



TURNERS FALLS BLOCK PARTY

"Easy to Love, Hard to Leave"

Page 8

LAKE PLEASANT MILLERS FALLS MONTAGUE CENTER MONTAGUE CITY TURNERS FALLS

The Montague Reporter

YEAR 8 - NO. 42

also serving Irving, Gill, Everett and Wendell

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

AUGUST 19, 2010

SPS Bridgework Update



PARZYCH PHOTO

SPS workers on Gill-Montague Bridge replace an abrasive blade on a cutoff saw. Apparatus at right rear gives Mimosa workers access to install a second platform under the deck to support a demolition blanket to catch chips when jackhammering around re-bars.

BY JOSEPH A. PARZYCH
GREAT FALLS - SPS workers are hard at work on the Gill side of the Gill-Montague bridge, sawing the first concrete slab to be removed, probably Monday, according to job superintendent Henry Mulvey.

The steel shot recycling unit parked on the turnoff to Riverside is scheduled to be moved up onto the middle of the bridge on Saturday. Workers are installing a second work platform under the deck on which to spread a demo-

lition blanket to catch concrete chips when workers jackhammer concrete away from reinforcement rods so they can be cut with torches. After the slab is lifted onto a truck, the demo blanket will be gathered up in a bundle to hoist and dump chips in a truck with a crane.

In an unrelated job, close by, SPS workers are jackhammering concrete for replacement on the Route 2 bridge over the Fall River just north of the Gill town line.

Bridge Signage Vexes Drivers

BY P.H. CROSBY

GILL - The Gill Selectboard moved through its business this week with efficiency and good humor, affording members an early departure into a beautiful summer evening while it was still light enough to enjoy it.

A major subject was the lack of sufficient signage regarding the Gill-Montague Bridge project, which is a continuing issue and a very real danger, according to several in attendance at the meeting. Nancy Griswold noted that the signs are very unclear and that there are not enough of them. "It says 'Truck Detour Ahead.' That isn't very helpful to the regular driver."

Several people agreed that the signs do not make it at all clear that one lane on the bridge is closed, but that it is okay to drive into Turners Falls on the single lane remaining, even though it is on the wrong side of the road. Drivers can be witnessed on a regular basis starting to turn, hesitating, and pulling off the road to try and figure out what is okay and not okay to do.

The sign causing the greatest
see GILL pg 14

Johnson Family Farm



FURBISH PHOTO

Bob Johnson looks on as Edith Bourbeau adds some summer squash to Mary Wheeler's bag.

BY JOHN FURBISH

GREAT FALLS - Bob Johnson was one of the first farmers to start setting up on the Avenue about fifteen years ago, when the Wednesday afternoon Great Falls Farmers Market formed as an offshoot of the Saturday Greenfield Farmers Market. The farmers who started the Great Falls Market wanted to provide a midweek outlet for their harvest to residents of Turners, and surrounding towns, with display tables accessible to pedestrians on the Avenue.

Today the Johnson Family Farm's table and canopy is always the first stand you'll see when crossing 2nd Street to

approach the farmers market.

Johnson is an old style farmer with a small farm in West Deerfield, started by his grandfather about 1900. His father worked the farm all his life and Bob was born and raised there. Most of his adult life he worked on Valley tobacco farms as a foreman, running equipment.

For the past twenty or more years, he has returned to owning and operating the Johnson Farm. An old tractor, and sometimes Bob Junior, are his only assistants. He grows the same basic crops his grandfather and father grew before him, and plants by the traditional planting calendar they used.

Bob Johnson and his wife Janice married in 1962 and raised two sons and a daughter on the farm. Janice retired from a factory job last year; now she can help Bob around the farm more than before. She especially likes to sit with him at the market, selling their produce and meeting people on Wednesdays at the Great Falls Farmers Market, 2:00 - 6:00 p.m., rain or shine. Johnson managed to keep his table colorful and well stocked, despite the unrelenting heat of July.

Last week, a woman crossed the street, calling out, "Hey Bob, I see that your carrots are in."

"Yep," the old Swede replied. "They're small yet, but good." He helped Mary Wheeler pick out the bright orange carrots and several green and red vegetables from a table jam-packed with cukes, cauliflower, broccoli, beets, different shades of potatoes, bright carrots, summer squash, zucchini, different colors of beans, green peppers, various onion types, leeks, and peaches. And the prices are as low as the quality is high.

Johnson's constant helper at the farmers market is Edith Bourbeau. She told me, "Don't forget to tell folks we'll have all

see FARM pg 9

District Attorney Candidates Debate



PHOTO COURTESY OF WWW.CAHILLANEFORDA.COM

Michael Cahillane



PHOTO COURTESY OF WWW.DAVESULLIVAN.ORG

David Sullivan

BY BILL FRANKLIN

GREENFIELD - On August 5th, Greenfield Community Television hosted a debate between the two candidates for the office of District Attorney for the Northwest District: Michael Cahillane and David Sullivan. The candidates are running for the nomination of the Democratic Party to be decided in the primary on September 14th. Attorney David Roulston, himself a candidate for state representative for the second district in Franklin County, moderated the debate.

The DA's office, uncontested for the last 28 years, possesses tremendous discretionary power in deciding when and how to prosecute criminal cases. The office also employs 70 people. But the interested voter, with no other information other than that gleaned from this debate, may have been disappointed and hard-pressed to distinguish between the two candidates; on most substantive issues the candidates agreed.

Questioned as to their philosophy in deciding which cases to prosecute, Cahillane and Sullivan both agreed that first offenders, especially in drug-related crimes, should be helped with treatment and rehabilitation. For repeat offenders, Cahillane said that we need a "ratcheting up of sanctions." Sullivan stressed the "paramount value of public safety" and "victims' rights."

Both candidates agree, however, that drug forfeiture money should not be applied towards rehabilitation or treatment; rather, the funds should be used directly for law enforcement-to buy equipment and fund investigations.

With respect to the controversial issue of mandatory min-

imum sentences, both candidates stated that these sentences should be applied selectively. "Drug distribution in school zones, firearms, and DUIs" are minimum-sentencing appropriate, according to Cahillane.

"We need to be very strict with firearms," he added. "A different approach should be used for drug users than is used for drug dealers. We need to treat first time offenders differently than career criminals."

Sullivan stated that he would reserve the mandatory sentences for "those trafficking in large amounts of drugs." Referring to a recent change in the law that would cut drug sentences by half for those who have not used violence or sold to children, he agreed, noting that this would free up jail space for more violent offenders.

Both candidates stated that they were opposed to the death penalty, although there was some difference in rationale between the two: Cahillane acknowledged the desire for revenge by families of murder victims, but stated that the current system of life without parole works, and he supports it. Sullivan, on the other hand, said that there is a disproportionate racial component in the application of the death penalty, which is one reason he is against it. He noted the situation in Illinois in recent years in which the results of DNA testing showed that a large percentage of those on Death Row were actually innocent of the crimes for which they were sentenced to die. As a result, the governor of Illinois stopped all executions. "We sometimes get it wrong," said Sullivan. "People have been exonerated." He also said that killing people is not a humane way to resolve

see DEBATE pg 9

PET OF THE WEEK

Charming and Irresistible



Kittens!

We have many kittens available for adoption. If you are looking for a specific type of kitten, call and speak with an Adoption Counselor. The number of kittens varies all the time but during these summer months we will always have kittens available for adoption. Please come by and visit. For more information on adopting us, please contact the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society at (413) 548-9898 or via email: info@dpvhs.org.

MONTAGUE LIBRARY NEWS

Participants Enjoyed Summer Reading Parties



LINDA HICKMAN PHOTOS

Above
MILLERS FALLS-Kartyr, McKailya, and Evelyn of Millers Falls enjoyed the treats and prizes at the Millers Falls Library Summer Reading Program Party on Tuesday, August 3rd.



Left
MONTAGUE CENTER - Solena Davidson Carroll of Montague Center enjoyed dressing up like a queen and the oreos at the Montague Center Summer Reading Program Costume Party on Monday, August 2nd.



LYN CLARK PHOTO

Three generations of Coutures - Corey, Sam and Christian - celebrated the Couture Bros. 100th year in business on August 21st. State Representative Stephen Kulik (third from left) was on hand to present them with a certificate of achievement, as well as with a certificate from State Senator Stan Rosenberg. Couture Bros. has two locations in Turners Falls, their retail store at 187 Avenue A and their paint contractor business at 400 Avenue A.

Richardson Road Beaver Pond Community Meetings Scheduled

Western Massachusetts Electric Company (WMECO) has scheduled four community meetings to discuss the issue of the Richardson Road pond that is currently a habitat for beavers. The pond sits partly in Montague and partly in Leverett.

Two of the meetings are scheduled to take place in Leverett on Mondays, August 23rd and 30th from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the Leverett Library, 75 Montague Road.

The other two meetings are scheduled to take place in Montague on Thursdays, August 26th and September 1st from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. in the Community Room at the new public safety complex in Montague, 180 Turnpike Road, Turners Falls.

MONTAGUE VOTER REGISTRATION

Wednesday, August 25th, 2010 is the last day to register to vote or to change your party affiliation for the upcoming September 14th State Primary. Registration will be held at the Town Clerk's Office for all Montague residents who will be 18 years old on or before September 14th, 2010. Office hours will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Registered vot-

ers who belong to any one of the three parties, Republican, Democrat or Libertarian must vote their party affiliation. Unenrolled registered voters can choose any one of the three party ballots. The Town Clerk's office is located at the Town Hall, One Avenue A, Turners Falls. For more information call 863-3200, ext 203.

MONTAGUE ABSENTEE BALLOTS AVAILABLE

Absentee ballots are now available at the Town Clerk's Office for the September 14th, State Primary. The deadline to apply for an absentee ballot is noon on Monday, September 13th. To vote absentee you must be out of town on the day of the election, have a religious belief that prohibits you from being at

the polls or have a physical disability that prevents you from going to the polls. All absentee ballots must be returned to the Town Clerk's Office by the close of the polls on September 14th. The polls will be open from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Registered voters who belong to any one of the three parties,

Republican, Democrat or Libertarian must vote their party affiliation. Unenrolled registered voters can choose any one of the three party ballots.

The Town Clerk's Office is located at the Town Hall, One Avenue A, Turners Falls. For more information call 863-3200, ext 203.

SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES - August 23rd to September 3rd

GILL/MONTAGUE Senior Center, 62 Fifth Street, Turners Falls, is open Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Summer Congregate meals are served Tuesday through Thursday at Noon. Meal reservations must be made a day in advance by 11:00 a.m. Messages can be left on our machine when the center is not open. Council on Aging Director is Roberta Potter. Poet's Seat. For information or to make meal reservations, call (413) 863-9357.

Mondays, August 23rd, 30th
10:00 a.m. Senior Aerobics
10:45 a.m. Chair Exercise
1:00 p.m. Knitting Group
Tuesdays, August 24th, 31st
9:00 a.m. Walking Group
1:00 p.m. Canasta
Wednesdays, Aug. 25th, Sept 1st
10:00 a.m. Senior Aerobics

10:30 a.m. Monthly Health Screenings (August 24th)
12:45 p.m. Bingo
Thursdays, Aug. 26th, Sept. 2nd
1:00 p.m. Pitch
Fridays, August 27th, Sept. 3rd
10:00 a.m. Senior Aerobics
10:45 a.m. Chair Exercise
1:00 p.m. Scrabble

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

Mondays, August 23rd, 30th
9:00 a.m. Tai Chi
12:00 noon Pitch
Tuesdays, August 24th, 31st
8:45 a.m. Chair Aerobics
12:30 p.m. Painting
Wednesdays, Aug. 25th, Sept 1st
8:45 a.m. Line Dancing
12:30 p.m. Bingo
Thursdays, Aug. 26th, Sept. 2nd
9:00 a.m. Aerobics
Fridays, August 27th, Sept. 3rd
9:00 a.m. Bowling
11:30 a.m. Lunch - Call the center for details.

