden (Dave Peck), whose sadistic handlers see CUCKOO pg 11

Rat's Eye View of the River Race

"TIME FLIES WHEN YOU'RE FLOATING BACKWARDS"

BY JOSH HEINEMANN

WENDELL - "What has happened to the time?" We were floating downstream to our starting position, facing upstream, and the starting gun went off. I looked at fifty insane canoeists who saw me not as the fine human being that I sometimes am, but as some damn fool in the way and he better not slow me down. For a moment, I thought we should continue down the river backwards and make a smaller target for the boats coming at us, but then we decided otherwise, turned, stayed upright, and continued downriver with the rest. I don't know how many boats hit us, not many, and the important thing is balance. Center yourself.

Just beyond the Athol Main Street Bridge we were turned sideways when a boat hit us in the stern, behind me, and I could tell they were strong paddlers by how hard they pushed us. I told (yelled at) Katie to draw, and I tried to pry,



Josh Heinemann, left, prepares to paddle in the River Rat Race, along with his stepson's friends, Andy and Jared, from the UMass Polymer Science Dept. Andy and Jared borrowed the aluminum canoe in this picture.

but we were no match for the other boat, and again we were sideways to the river and the flow of boats.

We went right over an upside down red canoe, but scanning the see RACE pg 9

PET OF THE WEEK

Playful Guy



Bubba

Hi, my name is Bubba and I'm a 1-1/2-year-old pointer mix in need of a good home. I am a playful boy looking for some fun people to take me home! I've been trying to perfect my pointing skills, but haven't gotten the hang of it yet. I hope when I find my family, they'll notice me without my pointing at them first. I would be great with kids 10 and up. I would also be great with playful dogs but not cats. For more information on adopting me please contact the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society at 413-548-9898 or via email leverett@dpvhs.org.

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CARNEGIE LIBRARY NEWS

Baby Emus at Carnegie

BY LINDA HICKMAN
TURNERS FALLS - Baby emu chicks will be visiting the Carnegie Library on Wednesday, April 23, at 2 p.m. Dee Dee Mares of Songline farm in Gill will bring several

newly hatched chicks and will talk about these amazing giant birds. The All About Emu program is free and for all ages. For more information, please contact the Carnegie Library, 201 Ave. A, 863-3214.

MONTAGUE LIBRARIES NEWS

New DVDs at Montague Libraries

BY LINDA HICKMAN
A diverse selection of new release DVDs has just been added to the Montague Public Libraries' collections. The titles include *Alvin and the Chipmunks*, *Bee Movie*, *Beowulf*, *Bones Seasons 1 & 2*, *House Seasons 1 -3*, *I am Legend*, *I now Pronounce you Chuck and Larry*, *Juno*, *Kite Runner*, *Michael Clayton*, *Mist*, *Mr. Magorium's Wonder Emporium*, *Noble House*, *Supernanny*, *Sweeney Todd*, *There Will be Blood* and *Water Horse: Legend of the Deep*. Other new movies will be arriving at the Montague Libraries

as soon as they are released on DVD. Many other titles are available on the shelves and a huge selection can be ordered from other libraries. Movies circulate for seven days at a time. The Carnegie Library in Turners Falls is open Monday - Wednesday, 1 - 8 p.m., Thursday 1 - 5 p.m., Friday 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. and Saturday 1 - 5 p.m. The Montague Center Library is open Monday and Wednesday, 2 - 5 and 6 - 8 p.m. The Millers Falls Library is open on Tuesday and Thursday 2 - 5 and 6 - 8 p.m. For more information, call the Carnegie Library, 863-3214.



MONTAGUE CENTER- Laura Donaghy and Nikolas Martin of Turners Falls enjoyed sharing a book together at the Montague Center Library on Monday evening, April 14th.

SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES -- April 21st - April 25th

GILL/MONTAGUE Senior Center, 62 Fifth Street, Turners Falls, is open Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. for activities and congregate meals. Council-on-Aging Director is Bunny Caldwell. For information or to make reservations, call 863-9357. Meal reservations need to be made a day in advance by 11 a.m. Messages can be left on our machine when the center is not open. Mealsite Manager is Chris Richer. The Center offers a hot noon meal weekdays to any senior. A reservation is necessary and transportation can be provided. Trips: Call the Senior Center 863-9357 or 863-4500
Monday, 21st
Patriots Day - no Meals on Wheels
10 a.m. Senior Aerobics
11 a.m. Easy Aerobics
12 Noon Potluck Lunch. Bring a dish or pay \$3.50.
Tuesday, 22nd
1 p.m. Spring Painting classes. David Sund will be instructing

this class. This painting class is in Acrylic painting for all levels of expertise.
Wednesday, 23rd
10 a.m. Senior Aerobics
12:45 p.m. Bingo
Thursday, 24th
1 p.m. Pitch
Friday, 25th
10 a.m. Senior Aerobics
11 a.m. Easy Aerobics
ERVING Senior Center, 18 Pleasant St., Ervingside (Old Center School, 1st Floor), is open Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. for activities and congregate meals. For information and reservations call Polly Kiely, Senior Center director at 413 423-3308. Lunch daily at 11:30 a.m. with reservations a day in advance by 11:00 a.m. Transportation can be provided for meals, Thursday shopping, or medical necessity by calling Dana Moore at 413-422-2584.
Monday, 21st
9:00 a.m. Exercise

FACES & PLACES

The Rod Shop, Montague City
Photo by Linda Hickman

Brushy Mountain Presentation

The Leverett Historical Society Presents: *Life Along the Sawmill: North of Brushy Mountain* on Thursday April 24th; 7:30 p.m. at the Leverett Library (one mile north of Leverett Center, adjacent to the Elementary School).
The Sawmill River really did get its name from the sawmills along its banks. The history of the water powered sawmill is fascinating. Several local folks who once worked at these historic sites are still with us, and are willing to share some of their stories.
Lee Glazier, a Leverett resident for 80 years, will lead folks in recollections of the history of life along the Sawmill River north of Brushy Mountain. Please join us with your memories of local sawmills, or river life. An update will be provided about the restoration of the North Leverett sawmill.
For more information contact Dawn Ward at 413-367-9562.

HAPPY HAPPY
30TH BIRTHDAY
DAVID DAVID!!

Girl Scout Troop 79 presents
A Tea Party & Fashion Show
Join us for a tea party and fashion show with your favorite American Girl doll. Events will include a tea party, light lunch, door prizes and a fashion show featuring American Girl outfits made by local vendors. Doll clothing and accessories will also be available for purchase. Don't miss this fun filled afternoon for you and your doll!
Sunday, April 27th
1:00 pm
Montague Elks, 1 Columbus Ave. Turners Falls
Cost: \$15.00/person
For tickets, please call (413) 863-4074 or (413) 863-2436.

GREAT FALLS MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS OF THE WEEK
Grade 6 :
Tyler Richardson
Brody Markol
Grade 7:
Jayna Kelly
Grade 8:
Melanie McRae

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BY DAVID DETMOLD

LAKE PLEASANT - "I thought this winter was so cold compared to last year's," said former Lake Pleasant post mistress Joyce Cote. "It really blew me away, but when I went back to check, the ice went off the lake on April 10th both years."

Since 1977, Cote has been overseeing the village's favorite 'Can't Wait Til Spring' Contest, where residents buy chances for one dollar to see who gets lucky and lands on the the correct calendar date, the day when the last ice to melts off the broad, deep kettlehole lake that divides the village in two. So many people began to take part, that Cote had to run two contests simultaneously, and assign dates by lot to chance takers.

"We start it the 10th of March," said Cote, "and we run the lottery through the 14th or 15th of April." With the erratic weather patterns of recent years, sometimes those dates have not allowed enough leeway for vernal variation. "In 2002," recalled Cote, "the ice was off March 6th, before we even started the contest." No winner that year. "The latest date for ice off looks like April 18th, in 1978" she said. On years like that one, the prize goes to the person who landed on the latest calendar date.

This year, Cote's grandson,



Lake Pleasant, with ice.

Tyler Ahearn (15) won one of the contests, for a prize of \$30, which surprised him, since he hadn't even purchased a ticket. Fate works in mysterious ways, especially in Lake Pleasant. And the other person who drew April 10th was obviously psychic. That would be National Spiritual Alliance Member David James, who took home the grand prize of \$36. (Isn't that the same number of current life members of the Spiritual Alliance? That's

spooky.)

In fact, the Ice of the Lake drawing took place Tuesday at an afternoon tea held at the Spiritual Alliance temple on the corner of Montague Street and Owasso, where the TNSA used to print its national newspaper when spiritualism was at its peak following the Civil War. The social teas, which will now take place every third Tuesday of the month, are a chance for Cote to visit with friends whom she used

to see across the street every day at the post office, where she served as post mistress for 24 years until retiring last fall, and vice versa. They got started last month when Cote happened to remark to Joy Kaubin and Katherine Mayfield, "How much I missed dealing with people."

This week, in addition to determining the contest winners, Cote said she and a small group of village residents talked about the wonderful new bakery on 2nd

Street in Turners Falls, and the wonderful things they baked there, as well as the re-opening of the Creemee on Millers Falls Road, and a number of village concerns. For example, the Lake Pleasant Women's Club held a drawing of their own (with the ever impartial Mike Naughton doing the honors on the drawing) recently, for an Easter Basket, and the money raised from that event will go toward preparing a belated Easter Egg Hunt for the village children at the ballfield on Lake Pleasant Road, this Saturday at 1 p.m. Now that the snow is off the grass.

In other village news, postmaster Ron Croteau reports the mysterious disappearance of two inanimate objects along Lake Pleasant Road. The road signs that formerly greeted drivers, and perhaps transmitted a subliminal message to slow down, "Entering Lake Pleasant" have disappeared.

Highway superintendent Tom Bergeron said he has no money in the budget to replace the signs, which would cost several hundred dollars each for the DPW to manufacture. But he said village residents are welcome to prepare their own sign "as long as they are just the same as the old ones, black paint on white background," and the DPW would be willing to install them.

Eagle Watch

BY PAT CARLISLE

GREAT FALLS - We have only one eagle chick left in our Barton Cove nest; the smaller quiet one is gone. We do not know what went wrong, but in nature, the fittest must survive.

I think it is OK to be sad, but let's all celebrate the chick we have as we watch it grow and develop to be strong enough to leave the nest in late summer, and eventually produce chicks of its own.

There is one egg left, but it will not hatch because it is well beyond the date for viability. We know



Feeding time for one baby eagle chick.

from the past years, this too will disintegrate and be covered by

more nest materials. Nevertheless, Happy Eagle Watching!

Free Paper Shredding Event in Greenfield Saturday April 19th

GREENFIELD - On Saturday, April 19th from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., the Springfield Materials Recycling Facility Advisory Board (MAB) is sponsoring a free paper shredding event at Staples (259 Mohawk Trail), Greenfield.

The event is open to any western Massachusetts residents and small businesses. People wishing to shred confidential papers place their items to be shredded in a bin that is

then emptied into a mobile shredding unit, operated by ProShred, Inc. Paper shredding provides safe and confidential destruction of financial or personal documents. And the good news is, in the end this paper will all be recycled.

There is a per person shredding limit of one recycling bin full of the following papers: cancelled or blank checks, credit card statements, bank statements, medical records,

legal papers, income tax files (query on www.bankrate.com to find out how long to keep financial records), financial records, proprietary documents, customer lists, sales reports, and HR records. Staples and paper clips do not have to be removed, but an effort should be made to take them off when preparing your paper for shredding.

The MAB will also raffle off a free paper shredder.

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Editor

David Detmold

Assistant Editor

Kathleen Litchfield

Editorial Assistants

Hugh Corr
David Brule

Circulation

Suzette Snow Cobb
Don Clegg

Layout & Design

Kathleen Litchfield
Boysen Hodgson
Kathryn Hoyden
Karen Wilkinson
Suzette Snow Cobb

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Joe Parzych
Shawn Woolsey

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Michael Muller
Michael Farrick

Last Week's Budget Editorial Valiant, but Inaccurate

BY PATRICIA ALLEN

MONTAGUE - As your editorial last week indicated, (*A Bad Year for Pay Hikes, MR VI # 27*), Montague is indeed "wallowing in a sea of red ink." This editorial valiantly attempted to bring forth all the factors and ramifications that the budgets present. The frustration and concern we all face is evident. Perhaps, though, the editorial was too ambitious and would have been clearer and more successful if it had been divided into several editorials.

One editorial could have been more helpful and placed the problems into context better if it had pointed out the national and global stresses that have led to this point and their effects on not only Montague, but all the towns around us. Did we know four years ago what would happen? As recently as last fall national economists who stated there would be a recession in the late winter were few and far between.

The factors leading to these huge deficits have included the limits of Proposition 2½, the recession, the mortgage crisis, the lack of federal dollars going into our national budget rather than our international budget (i.e. the Middle East conflicts), and

the huge increases in health insurance and energy costs - all of which are far beyond the control of Montague itself. Some factors are Mother Nature's to determine: last year we had 50 degree temperatures in January, this year we have overspent our snow and ice budget.

