



## HOPE SPRINGS ETERNAL

At Fenway Park

see page 4



## EARTH DAY

At Sheffield Elementary

see page 16

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

Year 4  
No. 26

50¢

# The Montague Reporter

REPORTER@MONTAGUEMA.NET

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

APRIL 6, 2006

## Gill Noise Bylaw to be Debated

BY DAVID DETMOLD

The selectboard revisited the idea of enacting a noise bylaw on Monday, April 3rd. The issue has been raised due to numerous complaints from residents of a West Gill Road neighborhood, who have called town hall and police for more than a year to complain about repeated incidents of noise from "souped-up" ATVs being ridden "all day long" on nearby property. The noise complaints center on the use of recreational vehicles on private property, but the complainants say the people riding the ATVs are disrespecting their right to the peaceful enjoyment of their own homes. They say the ATVs in question have been altered by eliminating mufflers, and are plainly audible from a distance, according to town officials.

Two weeks ago, the selectboard provided police chief David Hastings with a copy of noise ordinances from nearby towns, and asked him to review them and

choose one that might be suitable for Gill. On April 3rd, Hastings returned his pick: two bylaws passed in Northfield to address noise and excessive noise.

Board chair Phil Maddern said, "I don't think this is something you should have to pass a law on. It should be common courtesy."

But Anne Banash replied, "Right now it is 'in your face.' This at least gives them something to lean on, with a fine attached to it."

The noise bylaw would prohibit anyone from "sounding a horn, blowing a whistle, or by undue or extreme acceleration of a motor vehicle, including a snowmobile, or by skidding or spinning the wheels of such a vehicle on the pavement or road surface, or by other means, [to] make or cause to be made any harsh or unnecessary noise or disturbance."

The excessive noise bylaw, which would carry a \$200 fine for

see GILL pg 10



BY PATRICK RENNICK & DAVID DETMOLD

TURNERS FALLS - The town of Montague came together last night in a way not often seen, as three dozen teenagers sat

down with members of the selectboard, police department, parks and recreation commissioners, interested parents and residents of downtown to work out a plan to reopen

the skate park. Jon Dobosz, director of parks and recreation, started the meeting with a reality check, detailing the condition of the ramps, with splintered boards and

**\$6,650 Raised for Skate Park Repairs**

see SKATE pg 12

## High School Students Organize Teen Conference

BY DAVID DETMOLD

TURNERS FALLS - Students from Greenfield and Turners Falls high schools have been meeting since October to plan an all-day youth conference that will take place Tuesday, April 11th at the Great Falls Middle School. The conference, called "Youth Take Action to Make a Difference," is the fifth annual youth conference planned with the support of the Community Coalition for Teens, a program of the Franklin Regional Council of Governments. Some of

the students collating packets of conference materials earlier this week are becoming seasoned pros at conference planning.

Greenfield junior Adriana Lara has been presenting workshops for three years running, and Kristy Symington, a senior at GHS, has been part of the planning process for the annual conference for the same period. This year, Lara has teamed up with TFHS sophomore Marilyn Lorenzo to plan one of the workshops, called Fighting Racism.

Lara explained, "A lot of people don't want to hear about racism. Parents are closed minded about it. We hope to break through the barriers and reach the kids." She and Lorenzo will have a big crowd to work with. Out of the 260 young people from area high schools and 80 adults (mostly teachers) who have registered for the conference, 32 have signed up for their workshop.

They had quite a menu of activities to choose from. Workshop topics

see TEENS pg 14

## Home Sweet Home in Turners

BY LAENA SANTOS

TURNERS FALLS - Local residents are invited to the first meeting of the fundraising committee that will work to offset funds needed to build the Habitat for Humanity homes soon to be under construction at the corner of 2nd and L Street. The meeting will be held at 7 p.m. at St. Andrews Episcopal Church, 2 Prospect Street, in Turners Falls on April 11th.

Last Tuesday, March



Connie Forcier and her children -- Megan, age 16; Summer, 10; Akeeva, 8; and Elijah, 3 -- will live at 55 L Street once the Habitat house is completed.

28th, marked the "Hallelujah moment" for the L Street Habitat project. The non-profit organization has built about 20 homes for qualified low and moderate income families. The project is set to be completed in the next few weeks. see HOME pg 9

## PET OF THE WEEK Lost Your...



### Mittens?

Mittens is a three-and-a-half year old female calico cat in need of a good home. Mittens loves to be petted and will surely share a couch with you. She is also very fond of batting around tin foil balls! She has lived with dogs before. For more information on adopting Mittens please contact the Dakin Animal Shelter in Leverett at 548-9898 or email at [info@dakinshelter.org](mailto:info@dakinshelter.org).

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## Friends Table at Arts Walk

BY KATHY LITCHFIELD

**TURNERS FALLS** - The Friends of the *Montague Reporter* will sell t-shirts, solicit subscriptions and talk up our lively weekly newspaper during the next arts walk in Turners Falls, on Saturday, May 20th. The Friends, an essential group of volunteers working to fundraise and reach out to readers in the newspaper's coverage area, met Monday, April 3rd in the newspaper offices at 24 3rd Street in Turners Falls to share ideas, plan for upcoming events and brainstorm ways to boost subscriptions.

New Friends are always needed. Put your energy into a fun project by volunteering for the *Montague Reporter* and help raise much-needed funds to keep your community newspaper growing! We're looking for a Friends group coordinator to notify volunteers of upcoming meetings and to coordinate staffing for Friends events. The Friends meet six times a year and host events in Spring, Summer and Fall.

One such event is a subscription drive to be held Monday, April 17th at 6:30 p.m. at 24 3rd Street, second floor. Refreshments including pizza will be provided.

Upcoming fundraisers and outreach efforts for which volunteers are needed include: bake sales, tabling at the Turners art walks, the Gill Picnic, and Montague and Wendell Old Home Days this summer. Poetry readings, bake sales outside Food City and a benefit dance have been held previously, and helped to keep your non-profit community newspaper from dipping too far into red ink.

What ideas do you have, and what skills would you like to share? Call 863-8666 for more information about how you can get involved and support the publication of local news. The next Friends meeting will be held Monday, May 8th at 7 p.m. at 24 Third Street, second floor. Come on over and meet some friends. We hope to see you there.

### CARNEGIE LIBRARY NEWS

## Welcoming Spring



PHOTO BY LINDA HICKMAN

**TURNERS FALLS** Danny Charest of Turners Falls and the other children from the Kids Place After School program enjoyed the nice weather on Wednesday, March 31st, on the side lawn at the Carnegie Library.

The Kids Place program meets at the Carnegie Library every Wednesday afternoon during the school year.

## SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES April 10th - 14th

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

**Monday, 10th**  
10:15 a.m. Aerobics  
11 a.m. PACE Aerobics  
1 p.m. Canasta

**Tuesday, 11th**  
9:30 a.m. Aerobics  
**Wednesday, 12th**  
10:15 a.m. Senior Aerobics  
12:45 p.m. Bingo  
**Thursday, 13th**  
1 p.m. Pitch  
**Friday, 14th**  
10:15 a.m. Senior Aerobics  
11 a.m. PACE 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,

## Use of Memorials in Montague

The Trustees of Soldiers Memorials have set up new standards for use of memorials in the town of Montague. Effective as of February 16th, 2006, people wishing to use the memorials will be required to fill out a form, which can be obtained from the select-board office in the Town Hall, Avenue A, Turners Falls. If you have any questions please contact Mike Cenzano at 863-2398.

## Memorial Day Parade

The Trustees Soldiers Memorial will be sponsoring a Memorial Day Parade in the Town of Turners Falls on May 29th at 10:30 a.m. All veterans are invited to march. The parade will proceed down Avenue A.

## FACES & PLACES

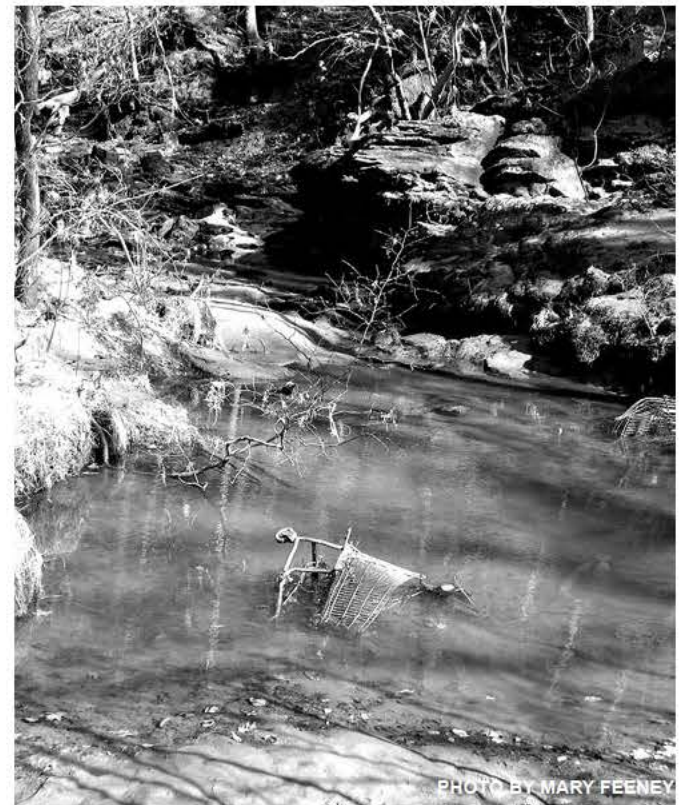


PHOTO BY MARY FEENEY

This photo of a partially submerged shopping cart found near the rock dam, was inaccurately attributed last week. Mary Feeney is the photographer and we apologize for the error.

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# Next Time I'll Walk!



This cab driver couldn't quite stop in time to miss the oil truck turning off Montague City Road, in this vintage accident scene photo from the Montague Police files. The building to the right has a sign that reads: Montague City Post Office, Karl F. Koch, Grocer. On the other side of Memory Lane, the building that now houses the beauty salon Bella was a service station that offered Green Stamps! (We'll give you a book of Green Stamps if you can remember the name of the street in the foreground.)

The Montague police log, along with all the other village police logs, will return to the *Montague Reporter* next week.

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**SENIOR SPRING HEALTH FAIR**

Thursday, April 13th  
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## Peter Cottontail's EGGstravaganza



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

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

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# Montague Elks Annual Award Night

**TURNERS FALLS**  
**BY PAMELA LESTER**  
The Montague Elks Lodge #2521 held its annual Awards Night on Saturday, March 11th, 2006. Awards were given by Douglas R. Brown, Exalted Ruler, for the Elk year 2005-2006.



Left to right: Douglas R. Brown, Exalted Ruler; Michael Blanchard, Leading Knight, Officer of the Year; Kevin J. Hastings, District Deputy Grand Exalted Ruler.