WENDELL Senior Center is located at 2 Lockes Village Road. Call Kathy Swaim at (978) 544-2020 for hours and upcoming programs. Call the Center if you need a ride.

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This newspaper shall not be liable for errors in advertisements, but will print without charge that part of the advertisement in which an error occurred. The publishers reserve the right to refuse advertising for any reason and to alter copy or graphics to conform to standards of the newspaper, such as they are.

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JESSICA HARMON ILLUSTRATION

Local Briefs

COMPILED BY DON CLEGG - Montague Old Home Days in Montague Center begins this Friday evening at 6:00 p.m. with a dance performance by Karen's Dance Studio. Booths on the common will be open and live music will be performed by Jen Tobey and Haven't a Clue. Saturday, August 21st features the Mug Race (registration at 7:30 a.m., race at 8:15), with a white elephant sale and farmers' market, quilt display by Montague Historical Society, and a silent auction at the Grange. Music starts at 11:00 a.m. and continues throughout the day. Sunday morning, August 22nd there will be a country breakfast buffet from 8:00 to 10:00 a.m. at the Montague Center Congregational Church. Tickets for breakfast are \$8.00 for adults and \$4.00 for children.

Bring a folding chair, fiddles, guitars, banjos, mandolins, ukuleles, harmonicas, accordions, etc. to the 9th Annual **John Putnam Fiddler's Reunion** and enjoy informal jam sessions. This free event is in honor of John Putnam (c.1818-1895) a Greenfield fiddler, dance caller, barber, and Underground Railroad conduc-

tor. It will be held at the Greenfield Energy Park located at the end of Miles Street in Greenfield, noon to dusk on Saturday, August 21st.

Free Harvest Supper on the Greenfield Town Common, Sunday, August 22nd, from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m., featuring fabulous locally-grown food, music and community. Please bring your own reusable place setting. Donations will be accepted in support of Greenfield Farmers Market Coupons. For more information call 413-774-2756 or www.freeharvestsupper.org

The Deerfield Valley Arts Association at Gallery 38, 2 Avenue A in Turners Falls is presenting **Summer Fun** with a lively musical performance by

Save the Date



Performance by Paul Richmond, Suzy Polucci and Moonlight Davis at the Shea Theater, Turners Falls, October 1st & 2nd. A benefit for The Montague Reporter!

The Walter Mitty's on Saturday, August 21st, from 3:00 p.m. until 5:00 p.m. "From bar to barn to bayou and back" is the musical theme.

The Great Falls Farmers Market will be having its third in a series of **Sunday farmers markets** on August 22nd from noon until 4:00 p.m. For more information, call Don at 413-336-3648. No need to register and new vendors are always welcome. Maybe you would just like to sell some of those tomatoes and zucchini that have recently burst out in your gardens!

Join Lisa Enzer, M.Ed., for **Easy Yoga** at the Greenfield Savings Bank community room, 282 Avenue A, in Turners Falls on Saturday morning, August 21st, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Enzer will guide you on the joys and benefits of yoga in this informative and educational

workshop. Learn how to relax, relieve stress, soothe aches and pains, as well as total body care concept for inner resources. Bring a large towel. Seating is limited, so call Linda or Kerri soon at 413-863-4316. Light refreshments will be provided.

The Gill Agricultural Commission is celebrating **"Massachusetts Farmers' Market Week"** by hosting a special Farmers' Market on

Sunday, August 22nd from 2-5 p.m. at the Riverside Building on Route 2 in Gill. Come on out and shop locally, supporting farmers from Gill and beyond. We'll have organic and conventional vegetables, herbs and flowers, socks from angora goats, local honey, baked goods and more.

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

Pastor Called Home

BY HELEN STOTZ

TURNERS FALLS - Rev. Dr. Dennis J. Roth, Pastor of the First Congregational Church passed away on Sunday, July 25, 2010, after battling bone marrow disease. Reverend Roth had an extensive background in the ministry, and throughout his life he had always been passionate about reaching out and ministering to

all.

Rev. Roth served the local church for the past four years. He was known for his love of music, and frequently on Sunday morning the congregation enjoyed music by the Roth Family Singers. He was loved by the parishioners and will be sorely missed. A memorial service was held on August 1st at the United Church of Bernardston where he had previously served.



David Southworth, fifth generation owner, giving a tour of the Southworth paper plant in Turners Falls

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WENDELL OLD HOME DAYS

Saturday, August 21st
The Common in Wendell
Events start Sunday at 11:00 a.m with the annual kids parade. Then a new and exciting international folk dance circle to include Celtic and Middle Eastern folk dances, with live music. At 1:00 p.m., will feature Marsia Shuron-Harris and Mother Turtle, Danger Boy singin' da blues, Annie Hassett and Bob Rosser, Julia Burrough and friends, Riddim Inc., Hillary and Richard Chase and friends, and more.

Silent Auction

To benefit the Friends of the Montague Grange and Old Home Days

Artists: Jill Bromberg, Joanne Caloon, Ann Feitelson, George Kennard, David McKenny, MaryMelonis, Chris Mero, Louise Minks, Claudine Mussuto, Jaye Pope, Sally Prash, Kathryn Simon, Josh Simpson, Kate Spencer, Ruth West

Gift Certificates: Night Kitchen, Red Fire Farm, Montague Reporter, Howard Blodgett - bicycle tune-up, Kathy Schermerhorn - acupuncture session, Nancy Paglia - massage, Black Orchid Jewelry, Jeane Weintraub-Mason - genealogy research, Tim VanEgmond - entertainment, Turn it Up, Lady Killigrew Café, The Montague Book Mill, Blue Heron Restaurant, Montague Mini-Mart

Held at the Montague Grange, 34 Main Street, Montague, MA
Saturday, August 21, 9:00am - 5:00pm Bidding ends at 4:00
Sponsored by the Friends of the Montague Grange, a local 501(c)(3) non profit, as part of their Grange Building fundraiser campaign. All donations are tax deductible. For more info please visit www.MontagueGrange.org.

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August Almanac

BY DAVID BRULE

ERVINGSIDE — How have you spent these endless blue sky days, baking heat with lawns grilled and dry as shredded wheat? It's been August in town and August in the country all month now. The end may be in sight, but we'll not complain too much, as everyone reminds us that we'll miss all this in the depths of gray, sunless late December.

Along Avenue A the pavement radiates 100 degree heat, the brick facades bounce hot drafts of air onto the sidewalks. Outside of town, along our river the temperatures are tempered by the leafy woods and the slow-moving water. The yard and garden are as dry as everywhere else in New England but early in the morning the day's tasks are easier done.

The sun sends dappled shade through the cherry tree onto the pages of the morning book. Catbirds mew and skulk around the yard, chickadee shadows flit overhead and the titmouse clan throngs in noisily to select a sunflower seed or two. Our hummingbirds warm in the sun on a lilac branch, then visit fading bee balm flowers before drawing long draughts of sugared water from the feeder.

The river that flows by here every day is reduced to a trickle. It still gurgles and splashes among the rounded river stones, quietly. You can walk from Ervingside to the Montague side in the Millers River without getting your feet wet. No sense in walking over there to stay however; we're content to stay put on this side where our taxes are lower!

The August population in our woods has actually increased with the dry summer, so there is

a positive side to the lack of rain. Wild flowers are thriving, cardinal flowers and joe pye weed are swarming with insects and bees tolling the nectar. There's a second brood of robins in the maple, a good quantity of catbirds, a growing skirmish of squirrels, a triumph of jays, the wood thrushes at twilight, dueling hummingbirds, a rattle of kingfishers, two lurking snapping turtles and just this morning a quark of great blue herons, and a wild whoop of the pileated woodpecker.

Our bullfrog patriarch waits out the dry spell in his shrinking mud hole. Where he used to plunge heartily into two feet of water, he now has to be content with a goopy murk of mud and old leaves while waiting for a cloud burst that has only come once this month. A woodcock is summering near the mudhole and every evening probes the margins with his long bill searching for his wormy supper.

The rhododendron where the cedar waxwings sought nightly refuge all winter is holding its own in the shade of the maples, and has put on new growth. Hoover the chipmunk (named after the vacuum cleaner, not the President), who has tamed and trained us, peers into the kitchen window and waits for his handouts. He packs his pockets with sunflower and scurries off to deposit seeds in his winter quarters and rushes back for more expectantly. Like Hoover, it's high time for us to think about the next season; getting in wood, scheduling time for the burner man to check the furnace, getting Craig the Sweep down from Vermont to clean the chimneys.

We leave this little domain every now and then to go to town, this time to head out for the annual Block Party. A bril-

liant day of sunshine brought out townsfolk for good rocking RiverCulture fun on the Avenue. The Lawn Chair Drill Team did their thing, precision marching, and figure-eighting, chillin' lazy and way cool. Every dog had his day, the pups on parade down the street, politely not pooping just when it really counted to be on best behavior. The Zen Farm Café Marching Band strutted by and the candy flew from the Between the Uprights float. (A few of us slipped away towards the BTU for a cool pint of ale and some Curly Fingers Dupree before heading back down the block to the Riverculture fest.)

Every subculture of the new Turners Falls flowed up and down the street from dreadlocks to folkies and rockers, gay and straight, and a full rainbow spectrum of ethnic groups from Lithuanians to Salvadorans. Alice Sokolosky, quite possibly the eldest attendee, took a quiet and dignified stroll down the Avenue, not far from one of the youngest there, barely two feet tall, whipping and threading expertly through the crowd on his scooter, tiny baseball cap on backwards. That's August around here for you. Soon there'll be the Montague Old Home Days, the Wendell Old Home Days, last concerts in the parks of Gill and Turners before we pack it in on Labor Day.

Back home in the calm of summer twilight, corn roasts on the campfire. Crickets fiddle all day and all night, the electric buzz of the cicada rises and falls, the katydid waits for the coolness of the evening to call her endless name over and over. The seasons do turn, and this is how we make the most of it, around here.

Cartwatchers



"ONE'S A BLUE-WHEELED DRUGSTORE ROLLER...
THE OTHER LOOKS LIKE A NARROW-BINNED DOLLARCART..."

MICHAEL LAIN CARTOON

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Lose Weight By Volunteering

Dear Fellow Readers:

When have you ever heard that for a pitch? I am living testimony to the truth of it, however, having lost ten pounds after volunteering to take over part of my daughter's *Montague Reporter* delivery route this spring.

Here's how it works. The papers get delivered to your drop off site - in my case, Upinngil - by Thursday afternoon. I get home from work, put on my sneakers and get at least part of the route done right away on Thursday night. In my case, my route involves three separate walks: a half mile east to deliver one issue; a quarter mile west to deliver two; and a 3.2 mile loop to deliver five more.

That means my volunteer obligations put me on the road a minimum of three times a week, Thursday - Saturday, no matter what, rain or shine (one good raincoat with a hood makes the former no problem). And actually, as all successful

exercisers know, once you establish a rhythm, the ritual feels so good you find yourself adding to it voluntarily.