Should we have been more tight-fisted? It's easy to see now that we should have been. Last year we undoubtedly should not have voted an additional \$300,000 at the district meeting for the schools, but our citizens want to do right by our schools.

The second editorial could have focused on the school committee, finance committee and board of selectmen and their respective deliberations over this systemic problem - the "structural gap." This would necessarily have been divided in two since it was noted that "the town has made an effort to cut its budget to meet reality; the schools, so far, have not."

To speak to the town side. As stated in the editorial, the town administrator developed a five-year plan to stem the tide of red ink, a plan undermined the very first year by that district vote. The editorial could have noted that the town has cut its current budget requests by over \$400,000 in an effort to rein in the townside shortfall. Cutting services and capital requests were on the table and acted on. It was made clear that contract negotiations would need to address the shortfall as well, including a potential wage

freeze.

The editorial could have questioned whether the decision at that point to seek an override for those services not legally mandated - an override that would build our base for the future - is the better approach this year, rather than next year. Should we, instead, have started by eliminating several clerical staff, which as pointed out in the editorial would result in "department heads [being] reduced to filing forms?"

There has been discussion about what may have to be done next year to meet the projected deficit, and those would probably include cutting more staff as well as capital items. It is true town deliberations have focused on closing the town-side gaps this year, finding it impossible to assess where the schools are going, since their requests have

not changed at all to date.

The third editorial could have addressed the employee wage packages. This is where in the editorial there have been some stark inaccuracies.

The school negotiations may, or may not, be complete at this point - I have not seen anything yet that indicates a final contract. The editorial could point out, as it did, the fiscal irresponsibility of offering 3% COLAs at this juncture. It could point out the impossibility of granting equity to town employees with that magnitude of increase for school staff.

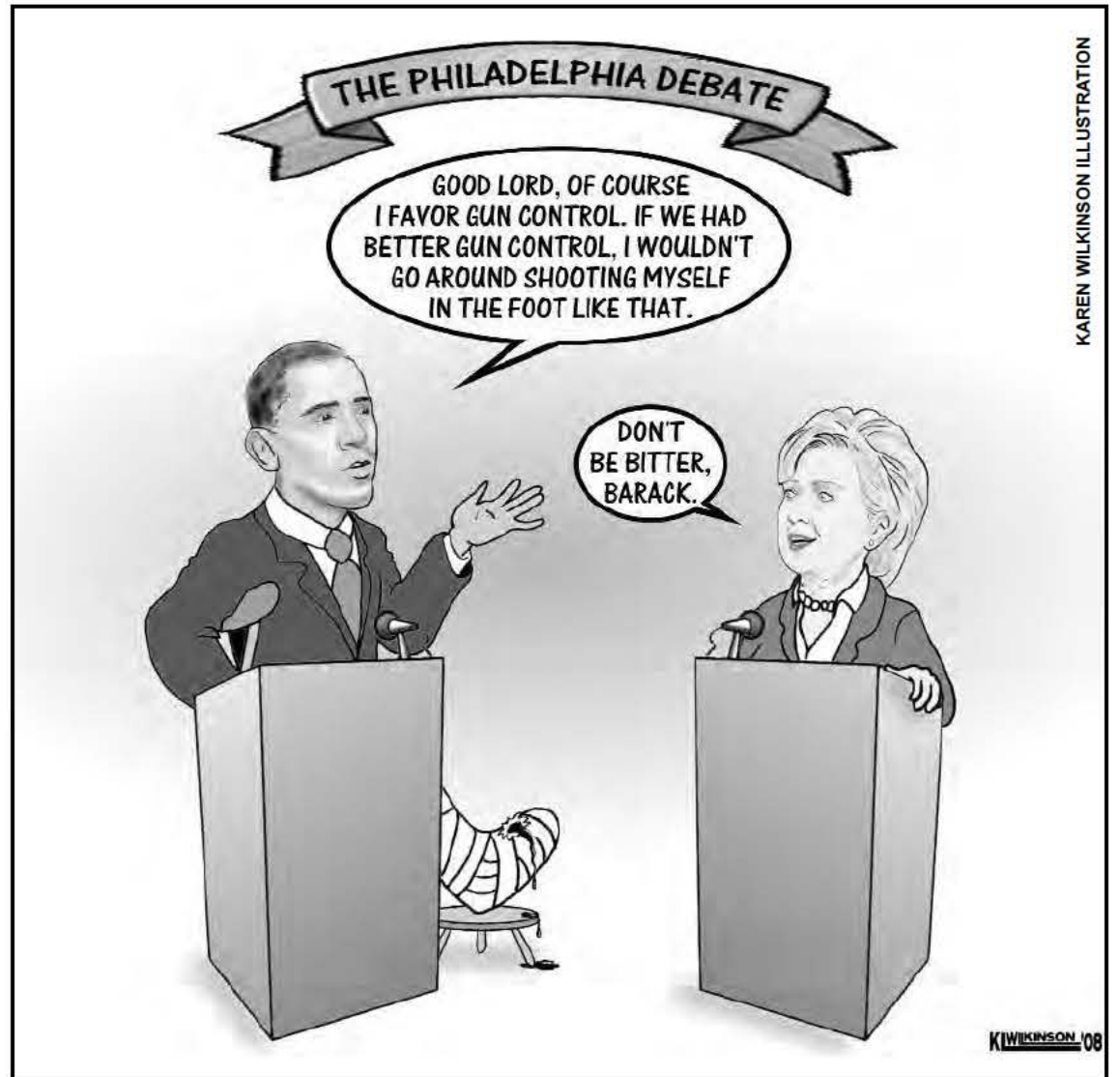
On the town-side, negotiations have only just begun this week, therefore to indicate that town employees will be receiving 5% annual increases and 90% health care contribution rates is inaccurate. Several years ago the town did institute a wage

and classification study to ensure equity within the town and parity with other towns. The last contract did in fact grant COLAs.

What it will be this year is open for negotiation. With the recently completed study of the health care benefits of GIC versus the current carrier, the very public discussion of the budget deficit facing the town, and concern about the percentage ratio for health care contribution (also brought to the table in previous negotiations), it is no secret that all these issues are on the table and that jobs may be in jeopardy.

To state that the town administrator negotiated the contracts is incorrect. The implication that the town administrator maneuvered negotiations to benefit himself at the expense of the town coffers by separating the selectmen is false. As we negoti-

see **BUDGET** page 5



KAREN WILKINSON ILLUSTRATION

KWILKINSON '08

American Dead in Iraq and Afghanistan as of 4/16/08



(Casualty sign temporarily located next to Wagon Wheel Restaurant on Rte. 2 in Gill)

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Vote the Budget Down

I can't improve on last week's excellent editorial detailing the essential bankruptcy of the Montague finance committee's and selectboard's FY 2009 budget recommendations, so I won't try. Instead, I'd like to focus on the fact that in a little over two weeks town meeting members will be asked to vote on this proposal. If we don't like what we see, what can we do about it?

Essentially, I think we have three choices: we can pass the budget as presented, we can amend it to a more palatable form and then pass the amended version, or we can vote it down. Personally, I don't think I can vote for a proposal that does nothing to address the rapid rise of personnel costs: as the editorial points out, this is

the main factor driving our perennial budget crises, and we have ignored it for too long already.

Amending the proposal seems cumbersome and impractical, especially at this late date. We'd either need some sort of omnibus plan that lumped all the changes into one amendment, or we'd have to debate them one at a time. Even if we could come up with a satisfactory list of all the needed changes, which would be a challenge given the short time frame, the objection would be raised -- and it's a fair one -- that many if not all of these matters are subject to collective bargaining, and it's not town meeting's job to dictate the terms of those negotiations.

That leaves simply voting

the budget down - in effect, telling the finance committee and the selectboard to go back and try again. I don't like the idea - it will leave the town without a budget until another meeting can be called - but right now I don't see any alternative. We're in a crisis situation, and we can't just keep kicking the can down the road.

- Mike Naughton
Millers Falls

Mike Naughton is a member of the capital improvements committee, and a town meeting member from Precinct 2. The views here are his own, and do not necessarily represent those of any other member of town government.

GUEST EDITORIAL:

Protect Land Use, Not Just Land

BY RAY DIDONATO

WENDELL - There have been a couple of letters which have appeared regarding the Eco-Sensitive Development (ESD) bylaw being drafted here in Wendell, and also regarding my letter to the editor from several weeks ago in response to an article on the draft bylaw that appeared in the Reporter (Eco-Sensitive Development Zoning Proposed MR VI #23). A small portion of my first letter responded to an apparent misquote of comments attributed to a member of the planning board. As soon as I was made aware that there may have been a misquote, I apologized to the member in question. I also apologized to the planning board.

While it was understandable that planning board chair Deirdre Cabral felt it necessary to respond to my comments regarding this misinterpretation. I feel that some of her comments went too far. Her characterization of my concern about the potential influence of land trusts on bylaw development as "lecturing," "sowing doubt," or implying that her committee was up to something "nefarious," mischaracterized my comments and concern in an unreasonable and derisive manner.

My main point was that as a hunter and angler I might be

concerned about how much influence local land trusts might have on bylaw development, since they are in the business of land protection and have a relatively large voice on the topic. My comments were not intended to imply that something "nefarious" was afoot. Just as I could have chosen my comments on the Reporter article more wisely, so too, I think, could Ms. Cabral in responding to my concerns.

It was unfortunate that Ms. Cabral chose not to comment on the main point of my letter, which was that protection of land uses are as important as protection of the land itself from development, or on any other substantive issues relating to the bylaw, which may have served to further inform readers.

I think the bylaw concept is excellent, which is why I spent some time examining the basic language of this bylaw and the proposed new subdivision regulations. I did this as a favor to the Wendell Open Space Committee earlier this year, prior to my joining the committee. I just happen to disagree with how the bylaw addresses land uses.

I met one last time with the Forest Conservation Bylaw Committee, and it appears from that meeting that language which would have protected several land uses, including timber man-

agement, agriculture, hunting, and fishing, from restriction in the conservation restriction schema will not be included in the bylaw. This includes timber management, which was originally protected in draft language, but has since been removed. Rather, while the committee does ask for these land uses to be addressed in a conservation analysis, the matter of which uses are restricted seems to be left entirely up to the landowner.

While this makes a certain amount of sense from one perspective, it strikes me as shortsighted.

Rather than asking those who practice these land uses today, or more importantly future generations, to sacrifice these uses, why not ask those who wish to restrict these uses to sacrifice some of their views? Why not as a community say, "These traditional uses are now, or may in the future, be useful," and we should protect them in the conservation restriction schema of this bylaw?

I was told at the last forest conservation bylaw committee meeting that it would be great if I could "get behind" the bylaw, rather than continuing to make the case for what was termed a "special interest." I find the term "special interest" a bit too Washingtonian for Wendell. But

more importantly, are traditional uses, such as hunting or fishing, or for that matter timber management and agriculture, really "special interests"? And why? Because perhaps a small minority of people in town practice some of these uses?

Rather than "special interest" issues, these uses go to the heart of creating a sustainable land-based future for our children and grandchildren.

The committee might argue that the bylaw already asks so much of landowners by placing a permanent restriction on their land, that asking for these uses to be protected goes too far. Or that there is some legal impediment to protecting uses. But really, the largest legal impediment in the bylaw is asking for a permanent restriction of development rights in the first place. Further, just as landowners can opt out of ESD if are opposed to placing a permanent conservation restriction (CR) on their land, so too could they if uninterested in protecting traditional uses on that land. In other words, no one is forcing them to do anything. I would venture to guess that a landowner who feels that strongly about a restrictive CR will be prone to minimize subdivision of their land anyway.

The bylaw committee used the example of a vegan landown-

er who wouldn't want hunters on their land. But, nothing in my proposal asks for hunting to be mandated or allowed on the property. I only ask that it is not permanently restricted for generations to come in a CR. The landowners of today will not be the landowners in two generations, or seven generations. Why allow for the systematic restriction of traditional uses now with no assessment of how this will impact future generations?

I would personally rather have a bylaw geared toward land protection and sustainability, instead of a bylaw geared at getting as much land as possible protected, especially considering that something on the order of 70% of the land in Wendell is already permanently protected. I'm willing to bet that others feel the same way.

It will soon be up to the planning board, and eventually town meeting, to determine the final form of the ESD bylaw, which allows a unique opportunity to plan for future sustainable land uses hand in hand with controlling development. I hope we might take full advantage of this opportunity. If the protection of these uses proves detrimental to the bylaw, we can always amend it.

I doubt this would be the case.

BUDGET from pg 4

ate this year we will have had at least two meetings beforehand where we as selectmen formulate our objectives. We will then meet with the union representatives, where they will present their requests. Every effort is made to be consistent with all three unions. Our management team for each union consists of a selectman, the town's labor lawyer and the town administrator. Generally when the town administrator speaks he clarifies contract issues, dates and times, and points out the effects of whatever we suggest on the proposed budget. Usually he does

not speak unless asked questions. If he has been trying to "feather his own nest," he's not doing a very good job of it.