Awarded to Jeff Sak was Elk of the Year; to Michael Blanchard, Leading Knight, Officer of the Year; and to Father Stanley J. Aksamit, Our Lady of Peace, the Citizen of the Year. Three Grand Exalted Ruler Certificates were awarded to Ernest L. Brown, Past Grand Lodge Committee; Kevin J. Hastings, District Deputy Grand Exalted Ruler, and Michael Crochier, Past Exalted Ruler, for donating \$1,000

each to the Elks National Foundation. In addition, Douglas R. Brown, Exalted Ruler, awarded Exalted Ruler Appreciation certificates to the following: Steven Saharceski, Lodge Tiler; Larry "Bubba" Kniskern; Susan Patton; Laurie Dulude; Donald "Tra" Traceski, Past Exalted Ruler; Debra Nicolai; Stanley "Stan" Ambo; Jim Sicard, Lecturing

John Rittall, One - year Trustee. Mary Brown was awarded the Elk of the Month for the month of February for her help with meals for many recent events. Preceding the awards, a roast pork dinner was served by John Grace and his kitchen staff. Members of the Turners Falls High School Girls Softball team assisted the kitchen staff by helping to serve the meal.

Knight; Pamela Lester, Loyal Knight; Ed Demers; Jason Clark; Joanne Brown, Chaplain; Judy Hastings;

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# The Montague Reporter

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Kathleen Litchfield

**Editorial Assistants**

Nina Bander  
Hugh Corr

**Circulation**

Jean Hebden  
Julia Bowden Smith  
Philippe Deguise

**Layout & Design**

Lisa Davol  
Boysen Hodgson  
Kätren Hoyden  
Karen Wilkinson  
Suzette Snow Cobb

"The Voice of the Villages"

**Photography**

Lisa Davol  
Joe Parzych  
Ariel Jones  
et al

**Technical Administrators**

Michael Muller  
Michael Farnick

**Founded by**

Arthur Evans Harry Brandt David Detmold  
August, 2002

## Hope Springs Eternal on the Baseball Diamond

BY MARVIN SHEDD

**BERNARDSTON** - For some of us, it isn't changing the clocks or the first sign of flowers blooming that herald the arrival of spring; it's Opening Day of baseball season. Opening Day is when baseball fans are finally able to put aside last season's disappointment. It's when dreams of a pennant begin to take hold. It's also our first official look at this year's team. As the Red Sox take the field this year it will be a decidedly

I was struck by how green the grass was; by how comfortable the people around me seemed. It was like they were visiting an old friend. The only thing I remember is that the Red Sox won the game on a pinch-hit homerun by Dalton Jones. I also recall my friend pointing out a tall man standing in street clothes near the Red Sox dugout, whom he identified as Ted Williams. I didn't realize I was seeing the most famous Red Sox player and, arguably,



Danny Shedd before the game at Fenway

different team than the one that ended the 2005 season with a first round playoff loss to the White Sox.

Johnny Damon has taken his game to (gulp) the Yankees. Also gone are fan favorites Kevin Millar and Bronson Arroyo. We'll miss them, but only until the team starts winning. As always, there are plenty of question marks. Is Curt Schilling still the pitcher who tormented National League hitters for years? Will Jon Pabelbon live up to his potential and become a winning pitcher? Is Keith Foulke back on track as one of the premier relief pitchers in the game? The only thing we can be sure of is that tickets to Fenway will be scarce.

I remember the first time I walked into the grand old park.

the greatest hitter who ever played the game.

During the 1967 season, as the Red Sox chased their "Impossible Dream," I became a fan. The exploits of Yaz, Tony C., and Rico Petrocelli captivated me and sparked what would become a lifelong love of the game. Over the years, the names changed and Carlton Fisk, Dewey Evans and Luis Tiant became the heroes. Today, it's Tim Wakefield, Manny Ramirez and "Big Papi" David Ortiz who bring us to our feet. But the experience of being in the ballpark always stays the same. I've never walked into Fenway without feeling the same sense of awe I felt as an eleven-year-old boy attending my first game.

Interestingly, my most vivid memories of being at Fenway

are not of Red Sox players, but of the big name opposing players who came to town. I can still remember watching Harmon Killebrew taking batting practice, hitting the ball out of the park numerous times. One night we saw Rod Carew rap hit after hit off pitchers who had no idea how to get him out. My favorite memory is watching Reggie Jackson patrolling right field for the New York Yankees. He appeared to be oblivious to the heckling that rained down on him, but then silenced the crowd by throwing a runner out at second base.

I still go to Fenway, but now I bring my sons with me. On one recent trip, my youngest son made his way to the side of the stands, holding his own in the jostling for position that takes place with autograph seekers. The effort was successful, however, and he came back with Manny Ramirez's autograph. Another trip he got drilled by a foul ball that deflected off his glove and jammed his thumb. He scrambled to secure the ball, though, before deciding he was hurt. It was what any good baseball fan would do in the same situation. After a trip to the first aid station, he returned to his seat with an autographed picture of Wally, the Green Monster.

As the summer unfolds, we'll get to Fenway for a game or two. My oldest son will keep the scorebook; my youngest son will have his glove ready lest another foul ball comes his way. We'll eat a hot dog or two, perhaps a bag of Cracker Jacks. We'll watch the game, but not so close that we miss seeing the peanut vendor pitch bags of peanuts over the heads of unsuspecting fans. We'll keep an eye on the folks in the bleachers who are trying to get the wave started. Most of all, we'll have fun.

Hospitals, HMOs and pharmaceutical companies spent \$7.5 million in 2005 lobbying Massachusetts legislators on the health care bill. The single payer health plan never made it out of committee.

### LETTER TO THE EDITOR

## VY Goes to 110%

On Friday, March 31st, the NRC announced it has given Entergy Vermont Yankee permission to crank its old reactor up another notch, from 105 to 110% of original licensed thermal power.

The experiment continues, based on a March 26th ENVY letter explaining to the NRC that new changes in the plan to monitor and evaluate "flow induced vibration" noticed in a main steam line after reaching 105% power.

Let's keep score. ENVY powered up March 3rd and heard some strange noises on March 4th and reported out to NRC after a 24-hour hold as required. They were then to hold at 105% for 96 hours while NRC analyzed. That would have put them ascending to 110% power on the 9th. They sent their, "Let's try this" filing in to NRC on the 26th and now it's the 31st.

This record duration head-scratching over what the raw data means gives us some confirmation of our contention that the way to measure flow induced vibration on reactor internal components is to put measuring instruments inside the reactor vessel, not to try modeling what is going on using extrapolations from instruments on the external surfaces of piping seven to ten feet away from the outer shell of the reactor.

Flow induced vibration is a difficult concept for a lot of folks to grasp. On a small scale it is like wind vibrating a reed. At VY, it is several million pounds of steam per hour pushing past obstructions such as the steam dryer under about a thou-

sand pounds of pressure, or as nuclear engineer Arnie Gundersen describes it: For every extra 5% they go up in power, they push through an extra 100,000 horsepower.

Those readers who are older will perhaps remember movies about test pilots trying to break the sound barrier. Just because those old planes were coaxed to do it once, doesn't mean they could do it on a routine basis 24/7 for the next 26 years.

-Ray Shadis  
Technical Advisor  
New England Coalition

We welcome your letters.

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# GUEST EDITORIAL

## Impact of Violent Media on Children

BY NANCY EMOND

**TURNERS FALLS** - I have to admit I adore movies - especially quirky, foreign films - *Danny Deckchair* and *Schulz Gets the Blues* are recent favorites. Sometimes I watch Wheel of Fortune with my mom or just gork out watching CNN or CSPAN. So this editorial is not about bashing media. It is, however, a warning about a disturbing trend in popular culture.

Do you know the plot of your kids' favorite video games? If not, it's definitely worth a look. In a survey of local students' technology needs a few months ago, I decided to add a question about favorite video games Montague youth are playing. Results ranged from age-appropriate and educational to disturbingly violent. And Montague youth are not alone.

If you notice that your kids are increasing their playing of video games, and if you are worried about how they might be affecting your children's behavior, you are not alone. Statistics show that as many as 90% of our youth play violent video games for 1.5 hours a day.

The brain is the only organ not fully formed at birth. It forms sequentially. First the brain stem forms reacting to the most primal instincts -- hunger, discomfort, fear. What happens when children grow up playing violent video games? They are actually learning patterns - cause and effect. You kill, you get more game time, bigger weapons, and higher scores - you kill, you are rewarded.

I recently attended a lec-

ture on this topic. The guest speaker, Colonel David Grossman, works in Psychological Operations for the Department of the Army. The bottom line, he says, is we should not let our kids play violent video games. The U.S. Army uses the video game "Doom" to train recruits to kill the enemy on the battlefield he says, "... because it works. Do you think the military would spend millions of dollars on it if it didn't work?"

I am not suggesting that 90% of our children will become mass murderers, although there have been crimes where video games were cited as evidence in court - among them references to the most popular video game "Grand Theft Auto" in a Kentucky murder trial. Many, many kids who have enough parental support may not be affected over the long haul, however a 17-year longitudinal study, (accommodating socio-economic differences), provides evidence that there is a definite link between violent video and criminal activity in adulthood.

During three years as a media literacy educator in Vermont, teachers overwhelmingly reported an increase in violence among children and teens in the past several years. Violent, bullying behavior, body image and gender-based violence, alcohol and drug use, the sexualization of younger and younger children -- how many of these issues are showing up in classroom behaviors? Teachers tell us they see them all!

Disruptive Behavior Disorder (DBD) has now taken a seat beside ADD as possibly linked to media. A 2002 UPI Science News Science and Technology Desk article by Peggy Beck quotes research by Dr. Carol Rumach, professor of radiology and pediatrics at the University of Colorado School of Medicine. "Violent video games are 'desensitizing the brain ... so that the child can no longer understand the real effect of violence.'"

Media doesn't have to be horrific to frighten younger children. Developmentally, different kinds of scariness affect different ages of kids. Younger children, 3-8 years, are more afraid of morphing images and animals while older kids 9 or older are more afraid of dangers that could happen ... 'psycho neighbor murders kids.'

You don't have to take violent video games lying down. Here are seven ways to protect kids from too much game time, from David Walsh, Ph.D, president of the National Institute on Media and the Family:

1. Limit game play to one hour per day
2. Check the ratings on the box to be sure the product is age appropriate
3. Preview games for excessive violence or sexually suggestive themes.
4. Keep video-game consoles or computers in a public area in the house, *not* in your child's room.
5. Look for games that allow for multiple players to encourage group participa-

tion rather than isolated play.

6. Avoid 'first-person' shooter games.

7. Look for games that encourage problem solving and strategizing skills.

I will add a few more:

8. No screens of any kind before age three. (American Academy of Pediatrics)

9. Don't let your child play a video game unless you play it with them first.

10. As you watch TV, videos or advertising together, deconstruct the messages.

If you are interested in learning more about media literacy, call Nancy Emond at The Brick House for presentations 863-9576.