So volunteer! Lose ten pounds! Pick a route in your neighborhood and get to know your neighbors better. Take a route somewhere else and get to know your community better. If you need the money, the MR can pay you, but it's costly to print this great little paper, so if you can make it part of your volunteer commitments, all the better.

Have fun, and maybe I'll see you on the road!

Patricia Crosby
Gill

Editor's note: Although we heartily commend Patricia and others who deliver the Montague Reporter on foot, we welcome your inquiry about taking on a paper route no matter what form of transportation you plan to use!

Note to Our Readers

The *Montague Reporter* is on its summer schedule, printing every other week. There will be no paper on August 26th. We return to weekly publication on September 2nd.

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The Montague Reporter

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American Dead in Iraq and Afghanistan as of 8/16/10



Open Meeting Law Not Violated

To the Editor:

Notwithstanding the August 16th headline in the Greenfield Recorder, the District Attorney's Office did not find a violation of the Open Meeting Law in regard to the election of the Gill-Montague Regional School District School Committee Chair. The District Attorney's letter did express concern about the process, but it specifically found no deliberate circumvention of the law. School Committee members work hard - and without compensation - toward a single goal, the best possible educa-

tion for our towns' children, and they are not in the business of violating state law. Now that I am no longer a member of the School Committee, I can say that all those who continue to serve should receive our gratitude and our strongest support.

Sandy Brown
Gill

To read the full text of the letter from the Office of the District Attorney to the GMRSD School Committee, visit the "Five Towns Extra!" blog at montaguereporter.blogspot.com.

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GUEST EDITORIAL

Frederick Douglass in the Classroom

BY ELOISE MICHAEL
TURNERS FALLS - On July 26th, The Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights under Law, The National Action Network, The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), The NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc., The National Council for Educating Black Children, The National Urban League, The Rainbow PUSH Coalition, and The Schott Foundation for Public Education published a document titled *Framework for Providing All Students an Opportunity to Learn through Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act*, which, in their own words, offers "critiques of federal efforts that would: distribute resources by competition in the midst of a severe recession; advance experimental proposals dwarfed by the scope of the challenges in low-income communities; and promote ineffective approaches for turning around low-performing schools and education systems."

U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan has called education the "civil rights issue of our generation." The Obama administration has told us repeatedly that "Race to the Top," is in the interest of poor and minority children, just as the Bush administration promoted "No Child Left Behind." Funny that eight civil rights groups should publicly disagree. I happen to, as well.

I do agree, however, that education is a civil rights issue. So much so that ten years ago while teaching 4th grade in a public school in Oregon, where all but

two of my twenty-seven students had a black parent, I decided to put aside the scripted lesson that I was required to read each day as part of the Open Court curriculum. Open Court, which has recently changed its name to "Imagine It!" is a "standards based," "research-proven," teach-to-the-test package that cost my building \$50K that particular year, and provided us with student texts, as well as teacher scripts.

Anyway, in a rash act of defiance, I decided to read aloud to my kids from an actual book rather than a script. I chose *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* to start. This fit into a larger two-month curriculum that I had (secretly) planned as a lead up to a required one-day Martin Luther King Jr. event. Douglass's Narrative has some pretty hard words, but I had the "high expectation" that my students would be able to follow the story, if I stopped frequently to explain words and make sure they knew what was going on.

To be honest, I did not think about whether reading Frederick Douglass would improve my students' test scores. The Obama administration explains that teachers like me have "low expectations" for our students. How can they perform on tests when their teacher is reading Frederick Douglass instead of a scripted lesson from Open Court and frankly doesn't care whether this will help them perform on the state test?

If I tried this today, I might well be fired. If you think I am joking, do a quick internet search

to see how many teachers of poor and minority children have been fired in the past year. The Obama administration applauds districts for taking this step, and indeed requires them, if they would receive federal funding through "Race to the Top," to fire teachers when their students do not score well on multiple-choice tests

When you think about it, people had low expectations for Frederick Douglass. In fact slave owners were actively trying to prevent their slaves from learning to read. But he had something more powerful than the "high expectations" of the federal government. Douglass understood that when he learned to read and write, he would become a force to be reckoned with, which is, of course, just what he did become. My students understood this, too, I think. The idea of learning to read in secret awoke their curiosity, and they had discussions of the sort every teacher dreams of having in her classroom. Even the kids who usually did not pay attention sat up. I did not have a single behavior problem during the reading and discussion of Frederick Douglass.

The kids could tell this was for real. Just as they could tell that the collection of excerpts from literature that Open Court had bound together and sold to the district in order to help them prepare for the state test was not for real.

So what did I think I was doing in my classroom, if I was not actively trying to raise test scores as "effective" teachers should? I had an idea that my mostly black students might be interested in their own history, that something

relevant to their lives might get them to pay attention. I thought they might be inspired by a man who educated himself, for the sake of gaining power, and then used that power to help, and also to influence, others. I had intended to steer the conversations in those directions, but it turned out I didn't need to. The kids got it on their own. They steered the discussions, while I sat back and dared to have the high expectation that maybe one of these kids would decide to take Douglass as a role model.

There is a place in the Narrative where the master beats Douglass and swears at him. I didn't think it right to censor Frederick Douglass, so I read the passage as it appeared in the book. Needless to say, the teacher swearing caused a bit of a stir. We had to stop and talk about it. "Why did Douglass put those words in his book?" someone wanted to know.

"I think that's what he really said," another child answered.

"I think he thought it was important for people to know what really happened," added another.

I think so, too. I agree with Arne Duncan on at least one point-- education is a civil rights issue. All students have a right to real books, instead of test-prep materials. They have the right to read books that are relevant to their lives, to follow their own interests, even if that learning does not directly and immediately improve their test scores. They have a right to learn history. They also have a right to art, music, gym, and recess.

Middle-class students are increasingly being denied these

rights, as well. After all, we have the same high standards for everyone. There are many renegade teachers, however, who continue to create meaningful educational experiences in their classrooms and who even allow their students to follow their own interests. The teachers who simply refuse to teach to the test are less likely to get caught in middle-class schools. For the most part, middle-class students will score well on the state tests.

Social class is still the best predictor of achievement on multiple-choice tests. It is low test scores that get a teacher fired, and this translates to less pressure on the teachers of the middle class to dumb down their curriculum. In their *Framework*, the eight civil rights groups mentioned above ask why we find so many of the new "research proven" innovations in poor neighborhoods. If these reforms are such a good idea, why don't we want them in middle-class schools? Good question.

There is one way that middle-class families share in the cost of the federal "reform" of education, and that is-- the cost. We buy the tests from private multinational corporations. We also pay them to grade the tests. Coincidentally, these are the same companies from whom we buy test prep materials and teacher training, and they don't come cheap. These are our tax dollars. Take a moment to think about other ways we could spend them - reopening neighborhood schools, repairing buildings, hiring teachers, rehiring school nurses and custodians, buying books and computers, to name a few.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Singleton Responds to Open Meeting Finding

To the Editor:

This letter is in response to Assistant District Attorney Cynthia M. Pepyne's open meeting law finding re the GMRSD school committee.

Dear Ms. Pepyne:

As you may have guessed from my response to your inquiry concerning discussions I may have had prior to the election of Gill-Montague school committee chair, I reject your findings concerning this matter as a fundamental violation of my First Amendment rights. I have a right to discuss who will be the school

committee chair with as many individual members of the committee as I choose. In fact, I barely had discussions with two members but that is really beside the point. Sandy Brown has the same right.

I am particularly concerned with your comment that "members should be aware that discussion of committee business outside of a posted open meeting raises issues of trust amongst the public as well as other committee members." In fact, I think the public fully realizes that members of a local committee, like members of any functioning organiza-

tion, have discussions of their business all the time outside of posted meetings. The legislature which wrote this law does it. Members of your office no doubt do it. The Attorney General which now oversees the law does it.

The only reason this perfectly normal behavior is called into question is that state legal officials have decided to issue all sorts of warnings about it. Now "the public" thinks something nefarious is happening.

The core of the problem is the expansive and unreasonable definition of "deliberation" you and your colleagues have promoted.

Now it appears that if we talk to a fellow committee member, send a memo by email (a public document no less!), post an opinion on a local website, etc., we may be doing something illegal. Warnings from state officials encourage massive self-censorship at the local level. The whole process has a chilling effect on fundamental democratic rights, not to mention the professional operation of these committees.

I have no intention of hiding anything from the public or making decisions outside the public view. But I also have absolutely

no intention of throwing my First Amendment rights out the window simply because I joined the school committee.

Jeff Singleton
Gill-Montague Regional School District School Committee

P.S. You request that we publish our initial responses to your inquiry so "the public will be fully appraised of any deliberation [sic] that took place outside the meeting." I already posted my response on a local website, in the *Montague Reporter* and emailed it to the entire school committee - actions which, ironically, you may consider a violation of the open meeting law.

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NOTES FROM MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD**The Survey Results Are In**

BY JEN DOWNS

TURNERS FALLS - Results of the Montague 2010 Community Needs Survey are in. Respondents would like Montague to encourage business development, demolish abandoned buildings, and focus on youth violence and bullying prevention, just to name a few priorities. Out of 4100 surveys distributed, 1260 were returned to Town Hall, and a few are continuing to trickle in.

Survey results will help inform town planner Walter Ramsey, Bruce Hunter of the Franklin County Regional Housing Authority, town administrator Frank Abbondanzio, and others involved in Community Development Block Grant applications and the town's Community Development Strategy as to which projects residents would prefer to be implemented in their town.

Complete survey results are available at Town Hall. About half of the surveys returned also had written comments, and they will be included in the Community Development Strategy report which will be available for public review starting September 1st at the Town Hall and through the town website. An open meeting will be held September 15th at 7:00 p.m. Public comments and attendance are encouraged and any comments can also be directed to town planner Walter Ramsey.

The 2011 Community Development Block Grant application will contain items from the 2010 application that did not get accepted, including

Unity Park improvements. The 2010 grant application for Unity Park improvements was just one point shy of being accepted. Housing rehabilitation in Turners Falls and Montague City will also be in the 2011 application. Five homeowners are already on the waiting list for the program.

Several permits were granted for upcoming public events in Turners Falls. The Deerfield Valley Arts Association will have live music on the lawn in front of their gallery at 38 Avenue A this Saturday, August 21 from 3-5:00 p.m., to celebrate their third summer in the building.

The Prospect and Central Street Neighborhood Association will have their annual celebration potluck dinner on September 11 from 5-9:00 p.m. There will be live acoustic music and a permit was requested to close one side of the newly-rebuilt Prospect Street bridge, which is now open again after years of being closed. Select board member Christopher Boutwell expressed concern for public safety during the festivities and suggested closing the entire bridge to automobile traffic for the four hour duration. Traffic needs will be assessed before the celebration and the permit request will be resubmitted, but Prospect and Central Street Neighborhood Association member Patricia Pruitt was told to "just have a great time," from select board member Mark Fairbrother.

In other bridge news, an email of concern was sent to SPS New England Inc., the contracting company rebuild-

ing the Gill-Montague Bridge, regarding misuse of town property. SPS has been violating the lease agreement for the rear parking lot area of Town Hall by "basically using every space available to them," rather than the agreed upon spaces, reported Abbondanzio. Tom Bergeron, Superintendent of the Department of Public Works, will speak with SPS further.

Abbondanzio reported that there have been no responses to a request for proposals for Montague Center School, although over 400 cards were sent out in a targeted mailing. Meanwhile, over twenty companies have submitted estimates for roof repairs at Sheffield School.

The select board approved a request from the Massachusetts Municipal Association for an essay contest for sixth grade students on the topic, "If I were elected as a leader in my community, I would ..."