To imply that our employees don't recognize the gravity of the situation is unfair to their dedication to the town and is belied by the facts. They have attended the health care benefit information sessions, have come en masse to several Wednesday budget meetings, have proposed ideas to cut expenses, and have forthrightly and expeditiously provided any and all information that could help in deliberations. I anticipate open and frank discussion when we begin negotiations.

Pat Allen is the chair of the selectboard of the town of Montague. This article represents her personal viewpoint, and is not intended to speak for the board.

Editor's Note: We tried to make it very clear in our editorial last week that we were urging a negotiated one-year halt to pay hikes for town and school employees, followed by contracted increases that would keep the budget in line with a 3% rise in expenses in years following. Therefore, we see nothing to support Allen's contention that we claimed a 5% annual increase was once more in the offing for

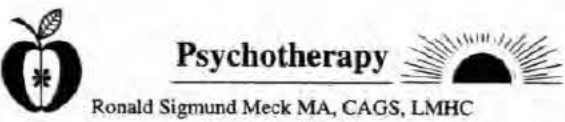
town employees, only that they had received 5% annual increases in their last three-year contract, as did school union employees. An annual five percent rise in personnel costs, combined with flat or declining state aid and local excise taxes, has proved to be unaffordable for our town within the confines of Proposition 2 1/2.


And nowhere did we imply that town and school employees do not recognize the gravity of the fiscal crisis. Only that among the possible - and increasingly likely - outcomes of Montague's budget crisis is a continued loss of union jobs and the municipal services they provide. Our argu-

ment has been that unionized employees - recognizing the severity of the budget deficit - need to stand for job solidarity today, rather than individual gains, in the service of the taxpayers, who are their collective employers

We recognize, and have always applauded, the excellent service town and school employees in all departments have provided the taxpayers over the years, and continue to perform today, under trying circumstances. Normally, we support contractual pay increases for municipal and school employees. This year, we simply can't afford any.

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OBITUARY

Louis G. Roscher (1952-2008)

BY JOE LADA

GREENFIELD - "Life does not cease to be funny when people die just as it does not cease to be serious when people laugh."

- George Bernard Shaw

Lou Roscher - known by the stage name "Buddy Rubbish" throughout the known world (and some parts of New Jersey) - radio disc jockey, comedy impresario, and stage performer, died (or use your own euphemism) from complications after emergency heart surgery on Friday, April 11th. He was 56 (roughly 8 dog years). Since Buddy had perfect timing, he must have known something we don't know. A vast circle of friends, fans and irate creditors are mourning his passing. In retrospect, he would likely be extremely annoyed at not having written his own obituary.

Born and raised on Long Island, Buddy took a circuitous path to his final home in Turners Falls. A natural raconteur, he peddled frozen shrimp on the side of the road, tended bar from Florida to New Hampshire, organized shows, worked at several radio stations, and performed wherever and whenever he could, occasionally leaving common sense by the wayside. Through the decades he hosted comedy and musical events, put on benefits (his generosity is well known), cobbled together video presentations, wrote for a number of publications, (including this one, where his

Absolute Rubbish column alternated between fits of manic glory and depressing bouts of self pity) played chess with opponents in local clubs and online around the world, and was one of the stalwarts of the Northampton Arts Council's Transperformance series, appearing as everyone from Yogi Berra to Joan Baez.

Though, oddly, never as Madonna.

Buddy (then in the guise of Lou) came to the Pioneer Valley in the late 1970s via the Renaissance Community. Soon after, he and his partner, Virginia Simpson, opened the Separate Entrance, a local watering hole, in South Deerfield. After being mentored in comedy by the mild mannered Ed Vadas, he started the Comedy Crunch, which provided a springboard for many standup comics and musicians. After leaving the Hot-L, the Comedy Crunch moved to the Iron Horse, where it provided the Pioneer Valley with many more years of uproarious and often embarrassing open mic comedy.

In 1984, the comedy/music duo of Buddy Rubbish and Bobby Darling began broadcasting the Oldies Show on WRSI, then located in Greenfield. Their program was a three-ring circus of

entertainment, being unable to fit a fourth ring into the studio due to physical constraints.

Well-versed in popular and esoteric music of the 1950s and 60s, they presented a soup to nuts mix of well-known and obscure songs, accompanied by pre-recorded and live comedy bits. The centerpiece of the show was the second-floor Drive-Up Window on the alley dubbed "Memory Lane" (the name actually written by Buddy's attorney, Sandy Staub). Requests were taken from honking motorists in the alley, and prizes (records, candy, "genuine Mohawk Dumdum Arrowheads" [a/k/a, rocks], along with other odd paraphernalia) were lowered down to his grateful and often-inebriated fans. The show ran for many years until Buddy took over the morning show on the station. He later worked on

WRNX, WGAM, and WPVQ.

After his illustrious radio career, he returned to bartending in Valley bars and restaurants. While never likely to win the "employee of the month" award (see Red Sox below), he was a master behind the bar; making new acquaintances, entertaining patrons, and always ready to dispense a "generous pour" when friends stopped by.

Often overlooked and forgotten (for obvious reasons to those who heard them), Buddy was lead singer for the (thankfully) ephemeral Buddy Rubbish and the Deertones.

Buddy was an important contributor to the seminal cartoon-and-humor magazine Scat, based in Northampton. He hoped to take Scat to a national audience, but his overtures were rebuffed. He later learned they were never buffed in the

first place.

Though raised a Yankees fan, Buddy quickly turned his back on the Evil Empire, becoming as passionate a Red Sox fan as any Boston Townie. Let it be known that he never let work interfere with his love for the game. He was also an ever-enthusiastic fan of the New England Patriots, describing himself as "numb" after the recent Super Bowl loss.

Buddy was an avid herbalist.

One of Buddy's enduring hopes was that his birthday, January 23, 1952, would become a national holiday, or at least a recognizable occasion, like National Petulance Day. He ultimately conceded that at his death he would be satisfied to have all city buses draped in black bunting.

Although Buddy was a talented improviser, song and comedy writer, and spontaneous wit, his greatest creation was his beloved children: Jackson Louis (8) and Lily Eloise Roscher (6). We would be remiss here to not include his co-producer, Ellen DeBruyn, without whom the production would have been unmanageable.

Buddy's parents and sister predeceased him, as did his famous sketch character Billy the Bat.

In lieu of memorial services, raucous celebrations of Buddy's life will be held on May 18th at the Northampton Unitarian Church and the Northampton Center For The Arts. Consult local listings.

Donations may be made to Buddy's Kids @ PeoplesBank.



Lou Roscher, a.k.a. Buddy Rubbish, is seen here during his last stand-up comedy performance at the benefit "Musicians for the Shea," on Sunday, April 6th in Turners Falls.

Actually, in this photo, he was introducing the Steve Crow Trio, but Lou made every announcement a comedy act.

Wendell Town Elections May 5th

Town of Wendell, Election May 5, 2008. Polling hours 12-8 PM. Voting will take place at town offices, which are wheelchair-accessible.

If any question call 978-544-3395 ext 102 Town clerk office or 978-544-6052 home.

Candidates:

Selectboard 3 yrs
Daniel W. Keller. Candidate for re election

Board of Assessors 3 yrs.

No candidate

Town Clerk 3 yrs
Anna M.C.B. Hartjens. Candidate for re election

Tax Collector 3 yrs
Penny Delorey. Candidate for re election

Treasurer 3 yrs
Caroline U. Manly. Candidate for re election

Board of Health 3 yrs
Martha Senn. Candidate for re election

Planning Board 5 yrs
No Candidate

Planning Board 2 yr to fill a vacancy

James H. Dunn. Nomination Papers, 33 West St

Moderator 1 yr
Kathy Ann Becker. Candidate for re election

Cemetery Commissioner 3 yrs
No Candidate

Road Commissioner 3 yrs
William G. Clough. Candidate for re election

School Committee 3 yrs

Kevin J Skorupa. Candidate for re election

School Committee 2 yrs to fill a vacancy
Raymond J DiDonato

Tree Warden 1 yr.
Daniel E Bacigalupo Sr. Candidate for re election

Library Trustees 3 yrs -Two Positions
Judith N. Putman. Candidate for re election

Sylvia A. Wetherby. Candidate for re election

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A Needed Override

BY PATRICIA PRUITT

TURNERS FALLS - While it is a fact that Montague's budget and school district shortfalls are similar to those faced in many communities across the state, there is no comfort for citizens anywhere in that fact.

It is natural, perhaps, for us to look for persons and search out practices responsible for our woes. In Montague, over the years, many have tended to identify the schools (more precisely, the school budget increases) as responsible for the town's primary financial burden. During budget seasons, feelings on the townside veer to the dramatic, and sometimes make one think of Innocent Nell (the Town) taken advantage of by the mean, voracious Simon

Legree (the Schools) who can only be saved by the Hero (Increased State Aid). This year, however, we are forced into a harsh reality far beyond the simple good vs. bad of the cartoon drama, if only because there is no hero - State Aid - for either the town or the school district.

The town's \$600,000 plus or minus shortfall is matched and exceeded by the \$900,000 shortfall in the amount needed from Montague by our school district. In order to meet the town's shortfall, the finance committee and selectboard have chosen to ask voters to approve a \$250,000 override. Passage of this override is critical for the town to meet the increasing costs of municipal life: which

include health care and other insurance costs, fuel, wage increases, and the unexpected - such as costs in the aftermath of the Strathmore fire.

An override is the least attractive of the options the town has available to it when faced with a lack of funds and increasing costs. We come to it after having identified and applied our other options as follows: We have applied some of our reserves to bring the total shortfall down; Departments have submitted level services budgets, or less where possible; We have decided not to fill positions presently vacant; We have identified those services not required by law as possible cuts. These are the services that serve our quality of life in town:

Library branches, the Senior Center, the Recreation Department. It is no contradiction to support an override while simultaneously knowing that these services are not really what needs cutting.

The fact is the town needs more income to meet rising costs and to provide the services citizens need. When the economy is in a slump and promising to get slumpier, usual sources of income for the town also decrease: sources such as excise tax receipts are down; lottery income is level funded. We even got a little less in state Chapter 90 highway money than we did last year.

We also must work with our union employees and department heads to make

economically sound choices this year regarding health care costs. It is my hope too that the town will implement whatever savings the Franklin Regional Council of Governments utilities study identifies for us, when it is completed. Clearly this level of economic change in our budgets takes clear thinking, careful planning, as well as time.

Montague has so much going for it. As a taxpayer, I believe a positive override vote on May 19th will help keep it that way.

Patricia Pruitt is a member of the Montague Selectboard. The views here are her own, and do not necessarily represent those of any other member of town government.

MONTAGUE POLICE STATION BUILDING REPORT

Green Energy for the New Police Station

BY DEB RADWAY AND PAM HANOLD

MONTAGUE - It's the season for looking at budgets and costs in Montague, an approach that is foremost in the minds of the Public Safety Building Committee as we enter the final stages of the design process for the new police station. We want townspeople to know we are carefully examining both building efficiencies and potential additional funding sources in order to minimize long term maintenance and utility costs, and to lower the amount of money the town will need to borrow for the new

police station. In terms of seeking additional funding, the town has already been awarded \$200,000 from the state Construction of Municipal Police Stations grant program. Our application for a \$700,000 Community Development Block Grant was submitted in February. We expect to hear the result of this application sometime in July. The police and fire chiefs and town emergency management director applied for and expect to receive \$80,000 to cover the cost of a new building generator. Police chief Ray Zukowski has also received

\$11,000 to apply to the cost of equipment for the new facility. Our project manager is researching funding available through the Mass Technology Collaborative and elsewhere to see if we can add photovoltaic panels at cost. The committee will continue to apply for grants for other aspects of the police station building project as funding sources become known to us.

New committee members Jason Burbank and Paul Voiland bring additional professional expertise to our Green subcommittee. They worked out a finely tuned approach to

heating and cooling systems for the new building, which the architect and project manager are now working into the final plans. It is another sign of the quality of our architect and project manager that they are willing to integrate the expertise and knowledge coming out of the committee into their plans. While the design for heating and cooling, as well as for the insulation and geothermal well field, is still in process, we are confident that the steps we are taking to insulate, heat, and cool the building will result in highly efficient installation, maintenance, and operating

costs. The zoning board of appeals approved our plans without conditions on April 2nd. We are on the agenda for planning board approval in May. Our timeline is to be out for bid for construction on May 28th.

Our next meeting will be held on May 1st at 5:30 p.m. at town hall, and all are welcome. We are uploading a link to the project manager's website soon, so that you can see pictures of our progress and read about the project as it takes shape.

Deb Radway and Pam Hanold co-chair the Police Station Building Committee

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NOTES FROM THE MONTAGUE SELCTBOARD

\$250,000 Override Slotted for Town Election Ballot, May 19th

BY DAVID DETMOLD - On Monday, April 14th, the Montague selectboard voted 2-1 in favor of a \$250,000 override to support a "basket" of municipal services...

Selectboard member Patricia Pruitt cast the lone dissenting vote on the "basket of services" approach, although she supported the need for an override to help close part of the \$600,000 gap on the townside of the '09 budget.