Our community is working on violence prevention, anti-bullying issues through social skill building, conflict resolution programming and media literacy education. During the upcoming National Violence



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Jean Donovan, CRS, ABR  
 BROKER

# Early Days of Turners Falls ~ Part X

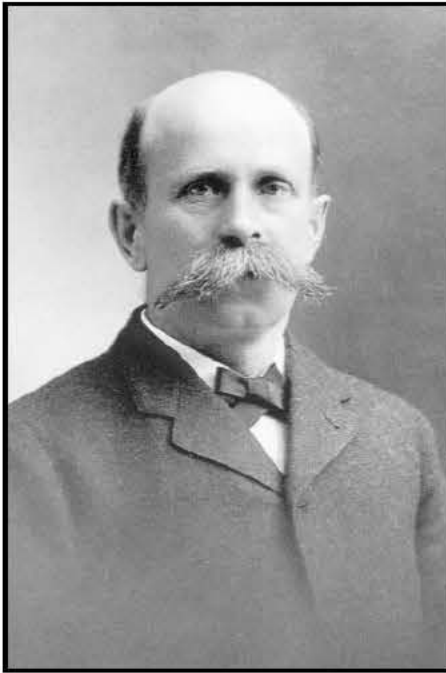
From a speech given by Charles Hazelton to the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, February 23rd, 1926. In 1867, Hazelton was hired to help engineer William P. Crocker lay out the power canal and streets of the village of Turners Falls.

As the sawmill is the fore-runner of nearly all building operations in a new place, the first lease of water for power purposes made by the Turners Falls Co., was made with Nathaniel Holmes, who in July of 1867 with his family moved from Gardner to Turners Falls and lived in the Hubbard Taft house near the ferry while their new home at Riverside was being built, and who that fall started to build, and later with David A.

Wood ran a sawmill at the Gill end of the dam. This plant was destroyed by fire December 31st, 1903.

So far as I know, the only man living today that worked on the dam of 1866 is Edward E. Barnard of Montague City. There was, however, a woman who had an important part in carrying on this work and is now living at Turners Falls. She is Mrs. Nancy Bowman, who in 1866, with her family, lived on the Herrick Howland place in Riverside and there boarded many of the men that built the dam.

It may also not be out of place and perhaps of a little interest to note that the funerals of Colonel Alvah Crocker, the promoter of



Turners Falls, and of John Russell, the founder of what is now the John Russell Cutlery works, were held on

Charles Hazelton was employed in 1867 with the Turners Falls Company as an engineer. He served as a director, partner, and president of many boards of businesses located in Turners Falls.

Hazelton was also elected to serve as a state senator. Excerpt from Montague Labor and Leisure by Kyle Scott.

(Photo courtesy of Mechanics Lodge of Free Masons)

the same day in December, 1874.

Turners Falls is generally thought and spoken of as a

manufacturing town, and such it is. In fact the products of its mills, the Russell Cutlery, Keith and Esleeck papers, the Griswold cottons are sent out to the world, sold and used, because of their standard qualities. But there is another product of the village, of equal or more value to the country, and that is the boys and girls that go from the homes and schools of the village each year, going out into the larger fields of action, and making for themselves in the professional, musical, literary and political world a reputation for quality that is a matter of pride and satisfaction to their friends, and a credit to the Turners Falls of today.

Here the speech ends.

## MCTV Schedule

MCTV April 7-13

10:30 From the Archives

Every day: Eagle from 6:00 a.m.

Friday:

6:00 Board of Health  
7:00 Selectboard (4/3)  
9:30 Landfill Debrief  
10:30 GaiaVision

Saturday:

6:00 Discovery Center  
8:00 School Committee (3/28)  
9:00 Skate Park Meeting  
11:30 From The Archives

Sunday:

6:00 Discovery Center  
7:00 Airport Improvements (3/14)  
9:00 Montague Update: Pat Carlisle  
10:00 Gaia Vision

Monday:

6:00 After the Storm  
7:00 Selectboard (Live)  
9:30 Montague Update: Pat Carlisle

Tuesday:

6:00 Board of Health  
7:00 School Committee (Live)  
9:30 Women and HIV  
11:00 From the Archives

Wednesday:

6:00 Discovery Center  
7:00 Selectboard Meeting (4/10)  
9:30 Montague Update: Board of Assessors  
10:30 GaiaVision

Thursday:

6:00 Board of Health Presents  
7:00 School Committee (4/11)  
9:30 Skate Park Meeting  
11:30 From The Archives

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

## Free Agricultural Pesticide Waste Collections

Two pesticide waste collections for farmers will be held this spring. The first is on Saturday, April 22nd at the Smith Vocational School in Northampton and the second on Saturday, May 6th at the Town of Orange Transfer Station. The collection events are free to any farm or agricultural operation in western Massachusetts. Accepted wastes include: pesticides, insecticides, fungicides, herbicides, poisons, and unknown pesticide substances. This is a nonregulatory collection service.

Disposal at no cost but must pre-register by calling the Solid Waste District at (413) 772-2438 or email at [info@franklincountywastedistrict.org](mailto:info@franklincountywastedistrict.org). Be prepared to submit an inventory of waste when registering.

For info, contact the District office at 772-2438. Hearing impaired call Massachusetts Relay at 711 or for TTY/ASCI access dial 1-800-439-2370.

## Every Week is Earth Week BACKYARD COMPOST BINS AVAILABLE from Franklin County Solid Waste Management

Spring is here, and along with planting a garden or sprucing up the yard, it's a great time to start composting. Composting is easy, and it can be even easier with an effective compost bin. Attractive, durable bins for backyard composting are available for District residents through the Franklin County Solid Waste Management District at several locations. Greenfield residents can purchase a compost bin at the Greenfield Transfer Station and not through the Solid Waste District.

There are two different models of bins available. The "Earth Machine," which sells for \$35, is made of a tough recycled polyethylene plastic and has a twist-on lid. The Earth Machine is available at these four locations: Colrain Transfer Station, Sat. 8-4; Wendell Transfer Station, Tues. 12-6, Sat. 7:30-3:30; Orange Transfer Station, Tues., Thurs. & Sat.: 8-2:45; and the District

office, 50 Miles Street, Greenfield (hours vary; call 772-2438).

The "Brave New Composter" bin costs \$15 and is made in Massachusetts of 100% recycled plastic from the state's recycling programs. This bin's size is adjustable to suit your needs. The Brave New Composter is available only at the District office, 50 Miles Street, Greenfield.

Both bins stake to the ground and are easy to assemble, rodent resistant, and designed for good aeration.

The District office also carries blue recycling bins (\$7) and containers for collecting oil drained from cars (free to District residents).

For more information on composting or waste management programs, call the Solid Waste District at 413-772-2438 or visit the District website at [www.franklincountywastedistrict.org](http://www.franklincountywastedistrict.org).

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# The Sky, the Mothership and Jack Borden

BY DOUG TURNER  
NEW SALEM -

"I wandered lonely as a cloud..."  
- William Wordsworth

Do you believe in UFOs?  
Personally I'm skeptical.

The existence of extra-terrestrial intelligence appeals to my active imagination, but I prefer to think that most Unidentified Flying Objects are figments of the sky's creativity.

The history of UFOs goes a long way back of course - all the way back to the Old Testament in the book of the prophet Ezekiel. Some credit Ezekiel's vision of the burning wheel spinning in the sky as one of the best firsthand accounts of an unidentified flying object (UFO).

But I think it was the sky. I've seen some amazing sights in the sky.

I guess I'm kind of an expert on the sky. Why shouldn't I be? I've watched it all my life. I've seen the sky from Maine to California, and Newfoundland to Florida - and believe me I paid attention.

Some of the time I was a kid, but so what? I was weaned on the sky.

My father was in the Air Force; we moved around a lot.

I can't really quantify my expertise. As a Little Leaguer I played the outfield.

In elementary school I was always looking out the window. Usually the sky was all that I could see, and perhaps the tops of the trees.

It was my escape.

There wasn't much television in 1958, especially in places like Newfoundland, but who needed it? I was outside, from dawn to dusk - really.

The space race started when I was just a lad. I grew up aspiring to be an astronaut. Lots of men my age probably had the same dream. I feel sort of ripped off.

I joined the Navy and went into submarines because I had

the weird idea that a submarine was much like a rocket ship. I thought that one day our government would be seeking people with such experi-

ence, to man the space stations that would be popping up between here and the moon before the end of the century. It really seemed a possibility, even in 1975.

"There are no windows on submarines," I was told in recruit training. Consequently the barracks windows were boarded up, until the final two weeks of our training.

But that didn't dissuade me. Though there are no windows on a submarine, I spent plenty of time standing a top-side watch, whenever the boat was in port, or as a lookout when surfaced at sea.

When you are required to stand a watch, in one place for four or six hours at a time, through the busy brightness of the day, or vacuous gloom of night (which is rarely gloomy, by the way), one absorbs the sky through osmosis.

In the Navy they actually call it 'skylarking.'

I've also been lucky. Since 1980 my employment has been spent mostly outdoors. A good deal of that time I have worked in the sky; on a ladder, a scaffold, or a roof.

That's how I met Jack Borden, Athol resident, and founder of *For Spacious Skies*. I painted his house.

*For Spacious Skies* is a non-



Sunrise over the Atlantic Ocean, St. Augustine Beach, Florida

profit public awareness and education project founded by the escaped Boston newsman almost 30 years ago. Since then, Borden has taken the bright idea of sky awareness into the boardroom and the classroom, encouraging young and old to look up.

Like the great American naturalist and writer Henry David Thoreau, who preached 'Simplify, simplify!' Jack Borden's simple message is 'Look up! Look up!'

Jack's philosophy came by way of the sky, like a lightning bolt, or a comet, or an apple falling from a tree.

Jack was lying in a field after a brisk walk. He dozed, and when he awoke, his eyes opened to the sky, broad and vast. To Jack it was as if he was seeing it for the first time, and comprehending all of its wonder in one waking moment.

"None of them knew the color of the sky."

- Steven Crane  
*The Open Boat*

Did Jack awake to the sky or did the sky awaken Jack?

Jack's 'awakening' had an immediate effect on his life. Within a short time he was using his position as a popular Boston television news personality to promote the sky.

In one segment he challenged pedestrians in downtown Arlington, MA to describe the sky above them. He interviewed a couple of dozen passersby and found that a great percentage of them hadn't a notion as to the sky's appearance. The remarkable thing was that in so doing, he seemed to wake up many of his subjects to "the great art gallery above."

That segment was just the first step in a campaign. Jack lobbied to have various cloud formations identified by the U.S. Postal Service and put on stamps.

It took about 20 years, but the crusader was finally rewarded for his efforts, as a series of stamps called Cloudscapes was issued by the postal service in 2004.

Over the years, Jack has drawn thousands of people to his cause. Scientists, teachers, and artists including Ansel Adams and Eric Sloane. His passion for the sky has spread, and he in turn has found others who share his passion.

The National Park Service has backed the program because of its obvious environmental influence. What would the parks be without the skies?

The first *For Spacious Skies* conference took place at the Grand Canyon in 1981.