Leaders in the community are needed to provide feedback to the Department of Conservation and Recreation on their Forest Futures Visioning Process. Contact Walter Ramsey at Town Hall if you would like to be a part of an advisory committee that will evaluate DCR's designations of Montague lands as preserves, parkland, or woodland, and provide recommendations.

The next select board meeting is scheduled for Monday, August 30th at 7:00 p.m. in the upstairs meeting room at Montague Town Hall, One Avenue A.

NOTES FROM ERVING SELECTBOARD**Ideas for Usher Property, New Windows, and a Gator**

BY BILL FRANKLIN

ERVING - August 12th: It was a week of good fiscal news and potential money saving for the Town of Erving. Peggy Sloane of the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) has indicated that the town of Erving may be eligible for as much as \$200,000 in grants and low interest loans to rehabilitate the Usher plant property on Arch Street.

The Usher plant was the site of a 2007 fire that left behind an unsightly and dangerous, asbestos-contaminated area of debris. Cleanup of the property has been high on the list of the town's concerns lately. The area is currently not well-secured and presents serious safety concerns; the site is accessible to children.

The grant monies would be available under the jurisdiction of the Environmental Protection Agency's "Brown Field" program, and would involve an outright non-repay grant of \$50,000, plus a ten-year loan at 2% interest, capped at \$150,000.

These monies may be used to determine what the community wants to do with the site, and would provide schematics and drawings of potential uses of the property.

Sloane also indicated that the Conway School of Planning and Design has offered to work with the town on drafting plans for the site. "This will give us an idea of what a park would look like, and what a park with a building would look like," said town administrator Tom Sharp. "It won't cost us anything but time."

Some members of the select-

board, however, feel that the town is putting the cart before the horse. "As of now," said James Hackett, "it's still not our property."

"We need to watch what we do, and see what Patriot (owners of the property) does," said selectboard member Eugene Klepadlo. "We need to do that before going ahead."

Recent discussion at selectboard meetings has suggested that the town may very well end up owning the property if the town is forced to secure and clean up the site. A lien would be placed on the property that might force the owner to abandon the property, transferring it to the town.

In other matters, the much discussed, long-awaited new windows for the Erving Town Hall are nearly a reality. The contractors are on site measuring the openings. Erving accepted a low bid of \$58,528.39 from Renaissance Builders for the contract. "This figure is well under what we had budgeted," said Sharp. The grant from the Department of Energy to replace the building's old windows with insulated ones was \$81,000.

"Let's hope we have the same luck with the senior center," said Sharp.

The town is also going ahead with the purchase of a 4-wheel drive, all-terrain vehicle called a Gator. This vehicle will be used by the police and fire departments to enter wooded and other areas that are inaccessible to regular vehicles. "We went through all the manufacturers' spec sheets and picked the best,"

see ERVING pg 9

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NOTES FROM THE LEVERETT SELECTBOARD

Low and Loud

BY BILL FRANKLIN

LEVERETT - "Like Harleys in the sky" was how one resident at the Leverett selectboard meeting on August 10th described the noise of stunt planes flying over Leverett and nearby areas.

It was the consensus among the selectboard members and residents who attended the meeting that the airplanes are creating a nuisance. Described as "low and loud," the stunt planes have been an ongoing annoyance for residents who desire a quieter, more exurban community.

Although the stunt flying has been going on for some time (an article in the *Hampshire Gazette* addressed the problem as far back as 1985), the number of complaints has risen sharply of late. "The frequency has increased," said resident Ron Juels. "It's not earsplitting, just annoying."

The area in which the stunt planes are permitted to fly is marked by a Federal Aviation Administration map and roughly corresponds to the area above the gravel pit at the Leverett/Sunderland town line. The area designated for pilot training and stunt flying is drawn to keep planes out of the flight paths of nearby airports such as

Turners Falls. The planes must also maintain a minimum altitude of 1500 feet.

But these restrictions do not seem to be enough to quell the irritation of local residents, some of whom feel that the pilots are buzzing the area just to have a good time. "I'm a yankee," said Macaylla Silver. "If you're doing it for work, it's alright. If not..." Most everyone in attendance agreed that the noise can be heard far from the area of the gravel pit—sometimes as far away as Amherst.

Selectboard chairman Rich Brazeau indicated that he would like to get all the local towns affected by the airplane noise to join together in presenting a formal letter of complaint to the FAA via the office of Congressman John Olver of Amherst.

"We need to be aware of what we're up against," (with the FAA) said selectboard member Peter d'Errico, "in terms of the maps and rules and density." But d'Errico noted that the density of the local population has certainly increased since the original FAA maps of the area were drawn. The increased population may affect the FAA's response.

NOTES FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD

Windfalls in Wendell

BY JOSH HEINEMANN

WENDELL - The Wendell Selectboard got two pieces of financial good news at its August 4th meeting; the first was when Town Coordinator Nancy Aldrich told them that Robert and Helen Hadad had donated \$25,000 for books to the library account in memory of their son. Board member Dan Keller moved to accept the money for the library, and board member Geoffrey Pooser seconded the motion. Board Chair Christine Heard was not at the meeting.

The second installment came while Selectboard Clerk Joy Gorzocoski was looking for the color to match the interior of the town hall. She found two envelopes with cash that had been lying unnoticed for ten years; one labeled "For the Selectboard from the Full Moon Coffeehouse" containing \$200 and the other, labeled "Coffeehouse Window" had a similar amount. Gorzocoski turned the envelopes over to Aldrich, who gave them to the Selectboard. The Selectboard will deposit the money into the town accounts.

Phyllis Brooks was at the meeting when it opened at 7:00 p.m., bringing up an issue with the use of the town hall by outside groups. In about a year she wants to rent the town hall for a whole weekend, which would bring her in conflict with the regular Sunday afternoon food distribution by Good Neighbors. Brooks said that the program for which she wanted to reserve the town hall would not work unless the building was available for all of both weekend days. She said she pays a lot of taxes to the town and it was not right that another group had a monopoly on the use of the town hall every Sunday.

Pooser suggested that Good Neighbors might use the Senior Center for one distribution. (Good Neighbors uses town hall for its food distribution because the Board of Health considered neither the Senior Center nor the highway garage appropriate for them.) Keller said, "My feeling is that there are many ways to

make it work." He noted that the Selectboard makes some decisions, but allows other town boards to make their own decisions, and would not overrule a decision by the Board of Health. He said that Brooks should keep talking to people and trying to make an arrangement that works for both her group and Good Neighbors.

Brooks was not satisfied and suggested that she might have to rent a more expensive place elsewhere.

Aldrich relayed a request to use the town hall for a fundraiser; she was not sure what the fundraising group was, but that it might be political. Keller said he knew there are rules and he did not think that fundraising for a political candidate was allowed. He was not sure about fundraising for private or non-profit causes.

The Open Space Committee is a seven member committee, but right now only has three members. That might mean that even when the entire committee meets, there is no quorum, and the committee may take no action. Keller said that Town Clerk, Anna Hartjens, might know if the three members may act as the committee, and suggested that if they may not, a special town meeting could reduce the size of the committee. The Selectboard intends to schedule a special town meeting in September, with the date to be set at their next meeting.

Pooser gave an update on the Action Plan that the Open Space Committee is preparing with help from the FRCOG. They want to encourage a walking community, language that would preserve farmland, and to encourage edges between forest and cleared land which are especially valuable for wildlife. The Action Plan should be wrapped up by the end of this calendar year.

State Senator Stan Rosenberg sent a fax to Wendell reporting that the wind power siting bill did not get through committee. The town of Mount Washington had sent a letter to the Wendell Selectboard stating their concern about losing any local con-

trol and Wendell added their similar concern in a letter to the town's legislators.

Aldrich reported that the 2010 Census map shows the line between Wendell and New Salem going through the house where John Ryan and Linda Overing live, as results from a straight line between two markers; two additional granite markers between the other two put a curve in the border between the two towns, and put the house clearly in New Salem. Overing and Ryan have always considered themselves residents of New Salem, as do both towns and local neighbors. The Census and the State prefer straight lines. Keller told Aldrich to let the New Salem Selectboard know that Wendell will stand behind their efforts to keep that house and its residents in New Salem.

The contract for painting the town hall's interior was signed with low bidder Dennis Hudson, and Aldrich said that he expects to start work during the week of August 23rd.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE WENDELL POLICE LOG

Mailbox Explosions Investigated

Saturday, 7/24

Two stolen ATV's recovered at Farley Road residence by Environmental Police.

Sunday, 8/1

Lockes Village Road resident reported finding a

video surveillance camera beside the road.

Thursday, 8/5

10:12 a.m. A Montague Road resident reported that his mailbox was blown up overnight with a homemade explosive

device. Postal inspector notified. Sending evidence to lab.

12:17 p.m. A Wickett Pond Road resident reported his mailbox was blown up overnight. Evidence delivered to Postmaster.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE LEVERETT POLICE LOG

Stolen Money Recovered, Returned

Tuesday, 8/3

11:15 a.m. Officer stopped [redacted] and issued a criminal complaint citation for operating a vehicle after a license suspension.

Wednesday, 8/4

2:19 p.m. Report of larceny of money at a Depot Road address. Arrested [redacted] for larceny from a

building and receiving stolen property over \$250. Officer recovered money and returned to victim.

6:05 p.m. Officer removed a bat from a January Hill Road residence at the request of the resident.

Tuesday, 8/10

10:25 a.m. Report of a dog bite incident on Sprinkle Road. Resident

reported his dog injured another dog on 8/3.

Thursday, 8/12

4:06 p.m. Traffic stop lead to arrest of [redacted]

Straight warrant for failure to appear for jury duty. Bailed at 6:30 p.m. for court.

Sunday, 8/15

12:30 p.m. Officer assisted with traffic control for house fire on Long Plain Road.

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TURNERS FALLS BLOCK PARTY AND FASHION SHOW



Jamie Berger and friends

Thanks to Maure Briggs-Carrington and Barbara Stewart, who documented the fourth Annual Turners Falls Block Party on August 14th. Look for more of their photos on *The Montague Reporter's* page on Facebook!



The Montague Farm Cafe Marching Band made their way down Avenue A in the parade.



Sara Rose and pup



Suzy Polueci



Naia Kete final performance. She's headed to California!



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It's Not Too Late! Soapbox Races Entry Deadline is August 30

BY MIK MULLER, RACE DIRECTOR

MONTAGUE - With official approval from the Montague Selectboard, the Montague Soapbox Races are officially on! Sunday, September 19th, at Unity Park.

Many people have called asking if they can still enter their cart in the derby. Yes, you can! We have extended the entry deadline until Monday, August 30th. If you are planning on building a cart, please get your application in by then, as the Race is filling up. We have many applications in, including some from Brattleboro. They have challenged Montague! One racer will be riding down the hill in the Millennium Falcon of Star Wars fame.

And speaking of style and creativity in soapbox carts, we have confirmed that State Senator Stan Rosenberg will be one of the style judges, along with our very own Pat Allen, chair of the Montague Selectboard! If you don't think your cart will win on speed, try

going for style.

Some folks have asked for secret tips on how to build a good cart. All I can say is the wheel bearings make the most difference. If you're planning to win, you'll need the wheels that spin the easiest: bicycle wheels. But your cart will also have to be quite durable, and able to withstand high speeds. Adult racers starting from the top of the 1st Street hill will easily reach 30mph, (teens and kids, starting down lower, will probably not go as fast). And the track, after the big left turn at the bottom of the hill, will be filled with hay bale obstacles and a speed bump. Make sure your cart can handle zig-zagging down this stretch! That means low center of gravity, and stability.