Gill-Montague regional schools. Pruitt, who had supported the "basket" approach to an override at the joint meeting of the finance committee and selectboard that hashed out the list of likely cuts on Wednesday, April 2nd, found herself "in a difficult spot," in opposing the same motion ten days later.

"I don't want to insult all the efforts of the finance committee and everyone else who has worked on this, but I can't feel these are real cuts. I think this is the cost of things being offered that will make it easy for people to vote for this override. And the truth is, we need an override, because we do not have enough money in our operating budget. And we've selected these things because maybe they're not required by law, but also because these are the things that make a town a town for people: libraries, and senior centers...

"I would be much happier if we were putting down the things where costs have really gone up dramatically. It's not in the library that costs have gone up dramatically, it's things like energy. Things like the \$1,010,000 health care bill that

we have [for town employees]. We have only been mentioning the \$110,000 increase [for town employees' health care bill] this year, but that's not on the list.

"I think we are fooling people into thinking they'll lose their library, when in fact they need to contribute more to run the town. That's why we're having an override. So, that's why I decided to bite the bullet and vote no."

As the board prepared to vote on a figure of \$7,002,683 for the G-M school assessment (shaving approximately \$650,000 of the amount requested from Montague by the school), selectboard member Allen Ross responded to Pruitt's comments, saying, "I think that I share some of Patricia's concerns. Her concerns are: the town is short of money, and the town needs an override. To describe this as some kind of manipulative move...I think it's a realistic political move."

He continued, "We should be willing to put more into the Gill-Montague assessment from the get-go, and that would involve a larger override, and potentially a larger use of reserves." Montague is already committing \$437,000 from reserves to pay operating expenses for the

town's '09 operating costs, and \$167,000 from reserves to pay for the schools' '09 operating costs in the current budget plan. As the board voted, two in favor, with Pruitt abstaining, for the \$7,002,683 figure for the G-M assessment, chair Pat Allen said, "We kind of backed into this number in order to balance our budget at this time. The schools have not altered their budget request at all, so we don't know what they are about to do. I consider this (number) a placeholder."

Pruitt said, "I don't think it's right for us to actually give the schools less than we gave them last year in district meeting."

Allen said, "It won't be the last we hear on the school budget this year."

DPW chief Tom Bergeron came to the board warning that the free leaf and grass clipping pile at the transfer station would be closed to residents if they did not follow the rules. He said he is finding "plastic barrels, steel barrels, carpeting, three stumps and branches, tires with rims, tarps and all kinds of things that don't compost," in that pile.

Bergeron said he was glad to have his crew out sweeping the streets with the newly refurbished street sweeper,

rather than continuing to plow and sand. He has the street sweeper out "sixteen hours a day, 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. and 7 a.m. to 3 p.m." and after the \$33,000 repair bill to the sweeper, "it's running like a charm."

A number of residents present in the room wanted to know when the sweeper would be making an appearance in their neighborhood. Bergeron said the Taylor Hill Road area would be cleaned soon, in preparation for chip sealing of the road surface. He said the sweeper was hitting "one village at a time."

The board granted Ruth Nervig, Americorps worker at the Brick House Hot Spot Teen Center and member of the newly revitalized Skate Park Advisory Committee, a public gathering permit to hold an outdoor fundraising rock concert at the skate park on Saturday June 7th from noon to 6 p.m., with Klondike Sound donating their services and two hundred people expected to attend, to hear area bands perform.

The board appointed Frank Abbondanzio, Tom Bergeron, Les Cromack, Chris Boutwell, Greg Garrison, and Patricia see MONTAGUE pg 13

MCTV Schedule: April 18th-24th. Eagle Cam: Friday 1P-6P, Saturday 1P-6P, Sunday 1230P-6P, Monday 1P-6P, Tuesday 1230P-6P, Wednesday 11A-6P, Thursday 1P-6P. If We Have a Signal You Will Have a Picture. Friday, April 18: 8:00 am Wisdom Way Solar Village, 9:00 am Select Board 4/14/08, 10:30 am Women Girls & HIV: Services, 11:00 am Coffee House Series: Fall Town String Band, 6:00 pm Over the Falls: Kris Holloway Documentary, 6:30 pm Montague Update: Ted Graveline, 7:00 pm GMRSD (4/8/08), 9:30 pm Chronicles: Mass For Louis A Kozloski, 10:30 pm Eaton: Sue Mono Giri. Saturday, April 19: 8:00 am Over The Falls: Kris Holloway Documentary, 8:30 am Montague Update: Ted Graveline, 9:00 am GMRSD (4/8/08), 11:30 am Chronicles: Mass for Louis A Kozloski, 12:30 pm Eaton Sue Mono Giri, 6:00 pm Franklin County Matters: Domestic Violence, 7:00 pm Independent Voices, 7:30 pm Living in the Shadow of Vermont Yankee, 8:30 pm Preachin the Blues, 9:30 pm Montague Update: Tim Neuman, 10:30 pm Northfield Mountain Geology Story. Sunday, April 20: 8:00 am Franklin County Matters: Domestic Violence, 8:30 am Independent Voices, 9:00 am Living in the Shadow of Vermont Yankee, 10:00 am Preachin the Blues, 11:00 am Montague Update: Tim Neuman, 12:30 am Northfield Mountain Geology Story, 6:00 pm Carlos W. Anderson, 7:00 pm On The Ridge: Fins, Feathers and Furs, 8:00 pm Coffee House Series: Joe Graveline, 9:00 pm Franklin County Matters: Farren Care Center, 10:00 pm Seabrook 1977. Monday, April 21: 8:00 am Carlos W. Anderson, 9:00 am On the Ridge: Fins, Feather and Furs, 9:30 am Coffee House Series: Joe Graveline, 10:30 am Franklin County Matters: Farren Care Center, 11:30 am Seabrook 1977, 6:00 pm Chronicles: Mass for Louis A Kozloski, 7:00 pm Montague Select Board: (4/14/08), 9:00 pm Discovery Center Emu's, 10:00 pm Independent Voices, 10:30 pm Montague Update: Lisa Enzer. Tuesday, April 22: 8:00 am Chronicles: Mass for Louis A Kozloski, 9:00 am Montague Select Board: (4/14/08), 11:00 am Discovery Center Emu's, 12:00 pm Montague Update: Lisa Enzer, 6:00 pm Carlos W. Anderson, 7:00 pm Montague Select Board (Live) GMRSD Meeting will be joined already in progress after conclusion of Select Board Mtg., 10:30 am Eaton: Hachi Go, 11:00 pm Enjoy the Ride. Wednesday, April 23: 8:00 am Carlos W. Anderson, 9:00 am Eaton: Hachi Go, 9:30 am Enjoy the Ride, 6:00 pm Over the Falls: Kris Holloway Documentary, 6:30 pm The Franklin County Democrat: Senator Stan Rosenberg, 7:00 pm Tapping Maple Ridge, 8:00 pm Chronicles: Volume 10, 8:30 pm Common Man: Stephanie Marshall, 9:30 pm Senses of Place. Thursday, April 24: 8:00 am Over the Falls: Kris Holloway Documentary, 8:30 am The Franklin County Democrat: Senator Stan Rosenberg, 9:00 am Tapping Maple Ridge, 10:00 am Chronicles: Volume 10, 10:30 am Common Man: Stephanie Marshall, 11:30 am Senses of Place, 6:00 pm The 4th Annual Gill Montague Gala, 7:00 pm Montague Select Board (4/22/08), 9:00 pm Safe & Green Forum, 10:30 pm Skin N Bonz.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG. Illegal Dumping and Vandalism. Wednesday, 4/9: 12:07 a.m. Report of loud noise disturbance at a Fourth Street address, Turners Falls. Peace restored. 1:29 a.m. Following a motor vehicle stop, [redacted] taken into protective custody. 5:41 a.m. Report of threatening/harassment at Cumberland Farms, Montague City Road, Turners Falls. 8:45 a.m. Possible sex offense investigated, Third Street, Turners Falls. 12:08 p.m. Report of neighbor disturbance at a Seventh Street address, Turners Falls. 1:48 p.m. Possible sex offense investigated at a Millers Falls Road address, village unknown. 5:28 p.m. Report of larceny at a Highland Street address, Millers Falls. 7:15 p.m. Report of disorderly conduct at a Turners Falls Road address, Turners Falls. Thursday, 4/10: 12:29 a.m. Suspicious person in the area of Ed's Barber Shop, Turners Falls. Subject taken into protective custody. 6:43 a.m. Report of larceny of dirt bike from a Kettle Hole Lane address, Montague. 9:06 a.m. Report of accident with personal injury in the area of Park and Unity Streets, Turners Falls. 9:15 a.m. Report of disorderly conduct at Sheffield School Gym. Advised of legal help. 12:30 p.m. Report of loud noise disturbance at a Worcester Avenue address, Turners Falls. Services rendered. 1:22 p.m. Report of motor vehicle disturbance in the area of Turners Falls Road, Montague. Services rendered. 1:54 p.m. Report of disorderly conduct at Alternative Classrooms, Turnpike Road, Turners Falls. Peace restored. 3:56 p.m. Report of pedestrian accident in the area of Eleventh Street, Turners Falls. Subject removed to hospital. Friday, 4/11: 1:17 a.m. Report of loud noise disturbance at a Fourth Street address, Turners Falls. Peace restored. 2:54 a.m. Following a traffic stop, arrested [redacted] Charged with operating motor vehicle under the influence of liquor, second offense, marked lanes violation, failure to wear seat belt and speeding. 8:59 a.m. Officer wanted at a Fourth Street address, Turners Falls. Peace restored. 10:22 a.m. Report of illegal dumping at sand pit, Gunn Road, Montague. 3:08 p.m. Arrested [redacted] on a default warrant. 4:29 a.m. Report of larceny from a K Street address, Turners Falls. Under investigation. 6:21 p.m. Report of drug/narcotics violation at a Fifth Street address, Turners Falls. Under investigation. Saturday, 4/12: 1:04 a.m. Following a motor vehicle stop, arrested [redacted] Charged with speeding, possession of marijuana and unlicensed operation of a motor vehicle. Sunday, 4/13: 12:43 a.m. Report of assault at Rendezvous,

Third Street, Turners Falls. Subject removed to hospital. 2:02 a.m. Following a traffic stop, arrested [redacted] Charged with speeding, operating motor vehicle under the influence of liquor, second offense, and operating to endanger. 2:18 a.m. Domestic disturbance at a jFourth Street address, Turners Falls. Peace restored. 4:26 p.m. Report of assault at a Park Street address, Turners Falls. Advised of options. Monday, 4/14: 10:08 a.m. Report of larceny at a Third Street address, Turners Falls. 10:15 a.m. Report of vandalism at Jarvis Pools, Unity Street, Turners Falls. 10:45 a.m. Report of vandalism at an L Street address, Turners Falls. 12:38 p.m. Report of vandalism at a Prospect Street address, Turners Falls. 2:07 p.m. Report of suspicious automobile on Vladish Avenue, Turners Falls. Vehicle stored/impounded. 6:05 p.m. Report of threatening/harassment at a Farren Avenue address, Turners Falls. 7:43 p.m. Possible fight at a Fifth Street address, Turners Falls. Peace restored. Tuesday, 4/15: 11:50 a.m. Report of larceny at an M Street address, Turners Falls. 2:47 p.m. Report of loud noise disturbance in field behind Kustom Auto Body in the area of Randall Wood Drive, Montague. Peace restored. 6:15 p.m. Report of burglary/breaking & entering at a Main Street address, Montague.

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GILL from pg 1

the department has been relying on for several years beyond their normal working life. The older of the two Ford trucks would cost \$135,000 to replace; the newer one would cost \$120,000 to replace, since the sander on that one is in good shape. The highway department will provide town meeting with an out-of-town expert assessment of the trucks' condition. ("What're ya' nuts? Ya' can't keep drivin' 'em!") and the selectboard is recommending the town borrow the money needed with a five-year loan at a probable interest rate of 4.1%, to finance the purchase.

In other news, state representative Chris Donelan (D-Orange) held office hours at the Gill town hall for an hour before the board meeting on April 14th. Gill sixth grade teacher Joanne Rabideau talked with Donelan about the dire budgetary situation facing the Gill-Montague schools, and Atherton Road resident Ray Purington took Donelan on a tour of the nearby Center Cemetery, facing erosion from a fast-flowing Unadilla Brook this time of year. Donelan said he would see if he could help find any funds in state coffers to help

the town afford to rent equipment, conduct stream flow analyses, and pay for a state biologist's help in monitoring the process of bank stabilization at the rear of the cemetery. The town cemetery commission has applied for the Center Cemetery to be placed on the National Register of Historic Places, a prerequisite to receiving grant funds, and it may take two years to complete that process, town administrative assistant Tracy Rogers said. She said Massachusetts Natural Heritage has been contacted regarding three species of concern in the area of the brook and the cemetery, and wouldn't you know, wood turtles are one of them.

On the topic of state aid for schools, Donelan said the efforts underway between Franklin County school districts, town officials, and local state legislators to determine ways of cooperating on purchasing and possibly merge administrative functions have the most hope for improving the bottom line of local school budgets in the near term. He said the cross-district model being developed in Franklin County is being watched with interest in Boston, and may become a model for the

rest of the state.