Jack Borden's epiphany has all the ingredients of classical mythology: a man of Mundania falls asleep in a pastoral setting; the gentle zephyrs blow upon his brow; he wakes to a beautiful vision. Jack is not the

first to find redemption in the clouds.

According to Jack, sky-aware people share five attributes.

1. They would never throw a paper cup out of a car;
2. They are very sensitive to depictions of skylines and landscapes in pictures;
3. They have more sense of awe, a sense of wonder. There is a spiritual dimension to them;
4. They find the sky relaxing and soothing; and
5. They are more interested in things related to the sky.

In 1958 I didn't need to be reminded to 'play outside.' In 2006, it's a novel concept.

In 2006 it is just as likely there's a television or a computer monitor in the classroom, drawing young eyes away from the world outside.

The virtual world cannot compete and the sky does not need enhancement.

It turns out that the sky can be an ally to the teacher, because the sky allows for a holistic approach to teaching.

A teaching guide that employs the *For Spacious Skies* approach has been circulated through thousands of elementary school classrooms and utilized as a means of engaging children in their studies - through the sky - since the 1980s.

Studies have shown that when the sky is incorporated into the lessons there is a marked improvement in mathematics, science and the arts. These findings were published in *Time Magazine* in 1988, after researchers at the Harvard Graduate School of Education evaluated the impact of the *For Spacious Skies* programs on learning for elementary school children.

Kids are always asking, "Why do I need to know this?"

Well, it appears the sky gives them sufficient motivation.

see SKY pg 8

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## GUEST EDITORIAL

# A Taste of Spring in the DC

BY JOHN HANOLD

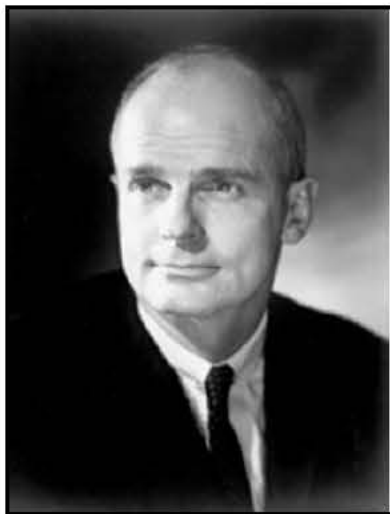
**TURNERS FALLS** -This past week my wife Pam and I experienced spring in Washington DC, with the beauty of cherry blossoms moderated by reflections of the past. Over 300 people gathered for a memorial service for former Wisconsin Senator William Proxmire, who died in December 2005 after a long bout with Alzheimer's disease. The service featured tributes by nationally-known figures and music with a connection to Western Massachusetts.

Proxmire's career as a progressive Democrat was hailed by Paul Volker, former chair of the Federal Reserve; Walter Mondale, former senator and vice-president; and our own senator Ted Kennedy. Their recollections focused on their unique relationships to Proxmire: Volker testified regularly before the Senate banking committee which Proxmire chaired, and Mondale - a senator from neighboring Minnesota - recalled his colleague's preference for weekly "red-eye" flights to visit his constituents and his extremely

frugal campaign expenditures.

Kennedy, whose longevity among current Senators is now second only to West Virginia's Robert Byrd, pointed to Proxmire's string of over 10,000 consecutive votes over twenty years. His colleague's total of 30 years in office began with a 1957 special election to fill Joe McCarthy's unfinished term, a particularly clear signal of a changing political philosophy. Kennedy also mentioned Proxmire's sponsorship of anti-genocide legislation, which finally became law after the Midwesterner had delivered over 3,200 speeches in its support.

In recognition of the late senator's college connection (Yale 1938) his family asked Washington-area alumni to provide choral music for the prelude and part of the service itself. The call went out in turn to the Yale Alumni Chorus, and members John and Pam Hanold of Turners Falls were among those who traveled to DC for rehearsals and the service. As long-time Minnesotans, we



William Proxmire

looked forward to expressing our appreciation for Proxmire's years of vigorous service, to both his Wisconsin constituency and Americans at large.

A walk through the Franklin Roosevelt monument added the words and challenges from yet an earlier time of our history. Although that was before our time, Pam recalls days of hearing stories from friends who served in the CCC, spent hours building monuments, or just remembered the 'tight times' and stories of handouts and taking in family when banks

failed. It was good to watch children exploring the memorial full of statues and bas-reliefs that drew them into some of the experiences she learned first as oral history. It turned out to be a wonderful reminder of what public service can be in the hands of leaders with a broad understanding of the need to serve all citizens and nurture participatory democracy by their actions.

Proxmire's principled and tireless advocacy of good government, including his mocking 'Golden Fleece' awards for wasteful government spending, stand in stark contrast to the timidity and vagueness of progressives in our time. Pam's reaction was "I found myself over and over wanting to take Congress and the White House and others inside the Beltway by the scruff of the neck, set them down before the chiseled words at the FDR Monument, and admonish them to 'Read this and really think about it.'" Among the inscriptions: "Man and nature must work hand in hand - the throwing out of balance of the resources of nature,

throws out of balance also the lives of men."

"In these days of difficulty, we Americans everywhere must chose the path of social justice, the path of faith, the path of hope and the path of love between our fellow man."

"I see one third of a nation ill-housed, ill-clad and ill-nourished. The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much, it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little."

"The structure of world peace can not be the mark of one man, one party or one nation. It must be a peace that rests on the co-operative effort of the whole world."

It was reassuring to see there were many people of all ages reading thoughtfully and walking in the fairyland of blossoms, sharing dogs and children and smiles and camera shots of the hope spring brings. Now, if we can convey the sense of this scene and Proxmire's career to Boston and our national leaders, it will be a spring to remember.

## SKY

continued from pg 7

"Excuse me while I kiss the sky!"

- Jimi Hendrix  
"Purple Haze"

In the 19th century the most typical UFOs were cigar-shaped, which is just a saucer shape viewed from another angle.

Heck I've seen half a dozen of those in the last year. They're called clouds.

The sky's artistry is unparalleled. Its ability to inspire lesser artists, in oil, music, poetry, and architecture is well documented.

The sky not only inspires, it calms, cheers, bemuses, fools, mocks and entertains us.

It was our earliest entertainment system.

Our primitive ancestors had millennia upon millennia to observe, study and finally document the sky.

They created soap operas in

the skies, the soap operas of the gods. The gods resided in the sky and you did not cross the gods. They became our constellations.

Naming the constellations was a good thing. It was our first start at conquering our fears. Because we are, after all, sky creatures.

According to Charles E. Roth, chief educator and naturalist for the Massachusetts Audubon Society, in *Education for Life in the Sky*, we are, "Like starfish and lobsters that are bottom dwellers in the great oceans of water, we are among the benthic organisms of the great oceans of air that make up most of the sky as we know it - thus we are creatures of the bottom of the sky."

Of all that primitive man encountered in his daily life, the sky was the most awesome, the most mysterious, the most unpredictable. The sky could deliver fire or flood.

Only a few generations have passed since standing watch

for intruders and beasts, and keeping the fire lit through the night was a duty we all shared.

All those millennia watching the sky, fearing the sky. What ideas formed in the minds of all those watchers?

Consider: for ages we looked upon the unpredictable sky as being populated with unpredictable gods and predictable demons, until finally some understanding of the motions of the heavens and the four winds evolved among the wisest of us.

Instead of a chaotic place, the sky became a divine place, 'the heavens,' and a somewhat ordered place, where the moon returned every four weeks and yes, dark clouds were a portent, a portent of rain, nourishment from the skies, and consequently growth, abundance. The sky became the 'firmament.'

Why do we care about the sky?

Because it makes things go. Through the process of pho-

tosynthesis the trees pull the carbon dioxide from the air turning it to oxygen, but the sun triggers that action, and the sky supplies the rain that sustains the system.

And if it doesn't make it go, than it moderates it, filters it or renews it.

The earth is the mothership, and the sky is an unbelievably complicated, but completely natural protective shield and status panel all in one, like the dashboard in your car.

And the red lights are on.

You don't have to be a rocket scientist.

Jack accepts the fact that if everyone acquires a rudimentary appreciation for the miracle above; which provides them with the breath that fills their lungs at an average rate of 16 times a minute, the rest will follow.

Right now, not many people do.

The sky, after all, is one thing we can all share in. It's free (for now), and if we don't

pay attention the freebie may not last much longer.

Jack reminds me of Daedalus, the mythical Greek inventor who crafted wings of wax, so he could escape with his son Icarus, from the labyrinth of King Minos.

The allusion is quite appropriate since the *For Spacious Skies* program has also reached into the prison system, via *Prison Life Magazine*, providing sky charts to as many as 100,000 incarcerated people.

Ironically, the program itself has yet to be allowed direct access in the state prison systems - despite its merits - so perhaps the sky is not free for everyone.

Borden is a modern day Daedalus. He's offered all of us escape from our earthbound prison. All we have to do is 'Look up!'

No, I mean really look. Give the sky as much time as you give the dashboard of your car.

Of course, once you do, you'll be hooked.



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**NOTES FROM THE MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD**

**Town Meeting to be Held First Saturday in May**

**BY PATRICK RENNICK** - Working with the finance committee and school committee to ready the '07 omnibus budget, the selectboard has picked the date of May 6th for this year's annual town meeting. The board had originally hoped to push the meeting date back until June, but schedule conflicts prevented that. The May date has forced the Gill-Montague school committee to prepare and submit a budget earlier than expected.

"I called Superintendent Sue Gee on Friday and told her that the June date would be problematic," said selectboard member Allen Ross. "She was relieved and grateful to be informed and assured me that she would try and work with it."

"If the budget is turned down, the school committee will have 30 days to re-submit a budget," added town administrator Frank Abbondanzio.

A property on 181 Avenue A,

owned by Mark Kislyuk, of Montague River's Edge LLC, was the subject of a recent inspection by building inspector David Jensen. The site features a partially constructed cement brick foundation, with mounds of debris and rebar sticking out, and open trenches that fill with water in the rain. Jensen has ordered the construction of a six-foot fence within 10 working days around the area. If the fence is not erected, the Montague DPW will perform the job and pass the bill to the owner. Jensen has been granted the authority to use town counsel, and go to court if necessary to resolve the impasse over the property, where construction ground to a halt last summer in a flurry of charges from subcontractors over unpaid bills. The DPW took responsibility for patching gaping cuts in the road surface and broken and tilted tiles in the sidewalk, left by

Kislyuk.

"The building is located right across the street from the post office, new restaurants, and vacant store fronts," said Ross. "The building violations are evident, especially the boards with nails sticking out of them."

Abbondanzio spoke with DPW supervisor Tom Bergeron about public access to the Dry Hill Cemetery. Flags are in the process of being installed to delineate the boundaries of the town road from the adjoining property. Bergeron has started to gather price estimates for the construction of a gravel road with drainage pipes for the first 700 feet of Dry Hill Road up from Wendell Road. The remaining portion of the road to the cemetery has been improved by the abutter, Jim Senn. While no figures have been confirmed, the short stretch of gravel road will cost much less than the board had once thought re-

establishing access to the town cemetery would cost.