For those who need technical assistance building their carts, we have planned a Soapbox Cart Building Party on Sunday, August 29th. Only those who have filled out the Race Application will be invited to come. The committee has access to about 80 old bikes

that can be cut up and parted out, including the wheels. Get your entry forms in soon to get your invite to the build party!

For local businesses, the race has several vendors signed up to sell their wares or distribute their information, and we're still looking for more. Vendors (including non-profits wishing to fundraise) please call Nancy at (413) 548-9015. If you can't set up a table, please consider buying a banner on one of the hay bales lining the race track! They're pretty cheap, and you get to keep them when the race is over. Sponsors and advertisers please call Doug at (413) 522-8382.

Remember, this is a fundraising event for Montague Community TV. All money raised by the event goes straight to the station.

Race applications and all the information you could ever want can be found on the official website www.MontagueSoapboxRaces.com. If you cannot print out the race entry form you can



MAURE BRIGGS CARRINGTON PHOTO

Mic Muller's Soapbox

pick up a copy at any of the three Montague libraries, the Town Clerk's office, or MCTV (34 2nd Street).

See you at Unity Park, Sunday, September 19th, at high noon!

DEBATE from page 1

societal problems.

Both candidates stated that, if necessary, they would break ranks with the recommendations of the District Attorneys' Association.

Cahillane acknowledged, however, that the association "gives an opportunity to identify problems in other districts, and to keep them from spreading."

The candidates appear to be running more on their records than on the substantive differences between them. Cahillane stressed that his extensive background as an assistant DA for the past ten years has given him the necessary prosecutorial skills to do the job. Sullivan, on the other hand, stressed his managerial background as registrar of probate for Hampshire County, as well as his private law practice.

FARM from page 1

the fall crops: squash, pumpkins, gourds, and three kinds of cabbage."

"I hope so," said Johnson. "They're in the ground now, and the apples are on the trees. But will we have them on this table come fall? You can never tell, might be a tornado, a flood." Better to be pessimistic, as a farmer. That way you're never disappointed.

Johnson told me about the life of a farmer, working seven days a week regardless of the weather, no Sundays or holidays off, no vacations. You and your crops are at the mercy of nature, too much or too little rain, too much wind. Raccoons and bears love to eat the corn, and the bears will keep coming back day after day until they've eaten the entire crop. Once, a rabid fox bit Bob and Janice, both.

But for Bob Johnson the life of a farmer is worth it, even if taxes seem to take more and more of a bite out of the profit,

and the knees of his jeans keep wearing out. He likes to use his hands, can't imagine sitting around with nothing to do. He's in his seventies, and wants to keep going with the farming as long as he can. Will one or both of his sons take over? Will the Johnson Farm survive? Bob Johnson hopes so, but in life you never know.



ERVING from page 6

said Sharp. The town will be waiting six to eight weeks until it's put on the bid sheet to get the best possible deal for the town. They are anticipating a 22% discount on the \$20,000 vehicle.

In other good fiscal news, the Bid Services Agreement for the proposed new senior center will be posted online rather than printed. This, according to the town's consultants, will save approximately \$6,000. "We're about two weeks away from going out to bid," said Sharp.



Kittens galore are available for adoption at Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society. See Page Two for more details.

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NOTES FROM THE GILL-MONTAGUE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

BY ELLEN BLANCHETTE
TURNERS FALLS - The Gill-Montague school committee gathered on Tuesday evening, August 10, at Turners Falls High School, to discuss ways to improve their own deliberative process. In a two-hour discussion that covered a wide range of subjects, they came to some agreement on areas needing attention, and made a start on ideas to improve the process.

Michael Langknecht of Montague said he thought the school committee should review

old documents such as the Regional Agreement at the beginning of each new session. He said the school committee was a team and that the quality of teamwork was important to the success of their deliberative process. Emily Monosson, chair, agreeing with Langknecht, said they should get a list of old but "still live" documents for members to review: "You don't know what you don't know." Jeff Singleton said he wondered if they weren't so much a team as a legislative body.

Monosson raised the question of education for new members. Marjorie Levenson of Montague emphasized her desire to have more in-depth discussions on issues, not possible during regular meetings, as so much time was spent on such things as approving warrants for payment of necessary services.

Kristin Boyle, secretary of the school committee, agreed it was a learning curve. She suggested they use the services of the state that are available to them, such as the MASC (Massachusetts Association of School Committees), a good resource. She also mentioned the retreats that the school committees held in years past were helpful in allowing members to get to

know each other and making their deliberative process more congenial. Langknecht agreed.

Regarding the self-evaluation survey done during the last school committee session: Monosson asked about the low scores members had given themselves on certain subjects. Some felt the questions weren't always relevant to their own process and said some they were being asked to score hadn't been done before the survey was taken. Some members did not fill out the survey; some submitted them late and were scored separately. Members expressed dissatisfaction with the survey, not because they felt the members had not actually done well, but because the questions asked led them to score lower than was deserved. Superintendent Carl Ladd told the members he felt they had done some really good work in strategic planning and didn't know why members graded themselves the way they did. He said a lot of what was being asked on the survey had not been done yet.

Levenson said she felt they need to restructure how they run their meetings. Jeff Singleton said he felt the open meeting laws prevented gathering and discussing information prior to

Improving the Process

the meetings, which would allow members to be more prepared. Phillips said that issues could be brought up under new business, allowing time to ask for more information before the next meeting. Singleton suggested they have different types of meetings, such as ones that focused on a specific topic, similar to this meeting. Langknecht advocated for a "subcommittee of the whole," meeting every week instead of every other week. Levenson suggested changing the beginning time from 7:00 p.m. to 6:00 or 6:30 p.m. Ladd said that he and Robin Hamlett, administrative assistant to the superintendent, spend two days preparing for a meeting and two more after a meeting; if they had a meeting every week that was all they would do. Boyle said she works full time running a day care and has children of her own to care for and there was no chance she could come earlier than 7 p.m. although they could start without her.

Sorrel Hatch of Gill said they had more subcommittees in the past and a lot more got done that way. Levenson said she felt that subcommittees promote factionalism and agreed with Langknecht on having more frequent full committee meetings. Phillips said she felt subcommittees were needed, that they allow for more information gathering, such as the facilities subcommittee is doing now (gathering data on theater and pool use); using a subcommittee to do the work

expands the school committee time devoted to a specific issue. Oakes liked the idea of subcommittees, the idea of trust to bring back the information, and Monosson thought it was important for subcommittee members to look at all sides of an issue. Boyle felt being on a subcommittee gives members a chance to get to know each other better, while providing an opportunity to learn from other members who have more information.

While was no action taken, some clarity did emerge. The dialogue was cordial and the reality that the responsibilities of the school committee require cooperation and compromise was clear. Langknecht pointed out that they are close to being a 20-million dollar corporation, and have to make decisions. "There are things we have to do. We can disagree. Deciding by 5-4 majority is okay...we're a policy-making body, not a think tank."

They agreed on the value of hearing more from teachers (not simply asking them to talk during meetings, which Boyle said could be intimidating) and getting more involved with activities that would allow them to interact with the wider school community, such as attending school events and looking for opportunities to talk with teachers in a less formal setting.

The next regular school committee meeting will be on Tuesday, August 24th, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. at TFHS.



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HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG
Vandalism, Fire, Larceny

Wednesday, 8/4
 1:56 p.m. Arrested [redacted] for vandalism / defacement of property, disorderly conduct and resisting arrest.

Thursday, 8/5
 2:49 p.m. Burglary, breaking and entering on Davis Street.
Friday, 8/6
 7:52 a.m. Vandalism at the Fourth Street public parking lot. Investigated.

Sunday, 8/8
 12:05 a.m. Structure fire reported at Peskeomskut Park. Investigated.
 11:20 p.m. Arrested [redacted] for vandalism / defacement of property.

Monday, 8/9
 12:25 a.m. Brush fire on Avenue A. Referred to other agency.
 8:30 a.m. Missing person report at Bridge Street in

Millers Falls. Investigated.
 9:10 a.m. Larceny at Basically Bicycles on Third Street. Report taken.

4:33 p.m. Domestic disturbance on Farren Avenue. Peace restored.
 10:59 p.m. Domestic disturbance on Farren Avenue. Investigated.

Thursday, 8/12
 12:57 a.m. Suspicious person by St. Kazimierz Society on Avenue A. Dispersed gathering.
 1:00 p.m. Trespassing on First Light Power property. Referred to an officer.

3:00 p.m. Brush fire behind Carroll's Market on West Main Street in Millers Falls. Referred to other agency.

Friday, 8/13
 2:15 p.m. Arrest of [redacted] for assault with a dangerous weapon and domestic assault and battery.

11:33 p.m. Unwanted person on Millers Falls Road. Peace restored.

Saturday, 8/14
 9:46 a.m. Larceny at Cumberland Farms. Report taken.
 6:30 p.m. Hit and run accident on Second Street. Report taken.

Sunday, 8/15
 12:18 a.m. Domestic disturbance on Fifth Street. Referred to an officer.

Monday, 8/16
 11:01 a.m. Restraining order violation on Turnpike Road. Report taken.

4:20 p.m. Shoplifting at Cumberland Farms, second offense. Summons issued.
 7:49 p.m. Disorderly conduct on Griswold Street. Peace restored.

Tuesday, 8/17
 12:09 p.m. Larceny at Bank of America on Avenue A. Referred to an officer.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ERVING POLICE LOG
Illegal Drivers Arrested

Tuesday, 8/3
 11:53 a.m. Located a down Verizon service wire on Mountain Road. Coiled up wire and contacted Verizon.

Wednesday, 8/4
 9:20 p.m. Suspicious person reported near cell tower at Erving Paper Mill. Found to be AT&T workers. All set.

Friday, 8/6
 6:25 p.m. Assisted Gill Police with a traffic stop for an active warrant.

9:00 p.m. Arrested [redacted] on a default warrant.

Saturday, 8/7
 9:11 p.m. Arrested [redacted]

for failure to stop for police, marked lane violations, operating a vehicle under the influence of alcohol, operating to endanger, failure to use turn signal, failure to use headlights, and an open container of alcohol.

Tuesday, 8/10
 3:00 p.m. Report of subject using a weed wacker, breaking a motor vehicle window near an East Main Street residence. Unable to locate either subject

Wednesday, 8/11
 5:58 a.m. Disturbance at a River Street residence. Intoxicated male trying to

2:27 p.m. Assisted Northfield police with reported breaking and entering in progress at Pine Meadow Road. Calmed situation and mediated between frustrated subjects. Northfield police department handled same.

Friday, 8/13
 9:35 a.m. Citation issued to [redacted] for operating a motor vehicle after revocation of license, operating a motor vehicle without insurance, and failure to inspect.

10:05 a.m. Assisted Northfield police with a domestic disturbance.

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the
poetry
page

It is difficult
to get the news from poems
yet men die miserably every day
for lack
of what is found there.

- William Carlos Williams

The editors would like to thank the following for their generous financial underwriting of The Poetry Page: -

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Christopher Sawyer-Laucanno,
and Janel Nockleby

Readers are invited to send poems to the
Montague Reporter at 24 3rd Street,
Turners Falls, MA 01376;
or email us your poetry at
reporter-poems@montaguema.net

design by Boysen Hodgson

Trees

I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree.