"People are very concerned about local control," Donelan said. "'Don't tell us what to do; just get us more money.' I'm sorry folks, there is no more money."

He said he met with Governor Deval Patrick recently, and told him, "The time is coming when the state is going to have to say to school districts with 2000 kids or less, you need to find a neighbor to join with." Donelan said Patrick shrugged and said, "I don't know how we can avoid that."

Donelan said for the here and now, Franklin County school districts should work together with the Franklin Regional Council of Governments to form a joint purchasing office to arrange bulk bids for everything from janitorial supplies to bus contracts. But as Banash reminded him, even if that concept gets put in place right away, "It won't affect this budget year."

"The Chapter 70 (state aid for schools) figure is set in stone already," agreed Donelan, who added he was working with other local legislators to find a way to craft very specific criteria for a so-called "Pothole grant" for school districts that have joined the

state's cost-saving Group Insurance Commission health plan, have less than 30 students per square mile, and have seen an enrollment decline of more than 7%, which if accepted by the

conceptual design and drawings for site development, and an intensive archeological survey by UMass Archaeological Services.

The board of health discussed problems the town has been experiencing with Duseau Trucking, the private waste hauling and recycling firm that has admitted to short changing the town on two thousand dollars worth of recycling tonnage. Duseau will repay that amount to Gill over the course of the next few months. Meanwhile, the town is putting the trash and recycling contract out to bid, and the board of health would like to have the authority to



Half a dozen graves at the Center Cemetery in Gill are in danger of being washed away by erosion from Unadilla Brook, (top left). The Center Cemetery holds the remains of many of the original settlers of Gill, including Susanna Janes (d.1811), Gilbert Stacy, esq. (d. 1813), and Eliphas Chapin (d. 1816). Gill is seeking funds to stabilize the bank.

legislature would bring additional funds to Mohawk, Athol-Royalston, and the GMRSD.

In other news, the selectboard has received word that the Massachusetts Interagency Permitting Board has approved a competitive \$100,000 expedited permitting grant to help the town resolve any hurdles in the way of developing the former Mariamante property, a 12 acre town-owned parcel on the corner of Main Road and West Gill Road. The grant will pay for costs associated with town counsel review of zoning bylaws and permitting procedures,

oversee that contract, as they did in past years. The selectboard happily agreed to that proposal. Health board chair Doug Edson said the board used to require weekly weight logs for pick-ups, and would return to that practice.

Edson said the idea of having a recycling truck pick up cans and bottles one week, and paper the next, as Duseau has proposed, would not work. "People don't remember; there should be one day for pickup," said Edson, who added, "People are stressed out enough with normal life."



Gill Selectboard Office Closed

The Gill Selectboard office will be closed Friday, April 18 through Wednesday, April 23 while the Administrative Assistant is on vacation. All town offices will be closed Monday, April 21 in observance of Patriots Day. Trash pickup will remain on its regular Friday schedule.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE GILL POLICE LOG Possession of Marijuana

Wednesday, 4-9
12:20 p.m. Arrested [redacted] on default warrant, brought to court.
Thursday, 4-10
9 p.m. Assisted Northfield police and state police with executing an arrest warrant.
Friday, 4-11
9:05 p.m. Arrested [redacted] Charged with littering, possession of marijuana and possession of marijuana with intent to distribute.
Saturday, 4-12
4:15 p.m. Disturbance and ATV

complaint on West Gill Road.
Sunday, 4-13
1:10 a.m. Arrested [redacted] Charged with operating a motor vehicle with a suspended license.
10:29 a.m. Report of suspicious subject on Main Road, checked area. Unable to locate.
11:31 a.m. Assisted with medical emergency on Oak Street.
3:33 p.m. Checked on 911 hang up call on West Gill Road.
Monday, 4-14
7:01 a.m. Motor vehicle accident on Gill Montague bridge with injury.

RACE from pg 1

water I saw no one swimming, so we went on.

A swimmer was holding onto his boat, shouting, "This water is &#\$@ing cold!" He repeated that several times until we were out of earshot, and as it worked out, he finished the race behind us, and before getting his boat onto the shore he deliberately fell backwards off the stern, and again informed all bystanders that the water was (indeed very) cold. I took his word for it. He climbed out of the water with a big smile.

It was a beautiful day, not the cold rainy weather that had been predicted but sunny, with pretty clouds, and so warm that the

occasional splash was pleasant refreshment. I did not even have to change to my dry clothes at race's end.

Before the start we saw one boat floating upside down, and another floating on its side, which is just as cold, and we saw one more pair of swimmers near the halfway point, causing us to quickly assess their situation.

Do they need help? Maybe. They are pretty far from shore, but they are swimming vigorously.

Can I reach them and help? Maybe.

Do I want to help? Well... I should if they need it, but...

As we got close I saw that the stern man had reached water that

was shallow enough for him to stand, and the bow man was almost on shore. I thought, "Good luck," and on we went from there. We paddled as hard as we could, which was not that hard judging by the boats that passed us, but not so badly, either, judging by the boats we passed.

In the first mile we had passed Liz and Christie, names lettered large on the side of their boat, because they got caught in a tangle of boats. I thought we would not see them again, but in the last mile they caught us, pulled a boat length ahead and stayed right there until the finish line. It is amazing how far the last ten yards before the finish line stretch.



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AIRPORT from pg 1

engaged in discussions with the Federal Aviation Administration and the National Trust for Historic Preservation about the stone formation at the Turners airport, and until that dispute is resolved, the runway project is on hold, manager Michael Sweeney told the Montague selectboard on September 10th, 2007. The hillside on which the stone formation is located has been logged in preparation for excavation of the site.

On Friday, April 11th, Brown responded to Welch's and Fairbrother's remarks by saying, "The comments are racist and bigoted. It's clear they do not understand the responsibility they have under federal law. For public officials to make these type of comments about any race or people shows a failure to appreciate their role as duly elected or appointed officials. They can be sued, or the state can be sued. Clearly we're going to get in contact with Mr. Welch and

Mr. Fairbrother and have a conversation with them in regard to their statements, which are clearly negative, and which show they are biased against their responsibility when it comes to protecting properties that belong to the Indian tribes."

Since then, Brown has said, Welch and Fairbrother have failed to return phone calls to discuss the incident and the remarks made.

A letter emailed from Turners Falls resident, Chris Sawyer-Laucanno, to Welch and MAC commissioners, demanding an apology, (reprinted at left) resulted in a two word email sent out to all members of the Massachusetts Aeronautic Commission from MAC commissioner Arthur Allen on Tuesday, April 15th at 7:35 p.m., and cc'ed to Laucanno, reading, "Don't reply."

On Wednesday, Brown said he had made a formal complaint about the incident to the Massachusetts Attorney General's office, the Federal

Communications Commission, and Governor Deval Patrick.

When Welch made his remark about "tree hugging Indians" on April 4th, airport commissioner Mark Fairbrother, present in the small room with other Turners Falls airport commissioners and TFMA manager Michael Sweeney replied, "They aren't tree-hugging Indians. They're rock hugging Indians. They already hugged the trees, right onto the logging truck." On Tuesday night, April 15th, he denied making that remark.

"We have a difference of opinion," he told this reporter, who has been acquainted with Fairbrother for a number of years, and was standing directly across the main room at the airport office from him when he made his comments. "I did not make that statement." Asked who in the room did make the statement about "rock hugging Indians," Fairbrother replied, "I've heard a name mentioned, but I'm not going to give it to you," before hanging up.

One other person present at the informal meeting, which took place in a room of less than 1000 square feet, among less than a dozen men, all of whom appeared to be well known to one another as users of the airport, was pilot Chuck Meyer, of Conway. Meyer is a hangar owner at the airport, is among a group of eight or nine candidates seeking appointment to the soon-to-be-expanded airport commission, and is the business owner of Birds Eye Views aerial photography. Meyer was standing on the same side of the room as Fairbrother during the interchange with Welch. Asked Tuesday how he recalled the events of that afternoon, Meyer said it was Fairbrother who made the remark about "rock hugging Indians," as quoted.

Still, on Tuesday night, April 15th, Turners Falls airport commission chair Peter Golrick, who was also present in the small room, but who claimed to be out of the line of sight of whoever was speaking in response to Welch, said the airport commission had met on Monday, April 14th, and spent some time discussing the incident. The commissioners all recalled someone

Public Apology Demanded

To Robert Welch, Executive Director, Massachusetts Aeronautics Commission

Dear Mr. Welch,

I am writing to ask you to issue a public apology for your remarks regarding Native Americans and the possible ancient Native American ceremonial site on land at the Turners Falls airport.

As reported in the *Montague Reporter* of April 10, 2008, your comments in regard to the proposed runway expansion and the claim that the native ceremonial site should not be disturbed, are as follows:

"We're ready to go with construction. The only thing holding it up is those tree-hugging Indians." To which airport commissioner Mark Fairbrother replied, "They're rock-hugging Indians. They already hugged the trees, right onto the lumber trucks."

I found your remarks highly inappropriate and racially insensitive. Your stance also reveals a very prejudicial viewpoint regarding the site. This dismissal of the Native American claim certainly compromises you (and by extension MAC) in any future arbitration regarding both the extension and the claim.

I call upon you to issue immediately a public apology to the Native Americans, and to further withdraw yourself from any future proceedings in the matter of this claim. You may respond to me directly, and I will forward your comments to the editor of the *Montague Reporter*, who has agreed to print your reply. If you prefer, you may send your response directly to reporter@montague-ma.net.

Sincerely,

- Christopher Sawyer-Laucanno
Turners Falls

in the room making the remark about "rock hugging Indians," Golrick said, but none could recall who it was who had made those comments, even though the only people present on April 4th were airport users or commissioners, all of whom had come to the airport office that day specifically to meet with Welch about a disputed access road on the airport perimeter.

Golrick and the commissioners stated in a letter to Brown, dated April 16th, "I can assure you that the comments quoted did not come from anyone associated with the Airport, and that they certainly do not represent the position of the Airport, the Commission, the Airport Manager, or the Town of Montague."

"There may have been one other person in the room I did not know," said Golrick. "I'll check with Mike Sweeney and get back to you." Less than a dozen people were standing in the room at the time, Golrick agreed.

Golrick called MAC executive director Welch's initial remark about "tree hugging Indians" blocking progress on the runway extension project,

"Unfortunate."

On May 19th, 2004, the selectboard of the town of Montague signed a *Document of Cooperation and Peace* with the Narragansetts that stated, in part, "As we exchange gifts, ideas and good will today, we 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 indigenous people of our region and all who have found respite, sanctuary and welcome here."

The Turners Falls airport commission is a commission of the town of Montague.

At the Montague town meeting of June 2nd, 2007, Sweeney, speaking of the dispute over the stone formation on the hill to the east of the runway, which the Narragansetts and the Wampanoag Tribe of Gayhead (Aquinnah) claim is a culturally significant site, said, "Our goal and commitment to our predecessors on the North American continent is to protect (the site) until it is deemed to be otherwise." At

continued next page

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CUCKOO from page 1

call him Chief Broom, for the implement he pushes endlessly around the floor. Bromden punctuates the play with voice-over fantasies of dystopian social programming and mind control, which is not to say warrantless wiretapping. He is Big Nurse's ultimate end product: a titan bound by elastic strands of derision, belittlement, ego destruction, and electro-shock therapy; a 1950s Joey Ramone on steroids who has been rendered all but catatonic by 200 courses of shock treatment.

Bromden is one to watch. Through the course of the play the interaction of the protagonists has its ultimate cathartic effect on him, and to the final scene he embodies in his own visage and bearing the pain of living in suspended animation. Bromden is like a river dammed, nature trampled by industrialization, a wild thing penned, man's primordial instincts forced into society's straightjacket. In the end, only

his triumph can redeem the play's tragedy.

Watching Bromden in the first scene, you get the sense that time on the ward has slowed to a perpetual crawl. A day takes twenty years to push from dawn to dusk. Perhaps it's the medication, which Ratched's mousy assistant, Nurse Flinn, (Sarah Hodge-Wetherbee) doles out like a morning benediction to each patient as he rises.

There is Ruckley, (Tim Gorts), permanently shell-shocked, who represents the chronic side of the ward: patients for whom there is apparently no hope of a cure. Then there are the more hopeful cases: Martini, (Michael Epstein), who hallucinates all day long, often with lascivious overtones; Cheswich, (George Adair), an irritable Uncle Fester; Scanlon, (Rick Mauran), a human time bomb on a short fuse; Billy Bibbit, (Mark Hildreth), a stammering virgin with an ingrown Oedipal complex, and finally there is the president of the patient's council, the



Emily Eaton basks in adulation after taking her final bow, as Dave Peck (l-r), Kevin Tracy, Sharon Weyers, Nick deRuiter, Mark Hildreth, Michael Epstein, Tim Gorts (obscured) and Sarah Hodge-Wetherbee (obscured) look on.

aloof, wounded intellectual, Dale Harding, (Nick deRuiter) nursing an outsized inferiority complex and a fear that other men are making time with his buxom wife while he languishes in self-inflicted psychiatric hell.