The selectboard is investigating a complaint from Millers Falls resident Jeanne Golrick about permit requirements for D&D Motors of Millers Falls. The company's license allows for 12 cars on the lot, plus one in the shop window. Jeanne Golrick of Millers Falls expressed concerns about D&D infringing on her property.

"My private land has gas, oil, and disassembled cars on it," said Golrick. "When will the selectboard challenge D&D's license?"

"There are many vehicles [parked there] that are not under D&D, but are related to the owner of the [Powers Block, Richard] Conley's building," said Ross. "These jobs are not fun for us, certainly not for me, but it is housecleaning. There are also other issues in other villages that we must address."

"Projects such as the Railroad Salvage building that involve the blockage of a public way, are obviously more pressing to us," added selectboard member Patricia Pruitt.

Lisa Davol was appointed by the selectboard as the cultural coordinator for the River Culture project. Winans Creative and Rachel Wilsey Design and Marketing were awarded the contract for marketing the River Culture project, which is intended to stimulate arts-based economic development in downtown Turners Falls.

Regarding a vicious dog complaint in the Chestnut Hill Road area which the board handled a few months ago, Abbondanzio spoke with an Amherst veterinarian who said that one of the Howe dogs has been put down, while the other has been adopted by a family.

**HOME**

continued from pg 1

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

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

"The selectboard was very supportive in getting the block grant money to help demolish the old building," McLeod said. "They were obviously thinking that to remove a

derelict building and replace it with affordable housing was a wonderful vision for what needs to happen in Turners Falls. We were glad we could be a part of that and turn what was an unsightly thing into new affordable homes, which is good for the community and good for the individuals."

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

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

The family that has been selected to live at 55 L Street is Connie Forcier and her children - Megan, age 16; Summer,

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

Habitat partner families are selected on the basis of need, ability to make modest mortgage payments, and willingness to partner with Habitat. Each adult is required to put in 250 hours of "sweat equity," working to build their home or other Habitat homes.

Volunteers will be needed, both for construction and in other ways. Anyone interested in volunteering can sign up online. Visit [www.pioneervalleymontague.org](http://www.pioneervalleymontague.org) for volunteer construction dates as McLeod hopes they will begin in early May.

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

Construction volunteers

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

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

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

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

Not to knock food pantries because I do that, too, but I like to see that kind of substantial difference."

Habitat for Humanity has built 200,000 homes nationally. Anyone interested in being a part of the project is invited to call the Habitat office at (413) 586-5430 or send email to: [ed@pioneervalleymontague.org](mailto:ed@pioneervalleymontague.org); or call Doris McLeod at 774-7160 or send email to [dorisan-mm2@verizon.net](mailto:dorisan-mm2@verizon.net).



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**GILL**  
continued from pg 1

“any unnecessary loud, excessive or unusual noise... plainly audible at a distance of 150 feet from the building, structure, premises, shelter, vehicle, boat or conveyance in which or from which it is produced.” It goes on to state, “the fact that the noise is plainly audible at... 150 feet shall constitute *prima facie* evidence of a violation of this bylaw. Any person shall be deemed in violation of this bylaw who shall make, or aid and abet, or cause or suffer, or countenance, or assist in the making of such noise.” It goes on to say that citizens can initiate enforcement of the bylaw.

Banash said she would work to amend the wording of the Northfield bylaw to

include the word ATV, (for all terrain vehicle) in the list of vehicles specifically covered, and to eliminate the wording that specifies the bylaw is only to be enforced between 11:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m., before bringing the measure to annual town meeting for the voters to debate.

“This goes on all day, everyday, in the summer,” said Banash. “There is a whole neighborhood being affected. Put this forward and let town meeting decide.”

That is what the board agreed to do.

**Cable Bulletin Board**

The board considered options for installing a line for ComCast, the town’s cable provider, to the Gill town hall, so that a cable access bulletin board, provided for in the

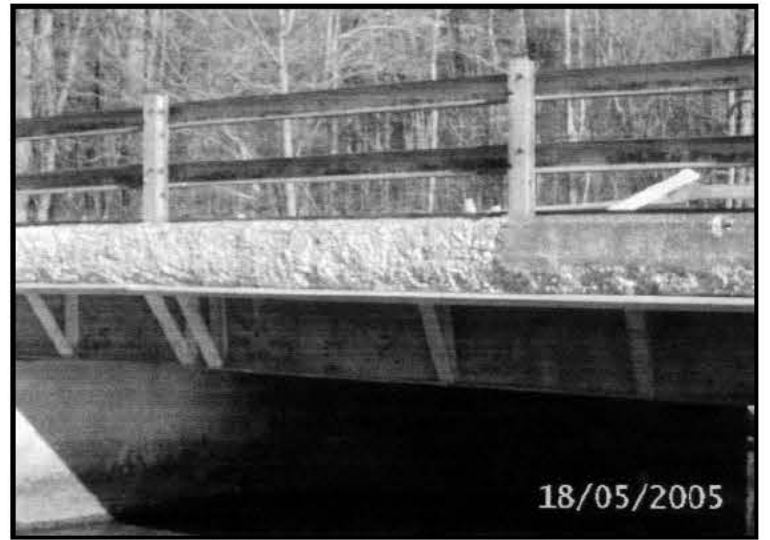
cable contract the town negotiated last year, can be activated. The town is still looking for a group of citizens, or perhaps a group of students from nearby Northfield Mount Hermon, to operate the computer driven program that will allow town events to be broadcast on a cable bulletin board to those homes in Gill with access to cable television.

That pool of households is growing, as a result of the same contract negotiations. ComCast recently notified the town that homes on West Gill, North Cross and Dole Road have now been hooked up to the cable network; homes on Munns Ferry Road will be added soon.

Looking ahead to the time Gill may wish to have proceedings of selectboard meetings broadcast live to home viewers, the selectboard decided to have the line installed on the main floor of the town hall, near the location where the board holds meetings. Once the line is installed and the proper computer equipment and software purchased with the \$1200 capital grant ComCast afforded for this purpose, the only thing lacking to make the bulletin board a reality will be someone, or some group, willing to keep it regularly updated. Residents with basic computer skills and a little free time who might be interested in the cable bulletin board project are encouraged to call 863-9347 and find out how to get involved.

On a similar note, administrative assistant Deb Roussel told the board the situation with vacancies on a number of important town boards is getting dire. The discussion was prompted by an at-large vacancy on the personnel board. The fact that the assessors and the zoning board also have vacancies led Roussel to urge the board to make a plea for more citizen involvement at the May town meeting.

**Vassar Way Bridge**  
The board signed a letter to



The North Cross bridge in Gill, showing signs of wear.



After the Gill Highway crew tackled the job, the bridge looks good as new.

Kenneth Johnson, of Vassar Way, who had written on behalf of six households on that private lane about improvements the residents had made, or were making, to the single lane bridge that crosses a brook near their homes. Since a visual inspection by SVE Associates three years ago had determined the bridge was unsafe for the town’s larger fire trucks to cross, the matter of the town’s ability to respond to a fire call for those households has been in limbo. The board’s letter of April 3rd informed Johnson and the other residents that it was their responsibility to have the renovated bridge inspected at their expense, and rated by a certified engineer, before the town would authorize the heavier fire trucks to cross it in the event of a fire.

**Friends of Agriculture**  
The Gill Friends of

Agriculture will meet at the town hall on Monday, April 10th at 7 p.m. to discuss forming an agricultural commission for the town of Gill. Representatives of the Northfield agricultural commission have been invited to attend.

**Main Road a GO!**

Finally, the selectboard celebrated the news that Mass Highway had given the long awaited “order to proceed” on the \$4.1 million reconstruction of Main Road, from Wood Avenue to the Northfield line. After years of delay, and tense negotiations over safe passage for Wood Turtles, not to mention NMH students, the board seemed relieved to finally have the letter in hand.

“We are authorized to do the work?” asked Maddern, incredulously. “I want a new shovel.”



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# Gill Reviews FY'07 Department Budgets

BY DAVID DETMOLD

On Tuesday, April 4th, the Gill selectboard met with department heads to go over their preliminary budget requests for Fiscal '07. Chief Hastings was up first, with highway super Mick LaClaire and fire chief Gene Beaubien on deck, and treasurer Ronnie LaChance battling cleanup.

Hastings brought in a request for \$183,591 for the police department, as compared to last year's budget of \$161,475, but he was philosophical about his chances. "I know you tear your hair out every year trying to find the money, and we tear our hair out at the department trying to come up with our budget." This year, the increases in fuel costs, part time salaries, and the new step increase for sergeant's position have combined to drive up the department's costs, Hastings said.

The board was sympathetic, but said they needed to cut approximately \$200,000 from departmental and capital requests this year to fit within the levy limit, if state aid remains at expected levels. Board member Ann

Banash asked Hastings to cut the \$22,000 increase in his budget by half.

"If you say, 'Leave here and cut \$11,000 out,' we'll try to live within it," said Hastings. But he pointed out that his expense line item was not sufficient to keep up with the rising cost of fuel this year, and regular step increases for part-timers will bring them up above \$14 per hour, necessitating the salary line item increase, if shift coverage is to remain the same.

"We could look at that motorcycle again...." Hastings offered, as a way to cut fuel costs. "That BMW 650 was all right; we could try the 850 this year."

The board did not support the idea of purchasing a motorcycle for the department. They did, however, take the opportunity to sign Hasting's new three-year contract.

For the highway department, LaClaire brought in a request for \$309,661, up from \$277,365 for '06. He fared worse than Hastings, with the board suggesting he pare his plans or take money out of Chapter 90 funds to

resurface a little more than two miles of Boyle Road, north of the elementary school, and Boyle Road Extension, along with 3/10ths of a mile of Barney Hale Road (to the top of the hill). Gill is slated to receive about the same amount of Chapter 90 money for road maintenance (\$92,850) this year as last (\$92,575), but the board cautioned LaClaire to keep as much of that money as possible in reserve to handle cost overruns on the \$4.1 million Main Road reconstruction, slated to begin this season. Cost overruns above 10% on that project will be the responsibility of the town, according to the contract with Mass Highway.

Banash asked LaClaire to try to reduce his total request to a figure below the amount the town is spending on the highway department this year.

LaClaire said he would try to do that, but warned them the town should start planning now to purchase a new dump truck next year, to replace an '89 model nearing the end of its useful life.

For the fire department,

Beaubien, with several call firefighters in attendance, again brought in a request for an extra \$30,000 to hire a fulltime firefighter. The board told him this would be a difficult sell in the current budget cycle, as it was last year, and suggested he make the bid for a fulltime firefighter a separate warrant article, so town meeting could discuss it on its merits.

"I'm not disagreeing that you need it," said Banash, "I just don't see how we're going to pay for it. If we're going to cut \$200,000, we're going to have to take it from the big three."