A tree whose hungry mouth is prest
Against the earth's sweet flowing
breast;

A tree that looks at God all day,
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;

A tree that may in Summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair;

Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
Who intimately lives with rain.

Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.

--Joyce Kilmer

Talk not to me of Summer Trees
The foliage of the mind
A Tabernacle is for Birds
Of no corporeal kind
And winds do go that way at noon
To their Ethereal Homes
Whose Bugles call the least of us
To undepicted Realms

--Emily Dickinson
Amherst, MA

I Get Tree Love Bad

a white pine needle
lives two years

what the white pine
needs is reassurance

we love you
by the river dead

--Janel Nockleby
Turners Falls, MA

Four Trees - upon a solitary Acre -
Without Design -
Or Order, or Apparent Action -
Maintain -

The Sun - upon a Morning meets them -
The Wind -
No nearer Neighbor-have they -
But God -

The Acre gives them-Place -
They - Him - Attention of Passer by -
Of Shadow, or of Squirrel, haply -
Or Boy -

What Deed is Their's unto the General Nature -
What Plan -
They severally -retard - or further -
Unknown -

--Emily Dickinson
Amherst, MA

The World Is Larger in Summer

-from "Two Illustrations that the World Is What You
Make Of It"

He left half a shoulder and half a head
To recognize him in after time.

These marbles lay weathering in the grass
When the summer was over, when the change

Of summer and of the sun, the life
Of summer and the sun, were gone.

He had said that everything possessed
The power to transform itself, or else,

And what meant more, to be transformed.
He discovered the colors of the moon

In a single spruce, when, suddenly,
The tree stood dazzling in the air

And blue broke on him from the sun,
A bullioned blue, a blue abulge,

Like daylight, with time's bellishings.
And sensuous summer stood full-height.

The master of the spruce, himself,
Became transformed. But his mastery

Left only the fragments found in the grass,
From his project, as finally magnified.

--Wallace Stevens
Hartford, CT

Birches

When I see birches bend to left and right
Across the lines of straighter darker trees,
I like to think some boy's been swinging them.
But swinging doesn't bend them down to stay
As ice-storms do. Often you must have seen them
Loaded with ice a sunny winter morning
After a rain. They click upon themselves
As the breeze rises, and turn many-colored
As the stir cracks and crazes their enamel.
Soon the sun's warmth makes them shed crystal shells
Shattering and avalanching on the snow-crust--
Such heaps of broken glass to sweep away
You'd think the inner dome of heaven had fallen.
They are dragged to the withered bracken by the load,
And they seem not to break; though once they are bowed
So low for long, they never right themselves:
You may see their trunks arching in the woods
Years afterwards, trailing their leaves on the ground
Like girls on hands and knees that throw their hair
Before them over their heads to dry in the sun.
But I was going to say when Truth broke in
With all her matter-of-fact about the ice-storm
I should prefer to have some boy bend them
As he went out and in to fetch the cows--
Some boy too far from town to learn baseball,
Whose only play was what he found himself,
Summer or winter, and could play alone.
One by one he subdued his father's trees
By riding them down over and over again
Until he took the stiffness out of them,
And not one but hung limp, not one was left
For him to conquer. He learned all there was
To learn about not launching out too soon
And so not carrying the tree away
Clear to the ground. He always kept his poise
To the top branches, climbing carefully
With the same pains you use to fill a cup
Up to the brim, and even above the brim.
Then he flung outward, feet first, with a swish,
Kicking his way down through the air to the ground.
So was I once myself a swinger of birches.
And so I dream of going back to be.
It's when I'm weary of considerations,
And life is too much like a pathless wood
Where your face burns and tickles with the cobwebs
Broken across it, and one eye is weeping
From a twig's having lashed across it open.
I'd like to get away from earth awhile
And then come back to it and begin over.
May no fate willfully misunderstand me
And half grant what I wish and snatch me away
Not to return. Earth's the right place for love:
I don't know where it's likely to go better.
I'd like to go by climbing a birch tree,
And climb black branches up a snow-white trunk
Toward heaven, till the tree could bear no more,
But dipped its top and set me down again.
That would be good both going and coming back.
One could do worse than be a swinger of birches.

--Robert Frost
Amherst, MA

CONTRIBUTOR'S NOTES:

Janel Nockleby co-edits the poetry page with Christopher Sawyer-Laucanno. On August 22nd at 2:00 p.m. she will be leading a discussion at The Great Falls Discovery Center on Connecticut River watershed poets and their obsessions with trees in the area. Find out about birches from Robert Frost and apple trees from Emily

Dickinson and spruce trees from Wallace Stevens. Perhaps you will consider ways to honor your own favorite tree friends through words and through conservation.

Joyce Kilmer (1886 - 1918) may have written his famous poem "Trees" while inspired by a maple tree in Montague City. According to the Wisconsin

Department of Natural Resources, other contenders for the honor include: a white oak on the campus of Rutgers University in New Jersey, his alma mater; oak trees surrounding his home in Mahwah, New Jersey; maple trees in Swanzey, New Hampshire; and woods near Darien, Connecticut.

Emily Dickinson (1830-1886) lived her

entire life in Amherst. She is regarded as one of America's greatest poets. The Great Falls Discovery Center is hosting a program featuring the work of both Emily Dickinson and Frederick Goddard Tuckerman in "Watershed Birds and Watershed Poets: Exploring Obsessions along the Connecticut River," Sunday July 25 from 2 - 3:30 p.m.

Wallace Stevens (1879 - 1955) wrote poems and worked for an insurance company in Hartford, CT.

Robert Frost (1874 - 1963) taught English at Amherst College for several years.

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THE NEIGHBORHOOD TOXICOLOGIST

Nut Allergies

BY EMILY MONOSSON

MONTAGUE - This summer I met a family from Australia who'd mentioned their daughter was highly allergic to peanuts. Wondering if all the concern about peanut allergies was yet another case of Americans over-reacting to anything health-related, I asked if they'd ever heard of schools in Australia banning peanuts.

"Our daughter's school has been peanut-free for years," they replied, as if it were an odd question. They added, "Lots of schools are."

Like many people, I've also wondered if the seeming rise in prevalence of peanut allergies was real. After all, how many times have I heard someone say, "Well, we all grew up with peanut butter, and I didn't know anyone who was allergic. What's all the fuss about now?"

Turns out -- according to several studies published in medical and allergy journals over the past decade -- that peanut and tree nut related allergies, or hypersensitivity of the immune system to specific proteins in these nut fam-

ilies, truly is on the rise in Australia, the US and other Westernized countries. It is now estimated that over 1% of the US population has peanut or tree nut allergies, and one study reported a doubling of peanut allergies in children over a five year period.

So what's going on? Has something changed in the way we are exposed to peanuts, tree nuts and other increasingly allergenic foods (sesame, and soy for example)? Or is it simply that our immune systems are going haywire?

The immune response is complex. While we're all familiar with the role of antibodies, which confer immunity to anything from the common cold to polio, they are only one of five different types of immune proteins, or immunoglobulins. Other immune proteins protect vulnerable regions of the digestive and respiratory tract from pathogens, stimulate our bodies to produce antimicrobials, and help us get a "jump" on our response once pathogens have breached other protections and entered our bloodstream.

Then there is immunoglobulin E (IgE). Although recent studies suggest that IgE may protect against certain parasitic worms (less of a problem these days in western countries compared with other regions of the globe), IgEs are most notorious for their role in causing allergic reactions, or an inappropriate immune response to a relatively harmless substance. Basically, once a body is sensitized by a potential allergen, a bit of basement mold perhaps, or a whiff of pollen from the old oak tree, IgEs are then distributed throughout the body in association with immune cells like mast cells and basophils, which lay in wait for the next exposure.

When subsequent exposure occurs, these sensitized immune cells release a slew of potent chemicals including histamine, cytokines, and prostaglandins. These are all useful chemicals when released at the appropriate time and place, as during a normal immune response when the body is combating a pathogen or healing a wound (and even then they may cause some damage to healthy cells and tissues.) But as far as anyone knows, there is no appropriate time or place for an allergic response. Yet no matter the reason, when these chemicals are released the body responds.

The allergic responses many of us experience are caused by the increases in vascular permeability, constriction of smooth muscles (including those around the smallest passages of our lungs), and increased mucus production caused by histamine and other chemicals. The impacts on a body can range from mild to severe.

So, while I might suffer through a month or two of asthma, sneezing and itchy eyes (along with the more than 20% of the U.S. population affected by allergies), thankfully my IgEs seem to respond relatively mildly. But for some, an IgE response can cause anaphylaxis, a far more severe and systemic condition which may include vomiting, constricted breathing, and plunging blood pressure. The onset of these life-threatening responses can lead to anaphylactic shock and can occur within minutes of exposure.

A 2008 study published in the journal Current Opinion in

Allergy and Clinical Immunology estimated that allergic anaphylaxis may occur in up to 2% of the U.S. population at some point in their life, with varying degrees of severity. And the risk of occurrence, particularly in children, is on the rise.

The Gill-Montague Regional School District Wellness Committee is the process of crafting a nut-safe policy for the district. The next meeting of the Wellness Committee will be held Thursday, August 26, at 1 p.m. in the television studio at Turners Falls High School. Public comment is welcome.

Which brings us to some of the top triggers for anaphylaxis - a list that includes many common substances like latex, insect venom (e.g. bee stings), medications (e.g. penicillin) and certain foods including shellfish, milk, tree nuts, and peanuts. Of these, food allergies are among the most common triggers of anaphylaxis requiring emergency room treatment. By some estimates, in the US food allergies account for roughly 30,000 visits to the emergency room and at least 100 fatalities a year, and several reviews of the medical literature including a 2009 review published in Clinical Pediatrics conclude that peanuts and tree nuts cause the majority of reported allergy-induced fatalities.

When a food is allergenic, the allergic reaction is usually caused by a specific type of protein contained in the food. In peanuts, eight different allergens have been identified. What differentiates allergenic proteins from other food proteins is that they resist acid, heat, and enzymatic breakdown in the gut. So they tend to be identified by the body's immune system as an intruder rather than a nutrient, with potentially devastating consequences.

Efforts to understand why the US and other Westernized populations has a higher prevalence of peanut allergies than, say, China, where peanut consumption is also high, have identified the U.S. food industry's practice of dry

roasting peanuts rather than boiling or frying peanuts as one potentially relevant factor. The higher temperatures reached by the dry roasting process increases the allergenicity of peanut proteins. Other factors contributing to higher prevalence likely include differences in diet, routes (oral or dermal) and timing of nut exposures. Additionally, scientists have hypothesized that improved hygiene and reduced disease incidence in young children may also contribute to increased prevalence of allergies in general. Scientists and allergists have also speculated that increased use of peanuts in common consumer products, from soaps to shampoos and skin creams, may contribute to creating a more sensitized population.

Whatever the underlying cause, some people, once they are sensitized, need only ingest a very small amount (50 milligrams, approximately 100th of a teaspoon, down to as low as 2 mg) of peanut product to cause what could become a life-threatening reaction.

It is a mind-boggling response. Consider the tiniest oral exposure setting off a systemic response within minutes. How does this happen?

"What you think of as low dose might contain plenty of stable antigen [or allergenic protein]," explains Southeastern Louisiana University Immunologist Dr. Penny Shockett. "Also," Shockett added, "once the system is sensitized it doesn't necessarily take a high dose for tripping the mast cell response. If you are highly sensitized (i.e. allergic) you have more sensitized mast cells in tissues (or basophils in the blood) sitting and waiting for the allergen, which can potentially detect it quickly and strongly."