The patients lounge around the ward in hospital togs playing cards and ratting out each other's anti-social ramblings to win a few Brownie Points from Ratched, or they strike cruciform poses, defuse imaginary armaments, and carry on animated dialogue with people who aren't there. Just like they did the day before, and the days before that. Nothing changes under Ratched's knowing gaze. Until Randall Patrick McMurphy (Kevin Tracy) shows up.

He's a prime specimen of the red-blooded American male animal. Sent up for aggressive behavior, McMurphy, by his own admission, is someone who just likes to take part in a couple of activities that begin with the letter F. And the second one is fighting. He ain't monogrammed RPM for nothing.

McMurphy sizes up his apathetic ward mates with a gambler's shrewd appraisal, and sets in to fleece them like the sheep they are. But they are so used to being dominated by a castrating female, they seem to rise to his provocations as if the goads he applies were welcome relief from their lot as psychic eunuchs. "Listen, buddy..." he tells Harding, after a group therapy session he compares to a pecking party in a chicken coop (where a chicken with a speck of blood on its feathers gets set upon and pecked to pieces by the rest of the brood, who inevitably get spat-

tered with a little blood themselves, perpetuating the feeding frenzy)... "You don't have to take this shit."

McMurphy will find out how true these words are, but only in Harding's case. Unlike McMurphy's own stay in the loony bin, the result of an involuntary commitment, Harding has put himself in Nurse Ratched's care voluntarily.

Oh, there's a doctor in the house, Dr. Spivey, (Bob Delaney), but he has been reduced to an insignificant specimen by Ratched's constant hectoring. Still, McMurphy's salutary masculinity provides a pick-me-up even for his henpecked spirits, and the doctor soon finds himself mouthing the word 'No' when Big Nurse suggests shock treatment to tame McMurphy's rebellious tendencies.

Still, resistance is futile; she holds all the meds.

A few complaints. The actors have immersed themselves in their roles so thoroughly that their characters, though finely drawn, exhibit one drawback. They tend to get so involved in their private manias that at times they seem to forget they are playing in a larger tragedy, rather than a private comedy.

But then, how can you blame them? They're insane.

And somewhere between the publication of Ken Kesey's shattering novel in 1962 and the Country Players' production of the shortened play at the Shea, a few anachronistic touches have been added - Pink Floyd's ode to *Brain Damage* as an intro to Act II, Harding's offhand reference to Prozac and other modern mood stabilizers - to update what is at

its core a searing indictment of America's social repression mechanism of the 1950s. These are distracting flourishes, better left on the cutting room floor. The Native flute music in the prelude provided an eerier, choice for mood music.

But these quibbles pale in comparison to the overwhelming strength of the portrayals. Hildreth is great as Bibbit, (and his illicit inamorata, Candy Starr, (Emily Eaton), is also outstanding) with his shoulders wrapped around his shrunken chest and torture lining his youthful brow. DeRuiter, as Harding, is the epitome of a wounded soul: his self-knowledge wrestles with self-loathing amid the paralysis of analysis, writ large on his stricken face. His ironic detachment is an eloquent counterpoint to Bromden's catatonia, but their clinical progress is unevenly matched at play's end.

The play's main characters are also its main strength: Tracy gives a headstrong, no-holds-barred performance as McMurphy, not ducking Jack Nicholson's 1975 cinematic portrayal, that etched that character indelibly on the public's consciousness, but subsuming the archetype he cast, sometimes channeling Nicholson, ("I just want to see once and for all which of these birds has any guts!!!") and yet somehow, like a dirty card trick, managing to make the character all his own. How successful he was could be measured in the spontaneous applause that burst out in the crowded auditorium when McMurphy finally busts loose and goes after Ratched: how often do Happy Valley audiences applaud naked acts of male violence against women? But they did so here, loudly and unreservedly.

And what a woman she is. Finally, highest honors go to Weyers for a pitch perfect portrait of Big Nurse. It's not easy to keep up appearances as a sympathetic ward matron, when all the while you are sharpening your scalpel for the next gelding, yet she managed to do it without crimping a single seam in her starched white uniform. Weyers is an impressive actress, and she inhabits the role as if it were tailor made for her, and if she ever comes around here with a shot of Thorazine, I'm going to follow Harding's lead, and swallow it down.

AIRPORT continued

the April 4th meeting, Sweeney offered no response to Welch's remark about "tree hugging Indians" holding up progress, or to Fairbrother's reply.

At press time, neither Sweeney nor Welch had returned phone calls from the *Montague Reporter* seeking further comment on the remarks about Native Americans.

Told of the Turners Falls Airport Commissioners' denial that commissioner Fairbrother had made the comments about "rock hugging Indians," Brown said, "I am not surprised by the behavior of that commission. I do believe the fact that the individuals are not returning calls is a very strong indicator. There's no way to take back that sort of statement. They can circle the wagons all they want. But the way I see it, they've just put their project back 60 years or so, until they are prepared to come clean and deal with people in the modern world. We don't live in the 16th or 17th century anymore."

On December 18th, 2006 at a meeting of the Montague selectboard, Sweeney discussed sev-

eral agreed upon 10,000-year-old Native American archeological sites of cultural significance at the airport, along with the disputed hilltop site. Following that meeting, Doug Harris, the Narragansett's deputy historic preservation officer, called the stone formation "a significant ceremonial stone landscape. The ceremonies that were put in place here were put in place to be part of the living landscape. The medicine is not short-lived medicine. It is there to put things in balance."

Last year, Harris told the selectboard the Narragansett and the Wampanoag Tribe of Gayhead (Aquinnah) do not oppose the runway expansion or the operation of the airport. They believe the runway can be safely extended without destroying what they consider to be an active ceremonial site on the nearby hill, and they are seeking recourse from the FAA and the National Trust for Historic Preservation, under the trust relationship granted federally recognized Indian Tribes under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, and the American Indian Religious Freedoms Act.

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NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD

Ambulance Delay Blamed on Police Chief

BY NICHOLE CLAYTON - Erving chief of police Chris Blair's job performance was called into question at Monday night's, April 14th, selectboard meeting by town resident Vicki Fellows. Fellows claims she called the police chief's number in error when trying to call dispatch for an ambulance for her mother. When she got the police chief, she said, she assumed that being in his position he could get an ambulance sent to her home, and that's what she asked him to do.

Fellows, who owns the Pocket Saver Market on Route 2, where her parents have an apartment, said she waited, along with a home health aide, and her mother, who needed EMT care, for an hour, after

hanging up with Blair, and when no ambulance showed up by then, she called him back to inquire why. She quoted him as saying, "If you need an ambulance for your mother you will need to call 911 or dispatch." She feels the police chief should have let her know that he would not help her to secure on ambulance for her mother in the first place. The delay could have been detrimental to her mother's condition. Fellows said she feels this incident may be due to a personal vendetta or a grudge the police chief may hold against her.

Selectboard member Jeff Dubai, who took it upon himself to contact the police chief when he heard about the incident, said "I spoke with the chief, and he

indicated that he truly thought the initial call to him was to let him know that you had called an ambulance for your mother, but you did not want police back up. He also told me that he would be in touch with you."

Fellows said she had not heard from the chief as yet, but she would be willing to speak with him.

Environmental supervisor Art Pace, who oversees the operations of Erving's three wastewater treatment plants, received his six-month performance review took home a 75 cent an hour pay raise. The board marked his performance at above average - average. Dubai told Pace, "It takes a special person to jump into such an overwhelming position. We appreci-

ate that you were willing to do so, and to look at it as a challenge. I feel we made a great decision in hiring you, and we thank you."

In other news, the Smokin' Hippo restaurant on Route 2, formerly owned and operated by Gary Weiss of Northfield, which went out of business at the turn of the year, will be going up for auction on May 12th, at 11:00 a.m. The site was formerly open under the name of the Star Lite Diner.

The selectboard approved a 34-article warrant for annual town meeting, which will take place on Wednesday, May 7th, at 7 p.m. at the Erving Elementary School. Topping the list are a \$3,386,835 article for general government, police, highway, board of health, parks and recreation, veterans services, and libraries. Insurance for town employees accounts for

a third of this total: \$1,028,378. Also on the warrant are \$2,035,000 to operate the Erving Elementary School, and \$1,023,358 to pay tuition at the TFHS for Erving secondary school students. Erving's assessment to the Franklin County Tech is pegged at \$101,990 in Article 6. Salaries for elected officials will equal \$90,750, if Article 7 is accepted.

Article 13 will appropriate \$414,000 to upgrade the Farley wastewater treatment plant, and Article 14 will appropriate \$480,000 to pay for design and engineering costs associated with the \$6.4 million renovation of the Erving wastewater treatment plant.

Erving will hold annual town elections on Monday, May 5th, at the town hall in Erving Center, with polls open from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Turners Falls Fire District Approves Annual Warrant Unanimously

BY DAVID DETMOLD - Approximately 50 residents of the Turners Falls Fire District showed up for the Annual District Meeting at the Hillcrest Elementary School auditorium on Tuesday night, April 15th. The entire 14 article warrant passed without dissenting vote, including Article 2, raising and appropriating \$1,542,044 from district taxes and \$509,814 from water department revenue to fund the operations of the district, primarily staff salaries.

After the meeting, prudential committee member Joe Janikas said, "I'm amazed that \$2.05 million was approved with nobody raising a concern. It's typical. Ninety percent of those in attendance were town officials, employees or relatives of town employees."

By his own calculations, Janikas estimated that the nine firefighters in the Turners Falls department are receiving an average of \$71,342 a year in salaries, including incentive pay, out of grade pay, holiday pay, sick leave relief, vacation relief, training pay, and the like. This estimate did not include any dollar equivalent for benefits, and

Janikas offered no comparable statistics for the water department, whose employees are engaged in less hazardous or medically imperative work. The district's non-retiree employee health insurance for both the fire department and the water department total \$210,000 for the upcoming fiscal year.

All the special articles passed unanimously, including Article 5, to spend \$12,000 to replace approximately 100 water meters that are approaching or have exceeded their normal life expectancy of 20 to 25 years, according to water department superintendent Mike Brown.

Also approved with the assent of the entire room was a petitioned article to spend \$210,000 to clean and reline with concrete an aging, half-congealed eight inch cast iron water line extending along Route 63 from the trestle bridge to the last service line at 136 Federal Street. Resident Dan Finn said, "I live on Route 63. The water quality there is definitely an issue for my family. The water pressure along Route 63 is such the fire hydrants would be of little use. It stains

anything white yellow or brown," such as his porcelain fixtures.

Water commissioner Ken Morin allowed, "We've been going up there for a lot of maintenance calls, flushing it out. The integrity of the line is good." And he said rather than replacing the entire line, cutting it every 600 feet and reaming out the interior of the pipe, then relining the interior with concrete should make the line as good as new, at less than half the cost are far less disruption of the roadway than laying new pipe.

Voters also approved a \$60,000 geothermal heating and cooling system for the living quarters and business area of the fire station on Turnpike Road. Prudential committee member Mark Allen estimated the new system would pay for itself within 16 years; although he based that estimate on the price of heating oil rising to \$6 a gallon within 10 years, not a pleasant prospect.

A dive team will be brought in the inspect and clean the giant four million gallon water tank, the size of a football field and the shape of a half-size Roman

Coliseum, only with fewer doors and windows, that sits on Wills Hill and supplies water to the district. The five year cleaning (the divers use underwater vacuums) and once over will cost \$5,000.

The pumping station at Lake Pleasant will get a new boiler to replace the 1950 Crane steam boiler ("Very inefficient," said Brown) still in operation there. The pumping station has not pumped water for the department for more twenty years or more, since the state mandated filtration of open reservoirs like Lake Pleasant, and the department switched to wells to supply potable water for the district, but Brown said the department still uses the site as a depot for equipment and vehicles. "The pumps are still there," said Brown. "I hope I never have to put them back on line." In an emergency situation, Brown said, the state would only allow the department to use Lake water briefly before installing a filtration system, a prohibitively expensive option.

Pressed by Dean Letourneau as to why the water department will not open up Green Pond (a

back up to the back up water supply at Lake Pleasant) to swimming for town residents, Brown said the state considers it inactive as a water supply, but still attached to Lake Pleasant.

Meanwhile, a new well at Hannegan Brook moved a step closer to reality with passage of Article 11, appropriating \$75,000 for design, permitting and construction of a pump house and treatment facility for the planned 18-inch well. The well will be located within a quarter mile of Lake Pleasant, in a different aquifer than the wells the department relies on now. The new well is not expected to go online for another five years, and will cost up to an additional million dollars, but Morin said the department would take in a quarter of that amount from the sale of land near the office of the water department to the Hallmark School of Photography.

The district has \$66,790 in stabilization presently, and \$344,357 left in free cash after Tuesday's spending on special articles, which added approximately 51 cents per thousand to district taxes.