Beaubien ticked them off on his fingers. "School, police, highway.... OK, all in favor say, 'Aye!'" But apparently Banash had town departments in mind, not the schools.

Besides the fulltime firefighter, the department request (\$30,844) was very close to last year's figure (\$29,428). Beaubien has argued for some time that with almost all the call firefighters working out of town during the day, Gill's readiness to respond to emergency calls would be

strengthened with a fulltime fireman.

In their search for savings, the board next faced LaChance, but here they did not find an easy target. They questioned her request for large salary increases for both her part time position as treasurer and tax collector. In the former position, LaChance is seeking a hike from \$8,790 to \$13,000; in the latter position she is asking for a hike from \$12,564 to \$15,000. But she defended her request based on the number of hours it actually takes to do the jobs, saying at 38 to 40 hours per week for both jobs combined, she would be making less than \$14 an hour at the higher salary figures. She pointed to the amount of back taxes she has hauled in for the town lately, and the higher salary figures surrounding towns pay their treasurers and tax collectors as added reasons why her request was justified. LaChance also pointed out that though she works fulltime, she does not take health benefits, saving the town \$6,000.

The board let her request for salary increases stand.

## Religious Services

**Baptist**  
Faith Baptist Church, 331 Silver Street, Greenfield, 774-6438  
Sunday at 10:30 a.m. and 6 p.m.,  
Wednesday Adult Bible Study 7 p.m. Youth Bible Club at 6:45 p.m.

First Baptist Church of Turners Falls, 10 Prospect, Turners, 863-9083  
Sunday at 11 a.m. and 6 p.m., and Wednesday at 7 p.m.

**Christian Science**  
First Church of Christ Scientist, 110 Federal St., Greenfield, 773-9765  
Sunday at 10:30 a.m. and Wednesday at 7:30 p.m.

Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints (Mormons)  
25 Bank Row, Greenfield, 772-

8514 Sunday at 10 a.m.

**Congregational**  
Gill Congregational Church, Main Rd., 863-8613 Sunday at 10 a.m.  
First Congregational Church, 19 Bridge St., Millers Falls, 659-3430 Sunday at 10:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. Bible study Wed. at 7 p.m.

**Episcopal**  
St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, Seventh and Prospect St., Turners, 863-4602  
Sunday at 9 a.m.

**Friends (Quakers)**  
Mount Toby Monthly Meeting of Friends, Rte. 63, Leverett, 548-9188  
Sunday at 10 a.m.

**Jewish**  
Temple Israel, 27 Pierce St., Greenfield, 773-5884

Friday at 6 p.m. (first weekend of the month) and Saturday at 9:30 a.m.; schedule does vary, it is advisable to call in advance

**Lutheran**  
St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 23 Long Ave., Greenfield, 773-5242  
Sunday at 10:30 a.m.

**Nondenominational**  
Grace Church, 41 K St., Turners, 863-2771  
Sunday at 10 a.m. and 6 p.m., and Wednesday at 6:30 p.m.

National Spiritual Alliance  
2 Montague Ave., Lake Pleasant, 367-0138 Sunday at 1 p.m.

Unity in the Pioneer Valley Church  
401 Chapman Street, Guiding Star Grange, 625-2960; Sunday at 10 a.m.

**Roman Catholic**

Our Lady of Czestochowa, 84 K St., Turners, 863-4748  
Saturday at 8 a.m. and 4 p.m.; Sunday at 8 and 10:30 a.m.; Monday at 8 a.m.; and Tuesday-Friday at 5:30 p.m. (Confession one half hour prior to mass)

St. John's, 5 Church St., Millers Falls, 659-3435  
Saturday at 4:15 p.m. and Sunday at 8:30 a.m.

Our Lady of Peace, 80 Seventh St., Turners, 863-2585  
Saturday at 4 p.m., Sundays 8 a.m. & 10 a.m. and weekdays at 7 a.m.

**Salvation Army**  
72 Chapman St., Greenfield, 773-3154 Sunday at 11 a.m.

**Unitarian Universalist**  
All Souls, 399 Main St., Greenfield, 773-5018 Sunday at

10:30 a.m.

First Parish Unitarian, Main St., Northfield, 498-5566  
Sunday at 10:30 a.m.

**United Church of Christ**  
Evangelical Congregational Church (UCC), 11 Church St., Erving (978) 544-8658

First Congregational Church (UCC), 4 North St., Montague Ctr., 367-9467 Sunday at 10 a.m.

First Congregational Church of Turners Falls (UCC), 148 L St., Turners, 863-9844, Sunday at 9:30 a.m.

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# The Gardener's Companion

BY LESLIE BROWN

**MONTAGUE CITY** - It is breezy, warm and mild. A scoop of garden soil squeezed in the hand crumbles and does not hold together. I am working in the raised beds, which are even drier. To last year's dirt I've added a half bag of topsoil and two large shovels full of well-aged compost. I'm putting out the onions we started in from seed in early February. These plants have had three haircuts to trim the greens and send the energy to the bulb. They've been fed with a low dose of seaweed

fertilizer. Now a decision has to be made.

The onion roots are a good four inches long. The baby bulbs are the size of grape seeds. It is time to transplant them to individual cells or put them outside. I decide to gamble. Onions can take a light frost or two. Here, next to the warmth of the Connecticut the last frost is a good month away. On the other hand, the final crop will be larger and tastier if they survive an early planting. It is not much ahead of schedule; they're usually planted during



MARY AZARIAN WOODBLOCK  
the school break, which is only two weeks away. Given this unusual season, the trick will be to keep them well watered. So, in they go followed by a long

drink from my favorite metal watering can.

It feels good to get hands and fingers into the soil. Grubbing in the dirt evokes the same primal sensation as returning to the ocean side. It is right and original. Last night I heard the peeper frogs, second harbinger of spring following the Redwings. I miss the uplift of spirit the return of the wild geese used to bring. Since we have open water most winters now, they never really leave us.

Tomato and pepper seeds were started in individual grow-

ing units late in March. Warmed from underneath by heating mats and cosseted by moisture gathering lids, they responded quickly, developing into inch high seedlings this weekend. These plants will require much tending: thinning, feeding, one transplanting or perhaps two. They can't be set out much before Memorial Day. Still, that will come quickly, as the sweet and sour joys of spring rush by too fast and we are engulfed in the heat of summer.

## SKATE

continued from pg 1

jagged landings. He estimated the cost to repair the park at \$7,875, with the majority, \$5,075, needed to repair large sections of the chain link fence.

But Justin Smith, one of the teens in attendance, said, "Not all of this money would come from the taxpayers. Some of the money has been earned by kids putting on shows." Still, the faces of the adults in the crowd at the Great Hall of the Discovery Center looked doubtful until Brick House director Nancy Emond took the mike and told them just how much her organization's teen center had already raised.

"We have raised \$6,650, raised by the kids in one month. How very proud I am of all of them." The majority of this was raised from one large anonymous donation, although several smaller amounts were solicited, and the teens raised \$651.41 at last month's skate park benefit concert. \$651.41 at last month's skate park benefit concert.

Town administrator Frank Abbondanzio said the town had \$1,185 in program income money set aside for the skate park. Then Patti Dion, treasurer for the town, said her department still held a positive balance in the skate park fund for \$275. "I think we are almost there, to get the park up and running," Abbondanzio said.

Linda Ackerman, parks and recreation commissioner, said, "Congratulations.... and I wish you the best of luck, sincerely. But I understand the lease on the skate park land is up in 20 months. What is the option of having the lease renewed?"

At that, all eyes turned to



Jared Libby, Tim De Christopher and Nate Greene after the skate park meeting. "This could be the start of a beautiful friendship."

landlord Tim de Christopher, who took a deep breath before responding. "I am the guy who owns this land. The way the lease is written right now, it expires in less than 20 months. But there is an option to renew for five years after that. So it would expire in November of 2013."

He continued, "I bought this land for a specific purpose." De Christopher, a sculptor who apprenticed at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City, plans to eventually incorporate the land as part of a larger installation at the end of 2nd Street. "What I am basically going to be doing is creating a sculpture park. There could be a way to possibly incorporate the skate park," within his planned installation, de Christopher said, if the ramps could eventually be recreated as cement forms.

Jared Libby, the Brick House teen center coordinator mentioned a cast cement skate park in Fitchburg (reputed to be the largest in New England), a major attraction for skating enthusiasts around the region. "Teens will drive an hour and a

half just to go there."

De Christopher expressed anxiety about the possibility of vandalism at the unsupervised park.

Abbondanzio said towns uniformly adopt what is known as "the California model" of operating skate parks, for insurance purposes, by posting regulations that users are enjoined to obey 'at their own risk.' Towns can not afford to be in the position of supervising skate park use, due to the liability concern, he said.

Jeff Singleton, parent of a 10-year-old skating enthusiast, said, "It only takes a few people to trash it, even if 90% are playing by the rules." He added, "I have a huge problem with people not wearing a helmet. Is it realistic that you will tell each other to wear helmets?"

Athecia Greene said, "When our group came together, we all became friends, with a similar interest, with a love for Turners Falls. We are all willing to be there to make sure kids are wearing helmets. We are here as a group, as a community, to make a difference."

Speaking of earlier skaters, including Chris Gallagher and Winter Orion Clark, who helped organize the park in 1997 - 98, Greene said, "Everyone here is my friend. Some of us have lost friends who tried to get the park up and running. This is a tribute to them. I will do whatever it takes."

Selectboard member Pat Allen said, "I remember when Zak and Winter and Chris all came before the selectboard. I was very impressed at how they pulled it all together, and kept the vision. I'm really impressed by how many of you are here. I think you can do it, and keep it going."

Assistant Brick House youth coordinator Nate Greene said, "Everyone has been brainstorming ideas for improvement at the park. Volunteers will clean up the place, clean up the trash on a monthly or weekly basis. Everyone here is totally committed to this."

De Christopher said, "The more I think about this, the

more I like it."

Talking about working together to design a park that could fit in with de Christopher's sculpture garden, Karen Stinchfield, outreach coordinator for the Brick House, said, "Tim is world famous. We can attract people just like Fitchburg."

Ackerman said, "This puts a whole new perspective on the vision for the skate park."

The meeting ended with an agreement for town officials to meet with the teens on an ongoing basis, in a reformed skate park committee, to oversee short term repairs, and plan for long term goals for the park.

Jessica Harmon said, "I am the mother of a two and a half year old, with another baby on the way. I'm here tonight because I read an article describing the teens who want this skate park, how they are looking for a sense of safety and community, a place that is theirs. I really want my children to have that in this town when

## Montague Dem's Hold Caucus Ross Gets Selectboard Nod, 17 - 0



Wednesday night, Montague Democrats gathered in town hall for their annual rites. Seventeen party stalwarts (including Mike Cenzano, pictured here at the reliable ballot box) turned out for the caucus, picking candidates for all seats except one 3-year library trustee. Allen Ross got the nod for another 3-year term on the selectboard; he has no opponents in the general

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**THE HEALTHY GEEZER**

**“Holiday Heart”**

**BY FRED CICETTI, LEONI, NJ** - *Q. Whenever I drink a little too much wine, I find that I wake up at night and my heart seems to race for a while. Can wine do that?*

The short answer is yes. But, first, it sounds like you haven't told a doctor about this. And you should-immediately. What you are describing could be atrial fibrillation. The risk of atrial fibrillation increases with age, particularly after age 60.