Studies indicate that not only has the prevalence of peanut allergies risen over the past few decades, but also the risk of anaphylaxis in general, at least in the United States and other Western countries. As we alter our diets based on the ever-changing suggestions of health and nutrition experts, cultures adopt one another's diets, and diseases are reduced through changes in hygiene and vaccines, scientists

see ALLERGIES pg 13

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JESSICA HARMON ILLUSTRATION

BY FRED CICETTI

LEONIA, NJ – This is the second of two columns on the methods of Robin McKenzie.

Like millions of people who suffer back pain, I rely on a system developed by Robin McKenzie, a physiotherapist in New Zealand.

Since I was 30 years old, I have hurt my lower back many times. Eventually, I suffered from sciatica, a toothache-like pain that runs down my left buttock to my ankle. This is caused by a bulging lumbar disc.

I tried physiatrists, chiropractors and physical therapists. Then I was given a copy of "Treat Your Own Back" written by McKenzie. Since then, I have

The MacKenzie System for Back Pain

not been to any type of health-care professional for help.

McKenzie discovered the principle of his system by accident. He told a patient to lie face down on a treatment table. But the end of the table had been raised for a previous patient. Unnoticed by any of the clinical staff, the patient lay face down with his back arched and overstretched for about five minutes.

When McKenzie returned, he was extremely concerned to find the patient lying in what, at the time, was considered to be a very damaging position. However, the patient told McKenzie that he felt great.

Because of this incident, the McKenzie system is now used by thousands of doctors, physiotherapists and chiropractors treating patients with back pain.

To take care of yourself, you have to understand the importance of that inward curve in the small of your back. This hollow is called the lumbar lordosis.

You lose the lordosis when sitting or lying improperly and bending forward. Back problems develop when you eliminate the curvature for long periods.

It is essential that you read the entire book before attempting any of the exercises that are only summarized below. The McKenzie system is more extensive than just exercise, but reading about the exercises should give you a better understanding of the system.

There are seven exercises in the program. The first four are extension (bending backward), and the remaining three are flexion (bending forward) exercises.

1. Lie face down with arms at sides and head to one side. Take deep breaths and relax for a few minutes.

2. Lie face down and place your elbows under your shoulders so that you lean on your forearms. Stay in this position a few minutes.

3. Remain face down. Place your hands under your shoulders. Lift your head and torso off the floor by straightening your arms. Hold for a few seconds. Do not raise your lower

body.

4. Stand upright with your feet slightly apart. Place the palms of your hands in the small of your back with your fingers pointed at your spine. Bend your trunk backward at the waist as far as you can. Keep your knees straight. Hold for a second or two. (This is my favorite exercise. I do it whenever my back feels tired.)

5. Lie on your back with knees bent and your feet flat on the floor. Using your hands,

bring your knees to your chest. Hold for a second or two.

6. Sit on a chair with your feet well apart. Let your hands rest between your legs. Bend your trunk forward and touch the floor. Return to the starting position.

7. Stand upright with your feet apart and knees straight. Bend forward and run your fingers down your legs as far you can reach. Return to standing position.

For more information, go to: www.mckenziemdt.org/

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

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GILL POLICE LOG

Suspicious Canoes at Dam

Friday, 8/6

6:30 p.m. Arrested [redacted], on a warrant.

6:45 p.m. Motor vehicle accident on French King Highway, transferred to State police. Officer busy with arrest.

Saturday, 8/7

8:44 p.m. Assisted Erving police with motor vehicle pursuit and arrest of erratic operator.

Sunday, 8/8

3:52 a.m. Report of house fire on Mountain Road. Responded with fire department.

Monday, 8/9

10:35 a.m. Report of canoes in restricted area near dam on Connecticut River. First Light Power removing invasive aquatic species Water Chestnut in the river near Riverside.

Wednesday, 8/11

4:50 a.m. Report of

home invasion in progress on Mountain Road. 11:08 p.m. Report of subject enroute to jump off of French King Bridge, officer sent to area.

Thursday, 8/12

7:31 p.m. Possible suicide at French King Bridge.

Saturday, 8/14

3:30 p.m. Assisted Northfield police department with suicidal subject. 8:31 p.m. Officer observed possible road rage incident at Gill lights on French King Highway.

ALLERGIES from pg 12 are in a quandary as to the causes of increased peanut and tree-nut sensitivity. Hopefully both the underlying causes and solutions for those who are allergic will be identified sooner than later.

For those currently affected by severe allergies, the focus is on management. In addition to education of individuals with allergies, particularly children, this means a range of options for schools. First and foremost involves appropriate medical and treatment plans in schools, followed by education of the school community, and strategies to avoid exposures for allergic indi-

viduals. In the case of peanut allergies avoidance in schools ranges from peanut free buildings to peanut free classrooms or separate lunch tables. As to the most effective management practice, the jury is still out.

Emily Monosson, Ph.D. writes and blogs as the Neighborhood Toxicologist, is a member of the GMRSD school committee, and is a member of the district's Wellness Committee. The information presented here is the product of her own research into the issue and does not represent the opinion or work of the GMRSD school district, or the Wellness Committee

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GO GREEN FAMILY

Episode 21: Electricity Challenge - The Results!

BY JEANNE WEINTRAUB-MASON

MONTAGUE CENTER - An oversized light bulb in the WGBJ studio shone a garish light on Sam Lively's teased sandy hair. The host of the Go Green Family contest leapt up with gusto when the TV camera zoomed in.

"The results of our saving electricity challenge are in! Let me introduce our judges: Bill Bingman from the Pioneer Valley Electric Company (PVECO), and Jen Hillard from the Massachusetts Sustainable Energy Society (MES), Bill- would you fill us in?"

"Sure, Sam. First, we should

explain to our viewers that the Bartlett family has been disqualified, as the photovoltaic panels they installed were not in compliance with state regulations. So it's down to two families for this challenge. The Robbins-Levine family garnered some substantial savings from some simple choices: using a clothesline instead of the electric drier, unplugging appliances not in use, and being vigilant about shutting off lights. And, over the next twenty years, their new solar hot water system will save them money and displace over 50 tons of CO2 emissions!

However, our winner is the Tinker family. The dramatic drop in their electric bill shows what a difference energy-effi-

cient appliances can make. They've saved \$85 a month by replacing their refrigerator, unplugging an unused freezer, and switching over to compact florescent light bulbs. For their efforts, the Tinker family will receive a set of new photovoltaic panels with free installation so they can start generating their own electricity. Congratulations!"

"Jen, do you have any comment on the Tinker family's winning strategy?" Sam asked.

"Of course! I was pleased to see all those incandescent lights replaced by compact florescent bulbs. By the way, your viewers might appreciate knowing that we believe this is a stop-gap technology. Once they become more affordable, we expect that

Go Green Family Contestants' Electric Bills (@ 14 cents/kwh)

	Starting Monthly Usage	Ending Monthly Usage
Bartletts	2,300 kwh / \$322	disqualified
Tinkers	1,100 kwh / \$154	440 kwh / \$61
Robbins-Levines	450 kwh / \$63	270 kwh / \$38

Comparing Bulb Types

Bulb type	Percent light vs. heat
Incandescent	5% light 95% heat
Compact florescent	20% light 80% heat
LED	80% light 20% heat

LED lights, which use even less energy than compact florescent bulbs, will become the bulb of choice. For now, though, we all need to get going on replacing our incandescent bulbs - under

new Federal government rules, they will no longer be sold after 2014."

Continued next week

GILL from page 1

concern is the one that says something to the effect that a driver should heed the signal when the light is flashing. "It should say outright, 'Do not cross this bridge when the light is flashing.'" Board member Ann Banash maintained. The fact that the sign is not clear was amply demonstrated recently when there was a fire in Gill in the early morning. The emergency light was flashing, and yet the fire engine hurrying from Turners to Gill came face-to-face with a startled driver halfway across the bridge.

The Board intends to ask for another meeting with SPS Construction and other Gill-Montague officials to insist that the company improve signage on

the project.

At the August 16th meeting, Selectboard members John Ward, Randy Crochier and Ann Banash also agreed style and cost estimates need to be researched more before a proposal for a new roof for the Public Safety Complex (aka Fire/Police Station) can be put before voters. Administrative Assistant Ray Purington was directed to come back to the Board after gathering additional information. A community offer of volunteer labor was appreciated, but procurement and prevailing wage law, in addition to liability issues, ruled out that option for this particular project, in the view of members.

Progress on developing the energy performance improvement contract with Siemens Corporation was to be outlined more thoroughly at the Thursday evening Energy Commission meeting, but Purington suggested completion of the contract is getting closer. Purington noted that the technical assistant for the project, Beth Greenblatt of Beacon Integrated Solutions, is looking over materials and proposed specifications carefully, cautioning the town that they need to be certain to notify planners of any changes of use and other factors that could impact building performance and the measurement of improvements.

Board member Banash was concerned that the expiration of the grant to perform this work might be closing in, but the Town has until at least June 2011, with the possibility of an extension through June 2012, according to P u r i n g t o n . Steven Hussey appeared before the Board to ask for a "temporary reduction" in rent for the Gill Municipal building (the former Riverside School building). Hussey's experimental school, Four Winds, has had a significant decline in enrollment leading to reduced days per week (five to four) and staff numbers. "We have made every cut in costs we can possibly make," Hussey told the Board, "and have no choice but to ask you to reduce what we know is already a very reasonable rent." The request was for a reduction of \$350, to \$500 a month. Banash noted that it is in the Town's interest to have the building occupied and that Four Winds has been a reliable tenant. Four Winds had been hoping for receipt of a special education grant this year but was not successful in securing it. Currently, the school is barely meeting last year's enrollment levels, which totaled eight pupils.

Purington noted \$500 would possibly cover expenses of the building, "as long as we have a winter as light as last year's."

More programmable thermostats were discussed as a way of reducing costs. Gill townsperson Rick James, in the audience, inquired about the number of Gill students served by the school. Hussey said that no Gill students are currently enrolled, although in the past three have been. Four Winds has operated in Gill for nine years, and has been in existence for eleven years in all.

In response to a question regarding the cost of tuition, Hussey said a family pays approximately \$8800 per year for their child to attend, and that students of many academic backgrounds who have difficulty reaching their potential for differing reasons benefit from the individualized curriculum and instruction they receive. Asked about the school's relationship to the public school district—specifically, how Four Winds could keep from competing directly with the district for funds and students, as charter schools do—Hussey maintained he was a very strong supporter of public education. Hussey went on to say he was not a champion of the way charter schools are funded with dollars that take away from local school district budgets, and that he regretted that the current Massachusetts education system did not allow any way for innovative, experi-

mental schools such as his to provide an alternative for children and families without being pitted against the local school district.

The Board voted to adjust the Four Winds rent to \$500 based on current enrollment, with the agreement to take another look should circumstances or expense factors change.

The Board also discussed a potential Community Development Block Grant. The Board had been hoping the grant might help conduct a needs assessment and work on a project involving the Riverside sewer system. Purington's information suggested that this kind of project would be seen as a maintenance issue and was not the sort of project that would make the larger group grant application competitive and likely to be funded. The Housing and Redevelopment Authority does have a loan repayment fund with Gill contributions equaling \$90,000 at present that could be drawn on for this type of project. Board members discussed the pros and cons of using Loan Repayment funds for a project that would benefit Riverside exclusively. Purington agreed to research the potential needs and costs further.



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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



THURSDAY, AUGUST 19th
Deja Brew, Wendell: *Wailin' Dave Robinson & Tommy Filault*, Blues based roots music, 8 to 10 p.m.