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JESSICA HARMON ILLUSTRATION

BY FRED CICETTI

LEONIA, NJ - Q. As an authentic geezer, I've had so many medical tests I think I've seen more acronyms than were around during the New Deal. Recently, a friend of mine suggested I get a TSH test for my thyroid. What, in the name of FDR, is a TSH test?

The thyroid is a small, butterfly-shaped gland located in the middle of the lower neck. It produces hormones that control metabolism, which are the chem-

ical processes cells in the body perform to keep us alive.

It should come as no surprise that the thyroid gland often peters out as we get older. The thyroid stimulating hormone (TSH) test checks to see if your thyroid is producing the right amount of hormone for your system. If the gland is making too much hormone, you get hyperthyroidism; if it makes too little, you get hypothyroidism.

Hypothyroidism is very common in people over 60 years of age; the incidence of it steadily increases with age. About 25 percent of people in nursing homes may have undiagnosed hypothyroidism because the symptoms of this condition can be misinterpreted as signs of aging.

The Thyroid Foundation of

America recommends that people over 50 years old get a TSH test at least once every five years, and more often if there are symptoms. When thyroid disease is caught early, treatment can control the disorder even before the onset of symptoms

The symptoms of hypothyroidism include: fatigue, intolerance to cold, constipation, forgetfulness, muscle cramps, hair loss, depression, weight gain, dry skin, hoarseness and mood swings.

The symptoms of hyperthyroidism include: weight loss (not always in seniors), heat intolerance, hyperactivity, muscle weakness, palpitations, tremors, nervousness, irritability, insomnia, enlarged thyroid gland, frequent bowel movements, vision

problems or eye irritation.

About 27 million Americans of all ages have overactive or underactive thyroid glands but more than half the conditions are undiagnosed. More than 80 percent of people with thyroid disease are women.

Thyroid diseases are life-long, but treatable conditions. However, if untreated, thyroid disease can cause elevated cholesterol levels and subsequent heart disease, infertility, muscle weakness, osteoporosis and, in extreme cases, coma or death.

Treatment to balance your hormone levels is simple and not very expensive.

Hypothyroidism is treated with a drug called levothyroxine. This is a synthetic hormone tablet that replaces missing thy-

roid hormone in the body. With careful monitoring, your doctor will adjust your dosage accordingly, and you'll soon be able to return to your normal lifestyle.

Hyperthyroidism, generally more difficult to treat, requires the normalization of thyroid hormone production. Treatment could involve drug therapy to block hormone production, radioactive iodine treatment that disables the thyroid, or even thyroid surgery.

The most popular treatment for hyperthyroidism is radioactive iodine. This therapy often causes hypothyroidism, requiring levothyroxine to bring the system back to normal.

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

MONTAGUE from pg 8

Pruitt to the reformed landfill advisory committee, with Franklin County Solid Waste Management District director Jan Ameen to serve as a non-voting member.

Town administrator Frank Abbondanzio said the committee would be given the added charge of examining other possible uses of the permitted landfill site, including "energy related uses of the land that might be feasible now." The board invited other citizens to inquire about joining the committee.

Outlining possible approaches that might differ for the town's 2004 attempt to find a developer qualified to lease the landfill for burial of incinerator ash or contaminated soils, Abbondanzio said a condition to make the

developer responsible for capping the nearby (former) burn dump could be taken out as a condition of the request for proposals, in exchange for a higher rate of annual revenues from the landfill's operation accruing to the town, which would then be responsible for capping the burn dump. The town had sought annual revenues on the order of \$500,000 a year for 20 years from a landfill developer in the last RFP, which turned up only one qualified bidder, whose proposal was ultimately rejected by the landfill committee in 2005 as inadequate.

The board is also seeking citizens to volunteer for a proposed town of Montague Green Energy committee: call 863-3200, extension 110 if interested.

Fifty residents of the Patch signed a petition demanding that

the selectboard take action to reopen Power Street, which has been blocked off for nearly two years by the partial collapse of the former Railroad Salvage building. Building inspector David Jensen said he is taking the building's owner, Gary Kosuda, a Florida resident, back to land court on May 5th, to try to force a resolution of the problem.

Petitioned Articles

The board voted to approve a 24 article warrant for the upcoming annual town meeting on Saturday, May 3rd, at 8:30 a.m. After a few house keeping bills, including an article to raise an additional \$21,043 for '08 snow and ice removal, at a special town meeting, the annual will get underway with a non-binding resolution placed on the warrant by petition of town meeting

members from every precinct in town calling for the rejection of the proposed 20-year extension of the operating license of the 36-year-old Vermont Yankee nuclear plant in Vernon, VT.

Another petitioned article, brought forward by Turners Falls Municipal Airport commissioner Mark Fairbrother, calls for enacting a bylaw to stipulate that only Montague residents can serve as voting members of town boards and commissions.

A pre-town meeting will be held at the second floor meeting room at town hall on Wednesday, April 30th at 7 p.m. to go over details of the warrant.

The board said two articles relating to increasing the salary of the chief of police had been removed from the town meeting warrant, at Chief Ray Zukowski's request.

Good Neighbors Food Drive Donations Will Be Matched Dollar for Dollar

By Jonathon von Ranson Wendell - Can you help a local food pantry by contributing to a matching-funds Food-a-Thon?

Until the end of April, donations of either food or money to Wendell Good Neighbors will be matched dollar for dollar (and a dollar per item) by the Feinstein Foundation of Cranston, RI. This foundation is dedicated to stopping hunger by helping food pantries in our area.

Good Neighbors currently serves 30 to 50 families each week in the Wendell and New Salem, and numbers are increasing.

Food items and checks to Wendell Good Neighbors may be dropped off at Wendell Country Store, Wendell Free Library, or Wendell Post Office for the Food-a-thon, or sent to Good Neighbors, PO Box 222, Wendell MA 01379.

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JEP'S PLACE Part LXXIV

D.O. Paul's Store

BY JOSEPH A. PARZYCH GILL - With my new bike, I could now join the guys hanging out around D.O. Paul's general store in the center of town. Mr. Paul's first name was Dorilla, but everyone called him D.O. Kids sometimes called him Dorilla the Gorilla, though not to his face. He was anything but a gorilla, slight of build, weighing about 125 pounds with his overcoat on, and not much over 5 feet tall. He had a mild manner, except when it came to politics. Herbert

Hoover was his man; Roosevelt, he hated with a passion. But kids he tolerated, and maybe even liked, though it was hard to tell. D.O. stocked canned goods, ice cream and soda, and other convenience store items. Best of all he had penny candy: a whole row of clear glass jars filled with candy. The decorative square jars had ground glass covers that fit snugly. But they couldn't contain that wonderful aroma of the penny candy they held. When a kid came in with a few pennies to buy candy, the transaction would take forever. "How much are the root beer

barrels?"
 "Two for a penny."
 "How much for the green Gummy Leaves?"
 "Six for a penny."
 The buyer would ask the prices of one candy after the other - chocolate babies, Maryjanes, licorice, orange sections, butterscotch drops, bubble gum and Red Hots - then ask him to repeat the prices, over and over.
 D.O. would stand peering through his owl glasses with infinite patience, repeating the prices until the pennies clutched in the sweaty little paw would finally be exchanged for the little brown bag filled with delicious

treasures.
 D.O. lost an eye somehow - no one ever wanted to ask - and it was sometimes disconcerting to have one eye fixed on you while the other one wandered about a bit. I could never figure out which eye was real and which was glass.
 Each summer D.O. closed the store for a month and took to the road in his Buick to tour the country. He ceased his cross-country trips when his eyesight failed to the point that he could not read the numbers on pumps when dispensing gasoline. He continued to terrorize local motorists on his occasional forays into town. He had once

chauffeured a limousine in Washington, D.C. and liked to reminisce about the time he drove the ambassador of China to Kitty Hawk, to witness Wilbur and Orville Wright's first engine powered flight. I listened to his stories in rapture.
 Kids were his soft spot. He never once scolded a kid for running a bike over the hose that lay across the approach to the gas pumps. It sounded a bell inside the store, annoying his wife, Edna, no end. He'd gaze out the window and tune out her sputtering.

- Continued Next Week



ILLUSTRATION BY ANJA SCHUTZ

THIS WILD PLACE

Spring Firsts

BY KARL MEYER GREENFIELD - These last weeks have been full of firsts. Spring is like that. It seemed that winter finally released its wet, raw clasp a week back. It's still difficult to trust. But there are the vultures, by the bushel. I never knew that Greenfield was such a terrific vulture town. I thought it was just so-so. It's great. You can't look up - mid-morning, noon, late day - and not see a turkey vulture gliding or rocking back and forth on the wing. They've pulled the new season along with them. We need a vulture fest.
 You can actually see vulture courtship these days if you watch closely. Birds in twos and threes whirl along in close follow - flight on the air currents. It's also

evident in the picked up tempo of these gregarious scavengers, who normally seem to have all the time in the world. They are, after all, just waiting.
 Turkey vultures are understated, including their nests. These can be just a stone or two and some leaves in a depression on the ground; a hollowing in a log, or the hard surface of a ledge or cave. Nothing more is added to make it pretty. That's how they get it done. Given the lack of housekeeping, turkey vulture nests are notorious for remaining hidden from prying humans.
 Still, I saw my first vulture this year on January 18th, hardly a spring sighting. But I had a couple of real firsts recently, and two were decidedly more vocal

than vultures. The first was unfeathered, and heard from afar. On a rocky ledge, during a mid-afternoon rest, a high-pitched, repeated call kept seeping into my consciousness. At first it was just background, against a slightly warming, windy afternoon, the sweet, high notes of tufted titmice peppered the air. Below the ridge, snow and icy trails still held bits of the landscape. That shrill call kept creeping in from the background.
 In between bites of conversation it finally broke through - that harshly sweet, repetitive note. Not a bird at all, this. It was the distant, high, "peep, peep" of an amphibian, a spring peeper, my first of the year. It seemed that just a couple of peepers had unstuck their near-frozen selves from the leaf litter in early spring rains and hopped along on suction-cupped feet to climb a low shrub and offer those first, quavering screams. These were the vanguard of peepers aplenty that would soon make this landscape vibrate to life in one of the season's best choruses in coming days.
 There's always that novelty and wonder at the first spring peeper. This one-inch, gold-brown frog, with amazing pipes, will soon be singing from slow waters, wetlands, and vernal

pools across the region - right through some warm, wet days. With them in the vernal pools - those temporary spring ponds - will be their perennial neighbors, the wood frogs, quacking away after emerging from their near-frozen winter states. Their syncopated harmonies with the peeper are spring's own music. The two are not closely related however. Wood frogs are members of the 'true frog' family, related to the bullfrogs and pickerel frogs, while peepers are tree frogs - climbers, in closer genetic company with their gray tree frog cousins.
 On the return from this walk came a real bird call, the eastern phoebe - another first. Again, some distant recognition took hold in my consciousness - reminding me of the new season. I heard that phoebe long before we were near it. I kept squinting ahead, but it was farther on, then farther still. Finally, lit up like a candle in a cool afternoon breeze, that bird sat teed-up in sunlight atop a tall maple. It quickly flitted off after an early moth, and disappeared. In three weeks its cupped nest, under an awning or sheltered by a bridge, could be concealing four to five eggs.
 Two days later, on a walk after work along an open plain near the Greenfield transfer station, another first caught my eye. It was a lightish-breasted raptor, angling along, low, over grassy fields. The slow flight and the tilting, quartering behavior helped identify it as a northern harrier - a marsh hawk. It was on

a spring hunt for mice and birds as it ferried to northern nesting grounds. Once far more common, these field-loving raptors are now rare in the state. They do not nest locally. So, it's a rare treat to see one. Their flight is unmistakable. It matched the last marsh hawk I'd spotted heading south along the Deerfield meadows, five months ago. It reconnected the seasons.
 Cooling thought: If you've always just thought about it, now is a great time to put in a compost bin. It keeps waste from being hauled to the dump, or incinerated, and produces great, free, fertilizing, non-petroleum based soil nutrients. You can reach Karl Meyer at: karlmeyerwriting.com.

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FRIDAY, APRIL 18th
At the Rendezvous, Turners Falls: DJs XML/TBA/Jazzy B present Crescendo, \$2 cover.

At the Montague Book Mill, Montague Center: *Oweihops with Leftheaded* 8:30 p.m., \$5.

Rt. 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: *Bang Box*, 80's rock & roll covers, 9:30 p.m.

Montague Senior Health Fair at the Great Falls, Discovery Center. Free! Blood pressure and blood sugar checks, and cholesterol screenings. Learn about food label reading and much more. All are welcome. Accessible facilities. At the Great Falls Discovery Center, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Josh Levangie* - Josh pays tribute to the late Johnny Cash with his amazing Cash like voice, 9 - 11 p.m.

FRIDAY & SATURDAY, APRIL 18th & 19th
Pothole Pictures: Alfred Hitchcock's earliest "Hollywood" movie, the essential 1943 film noir *Shadow of a Doubt*. Based on the real-life story of the 1920s "Merry Widow" killer, and is not only one of the most suspenseful noir films of all time, but also a subtle display of the sleazy underbelly of small-town American life. PG. 7:30 p.m. music before the movie.