Atrial fibrillation - also called AF or Afib - is the most common form of irregular heartbeat. It is an abnormal heart rhythm originating in the atria, the upper chambers of the heart. The rate of impulses through the atria can range from 300 to 600 beats per minute.

Because the atria are beating rapidly and irregularly, blood does not flow through them as

quickly. This makes the blood more likely to clot.

If a clot is pumped out of the heart, it can travel to the brain causing a stroke. People with atrial fibrillation are five to seven times more likely to have a stroke than the general population.

Infrequent and brief episodes of atrial fibrillation can be triggered by overindulgence in alcohol, caffeine and food. Doctors sometimes call AF "holiday heart."

However, some of the most common causes of AF are high blood pressure, a variety of heart problems such as coronary artery disease, chronic lung disease and pulmonary embolism, which is a condition that occurs when an artery in your lung becomes blocked.

In at least 10 percent of AF cases, no underlying heart disease is found. In these cases, AF

may be related to alcohol or excessive caffeine use, stress, certain drugs, electrolyte or metabolic imbalances, or severe infections. In some cases, no cause can be found.

Among the commonly used tools to diagnose atrial fibrillation are the electrocardiogram (ECG); a Holter monitor, a small external recorder usually worn for one to three days, and a portable event monitor that enables a patient to record an AF.

Many people live for years problem-free with atrial fibrillation. However, chronic atrial fibrillation can cause problems. Besides stroke, there is the danger that clots can travel to other parts of the body (kidneys, heart, intestines), causing damage. AF can decrease the heart's pumping ability by as much as 20 to 25 percent. AF combined with a fast heart rate over a long

period of time can cause heart failure.

AF symptoms include a racing or fluttering heart, fatigue, dizziness, feeling faint, chest discomfort, and shortness of breath. However, you can have atrial fibrillation without symptoms.

Initially, medications are used to treat atrial fibrillation. There are also medications to prevent blood clots. In addition to taking medications, there are lifestyle changes you can make. These include: quitting smoking, limiting alcohol and caffeine, and avoiding activities that seem related to your irregular heart rhythm.

When initial remedies don't correct or control AF, a procedure such as electrical cardioversion may be necessary. In this procedure, an electrical shock is delivered to your chest wall to restore a normal rhythm.



ILLUSTRATION: JESSICA HARMON

Then there are devices such as an implantable atrial defibrillator that delivers low-dose therapy to convert AF to a normal heart rhythm.

Patients with chronic AF not relieved by medication or procedures are candidates for surgical treatment. Many of these approaches can be performed with minimally invasive (endoscopic or "keyhole") surgical techniques.

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

**FINDING BALANCE: HEALTH TIPS FOR A HAPPY LIFE**

**The Pause Between Breaths**

**BY JENNY CHAPIN, MONTAGUE CITY**

Our bodies are about 70% water. What feels pretty solid to us - a mass of muscle, bone, and flesh - actually moves with a fluidity that mirrors the waves of the ocean coming in to shore and receding again to join the depths. This rhythm or pulse belongs to all things, governing and guiding the cycles of our lives. From the grand scheme of life between conception and death, to the second-by-second passage of blood traveling through our veins with each heartbeat, everything we are can be described as a pulsation between complementary forces.

Call it expansion and contraction, movement and stillness, work and rest, separation and connection, light and dark, being and doing, forgetting and remembering; it is all a matter of moving between one thing

and another, at times in the extremes, occasionally perfectly balanced in the center, most often somewhere in between.

When life is relatively quiet, going well and smoothly, it's easier to be aware and accepting of the ebb and flow of the contrasting natures of reality. When times are challenging, when there's turmoil, confusion, or fear, the first thing to go is our equanimity.

In the face of difficulty, we can quickly lose our sense of feeling grounded and centered amid the changing flow. Have you ever noticed that when you get stressed or upset, your breathing gets shallow, fast, or even almost non-existent? When things calm down again, suddenly you find yourself taking a deep breath in, and maybe letting it out with a big sigh?

The breath is our connection with the pulse of life that con-

tinues despite external circumstances. Regardless of our emotional state, the breath is a constant. When we forget to breathe, something bigger than us breathes for us, until we



reconnect on our own with the essential movement of the breath.

To find the rhythm of your body, breath, and life, you must go beneath your habitual responses, beneath your usual meandering thoughts. When you do this, you will begin to notice the deeper pulsation, and, even more valuable, the space between pulses.

Try this practice to find the pause between breaths. Get comfortable, and tune into the

movement of your breath. With the in-breath, feel your body expanding, filling, moving outward. With the out-breath, your body contracts, empties, turns inward; this is the return journey, where consciousness moves inward to reach back to the core.

Breathe like this for a couple minutes, paying attention to the feeling of your body expanding and contracting. Watch the cadence of your breath, the balanced rhythmic flow of air moving in, and out, and in again. Don't force it to be a certain speed or depth, just observe it effortlessly entering and leaving your body. Notice that you don't have to do anything to breathe, you can simply relax and let it happen.

Now, at the end of the next exhalation, can you feel the slight pause that comes before the next breath comes in? This

pause is a gap in time, a moment out of time, a moment of timelessness. In this lull, nothing is happening, and nothing needs to be done. Allow yourself to rest in the stillness. Out of this quiet, the new breath arises. Into this quiet, the breath dissolves.

This pause, this place of restfulness and peace, is always available to us. When we're tired, overwhelmed, anxious, or afraid, we can turn back to the movement of the breath. From the steadiness of this flow, we can reconnect with the pause between breaths, where stillness resides and we come back to the heart and substance of our own being.

*Jenny Chapin has been a holistic health practitioner in Franklin County for many years. Suggest a question or topic for her column at jgchapin@crocker.com.*


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# ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



JACK COUGHILIN ILLUSTRATION

**THURSDAY, APRIL 6TH**  
Kevin Skorupa & Richard Chase 8-10 p.m. Deja Brew Cafe 57A Lockes Village Road, Wendell. 978-544-BREW

**FRIDAY, APRIL 7TH**  
Blame It on Tina 9-11 p.m. Deja Brew Cafe 57A Lockes Village Road, Wendell. 978-544-BREW

**SATURDAY, APRIL 8TH**  
At 9 a.m., a Vernal Pool Trip will begin at the Millers River Environmental Center at 100 Main Street in Athol. Join Lynn Harper for this look at the wonders of our local vernal pools. Meet at the Millers River Environmental Center, 100 Main St., Athol. For more information, call 978-248-9491.

The River Rat Race and Festival will be held from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Come to the Millers River Environmental Center Open House and Show. Watch the parade and participate by carrying one of the parade puppet characters created in our puppet building workshops. Volunteers needed. Millers River Environmental Center, 100 Main St., Athol. For more information, or to volunteer, call 978-248-9491.

Doug Tanner & Terry Reed, Gypsy Wranglers Lite at Deja Brew Cafe, 57A Lockes Village Road, Wendell. 978-544-BREW

Our Lady of Czestochowa Parish in Turners Falls will have an auction of celebrity items in conjunction with its April 8 Easter Bazaar and Spring Gaik. The silent auction will include photographs, books and other items signed by such celebrities as Tom Bodett, Jimmy Carter, Barry Gibb, Earl Hamner, Nancy Kerrigan, Natalie Merchant, Pat Robertson, Andy Robustelli, Antonio Sabato Jr., Pat Sajak and Vanna White, and Travis Tritt. In St. Theresa Catechism Center at 84 K Street from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. For more information, call 863-4748.

The honky-tonk, "retro-twang" sounds of the Girl Howdy band will be livening up the Wendell Full Moon Coffeehouse on the Common in Wendell. This event will benefit the Friends of the Wendell Meetinghouse. Open Mic begins at 7:30 p.m. www.wendellfullmoon.org

James Montgomery Blues Band. When blues legend James Montgomery plays the harmonica, he "brings it on

home." Whether it's recording with Kid Rock, sitting in with Gregg Allman, or fronting his hot band of thirty years, Montgomery plays with authority. While growing up in Detroit he learned first-hand from the masters - James Cotton, John Lee Hooker, and Jr. Wells - at the legendary "Chessmate." Over the years, he's carried on in the tradition and continues to be a vital presence in Blues as one of the most dynamic performers on the scene. 9:30 p.m., Rt. 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls, \$10. 413-659-3384.

Jay Maisel's bold, graphic, saturated color images are showcased in *Retrospective*, the new photography exhibit at The Hallmark Museum of Contemporary Photography. Maisel, photographing since 1954, has selected works from his career as an advertising, corporate and editorial photographer based in New York City. An opening reception will be held on Saturday, April 8th from 1-5 p.m. with live jazz, *hors d'oeuvres* and book signing with Maisel. Also on April 8th Maisel will give an Artist's Talk beginning at 7 p.m. at the Hallmark Institute of Photography lecture hall, Industrial Boulevard, Turners Falls. Refreshments and a book signing follow. 85 Avenue A, Turners Falls. Museum Hours, Thurs.-Sun. 1-5 p.m. Admission to the museum and all events is free. Information: (413) 863-0009.

Coffee and Soul Coffeehouse Featuring Modern Man (David Buskin, Rob Carlson and George Wurzbach) with Special Guest the Jazz Beat Blues Poetry Ensemble Performance at All Souls Church located at 399 Main Street in Greenfield. Doors opens at 7:00 p.m. Concert begins at 7:30 p.m. 413-773-5018

**SUNDAY, APRIL 9TH**  
Turners Falls High School Class of 2008 will sponsor a Breakfast with the Easter Bunny at the Elks Lodge on Elks Avenue. The breakfast will be served from 7-11 a.m. Tickets are \$4 for adults, \$3 for students and seniors and \$2 for children under 10. Tickets will be on sale at the door.

**FRIDAY, APRIL 7 - SUNDAY APRIL 9TH**  
Nationally-known playwright and performance artist Bill Talen, a.k.a. "Reverend Billy,"

and his NYC-based "Church of Stop Shopping" Gospel Choir will be bringing their anti-consumerist "Fabu-lous Worship!" service to Brattleboro, Amherst, and Greenfield, April 7th - 9th. On Friday, April 7th, 7:30 p.m. at The Church, 120 Main St., Brattleboro, VT; Saturday, on April 8th, 8:00 p.m. at Hampshire College Gymnasium, Route. 116, Amherst; on Sunday, April 9th, 3:00 p.m. at the All Souls Unitarian Church, 399 Main St., Greenfield. There will be a suggested donation of \$8.00 at the door for each performance, though no one will be turned away. More info, see: www.RevBilly.com.