Shag the band at Burrito Rojo, Turners Falls, 7 to 9 p.m. Rob, Doug, and Laura playing all your 70's easy listening favorites. Guest Ivan Ussach on drums!

FRIDAY & SATURDAY, AUGUST 20th & 21st.
Pothole Pictures, Shelburne Falls: *Topsy-Turvey*. Gloriously entertaining period piece, portrait of Gilbert & Sullivan as they create their comic operetta masterpiece *The Mikado*. Music before movie, 7 p.m.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 20th
Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: *The Short Bus*. Rock and roll covers reminiscent of *Love Bomb*, 9:30 p.m.

Montague Bookmill, Montague Center: *John Roderick of the Long Winters, David Rees*, and hosted by *John Hodgman*, 8 to 10 p.m. \$10 at the door.

The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Bella's Bartok, Ooh Girl and Brother Truck*, \$4 cover, 9:30 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Josh Levangie*, 9 p.m.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 21st
Easy Yoga by Lisa Enzer, M. Ed. 10 to 11



Lovewhip performs at Burrito Rojo on Saturday, August 28th beginning at 8 p.m. \$5 cover. Ghost Quartet too!

a.m. Lisa will guide you on the joys and benefits of yoga, free event in the Community Room, Greenfield Savings Bank, Turners Falls. Space is limited, so please call to reserve a spot! Contact Linda or Kerri: (413) 863-4316.

Montague Farm Cafe, 12 - 3 p.m., 177 Ripley Road, Montague. Great food and a family friendly atmosphere. Every Saturday. Plus health and wellness offerings and fresh veggie care packages to take home. Today: visiting shape note singers. All free. Transportation available. Karen: 367-5275 or karen@zenpeace-makers.com.

Silent Auction at the Montague Grange to benefit the Friends of the Grange and Montague Old Home Days, 9 to 4 p.m. Cocktail hour: 3 to 4 p.m. to place final bids. Items include: art quilt by Ann Feitelson, glass planet by Josh Simpson, local businesses certificates.

Erving State Forest, 122 Laurel Lake Road, Erving: *Family Fun Day*, 3 p.m. - 6 p.m. Family activities, hands-on demonstrations and discovery center. Campfire, 7 p.m. - 8 p.m. The 1930's comes to life with stories, songs, jokes, and games. Free programs \$5 parking fee. Info: (413) 584-6788.

The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Rockit Queer* (THE dance party) \$3 cover.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Riddim, Inc.* 9 p.m.

Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: *1 ought* 9 at 9:30 p.m. \$5 cover.

FRIDAY TO SUNDAY, AUGUST 20th to 22nd
Montague Old Home Days, Montague Center. Info: www.montaguema.net.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 22nd
Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: Watershed trees & poets! Learn about local poets who love trees. 2 to 3:30 p.m.

Erving State Forest, 122 Laurel Lake Road, Erving: *Guided Park Tour*, 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. Hike from the campground to the beach. Paved road and sandy beach with a few short steep sections taken at a leisurely pace. Free program, \$5 parking fee. (413) 584-6788.

JACK COUGHLIN ILLUSTRATION

The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *TNT KARAOKE*, 8 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Steve Crow, Peter Kim & Joe Fitzpatrick*, - 8 p.m.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 26th
Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Kidleidoscope*, a kid-friendly, hands-on environmental experience for young children. 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. Today's topic: Butterflies!

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Larry Kopp*, 8 p.m.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 27th
Irish Seisiun, A classic Irish Seisiun (pronounced "session") music and potluck. Suggested \$5 - \$10 donation at the door. BYO food and beverage of choice to share. At the Montague Grange, Montague Center, 7 to 10 p.m.

The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Lenny's Lounge*, 7 p.m.. Followed by *The Cohen Brothers* (Studebaker Hawk & Len Bias spin deep disco), no cover.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Carrie Ferguson*, 9 p.m.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 28th
Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Nature Journaling*. Explore the natural world through writing, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. *And Fossil Fuel for the Valley's Fossil Roadshow*: bring your mysterious rocks or fossils to the Friends of the GFDC to be identified, 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. (413) 863-3221.

Psychic Fair, sponsored by The National Spiritual Alliance from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Thompson Temple across from the Lake Pleasant Post Office. www.thenational-spiritualallianceinc.org.

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Burrito Rojo, Turners Falls: *Lovewhip*, joined by *Ghost Quartet*. Lovewhip has their finger on the pulse of what makes people want to move their feet and shake their booties. They been bringing their original brand of electro funk to fans of music for a decade and just released their new album, *Love Electric*. The show is all ages, \$5 at the door, 8 p.m.. Info: www.lovewhip.net.

MONDAY, AUGUST 30th
Montague Center Farmer's Market, on the common, Montague Center, 3 to 7 p.m. Vendors welcome.

WEDNESDAYS
Great Falls Farmers Market. On the lawn near the Discovery Center, Avenue A, Turners Falls. 2 to 6 p.m. Rain or shine every Wednesday.

ONGOING
Appalachian Families and Faces, 1971-1975, a photographic exhibit at The Gallery at Hallmark by Vern McClish. Documentary photographs on display through September 5th.

Gallery 38, Avenue A, Turners Falls, next to the Great Falls Discovery Center. Deerfield Valley Art Assoc., Summer Fun exhibit & sale through August. Wed., Fri. & Sat. 1 to 6 p.m.

Exhibition of Digital Prints: *Songs of Lake Pleasant* by artist and writer Jan Atamian. At the Sunderland Public Library, Sunderland. Montague artist, writer, and teacher Jan Atamian's work is a picture book celebration of the history and beauty of the lake, as well as the animals that live in this area of Western Massachusetts. The prints are on exhibit through August 31st. Info: 665-2642.

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3. INCEPTION PG13 DAILY 6 9:30
4. SCOTT PILGRIM VS THE WORLD PG13 DAILY 12:15 3:15 6:45 9:15
5. THE OTHER GUYS PG13 DAILY 12:15 3:15 6:45 9:15
6. THE EXPENDABLES R in DTS sound DAILY 12:30 3:30 6:30 9:30
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MARY AZARIAN WOODBLOCK

THE GARDENER'S COMPANION

Harvest Time

The bean poles are heavy with vines, despite the fact that I disciplined myself this year and planted only three seeds at the base of each pole of my tripod teepee. Thus the green beans are legend and there are two choices: keep up with the picking every few days and

store it in a cool, dry place like the garage until the weather cools way down and the palate craves heavier, more substantial foods.

The sweet peppers are big and green and shiny, but if I am patient, they will continue to turn, becoming red, orange or yellow, or in the case of the chocolates, brown. They will be all the sweeter for that change of hue, and if the cook cannot keep up with the production, no matter, they can be simply frozen directly in plastic bags for consumption all winter long.

Despite the calendar, the edges of the vegetable bed continue to be defined by flowers. While the daylilies are finished, the butterfly bush continues to flourish, attracting the soon migrant butterflies and hummingbirds. The honeysuckle vine is having a second blooming which also attracts nectar lovers and scents the yard so strongly that it comes into the open windows at night. My English roses are producing once again, this time with less interference from the Japanese beetles. Soon the goldenrod and asters at the edge of the mowed yard will come into bloom, truly signally the winding

share the abundance with friends and neighbors while the beans are small and tender, or leave the pods on to develop into shell beans.

The lemon cukes are mid-sized and light yellow, the proper picking time for eating raw in salads or sharing with folks who don't garden. Otherwise, left to turn dark yellow and larger than most of the lemons we encounter, they will become fodder for pickling.

Two crops which continue to prosper without the gardener's attention as yet are the winter squash and the sweet peppers. The squash will develop on its own timetable, and I need only wait to harvest it until the vines die back, brush the fruit dry and



Corn on the cob

food briefly into boiling water and then chilling quickly using ice water. Here is a time table for blanching some of the most common vegetables.

- Beans, green, waxed or limas 2-3 minutes, depending on size
- Broccoli 3 minutes
- Kale or other thick-leaved greens 2 minutes
- Corn off the cob 4 minutes
- Ears of corn 7-9 minutes
- Summer squashes, cubed or sliced 3 minutes

Prepare a sink or other large container with plenty of iced water, cubes and all.

Heat a large container of water with a little salt to the boil.

Drop in your vegetables and time carefully.

Have a strainer or colander handy to scoop the vegetables and drop into the cold water immediately.

If you have one, use a lettuce spinner to dry the chilled veggies before storing in zip-lock bags in your freezer.

Remove from the freezer and warm gently for a fresh-from-the-garden taste.

(If you have also been harvesting the wonderful season's berries, you need only wash them, dry a bit, and freeze directly.)

BY LESLIE BROWN

MONTAGUE CITY – While perhaps too hot for humans, this humid, bright summer has been great for the hot weather crops. As long as they have been adequately watered to make up for the natural short fall of rain, the squash, beans, cucumbers, peppers and tomatoes have continued to grow like Jack's beanstalk.

After time, of course, I have become impatient for fruit. Many of my tomato plants are indeterminates, which means that they will continue growing until stopped by frost or disease. They have sported large green fruit for weeks. Now of course, the harvest has ripened, and generally not in well planned sequence, but often all at once. It will continue well into the early fall.

August at Cold Brook Farm

BY FRAN HEMOND

MONTAGUE CENTER – "The Swallows are getting them ready to fly" — so goes the old song. Now in late August, the swallows have gathered their little ones and flocked to the wires by the side of country roads to swirl about and challenge the motorist. They replace the more considerate redwing blackbird and kestrel which had considered it their province and used the perch to merely observe the passing scene. It suggests a dying down of perhaps the hottest and most humid summer that I remember (104 degrees in the shade at Cold Brook on July 6th!) but also some glorious days of sun and light breeze.

Although some big trees were felled by an early summer storm, and the cleanup is still going on,

the world about Cold Brook managed our violent weather fairly well. I do wonder why the big



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Red-breasted merganser

hemlock fell and the trees in its area seemed unscathed. The early heat and later frost meant no

apples and poor berry production. But maybe the yellow raspberries will have a second crop?

The little creatures seem to have hidden out and reappeared with the calm. On the North Pond, as usual, early on a few

mergansers stopped by. Later, a couple families of mallards

instructed their children in the best spots and proper way to feed on milfoil. This year, two families of divers made it an interesting scene. A family of wood ducks was sighted scrambling out of the pond, but they were an elusive group. The purposeful black ducks stop in when the area is quiet, but disperse when people appear. They are all business.

A heron settles in now and again. He stalks around the edges and then stands very still, apparently hoping for an errant fish to come by. At four feet tall, he is the largest wading bird we have. The way he lifts that large body into the air above the pond with bill extended, legs aligned, and everything else fitted in is amazing! And then, again, he sits at the top of a pine tree on the hill and dominates a small world. And just today, a red-breasted merganser stopped by, probably on its way south, and I thrilled to see it dive into the pond. A rare and

appreciated sight!

Here by the house a noisy catbird considers himself the prime owner; he is handsome in his trim gray suit and brazen in his manner. We give him credit for keeping the nearby bushes free of bugs.

I took note of the August birds here at Cold Brook in 1993 when we moved to the farm. A flock of cedar waxwings spent time then, and this year, too, they find the South Pond a delight. The downy woodpeckers and migrating Maryland yellowthroats, and myrtle, blue-winged, and black and white warblers are listed from that year, and hopefully may be spotted in the early morning.

And all day long, flocks of swallows practice their swoops and dives from a lineup on the wires beside our country roads. The season is changing, and the big trip awaits.

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