At The Shea Theatre, Turners Falls: The Country Players present *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest*. 8 p.m. Call the Shea to reserve tickets

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Jane Halliday, John Thornberry & Ben Andrews of SWING '39 perform at the Montague Bookmill, Wednesday, April 23rd, at 8:30 p.m. The first stop on their 2008 New England Tour.

863-2281 www.countryplayers.org check it out! 9:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, APRIL 19th
Hike Royalston Falls with Dan Bolton (Athol Bird and Nature Club) for this moderate scenic hike of about 6 miles. Beautiful 40 foot waterfall and a natural rock bridge formation. Dress appropriately, bring water and a lunch. Meet at Tully Dam on Route 32 in Royalston, 9:30 a.m. Info. Dan (978) 249-2162.

Green Fair 2008: showcasing environmentally friendly services and products. Spotlight on Green Careers and Education. The fair is held at the Franklin County Fairgrounds, 10 to 5 p.m. Free admission.

At the Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Ecosystem in the City*, noon. Discuss and share your experiences on ways urbanization harms habitats and also ways in which urbanization can improve habitat for wildlife & which species thrive in your urban environment.

Village Co-op Fundraiser, 1 to 3 p.m. Dr. Robin Spitko and Glenn Morin of New England Fruit Consultants, Montague, present an informational session on organic/low spray insect and disease management for the home orchardist. Hear how to get the most out of your home fruit tress and help the Co-op painting fund! Location: Village Co-op, Rattlesnake Gutter Road, Leverett.

Wendell Full Moon Coffee House, Wendell: *Motoko & Eshu* tell stories from Asia and Africa. \$6 - \$12 Info (978) 544- 5557 or www.wendellfullmoon.org. Partial proceeds to benefit the Swift River School. Abundant dessert-o-rama, savory

snacks and beverages available. Open Mike at 7:30, feature 8 p.m.

At the Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *UNIT 7*, funk, soul, r & b, rock, \$5 .

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Karaoke Night* - TNT Productions will keep us all singing and dancing all night. Try out your vocal skills and have a great time as well, 9 - 11 p.m.

Rt. 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: *TBA*, 9:30 p.m.

SUNDAY, APRIL 20th
Scandinavian Dance, Montague Grange, Montague Center, 3 to 6 p.m. Hambo, Schottis, Polska, Waltz and more! Dancers with all levels of experience welcome, no partner necessary.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23rd
At The Montague Book Mill, Montague Center: *Swing '39*, a jazz trio composed of bass, violin and guitar, SWING '39 evokes the spirit of swing as it is epitomized in the music of gypsy guitarist Django Reinhardt and violinist Stephane Grapelli, 8:30 p.m., \$5.

THURSDAY, APRIL 24th
Open Women's Singing Circle: sharing songs/chants of healing, inspiration, and women's empowerment. 7 to 9 p.m. at the Second Congregational Church, Greenfield. Ongoing each Thursday, contact: Joy Kaubin (413) 367-0114 stillwaters3@verizon.net

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Larry Kopp* - Country and City Blues guitar with vocals, 8 - 10 p.m.

At the Montague Book Mill: *Equinox Open Mic* 7 to -9 p.m., free. Bring your poems, prose, proems, a libretto, some musical riffs, watercolors or any creation light enough to be carried .Sign-up starts at 6:30.

FRIDAY, APRIL 25th
At the Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Dance or Die*, electro etc. dance dance dj dance, \$3 cover.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Wildwood Unplugged* - Indie Folk, 9 - 11 p.m.

FRIDAY & SATURDAY, APRIL 25th & 26th

At the Shea Theater, Turners Falls: Arena Civic Theater presents *The Music Lesson* by Tammy Ryan, directed by Robert Freedman. Family drama exploring the relationship between a refugee couple from Bosnia who are music teachers and their American children students. 7 p.m Tickets by phone (413) 863-2281, at The World Eye Book Shop and at the door.

SATURDAY, APRIL 26th
At the Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Wood Green Empire*, gypsy jazz, \$3 cover.

Hallmark Museum of Contemporary Photography Open Reception for Stella Johnson's exhibit "AL SOL", Photographer Searches for Universal Experience. Gently revealing black and white images from rural Mexico, Nicaragua and Africa. Live music and hors d'oeuvres held at Gallery 85 from 1 - 5 p.m. Illustrated Artist's Talk by Johnson held at 7:30 p.m. in the auditorium at the Hallmark Institute of Photography, 27 Industrial Boulevard, Turners Falls.

4th Annual Gill-Montague Education Fund Gala: *The Essence of Country*. featuring Don Campbell and his band. Fund raiser for educational enrichment opportunities in the Gill-Montague district. At Turners Falls High School, 7 p.m.. Tickets: Scotty's Convenience Store, World Eye Book Shop, Bear Country 95.3 and WHAI or call Sandy at TFHS 863-721 or www.thegmef.org.

Great Falls Discovery Center: *Skin-n-Bonz*, Junkyard Brass Band! Reduce, Reuse and Recycle. This program is oriented towards early childhood music enrichment. Make your own instruments and jam with the band. www.greatfalls-ma.org

SUNDAY, APRIL 27th
At the Rendezvous, Turners Falls: The Voo and the Valley Advocate present *Le CABARET de RENDEE VOO*, 8 p.m. No cover. Call to perform!

ONGOING
Hallmark Museum of Contemporary Photography, Turners Falls. On display: Lili Almog, *Studio 52 - Perfect Intimacy Revealed Through Photographer's Eyes* & Linda Butler - *Meditations on Simplicity*, Studio 56.

HOT SPOT TEEN CENTER
MONDAY 4/21 - Skate park clean-up 12-3; TUES 4/22 - EARTH DAY! Gardening 2-5; WED 4/23 - Graphic Novel exhibit in Stockbridge 11-5; THURS 4/24 - Smith College gardens and art museum 12-5; FRI 4/25 - Open Mic 7-9
Free (except some trips), open to local teens. Some require permission slips.
Info: Jared at 863-9559.
Hot Spot Teen Center is in The Brick House
24 Third Street, Turners Falls, 01376

UNTIL MAY 31st
On display at the Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Wild about Nature*: WGBY Photo Contest, photographs of the nature in Western Mass.

Memorial Hall Theater
POTHOLE PICTURES
Friday & Saturday
April 18 & 19 at 7:30 p.m.
SHADOW OF A DOUBT
Alfred Hitchcock's earliest "Hollywood" movie, the essential 1943 film noir. Based on the real-life story of the 1920s "Merry Widow" killer, and is not only one of the most suspenseful noir films of all time, but also a subtle display of the sleazy underbelly of small-town American life. PG.
Music before movie 7 p.m.
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2. FORBIDDEN KINGDOM
DAILY 6:30 9:00 PG in dts sound
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3. NIM'S ISLAND PG
DAILY 6:30 9:00
MAT FRI, SAT, SUN 12:00 3:00
4. LEATHERHEADS
DAILY 6:45 9:15 PG13
MAT FRI, SAT, SUN 12:15 3:15
5. STREET KINGS R
DAILY 6:45 9:15
MAT FRI, SAT, SUN 12:15 3:15
6. PROM NIGHT in dts sound
DAILY 7:00 9:30 PG13
MAT FRI, SAT, SUN 12:30 3:30
7. FORGETTING SARAH MARSHALL
DAILY 7:00 9:30 MAT FRI, SAT, SUN 12:30 3:30 R in dts sound

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Sat. 4/19 9:30 PM \$5
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Montague Elementary Earth Day Parade

BY DAVID DETMOLD

GREAT FALLS - As Sheffield principal Chip Wood told the bowl full of cheering students from all three Montague elementary schools who had marched together to the sculpted green lawn of the Great Falls Discovery Center to celebrate Earth Day, one week early, on Monday, "It's a Great Day for a Parade!" The kids cheered long and loudly. Smokey the Bear danced in a corner of the lawn as the high school band played one last tune. The DPW recycling truck geared up for regular duty and returned to base, following the fire truck back up Avenue A. In the distance, the spray of water from melting snow in distant fields by the Canadian border lifted above the falls in the morning light, and spring flowers added their palette of living color to a street scene that had seemed white-washed in various shades of gray for months on end. It was truly a great day for a parade!

Wood told the children that their state representative, Steve Kulik, who was usually busy voting for them in Boston, was with them that day. Indeed, he had marched in the front of the parade, and now it was his turn to cheer the kids, calling their celebration "a great gathering of all the school communities

of Montague, getting together to celebrate our Earth and our planet.

"Every single person can do a lot to improve our environment," Kulik told them, "By recycling at home, by saving electricity, turning off lights, and turning off the TV when you're not using it." As the youngsters waved signs and held banners boosting ecology and green energy, Kulik continued, "When you save electricity, you reduce the amount of carbon that goes up into the atmosphere. That has a big impact on global warming and climate change." This was difficult, but the children seemed thrilled to be out on the lawn in short sleeves for the first time

make a big impact: in your homes, in your schools, and if every community did that it would make a better planet." He concluded, "Carry that commitment with you, every day, to make a healthier future for all of us!"

Gill-Montague school committee chair Mary Kociela told the school children, "We are so blessed to have these natural wonders around us, the river, the farmland, the eagles' nest." She told the youngsters, "as a school community, there's so much we can do" to protect the ecology of our land.



PHOTOS BY DAVID DETMOLD

since October, so they were patient with the speaker.

Kulik, in turn, made the most of the generational moment, saying, "When I think about all the things we've done to harm our planet, I look at you folks and I think, 'You're the future, and you can

"You're doing a great job!"

Superintendent Ken Rocke said, "I'm proud to see how everyone walked together. We're so lucky. We live in a beautiful place. Look around you at the trees and the hills. Hear the river. In the city, you wouldn't see all of this. It's

natural when we live here to feel a huge respect for the Earth and for each other."

After parading with the children in his florescent yellow River-mobile, WRSI disc jockey and morning show host Monte del Monte, a resident of the Patch, got the young crowd riled up again by shouting, "Music is Great!" Huge cheers. "And another thing my radio station stands for is a commitment to our world and our environment," Monte crowed. "Seeing all you kids out here is really heartening, for old folks like me who messed things up for you in the first place!" The cheers

a little less deafening, but Monte knew his audience.

"It's seems overwhelming. There's so much to do..." He told them a story, in its very simplicity, that brought the meaning of Earth Day home to each listening child in a very specific, heartfelt way.

He told a children's fairy tale about 1000 starfish stranded on a beach, and one little girl who picked up one of the starfish and tossed it back into the sea.

"Why did you do that?" her friend asked. "What possible difference could it make?"

"It made a difference to that one little starfish," the girl replied.

At that, Monte returned to the theme of adults throwing up their hands at the global mess they've created and turning to elementary students to save the day. (Hey, it's useless waiting for Congress to do anything.) He gave the school kids three seconds to consider the state of the Earth and to determine one thing they would each do today to make it better, and then counted to three and had them all yell that thing they would do out loud, all at the same time. They yelled. The word "Recycle!" echoed loudest, all the way across to town hall, where budget deliberations - including how on Earth Montague can continue to afford curbside recycling - have been proceeding.

Monte concluded his speech, and brought the celebration to a close, saying, "Hold each other accountable and things will start to get better, when you are old like us. Keep up the good work!" The kindergartners held their banner high, the sunshine poured down, and the river rolled on, as ever.



Celebrate Your Civil Liberty on Patriots' Day

BY FRAN HEMOND

MONTAGUE CENTER - This year, Patriots' Day falls on the 21st of April. It is a state holiday in Massachusetts and Maine, and celebrates the Minutemen's stand against the British march through Lexington to seize military stores that the colonists had gathered at Concord. The same New Englanders who had marched with Lord Jeffrey Amherst to secure Ticonderoga from the French and keep North America part of Britain's empire now led the coming rebellion.

The freedoms that led them to risk their lives against their mother country's King George are

assured to us in the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. We have assumed freedom of speech and security of home, but the colonists had to fight for them.

The *New York Times World Almanac* has the complete text of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, and the nonviolent attempts of the colonists to alert the English government to the infringements of their rights, in historical context. It is a great review for us who through the years have forgotten the causes of the revolution.

One fine history teacher of many years ago made certain that everyone in her class was well

familiar with our Bill of Rights. Goof off in her class and you spent time after school copying in long hand these first ten amendments to the Constitution. The subtle irony did not escape her captive learners, as she taught with realism that our founding fathers gave thinking voters a means of protecting themselves. Freedom escapes easily.

Every year, Lexington Green is the site of the reenactment of the confrontation. It is early in the morning that the Minutemen line up to impede the march of the British. Major Pitcairn is leading a force of Englishmen who would probably rather be back home

than in chilly Massachusetts. Someone fired the "shot that was heard round the world," and in the ensuing exchange the Minutemen lost eight men before they dispersed to harass the invaders from "behind each fence and farmyard wall," as Longfellow remembered in "The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere." The British suffered 273 casualties before they returned to Boston.

The Revolutionary War which it triggered resulted in determined men from 13 different colonies and interests developing a constitution and bill of rights which give thinking people a peaceful means of preserving our freedom.

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