**TUESDAY, APRIL 11TH**  
Presentation: "Winding Your Heart's Way Safely Through the Supermarket." Presenter is Louise Amyot, registered dietician. Held at Connecticut River Internists located at 8 Burnham Street in Turners Falls. 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. on Tuesday, April 11th, 8 Burnham Street, Turners Falls. Pre-register by calling 413-774-7917 and leave your name and telephone number.

**WEDNESDAY APRIL 12TH**  
Dr. Kellom will discuss how a handful of colleges, including GCC, are seeking to improve the educational experience of college men and address men's roles in today's society. The event is sponsored by the GCC Men's Initiative Committee is free and open to the public. For more information, contact Lewis Bosler at (413) 775-1276.

**THURSDAY, APRIL 20TH**  
Larry Kopp "jazz guitar" 8-10 pm at Deja Brew Cafe 57A Lockes Village Road, Wendell. 978-544-BREW

**SATURDAY, APRIL 22ND**  
Long-time supporter of the Zen Peacemakers, actor Jeff Bridges, will host the Massachusetts premiere of his new movie, *The Amateurs*, at the Academy of Music in Northampton on Saturday, from 4 - 6 p.m. General admission is \$20. Prior to the screening there will be an intimate wine & cheese reception with Bridges and Bernie Glassman, from 2 - 4 p.m. for \$85 admission, including both reception and film

screening. On the following day, Sunday, April 23rd, Jeff Bridges and Roshi Bernie Glassman, will lead a day long workshop at the Maezumi Institute called, *Enlightened Film: Zen Mind, Artist's Mind*. The workshop runs from 9:00 a.m. - till 4:00 p.m. and includes the screening of two of Bridges' films, each followed by open dialogue. Registration costs \$175 for the day. The morning film features *The Big Lebowski* and afternoon film features *The Fisher King*. Pre-Register - call 413-367-2080 ext. 4# or email laura@zenpeacemakers.org.

*Marx in Soho* - A one man play by Howard Zinn, historian and social activist. Performed by Jerry Levy, teacher of sociology at Marlboro College. Even in heaven it seems, Karl Marx is a troublemaker! Embedded in some secular afterlife, where intellectuals, artists and radicals are sent, Marx is given permission by the administrative committee to return to Soho, London to have his say. But through a bureaucratic mix-up, he winds up in Soho, New York. We see not only Marx the revolutionary philosopher, but the intimate, vindictive and humorous Karl Marx. Observations and commentaries about social injustice, family issues, the collapse of the Soviet Union and modern life in the world today! 8 PM, Memorial Hall, Bridge St, Shelburne Falls. Tickets - \$15.00 general admission \$10 students/retired/unemployed. Tickets at: World Eye Books, Greenfield, Boswell's Books, Shelburne Falls and at the door. Info at 413-625-6177

**SATURDAY, APRIL 29TH**  
Spaghetti Supper Sponsored by the Wendell Womens Club. Homemade Vegetarian or Meat Sauce, beverage, salad, and brownie with ice cream for dessert. Members of the Relay For Life Team #73, Schneiders Helpers, will be assisting the womens club members with this event. 50% of the proceeds will be donated to the American Cancer Society. 5:00 - 7:00 p.m. at the Wendell Town Hall. Adults \$6.00, Children and Seniors \$4.00. For more information and tickets call (978) 544-2928.

**Week of the Young Child**  
with **The Juice Pops**  
**Saturday, April 8th**  
1-2 pm Mountain Man Presentation  
2:30-3:30 pm Rockin' Kids Music with The Juice Pops FREE!  
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**April 7th & 8th Steamboat Bill Jr.**  
Electric cellist Gideon Freudmann returns with another innovative original LIVE score to a classic silent film. Milquetoast Buster Keaton does comic battle with a villainous riverboat owner and with the physical world in general in this imaginative, visually arresting, hilarious slice of Americana. The hurricane sequence is one of Keaton's best scenes ever. 1928. NR 71 minutes. b&w. 7:30 p.m Music at 7: Fri - The Illiterati, jazz, Sat - Matthew Ruby Shippee, jazz Guitar.  
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DAILY 7:00 9:10 PG 13 in DTS sound  
MAT SAT, SUN, WED 12:00 3:00  
**2. ICE AGE 2: THE MELTDOWN**  
DAILY 6:45 9:00 PG in DTS sound  
MAT SAT, SUN, WED 12:00 2:15 4:30  
**3. SHE'S THE MAN PG13**  
DAILY 6:45 9:15  
MAT SAT, SUN, WED 12:15 3:15  
**4. FAILURE TO LAUNCH PG13**  
DAILY 6:45 9:15  
MAT SAT, SUN, WED 12:15 3:15  
**5. TAKE THE LEAD**  
DAILY 7:00 9:10 PG13 DTS sound  
MAT SAT, SUN, WED 12:00 3:00  
**6. INSIDE MAN R**  
DAILY 6:30 9:30  
MAT SAT, SUN, WED 12:30 3:30  
**7. V FOR VENDETTA**  
DAILY 6:30 9:30 R in DTS sound  
MAT SAT, SUN, WED 12:30 3:30

Mabel Zobel  
By  
Sandra Facto  
  
Next time borrow money from a pessimist, there is a great chance that they won't expect it back!!!

# Geese on the Northern Flyways

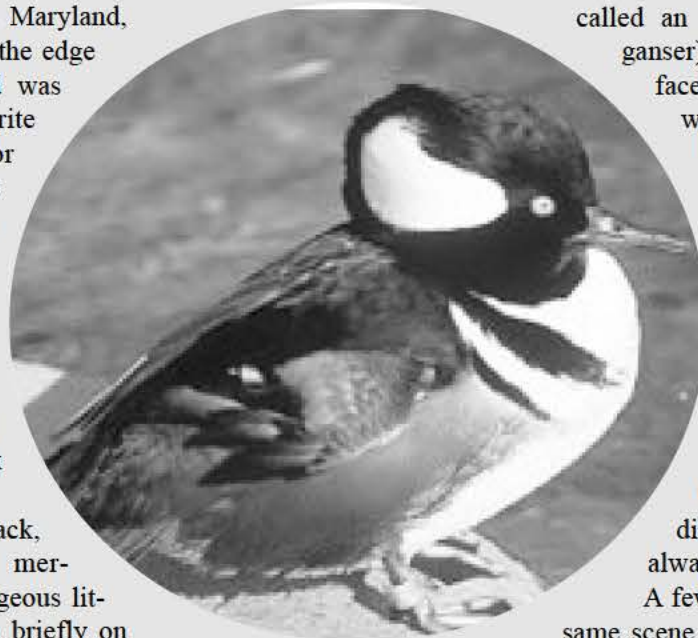
BY FRAN HEMOND

**MONTAGUE CENTER** - V's of geese in varying forms and numbers are honking their way north to their breeding grounds, our Connecticut River their flyway. We cannot miss them. They are with us, sound and sight, in air, on earth and water. They may stop in the river for a bit, and occasionally a couple stops for an overnight here on the pond. The geese are only a manifestation of the many unseen smaller and quieter birds that pass through every spring and fall.

Our government has established wildlife refuges to give safe stopping places to the migrants. Many of these havens are along the Atlantic shore. From years past, names like Chincoteague, Brigatine, and Bombay Hook come to mind. Like our Cape, Delmarva, the peninsula occu-

pied by Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia is on the edge of the ocean, and was the site of our favorite spring break for many years. Here in Montague, on the river, we also enjoy the opportunity to see migratory birds pass through. Even here, on the pond at Cold Brook Farm.

A short while back, a male hooded merganser, a truly gorgeous little guy, stopped in briefly on an open bit of North Pond when the ice was still discouraging avian visitors. The calm water and late afternoon sun combined to create a reflected Hoodie swimming by his side. The patterned white and black and rusty colors and lively little drakes made a memorable



sight. He swam a little, dived a bit, then flew off toward the river. A chance encounter.

It must have been a merganser week. Walking Migratory Way with my son, a lone, beautiful common merganser drake (he used to be

called an American merganser) dove and surfaced and flew. He was a good-sized bird who performed on an open stage. His colors, green head, white body with dark back and long red bill are distinctive, and these diving ducks area always a delight.


A few days later, the same scene offered golden-eyes, regular visitors. A golden-eye's white face spot just aft of his bill, small size, and white under parts, dark head and diving ways add life to the more pleasant geese with whom they swim. This day a bird watcher with a telescope kindly shared a view of scaup.

They are diving ducks, white in the middle and black at both ends. We also saw ring-necked ducks, distinguished by their dark back and head, with a very distinctive white vertical mark just aft of their breast.


The ornithologist also had a pintail in his scope. I pass on my sight of their bigger, gray, 'dabbler' duck notable for his long white neck and skinny tail, courtesy of an expert.

On the same trip, one person we passed reported seeing a pileated woodpecker flying across the canal. Meanwhile, the waxwings were at Unity Park, and in the crabapple trees that line the downtown streets. Viewers of local cable access were eagerly watching progress as the eagles roosted on two eggs. And the V's of geese were still streaming north.

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# Earth Week at Sheffield School

BY DAVID DETMOLD

**TURNERS FALLS** - Next week, Sheffield Elementary School gets Earthy, as fifth grade teacher Sue Smith and special education teacher Steve Touloumtzis roll out a barrel of Earth Week activities. Smith, the reigning goddess of Earth Week at Sheffield, (where she organized the first environmental awareness week of activities a decade ago) may step out of her professorial role to appear in the Earth Day parade as Rita ReUse-It. Other local celebrities who will put in an appearance include Dr. T (not to be confused with Mr. T.) the Garbologist (Jack Golden), and the ever-popular Tom Ricardi with his traveling birds of prey show. In between times, every classroom will take part in some "greening activities around the school,"

Touloumtzis said. Environmental educators from the Hitchcock Center in Amherst will be on premises throughout the week, to assist with science projects, including temperature and chemical analyses and comparisons of pond water vs. river water.

Students will participate in a march from Sheffield down to the Great Falls Discovery Center on Tuesday, April 11th, at 9:20 a.m. and the public is invited to celebrate Earth Week with them on that occasion. Sixth graders will return to the Discovery Center on Thursday morning to hear a presentation from environmental educators about the "use and misuse of the Connecticut River."

This year, the national theme for Earth Week is Global Warming. In an era when more and more

of class time is being devoted to testing children to see how well their math and reading scores are stacking up against escalating averages, we asked Sheffield School Elementary principal Chip Wood why his school is making such a fuss about environmental awareness and science.

He said, "National leaders are finally beginning to accept the reality of global warming. I won't accept the trend [of narrowing school curriculum to MCAS subjects] as effective for students who will have to solve the problem of global warming as adults. I believe we are trying to design a school community and structure that will meet the standard requirements as well as the creative and scientific needs and interests of our students."

Bring on Dr. T!



Sue Smith and Steve Touloumtzis stand in front of a red maple (donated by Stewart's Nursery) planted by students during Earth Week a few years ago at Sheffield.



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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